

EKAM SAT

4

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Vasishta-Gita
Rishabha-Gita
Agastya-Gita
Sruthi-Gita
Bhikshu-Gita

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Preface

The Gita literature in Sanskrit is the spontaneous outpouring of the sages and seers that have realized the Self. It is the expression of their direct experience of the Divine - the Self, the Brahman, the Atman in whatever way IT is apprehended in their supreme consciousness. It is, therefore, no surprise that every Gita sets realization of the Self as its ideal. All of them point to one Truth, the only Truth - Ekam Sat.

The Bhagavad-Gita is the most widely known classic of Sanatana-dharma, translated and commented upon by hundreds of spiritual seekers in almost every language in the world. The Hindu monks who are the torch-bearers of the Sanatana-dharma have either translated and / or commented upon a few of the other Gitas in English. It may be that most of the Gitas remain to be given free translation and brief commentary in English for an easy understanding of their spirit, for the benefit of aspirants not knowing Sanskrit.

We bring out a series of volumes titled Ekam Sat containing free translation in English of each verse of all the available Gitas other than the Bhagavad-Gita, with brief commentary wherever necessary. The idea is that the translation is true reflection of the spirit of the verse (sloka) in Sanskrit as far as practicable, and the commentary is consistent with the central thought of the Gita. The division of each Gita into chapters may be arbitrary, but indicative of the subject handled therein. Ekam Sat 1, 2 & 3 have already been published.

Ekam Sat 4, the fourth volume of the series, contains a detailed exposition of the Vasishtha-Gita, Rishabha-Gita, Agastya-Gita, Sruti-Gita & Bhikshu-Gita. The translation into English of each sloka (verse) of the five Gitas is rendered corresponding to the idea of the verse in Sanskrit of the Gita concerned. Explanatory paragraphs are added, wherever considered necessary, to elaborate the essence of the content of the verse from the point of view of Monism.

Vasishta-Gita

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Introduction

The Brihat (great) Yoga Vasista or the Yoga Vasista Maha Ramayana, as it is also called, contains over 29,000 verses in Sanskrit. It is ostensibly attributed to Valmiki, author of Ramayana. This is probably a case of modesty on the part of the actual author(s) or compiler(s) attributing it to a great sage.

Based on internal references in the text of the Yoga Vasista, it has been dated as early as the sixth century A.D. and as late as the fourteenth century. The study made by T.G. Mainkar claims that the work went through three major phases. In the beginning there was, now lost, the original work of Vasista. It was expanded into the Laghu Yoga Vasista into about 6,000 verses, and finally into the substantially larger form of the Yoga Vasista Maha Ramayana. According to him, the original work was an Upanisadic text.

When the original work was expanded into the Laghu Yoga Vasista, Buddhist ideas were incorporated. When the final phase came into being, it reflected the influence of the Saivite Trika School, also known as Kashmiri Saivism.

The principal figures of the Yoga Vasista are Rama and Vasista. While Rama is known as the chief character of the great Ramayana epic, Vasista is a more ancient figure to whom the seventh *mandala* of the Rig-Veda is attributed. Sankara, in his commentary on Bhagavad-Gita, refers to Vasista as the first sage of the Vedanta school based on his contribution to Rig-Veda.

The Yoga Vasista consists of spiritual instruction given to Rama by the sage Vasista. The whole text chronicles progressively the states which Rama undergoes in his search for enlightenment, ultimately leading to meditation and its culmination in *nirvana*. However, Rama's enlightenment does not require the rejection of his responsibility as the ruler, but allows him to rule in the light of his newly acquired knowledge.

The language and style of the Yoga Vasista is elegant and poetic. The text abounds with metaphorical descriptions, tales of fantasy and philosophical discourses, all within the context of dialogue between Rama and Vasista. It appeals to both intellect and imagination. Essentially, the text is syncretic, is affirmative of concepts, symbols and religious traditions by a process of selection and reconciliation. It is an affirmation of Monism. Threads of Vedanta, Jainism, Yoga, Samkhya, Saivism, Mahayana-Buddhism, etc are intricately woven into the text, only to emphasize Monism.

The chief characteristic of the Yoga Vasista Maha Ramayana is its emphasis on the doctrine of 'mind-only'. This is similar to the 'mind-only' tradition of the Yogacara-Buddhism as enunciated in the Lankavatara Sutra. Both describe mind (*manas*) as a creative force. Both negate the reality of the world, claiming that all appearances proceed from the mind. Both assert that through the purification of past impressions, by human effort, enlightenment is achieved. Both emphasize that meditation is the means to this end.

The Yoga Vasista holds that the highest human achievement is to become liberated in life, to achieve the state of *Jivanmukta*.

The present work is based on a condensation of the Laghu Yoga Vasista, by way of choice, into about 230 Sanskrit verses, by an unknown compiler, titled as Yoga Vasista Sara – the essence of Yoga Vasista. This is titled the Vasista-Gita as it is, philosophically, the essence of the teaching of Vasista in Yoga Vasista Maha Ramayana. This compilation includes only a few slokas (verses) of the Yoga Vasista relating to self-effort for realization of the Divine Self. This philosophy of self (human) effort is, in fact, traced to its origin to the *Anusasanaparva* of the Mahabharata wherein Brahma imparts to Vasista the knowledge that human effort is the key to enlightenment and that there is no such thing as external fate. This philosophy runs counter to the concept of fatalism, which is wrongly propagated to have permeated the Indian thought in the past.

The brief commentary on the liberal translation of each of the slokas of the Yoga Vasista Sara is followed by an appendix containing a brief account of the role of self-effort for enlightenment as stated in the main text of Yoga Vasista Maha Ramayana.

1. Dispassion

Salutations to the Serene Effulgence infinite and all-pervasive, unlimited by space and time! Salutations to the Pure Consciousness that can be realized only in experience!

The Self is pure awareness. IT is pure consciousness. The Self is the source of all kinds of illumination. IT is self-luminous, without darkness and light and is the self-manifest reality. The Self is only being. IT is what IT is. IT is the infinite 'I'. IT is eternal.

The Self Itself is the world; the Self Itself is 'I'; the Self Itself is God; all is the Self. The Self alone exists. The Self alone is real.

The Self is Consciousness and, as Consciousness, is eternal.

Knowing the Self means being the Self. The knowing Self is Itself the known Self. IT can never become a known or unknown object. The realization of the Self is only in experience.

One who is totally ignorant or who knows the whole Truth is ineligible to study this book. The one who thinks 'I am bound; I must become free' is alone eligible to study it.

A seeker after Truth is to be fired with the urge in his inner- most self to know of the Self – the Brahman, with a view to realizing IT. He is aware of his ignorance – *avidya* that binds him to the phenomenal world. Aware of his ignorance, he seeks to be free. A clear understanding of the philosophy contained in this work will help the seeker after Truth to realize his ideal through *sadhana*.

Unless and until one is definitely blessed by the Supreme Lord, one will not find either a proper guru or the right scripture.

A guru is in the nature of an inner being sent to the seeker (disciple) by the Divine at the appropriate stage of his *sadhana* (spiritual practice) to attain realization. Age, caste, creed, gender, vocation, etc of the guru is of no relevance to the seeker. The seeker is to feel the guru in his soul and accept him as such. So is it with the right scripture to elevate the seeker to the realm beyond his mind.

Oh Rama! Just as a steady boat is obtained from a boat-man, the method of crossing the ocean of *samsara* is learnt by associating with great souls.

Samsara is a series of lives with birth and death with no enlightenment. If a seeker is intent to overcome the series of lives, he is to associate with realized souls to know the way to overcoming *samsara*. The enlightened persons, having realized themselves, will be of help to the seeker in his effort.

The great remedy for the long-lasting disease of *samsara* is the enquiry ‘who am I? To whom does the *samsara* belong?’, which entirely cures it.

Not a day should be spent in a place which does not possess the tree of a wise knower of Truth with its good fruit and cool shade.

The company of a knower of Truth works as a magnetic force to the seeker after Truth to be on the path of realization.

The sages are to be approached even if they do not teach. Whatever they say even in a lighter vein contains wisdom.

A true guru to a seeker after Truth is ordained by the Divine. Whether he teaches or not, his very presence will have an ennobling impact on the seeker. Whatever such guru says carries wisdom for the benefit of the seeker.

The company of sages converts emptiness into fullness, death into immortality, and adversity into prosperity.

A seeker develops faith by living in the company of holy men – sages. Once he has faith, he achieves anything. There is nothing greater than faith.

The realization of the Divine cannot be by means of mere scholarship. The seeker must have love and faith. If he has faith in his guru’s words, his faith leads him to the Divine. As one’s faith increases, so does one’s knowledge of God. Faith is not simple belief. It is the grasp on the Ultimate, an illumination. The company of a guru or the sages thus converts emptiness into fullness, death into immortality, and adversity into prosperity.

If sages were concerned only with their own happiness, with whom could those tormented by the sorrows of *samsara* seek refuge?

An illumined sage always looks to seekers after Truth to impart true wisdom.

Oh good soul! That which is imparted to a worthy disciple that has become dispassionate is the real wisdom. That is the real purpose of the sacred *srutis* and texts and it is comprehensive.

The disciple is to be worthy, following the four disciplines of realization known as *sadhana-chatustayam*, to receive instruction of the sacred *srutis* and other texts. He becomes dispassionate through spiritual practices. The instruction imparted to such a disciple by the realized guru is true wisdom and comprehensive, to enable him to attain his ideal of realization.

The customary method of teaching will only help preserve the tradition. Pure awareness arises when the disciple is clear in his understanding.

The Supreme Brahman cannot be realized with the help of the sacred texts or the guru. The self realizes the Supreme Self with pure intellect, in supreme consciousness.

The self realizes the Supreme Self beyond the consciousness of the body and the mind, in the state of Supreme Consciousness. Either the guru or the sacred texts are of help only to guide the seeker on the path of realization. But the seeker attains realization in Supreme Consciousness endowed on him wholly by Divine grace.

All the arts acquired by men are lost by lack of practice. But the art of wisdom grows steadily once it rises.

Faculties of body and mind arise, strengthen and decay in space and time. But the faculties of soul or the self ever grow and never decay as they are beyond space and time and beyond the consciousness of body and mind. The self of the aspirant seeks to be in union with the Self that is eternal and infinite. As such the consciousness or the self of the seeker is ever expanding, *adinfinitum*.

An ornament worn round the neck is considered lost through forgetfulness. When the mistake is realized, it is considered gained. Similarly, the Self is attained with the instruction of the guru.

The Self is eternal, immutable and all-pervasive. IT is ever present everywhere. It is only ignorance – *avidya* that veils the Self from the knowledge of the seeker. The guru helps to remove ignorance of the seeker through instruction. When ignorance is removed, the Self shines in effulgence in the knowledge of the seeker. IT is his Knowledge itself.

He who, not knowing his own self, takes pleasure in sense objects, is indeed an unfortunate person. He is like one who realizes very late that the food earlier eaten by him was poisonous.

Taking pleasure in sense objects is being within the domain of the body and the mind, without realizing the sublimity of bliss of the Self. This is against the spirit of the ideal of human life which is to attain the Self for supreme bliss. It amounts to wasting precious spell of human life in vicarious activity unconnected to the ideal of life.

He who knows that worldly objects are deceptive and still hankers after them is a pervert and like an ass.

Unlike an animal, a human being is endowed with an active mind and intellect, and is capable of determining his ideal of life and charting a course for its realization. A seeker after Truth is aware that the objects of the world are only deceptive and keep him bound to ignorance. In spite of such awareness, if he still hankers after them, is he not but a perverted person? Is he anymore than an ass?

Even the slightest thought immerses a man in sorrow. When he is devoid of all thoughts, he enjoys imperishable bliss.

Mind is a stream of thoughts passing over consciousness. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts there is no such thing as mind. Thought, therefore, is the very nature of mind.

The very fact that a seeker is having a thought is indicative that he is in the realm of the mind. Unless the seeker transcends his mind, he cannot enter the state of supreme consciousness that attains realization of the Self. Only realization of the Self bestows imperishable bliss. Being devoid of any thought what so ever, being beyond the domain of the mind is a necessary condition to enjoy imperishable bliss.

We experience the delusion of hundreds of years in a dream lasting a short while. Similarly, we experience the sport of *Maya* in our waking state.

There are said to be four levels of being covering the world of action. They are the insignificant being, the apparent being, the pragmatic being and the Supreme Being. The objects of dreams unrelated to the world of action through causal laws are considered apparent beings. The objects of the real world have observability and perceivability. They are meant for action and meet the conditions of action. They are, therefore, called pragmatic beings. The pragmatic beings are the creation of *Maya* – Prakrti. We experience them in our waking state as we experience the apparent beings – the objects of our dreams in our dream state. Neither category of beings is real or permanent. While the apparent beings of the dreams disappear into the being of our mind when we awake from sleep, the pragmatic beings of the world of action disappear, get absorbed and assimilated into the Brahman – the Supreme Being.

He whose mind is inwardly calm and serene, and free from attachment and hatred, and who looks upon this world like a mere spectator is a happy man.

An individual is considered a spectator or a witness if he makes a distinction in his mind between the witness and the witnessed consciousness. This is similar to one's experience of trying to shake off the identity of the waking 'I' with the dream 'I' and absolve oneself from, and be unaffected by the actions of the dream 'I', when one comes out of the dream.

The witness consciousness has different levels. At the empirical level, it often disassociates itself easily from itself as experiencing the dream objects. Sometimes it has to make special efforts for such disassociation. Then forgetfulness helps in erasing the dream experiences. But at the deeper and the higher levels of the witness consciousness, the disassociation is more and more spontaneous and obvious to oneself. At these levels, the seeker is calm and serene, free from attachment or hatred and is ever happy.

The life of the person who has understood well how to abandon all ideas of acceptance and rejection and who has realized the Consciousness which is within the innermost heart is illustrious.

Renunciation is abandoning all ideas of acceptance and rejection. True renunciation is of three types – sacrifice, charity and penance. All the three are actions. They purify the soul. They are obligations to every man who has to perform them without any attachment to the fruits that may result. One who gives up actions through ignorance is under the influence of the Attribute of Darkness (*tamas*). One who gives them up because of the trouble they involve is under the influence of the Attribute of the Active (*rajas*). Neither is right. The one who performs them without desire for their fruit is under the influence of the Attribute of the Transparent (*sattva*). He is the true renouncer of action, the true knower and the truly wise (*jnani*). His life is illustrious.

Pure Consciousness is the true state of the Divine Ground or the Godhead and IT permeates the whole universe as pure activity of the Godhead. All conscious experiences are the states of consciousness altered or modified with respect to Pure Consciousness. As a corollary, Consciousness is presumed present in and permeating all beings – sentient and insentient in the universe. What permeates a being permeates everywhere in the being, every cell. IT is, therefore, innermost in the being. One who realizes the presence of Consciousness within one's innermost heart is truly blessed.

On the death of the physical body the consciousness limited to the heart (*hrdayam*) alone exits the body. People lament unnecessarily that the Self is extinct.

Death is a reality and is part of life. As life principle (*prana*) enters the body, so does it exit. As it is the only reality for the physical body, one is wise not to worry about it.

When one “dies”, one does not die at all, but only shifts into awareness of the macrocosm where there is no “time” or “space”, now and then, before and after. From a macro perspective, all the particles of Everything merely look like the whole. This is to say, on “death” one returns in consciousness to the macro reality which is but a micro reality of an even larger macro reality – and so on, without end. The macro reality is the Self which is eternal, all-pervasive and existent. This leads to the realization that life including death is all a matter of perspective. It is only due to ignorance that people lament the death of a fellow being.

When pots are broken, the space within them becomes unlimited. Similarly, when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

As long as the pot is intact with water, it reflects the sky on the surface of water within and gives an illusion that it contains the sky. When the pot is broken, water spills away. The sky is no longer seen in illusion. It remains where it is, unlimited.

The human body is like a pot. The life principle within is like water. The Self is reflected as individual soul (*atman*) within, as *akasa* is reflected in the water of the pot. When the body perishes on death, the individual *atman* merges into the Self which is eternal and unattached.

Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is the Brahman alone appearing illusorily in the form of the world.

The creative force is immanent in the Brahman. Creativity is negativity. There is no creativity unless there is a leap from one state to another. But this leap does not mean complete destruction or negation. The Being never becomes Non-being. There is continuity of Being, with change of form, one form succeeding another. It is the Brahman's own power of negativity, of creative self-differentiation, of immanence and self-transcendence that result in creation. The Brahman is, thus, the ground of everything that exists, the Being of the world that is ever transient. As the world is ever transient it is considered apparent and, therefore, an illusion.

The Brahman is the Supreme Being. Everything in the world has its being in the Brahman. Permeating and pervading everything in the world IT is the Supreme Consciousness. As such IT is considered the Supreme Spirit or the *Atman*. By its very nature of all-encompassing and all-pervading phenomenon, the Supreme Spirit or *Atman* is considered the innermost attribute or constituent of all the individual spirits or *atmans*. When the Brahman is eternal, all-pervading, imperishable, immutable and indivisible, how can anything be born or die ontologically anywhere and at anytime?

The Self is more extensive than space; IT is pure, subtle, undecaying and auspicious. As such, how could IT be born and how can IT die?

Space is four-fold. First is the physical space, infinite as we know of it. Second is the dream space as infinite for one as the physical space. Third is the psychological space in which the objects of one's imagination exist, as infinite as the dream space. Fourth is the logical and mathematical space in which logical and mathematical realities exist. The Upanisads speak of different levels of space.

Space may be defined, like time, as the correlating of many events to the I-am as eternally present. The correlation of one event among others involves both time and space. One-point event may not produce the idea of space, even though it is involved in locating it. The idea of space is brought to the surface of consciousness when the locating of one event by the side of another is involved. Primarily, locating is a function of spacing, placing.

On the other hand, the Self is pure awareness. IT is pure consciousness. IT is the infinite 'I'. The Self is Consciousness and, as Consciousness, is eternal and all-pervading. Being infinite and eternal, IT has neither beginning nor end. If the Self (the Brahman) is to be regarded as space (*akasa*) for the reason that all things are located in it, then it has to be beyond time.

Time and space are not necessarily out there. They are the functions of apperception. The objective space and time are the spontaneous functioning of one's apperception in its transcendental aspect. They are necessary for one in that they belong to one's transcendental depths. Time and space, thus, are the meeting points of the I-am

and the I-know. They dissolve into the I-am when the I-know enters it. Space in its manifold form, thus, dissolves into the Self.

All this (the Self) is tranquil, One without beginning, middle or end. IT cannot be said to be existent or non-existent. Know this and be happy.

Monism (*Advaita*, Non-dualism) considers the Brahman as one. The Brahman is pure ontological 'Being' or Existence (*satta*). Being and Existence are one and the same. Being cannot be many. If It is more than one, it becomes a class, and the word becomes the name of the class. The question whether It is one or more does not arise for the ontological Being. 'To be one' may be said to be one among many. But ontologically, 'to be' is the act of being or existing. There is no duality both within and without Being. The Being, being one, eternal and all-pervasive, can neither have beginning, middle nor end.

The Brahman is considered the Supreme Deity. Everything in the cosmos has its being in the Brahman. IT is concrete in the sense that IT IS. IT cannot be a person, as the word is generally understood. IT IS, and yet indeterminate, beyond concept and speech.

Oh, Rama! It is indeed nobler to wander begging about the streets of the outcastes (chandalas) with an earthen bowl in hand than to live a life of ignorance.

In ignorance, man binds himself to family and friends, to wealth and possessions and to pleasures associated with body. He gets involved in the cycle of *samsara* with no effort at redemption. He makes no effort to realize the ultimate Truth or the Reality. He lives the life of a beast, caring for satisfaction of the physical senses and appetites.

The animal, it is said, is a living laboratory in which Nature has worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation Nature wills to work out the superman to manifest God, to disclose the soul as a divine being, to evolve a divine nature. If it is true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in him and the realization of God within and without are the highest and the most legitimate ideal possible to man on earth.

The ideal of human life cannot simply be the animal repeated in a higher scale of mentality. The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings, as he is the most discontented and feels most the pressures of limitations. He becomes, therefore, capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for the supreme ideal. So seized by the divine frenzy for the supreme ideal, the seeker is to attain knowledge of the Self for realization.

Disease, poison, adversity or any other thing in the world causes less suffering to men than such stupidity (ignorance) engendered in their bodies.

2. Unreality of the World

Just as the great ocean of milk became still when the Mandara Mountain (with which the ocean of milk was churned) became still, even so the illusion of *samsara* comes to an end when the mind is stilled.

When the mind entertains notions of objects, there is agitation or movement in the mind. When there are no objects or ideas, then there is no movement of thought in the mind. When there is movement, then the world appears to be; there are the feelings of 'I am', 'this is mine', etc. When there is no movement in the mind, there is cessation of world-appearance.

The very best intelligent means by which the mind can be subdued is complete freedom from desire, hope or expectation in regard to all objects at all times. Just as there is no harvest without sowing, the mind is not subdued without persistent practice. The practice is of renunciation. No one can reach the state of total dispassion without persistent practice.

Samsara rises when the mind becomes active and ceases when it is still. Still the mind, therefore, by controlling the breath and the latent desires.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world. When the mind is transcended, the world vanishes, dissolves into its source.

In a living organism, *prana* is the energy that circulates in energy channels known as *nadis*. In accordance with its diverse functions in the body, it is also known as *apana*, etc. This *prana* is indistinguishably united with the mind. In fact, mind is the consciousness that tends towards thinking on account of the movement of *prana*. Movement of thought in the mind arises from the movement of *prana*. And the movement of *prana* arises because of the movement of thought in consciousness. They thus form a cycle of mutual dependence, like waves and movement of currents in water. The wise, therefore, declare that by the restraint of the *prana*, the mind becomes quiescent. The movement of *prana* is arrested with the cessation of the movement of thought in the mind.

This worthless (burnt-out) *samsara* is born of one's imagination and vanishes in the absence of imagination. It is certain that it is absolutely unsubstantial.

Everything in the world is dependent upon the mind, upon one's mental attitude. On examination, the mind itself appears to be unreal. But we are bewitched by it. With mind controlling our activity, we seem to be running after mirage.

It is the mind that creates the body by mere thoughts, just as the potter makes a pot out of clay. It creates new bodies and brings about the destruction of what exists, and all this is by mere wish. Within mind exist the faculties of delusion or hallucination,

dreaming and irrational thought. It creates the appearance of the body within itself. But in ignorance, one sees the physical body in gross physical vision as different from and independent of the mind. It assumes reality as in a mirage.

The mind flits in all directions all the time and is unable to find happiness anywhere. Like the lion in a cage, the mind is ever restless, having lost its freedom. It is never happy with its present state. Only when it is transcended, does one realize that the world is absolutely unsubstantial.

The idea of a snake in the picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the Truth is known. Similarly, *samsara* ceases to exist when the Truth is realized, even if it appears to be apparent.

It is an immutable law that the unreal has no real existence and the real does not cease to be. If the creation is in fact real then there is no possibility of its cessation. As the created world is ever in change, it does not stand the law of the real not to cease to be.

The Creator of the universe is only spiritual and not physical, as the cause that gives rise to the physical does not exist in Him. The Creator is not created – uncreated (*anadikarana*), but Creator of all beings. The created (like a bracelet) is always of the same substance as that of which it was created (like gold). As the Creator is spiritual, the cause of His manifold creation is, therefore, His thought. He being the Spirit and the cause of the creation being the thought, the creation, too, is truly of the nature of thought, without materiality.

Nothing has ever been created anywhere at any time. Nothing comes to an end either. Worlds within worlds appear in every atom. What can be the cause and how do they arise? The Absolute Brahman is All, Pure Consciousness and Omnipresent.

The Creator is the Intelligence (Consciousness) that supports the entire universe. Every thought that arises in that Intelligence gives rise to a form. Though all these forms are of the nature of pure intelligence, on account of self-forgetfulness of this nature and of the thought of physical forms, they freeze into physical forms. This is similar to ghosts, though formless, seen to have forms on account of the perceiver's delusion.

The materiality of the creation is like the castle in the air, an illusory projection of one's mind – imaginary.

This long-living ghost of *samsara* is the creation of the deluded mind of man and is the cause of his sufferings. It disappears when one ponders over it.

When the Infinite Consciousness vibrates, the worlds appear to emerge. When IT does not vibrate, they appear to submerge. Vibrating or not vibrating, IT is the same everywhere and ever. Not realizing IT, one is subject to delusion resulting in perception of the world-appearance. The delusion of the world-existence attains expansion by its

repeated affirmation. When IT is realized, all cravings and anxieties vanish, and the world-appearance dissolves into its source.

Oh Rama! *Maya* is such that it brings delight through its own destruction; its nature is inscrutable; it ceases to exist even while it is being observed.

The verbal root of *Maya* is *ma*, meaning to measure. The etymological root of the word makes it clear that it is something that makes the object we experience determinate through spatial, temporal and causal laws.

The Svetasvatara Upanisad gives an idea that *Maya* is a kind of net thrown on Being, making it look like the world fixed by some laws, constituting the structure of the net. This idea makes it clear that *Maya* is not mere illusion. The object of any illusion, like that of dream, disappears later, whatever fright it may have created in the person experiencing it. The idea of the *Brahman* creating the world, which does not exist on its own, through His will, involves something like the idea of illusion. Salvation as the ultimate goal is freedom from determinateness whether it is the life of pain or pleasure, happiness or sorrow, good or bad, knowledge or ignorance. It is the same as freedom from *Maya*.

Maya is indescribable. It is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both. It is not existent, for the *Brahman* alone is the existent (*sat*). It is not non-existent, for it is responsible for the appearance of the world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent as such a statement is self-contradictory. It is thus neither real, nor unreal; it is *Mithya*. But it is not a non-entity or a figment of imagination like the son of a barren woman. In the example of a rope mistaken for a snake, the rope is the ground on which the illusion of snake is super-imposed. When right knowledge dawns, the illusion disappears. The relation between the rope and the snake is neither that of identity nor of difference, nor of both. It is unique and known as *non-difference (tadatmya)*. Similarly, the *Brahman* is the ground, the substratum on which the world appears through Its potency - *Maya*. When right knowledge dawns, the real nature of the world is realized as *Maya* disappears.

The determinate world exists. But for a soul liberated, the determinate world gets transformed into the Pure Being of the *Brahman*. It dissolves into the Being of the *Brahman*. But the determinate world continues to exist for the un-liberated souls as empirically as ever. It is like “It neither exists, nor does not exist, nor both, nor neither” and also “It is neither true, nor false, nor both, nor neither”. The principle of the four-cornered negation precludes the idea that *Maya* leads to acosmism or negativism.

Said in other words, “*Paramatman* as ruling *Maya* is *Isvara*. *Paramatman* as under *Maya* is *Jivatma*. *Maya* is the sum total of manifestations that will vanish in realization. *Maya* is the energy of the universe, potential and kinetic. Until the Divine Mother releases us from *Maya*, we cannot be free”.

The “why” of anything is in *Maya*. If one asks why *Maya* arises, it elicits no answer as it is within *Maya*. The question does not arise beyond *Maya* as there is none to raise it.

Dear boy! Wonderful indeed is this *Maya* which deludes the entire world. It is on account of it that the Self is not perceived even if IT pervades all the limbs of the body.

The Self is subtler even than space. Neither the mind nor the senses can comprehend IT. IT is Pure Consciousness. The entire universe exists in the Consciousness that is omnipresent. That the Consciousness exists is the experience of all, and it alone is the self of all. Since IT is, all else is.

The Self is empty like space; but IT is not nothingness, since IT is consciousness. IT is; yet IT is not as IT cannot be experienced by the mind and the senses. IT being the self of all, IT is not experienced by anyone as an object. Though one, IT is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be many. This appearance is unreal even as a bracelet is an appearance of gold, which alone is real. But the Self is not unreal. IT is not a void or nothingness, for IT is the self of all. Further, Its existence can be experienced indirectly, as the existence of camphor can be experienced by its fragrance. IT alone is the self of all as consciousness, and IT alone is the substance that makes the world-appearance possible.

Though the world-appearance springs from the Self, what causes its cognition is *Maya*. It is the instrument of cognition and is of different forms like perception and inference. It not only seeks to measure reality, but also seeks to determine it, causing delusion.

Whatever is seen does not truly exist. It is like the mythical city of Gandharvas or a mirage.

The Reality is that which exists in the beginning and in the end. Whatever arises in the middle is extinguished. Whatever arises and is extinguished in time is unreal.

The ever-changing world is transitory and in time. It is, therefore, unreal. It is unreal in the sense that it is not as real as the *Brahman*; but it has practical reality. That is the reason why it is called *Mithya* but not *Asat* (non-existent). It is not an illusion. Things seen in a dream are quite true as long as the dream lasts; they are unreal only when one is awake. So is the case with a mirage. Similarly the world is quite real as long as true knowledge does not dawn. When once true knowledge dawns, the world is no longer cognized. It no longer exists for the seeker.

That, which is not seen, though within us, is the eternal and indestructible Self.

The Self, being infinite, moves not though moving, and yet is forever established in every atom of existence. The Self does not go, nor does IT ever come, for where can the Self go when All That Is, is within IT? If a pot is taken from one place to another, the

space within does not move from one place to the other, for everything is forever in space.

In the Infinite Self, there is no creator, no creation, no worlds, no heaven, no humans, no demons, no bodies, no elements, no time, no existence, no destruction, no falsehood, no truth, no 'you', no 'I', no notion of diversity, no contemplation and no enjoyment. Whatever is, is that supreme peace. There is no beginning, no middle and no end. All is all at all times, beyond the comprehension of thought and word. The Infinite is ever infinite. IT is like the ocean, but without its movement. IT is self-luminous like the sun, but without its activity. In ignorance, the Infinite Self is viewed as the universe. But in truth, the universe is the Brahman existing in the Brahman as the Brahman, as the space exists in space and is one with the space.

The Self, which is Pure Consciousness, exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times.

Just as the trees on a bank of a lake are reflected in the water, so also all these varied objects of the world are reflected in the vast mirror of our consciousness.

The self and the body of an individual are ever different. The mud never spoils a coin of gold fallen into it. Similarly, the self is untainted by the body. Even as the sky is not affected by the dust particles floating in it, the self is unaffected by the body. The self is one thing and the body is another, even as the water and the lotus.

A piece of wood, if it is proximate to water, is reflected in it. The wood and water have no real relationship between themselves. Similarly, the body, and the self in whom it is reflected have no real relationship. The reflection of an object in a mirror can be said to be neither real nor unreal. Similarly, the body reflected in the self is neither real nor unreal. It is indescribable.

This creation which is a mere play of Consciousness rises up like the delusion of a snake in a rope (when there is ignorance) and disappears when there is right knowledge.

When the Infinite Consciousness vibrates, the worlds appear to emerge. When IT does not vibrate, they appear to submerge. Vibrating or not vibrating, IT is the same everywhere and ever. Not realizing it, one is subject to delusion. The delusion of the world-existence attains expansion by its repeated affirmation. When it is realized, all cravings and anxieties vanish.

The creation exists in the Brahman as the sprout exists in the seed, liquidity in water, sweetness in sugar, etc. But in ignorance, it appears to be different from and independent of the Brahman. There is no cause for the world's existence. When there is a notion of creation, the creation seems to be. When, through self-effort, there is an understanding of non-creation, there is no world.

Even though bondage does not really exist, it becomes strong through desire for worldly enjoyments; when this desire subsides, bondage becomes weak.

There is no bondage other than craving for acquisition and the anxiety to avoid what one considers undesirable. The mind does not reach the state of utter tranquility till these two impulses of acquisition and rejection have been eliminated. As long as one feels that 'this is real' and 'that is unreal', etc, one's mind does not experience peace and equilibrium. Desirelessness, fearlessness, unchanging steadiness, equanimity, wisdom, non-attachment, non-action, goodness, absence of perversion, gentleness, courage, endurance, friendliness, intelligence, pleasant speech are the natural qualities of one who is free from the instincts of acquisition and rejection. One who is liberated spontaneously possesses these qualities.

Like waves rising in the ocean, does the unstable mind rise in the vast and stable expanse of the supreme Self.

Creation of the mind is but agitation in Infinite Consciousness. And the world exists in the mind. It seems to exist because of imperfect vision, imperfect understanding.

When the mind entertains notions of objects, there is agitation or movement in the mind. When there are no objects or ideas, then there is no movement of thought in the mind. When there is movement, then the world appears to be; there are the feelings of 'I am', 'this is mine', etc. When there is no movement in the mind, there is cessation of world-appearance.

On account of the agitation in mind, consciousness appears to become the object of knowledge. Then there arise in the mind all sorts of false notions. Such knowledge is not different from the mind. Hence it is known as ignorance or delusion.

It is because of the mind which always, of its own accord, imagines quickly and freely, that this magical show of the world is projected in the waking state.

External objects like space, psychological factors like 'I', etc exist only in mind. In reality, neither the objective universe, nor the perceiving self, nor perception as such, nor void, nor inertness exists; only One is. IT is cosmic Infinite Consciousness (*cit*). It is the mind that conjures up the diversity, the diverse actions and experiences, the world of objects, etc.

This world, though unreal, appears to exist and is the cause of life-long suffering to an ignorant person, just as a ghost is to a boy.

The individualized consciousness of the mind perceives what it thinks it perceives, on account of its conditioning. In ignorance, the real appears to be unreal and the unreal seems to be real. These hallucinations become reality when experienced by many, even as a statement made by very many people is accepted as truth. When these are incorporated in one's life, they acquire their own reality. After all, what is the truth

concerning the things of this world, except how they are experienced in one's own consciousness?

The relationship between the life force and consciousness is imagined. As it is so imagined, there is world-appearance. The life force by its association with consciousness becomes conscious and experiences the world as its object. But all this is as unreal as the experience of a ghost by a child. When the Truth is clearly understood, that which was falsely imagined by the mind ceases to be, and is transcended.

One who has no idea of gold sees only the bracelet. One does not at all have the idea that it is merely gold.

As long as one sees the bracelet as a bracelet, it is not seen as gold. When it is seen that 'bracelet' is just a word and not the reality, then gold is seen. Similarly, when the world is assumed to be real, the Self is not seen. When this assumption is discarded, Consciousness is realized. The Self is experienced in the *atman* (soul). IT is the All.

Similarly, towns, houses, mountains, serpents, etc are all in the eyes of the ignorant man separate objects. From the absolute point of view this object (the world) is the subject (the Self) itself; it is not separate (from the Self).

In the Infinite Self, there is no creator, no creation, no worlds, no heaven, no humans, no demons, no bodies, no elements, no time, no existence, no destruction, no falsehood, no truth, no 'you', no 'I', no notion of diversity, no contemplation and no enjoyment. Whatever is, is that supreme peace. There is no beginning, no middle and no end. All is all at all times, beyond the comprehension of thought and word. The Infinite is ever infinite. IT is like the ocean, but without its movement. IT is self-luminous like the sun, but without its activity. In ignorance, the Infinite Self is viewed as the universe. But in truth, the universe is the Brahman existing in the Brahman as the Brahman, as the space exists in space and is one with the space.

The Self, which is Pure Consciousness, exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times.

The world is full of misery to an ignorant man and full of bliss to a wise man. The world is dark to a blind man and is bright to one who has eyes to see.

Attachment makes the conditioning of the mind dense by repeatedly causing the experiences of pleasure and pain in relation to the existence and the non-existence of the objects of pleasure. One becomes unattached if one rises beyond joy and sorrow and, therefore, treats them alike, and if one is free from attraction, aversion and fear. One is unattached if one does not abandon the homogeneity of the Truth even while carrying on activities in the world.

Attachment is the cause for this world-illusion; it alone creates the objective world. Attachment causes bondage and endless sorrow. The abandonment of attachment is itself liberation and is the source of infinite bliss.

The bliss of a man of discrimination who has rejected *samsara* and discarded all mental concepts constantly increases.

Enquiry is the way for liberation. By enquiry, intelligence becomes keen and is able to realize the Supreme. The one in whom the spirit of enquiry is awake illumines the world and realizes the falsity of sense-pleasures and their objects. In the light of enquiry, there is the realization of the eternal and unchanging Reality. Such seeker is free from delusion and attachment. He does not seek any gain, nor does he spurn anything.

True enquiry is to enquire thus: “Who am I”? How has *samsara* – the cycle of birth and death of *Jiva* come into being? What is the way to overcome it?” Knowledge of Truth arises from such enquiry. From such knowledge arises tranquility in oneself. That leads to supreme peace that passes understanding, and ends all sorrow. Enquiry (*vicara*) is not reasoning or analysis. It is directly looking into oneself.

Like clouds that suddenly appear in a clear sky and as suddenly dissolve in it, the entire universe appears in the Self and dissolves in IT.

The creation of the entire universe has no cause and, therefore, it has had no beginning. It is only an appearance based on the reality of the Brahman. It is not independent of the Brahman. The Brahman alone exists. The universe appears in the Self and dissolves in IT, as waves appear in the ocean and dissolve therein.

He who reckons the rays of sun as non-different from the sun, and realizes that they are the sun itself is stated to be the undifferentiating man.

Differentiated consciousness is bondage; liberation is its absence.

Liberation is the Absolute Itself, which alone Is. An enlightened one sees only gold in ornaments, water in waves, emptiness in space, heat in mirage, sun in its rays and nothing else. Similarly, the liberated yogi whose consciousness is undifferentiated sees only the Brahman everywhere, not the world.

Just as the cloth, when investigated, is seen to be nothing but thread, so also this world, when enquired into, is (realized to be) merely the Self.

The uncarved image is forever present in a block, so is cloth in a thread. Similarly, the world is inherent in the Absolute, whether we regard the world real or unreal.

As in the tangible ocean, tangible waves are seen, in the formless Brahman – the Self, the world exists without form. From the Infinite, the Infinite emerges and exists in It

as the Infinite. Hence the world has never been really created – it is the same as that from which it emerges.

This fascinating world rises like a wave in the ocean of Consciousness and dissolves in IT. How then can it be different from the Consciousness when it appears in the middle?

Just as water remains water and flows down, and as fire does not abandon its nature of rising up, Consciousness remains forever Consciousness. To the enlightened person, there is only one Infinite Consciousness.

In the seed, there is no diversity. However, there is a notion of potential diversity of leaves, flowers, fruits, etc supposedly present in the seed. Even so, Cosmic Consciousness is one devoid of diversity. Yet the universe of diversity is said to exist potentially in the said Consciousness.

Being non-different from the Infinite Consciousness, the world-appearance has a mutual causal relationship with IT. It arises in IT, exists in IT and is absorbed in IT. The world-appearance is no different from the Infinite Consciousness.

Just as the foam, the waves, the dew and the bubbles are not different from water, even so this world which has come out of the Self is no different from the Self.

The Absolute Brahman being omnipotent, Its infinite potencies appear as this visible universe. All the diverse categories such as reality, unreality, unity, diversity, beginning, end, etc exist in the Brahman. The ocean is tranquil in some places and agitated in other places though it is one. Similarly, the Infinite Consciousness seems to embrace diversity in some places though IT is in Itself non-dual. It is natural for the omnipotent Infinite Consciousness to manifest in all Its infinite glory. Its manifestation enters into an alliance with time, space and causation, which are indispensable to such manifestation. As a result arise infinite names and forms but all these apparent manifestations are in reality not different from the Infinite Consciousness. That aspect of the Infinite Consciousness, which relates to the manifestation of names and forms, is known as the ‘Knower of the field’ or the Witness Consciousness.

Just as a tree consisting of fruits, leaves, creepers, flowers, branches, twigs and roots exists in the seed of the tree, even so this manifest world exists in the Brahman.

In the Infinite Consciousness, there is an inherent non-recognition of its infinite nature that appears to manifest as ‘I’ and the ‘world’. Just as there is an image in a marble slab even if it has not been carved, the notions of ‘I’ and the ‘world’ exist in the Infinite Consciousness. This is its creation. The word ‘creation’ has no other connotation. No creation takes place in the Supreme Being or the Infinite Consciousness. The Infinite Consciousness is not involved in the creation. They do not stand in a divided relationship to each other.

Just as the pot ultimately goes back to mud, waves into water and ornaments into gold, so also this world which has come out of the Self ultimately goes back to the Self.

The Brahman or the Self alone is the reality in all beings as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots, gold in ornaments and water in waves. As wind and its movement are not different, Consciousness and Its internal movement (energy) that causes all these manifestations are not different. The reality of the objects such as pots, ornaments and waves is only relative even when they appear. This relative reality is like the reality of dream objects. So is the world to the Self.

The snake appears when one does not recognize the rope; it disappears when one recognizes the rope. Even so this world appears when the Self is not recognized; it disappears when the Self is recognized.

As long as one feels a snake in a rope, it is seen as a snake. When it is realized that it is a rope and not a snake, then the rope is seen. The illusion of snake is overcome by knowledge of it being a rope. Similarly, when the world is assumed to be real, the Self is not seen. When this assumption is discarded with self-knowledge, the Self is experienced. In ignorance, the infinite Self is viewed as the universe. But in truth, the universe is the Self existing in the Self as the Self, as the space exists in space and is one with the space.

It is only our forgetfulness of the invisible Self which causes the world to appear just as the ignorance of the rope causes the snake to appear.

Whatever is regarded as the real objective world experienced in the waking state is no more real than that experienced during dream. One cannot say that either is real or unreal, but can only say that their substratum alone is real. The universe exists in the Brahman as a word, an idea. It is neither real nor unreal like a snake in the rope. To an immature and ignorant person who is confirmed in his conviction that this world is real, it continues to be real. He who sees the objective world does not see the Self which alone, being the substratum is true. The Self, being Absolute Consciousness, is not an object. IT is, therefore, not knowable and visible. IT can only be experienced on acquiring true knowledge.

Just as the dream becomes unreal in the waking state and waking state in the dream, so also death becomes unreal in birth and birth in death.

During dream, the objective world does not exist. During the waking state, the dream does not exist. That, which holds together either experience, is absent in the other. The waking state is that which endures. The dream state is that which is transient. During the period of the dream, it takes on the characteristic of the waking state. When the waking state is realized to be of a fleeting nature, it gets the characteristic of dream. The two are, therefore, the same and unreal.

As for the cycle of life, birth is the first spiritual mystery of the physical universe. Death is the second mystery. Life which would otherwise be a self-evident fact of existence becomes itself a mystery by virtue of these two which seem to be its beginning and its end, and yet betray themselves as neither of these things. They are rather intermediate stages in an occult process of life. In the birth of life, there is something more that participates in the emergence. This is a strong upsurge of some flame of soul – self, a first evident vibration of the Spirit.

All these are thus neither real nor unreal. They are the effect of delusion, mere impression arising out of some past experiences.

When the Infinite Consciousness vibrates, the worlds appear to emerge. When IT does not vibrate, they appear to submerge. Vibrating or not vibrating, IT is the same everywhere and ever. Not realizing IT, one is subject to delusion. The delusion of the world-existence attains expansion by its repeated affirmation. When IT is realized, all cravings and anxieties vanish.

3. The Liberated Person

The knowledge of the Self is the fire that burns up the dry grass of desire. This indeed is what is called *Samadhi*, not mere abstention from speech.

Samadhi is a state in which one realizes the objects of the senses as ‘not-self’ and thus enjoys calmness and tranquility within, all the time. Whether one is engaged in activity or lives in isolation, in enlightenment there is no distinction. When the mind is unconditioned, whatever action one does is non-action. The non-action of the mind is known as quiescence (*samadhana*). It is total freedom – blessedness.

One is in *Samadhi* or not is indicated by whether or not there is movement of thought in one’s mind. The unconditioned mind, in itself, is meditation, freedom and peace eternal. *Samadhi* is the state in which all the desires and hopes concerning the world have ceased, which is free from sorrow, fear and desire, and by which the self rests in itself. It is the state in which there is eternal satisfaction, clear perception of ‘what is’, egolessness, not being subject to the pairs of opposites, freed from anxiety and the urge of acquisition or rejection. The enlightened ones are forever in *Samadhi*, even though they engage themselves in the affairs of the world.

He who realizes that the whole universe is really nothing but Consciousness and remains quite calm is protected by the armour of the Brahman; he is happy.

Consciousness free from the limitations of the mind is known as the Inner Intelligence. It is the essential nature of no-mind. It is not tainted by the impurities of concepts and percepts. That is the Reality; that is Supreme Consciousness; that is the state known as the Supreme Self; and that is omniscience. That vision is not had when the wicked mind functions. Such consciousness does not give rise to the world-illusion and the cycle of world-appearance. When Consciousness realizes itself and abandons its self-limiting mental conditioning, the mind is freed from its colouring and rests in its essential nature, which is Consciousness. As the wave merges in the ocean and becomes one, and not different from it, the Consciousness abandons its objectivity and regains its absolute purity. When all external (material) and internal (notional) objects merge in Consciousness, there is pure being of Consciousness. This is the supreme vision, which the liberated sages attain.

The yogi who has attained the state beyond everything and remains always cool as the full moon is truly the Supreme Lord.

The state beyond everything is liberation or realization of the Infinite. It is attained when one arrives at the state of supreme peace after intelligent enquiry into the nature of the Self, and, after this, has brought about an inner awakening. *Kaivalya* or total freedom is the attainment of ‘pure being’ after all mental conditioning is transcended consciously, after thorough investigation, in the company and with the help of enlightened sages. The yogi who is liberated is truly one with the Supreme Lord.

He who reflects in his innermost heart upon the purport of the Upanisads dealing with the Brahman, and is not moved by joy and sorrow is not tormented by *samsara*.

Study of the Upanisads leads one on the way for liberation. By such study, intelligence becomes keen and is able to realize the Supreme. One in whom the spirit of enquiry is awake realizes the falsity of sense-pleasures and their objects. In the light of enquiry, there is the realization of the eternal and unchanging Reality. Such seeker is free from delusion and attachment. He does not seek any gain, nor does he spurn anything.

The surest sign of a man of the highest wisdom is that he is un-attracted by the pleasures of the world. In him even the subtle tendencies have ceased. When these tendencies are strong, there is bondage. When they have ceased, there is liberation and he is no more tormented by *samsara*.

Just as birds and beasts do not take shelter on a mountain on fire, so also evil thoughts never occur to a knower of the Brahman.

The seeker who rests his mind in the eternal is fully self-controlled and is, therefore, in peace. He sees that pain and pleasure chase and cancel each other. In that wisdom there is self-control and peace. One cannot rest one's mind in the eternal by rites and rituals, by pilgrimage or by acquisition of life. Such state is attained only by transcending the mind and by the cultivation of wisdom. The transcending of the mind with the resulting self-control is the fruit of wisdom. When the mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination and free from cravings of sense pleasure, it does not long for anything, nor does it reject anything. This is self-control or transcending the mind.

Wise men also make others angry, like foolish men. They do so only to test their ability to control their innate feelings.

Self-control is the best remedy for all physical and mental ills. One who is neither elated nor depressed by sense objects is self-controlled. One that is self-controlled is beyond the realm of emotions such as anger. Even when such person gets angry, it is only an outward manifestation. He continues to be a witness to his own emotion of anger to know the extent of self-control he has attained.

Just as the trembling caused by the illusion of the snake in the rope persists for sometime even after realizing that it is only a rope and no snake, so also the effect of illusion persists for a while even after getting rid of all delusions.

The conditioned mind alone is delusion - bondage; liberation is when the mind is unconditioned. The conditioning of the mind drops away when the Truth is clearly seen and realized. When the conditioning has ceased, one's consciousness is made supremely peaceful. 'The Self alone is all that is' is clear perception. "Conditioning and mind are mere words with no corresponding truth; when the truth is investigated, they cease to be meaningful" – this is clear perception. When this clear perception arises, there is

liberation. In essence, bondage is the craving for pleasure; its abandonment is liberation. It is attained by self-knowledge. It is part of nature that there is a time lag between the cessation of delusion and the attainment of liberation.

Just as a crystal is not stained by what is reflected in it, so also the knower of Truth is not really affected by the result of his acts.

One becomes unattached if one rises beyond joy and sorrow and, therefore, treats them alike, and if one is free from attraction, aversion and fear. One is unattached if one does not abandon the homogeneity of the Truth even while carrying on activities. The abandonment of attachment is itself liberation. One is no longer affected by the result of the activities undertaken in such state of non-attachment.

Even while he is intent on outward actions, the knower of Truth always remains an introvert, and is extremely calm like one asleep.

The knower of Truth is one whose mind is transcended or ceases to be when both happiness and unhappiness do not divert one from one's utter equanimity. Notions such as 'this I am', 'this I am not', etc do not arise in one thus limiting one's consciousness. When the very notions of calamity, poverty, elation, pride, dullness and excitement do not arise, one is liberated while living.

Liberation is but a synonym for pure mind, correct self-knowledge and a truly awakened state. The attainment of inner peace by total non-attachment to anything in the world is liberation.

The characteristic of the enlightened one is the purity of mind and the absence of craving even while one is at work.

Firmly convinced of non-duality and enjoying perfect mental peace, yogis go about their work seeing the world as if it were a dream.

Yogis realize that the world is as true in relation to the Brahman as the dream-city is true in relation to the experience of the waking consciousness. Just as a mountain is seen both inside the mirror and outside it, this world is both within Consciousness as solid matter and outside IT as its reflection. For them, the world and the Cosmic Consciousness are just synonyms. Ever established in the Cosmic Consciousness, yogis always see the world as if it were a dream.

Let death come to the knower of Truth today or at the end of aeons; he remains untarnished like gold buried in mire.

The knower of Truth is self-controlled. He attains self-control by transcending the mind and cultivating wisdom. His mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination and free from cravings of self-pleasure; it does not long for anything, nor

does it reject anything. This is true self-control. Such knower of Truth is unaffected either by life continued or death.

He may cast off his body at Kashi (Varanasi) or at the house of an outcaste. He, the desire-less one, is liberated at the very moment he attains knowledge of the Brahman.

To remain established in self-knowledge is liberation. The state of self-knowledge is that in which there is no mental agitation, desire, distraction and dullness of mind, egotism or perception of diversity.

Liberation arises when ignorance ceases through self-enquiry.

Liberation or realization of the Brahman is attained when one arrives at the state of supreme peace after intelligent enquiry into the nature of the Self, and, after this, has brought about an inner awakening. When one attains realization of the Brahman, one is liberated whether one casts off one's body at a holy place like Varanasi or at the house of an outcaste.

Oh Rama! To one, who is desire-less, the earth is the hoof-print of a cow, Mount Meru a small mound, space as little as contained in a casket and the three worlds a blade of grass.

Contentment is one way to attain liberation. To renounce all craving for what is not obtained unsought, and to be satisfied with what comes unsought without either elation or depression is contentment. As long as there is no contentment in the self, one is subjected to sorrow. With contentment in the self, the purity of one's heart blooms. One who attains contentment does not relish craving for sense-pleasures. No delight in this world is as sweet as contentment.

As long as one is contented, happiness and unhappiness do not divert one from one's equanimity. There do not arise in one notions of calamity, poverty, elation, pride, dullness and excitement. The objective world is irrelevant to one that is contented.

Like an empty vessel in space, the knower of Truth is empty both within and without, while at the same time is full within and without, like a vessel immersed in the ocean.

The characteristic of the enlightened one is the purity of mind and the absence of craving. He remains established ever in self-knowledge which is the state free from mental agitation, distraction, desire, egotism or perception of diversity. The mind of the enlightened one is transcended and is, therefore, as empty as a vessel in space. But he is full of wisdom and peace attained by self-control and is ever established in the Supreme Self. There is no duality for him and is one with the Infinite Consciousness. He is like a vessel immersed in the ocean that is full within and without as it is no different from the ocean.

He who neither likes nor dislikes the objects seen by him and who acts like one asleep is said to be a liberated person.

Conditioning of mind is responsible for the diversity in creatures and objects such as likes and dislikes. While dense conditioning is conducive to ignorance, attenuated conditioning is conducive to liberation.

The seeker who rests his mind in the eternal is fully self-controlled and is, therefore, in peace. He sees that pain and pleasure chase and cancel each other. In that wisdom there is self-control and peace. One cannot rest one's mind in the eternal by rites and rituals, by pilgrimage or by acquisition of life. Such state is attained only by transcending the mind and by the cultivation of wisdom. The transcending of the mind with the resulting self-control is the fruit of wisdom. When the mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination and free from cravings of sense pleasure, it does not long for anything, nor does it reject anything. This is self-control or transcending the mind. The one that is self-controlled is liberated. Such seeker may be considered asleep though awake.

He who is free from the knots (of desires) and whose doubts have been set at rest is liberated even when he is in the body (*jivan-mukta*). Although he may seem to be bound, he is free. He remains like a lamp in a picture.

The *jivan-mukta* state is that in which the saint has ceased to have any desires, as if he were in a state of deep sleep. He has always an inward eye even though he may perceive all things with his external eye and using his limbs in all directions. He does not wait for the future, nor remain in the present, nor remember the past. Though sleeping, he is awake and, though awake, he is asleep. He may be doing all kinds of actions externally, though he remains altogether unaffected by them internally. He is full of bliss and happiness and, therefore, appears to ordinary eyes to be an ordinary man; but in reality he has no delusion of being himself an active agent. He shows sympathetic interest in each person in his own way; he plays with a child, is serious with an old man, an enjoyable companion to a young man, sympathetic to a suffering man.

He who has easily cast off all his egoistic tendencies and has abandoned even the object of meditation is said to be liberated even when he is in the body (*jivan-mukta*).

A *jivan-mukta* is one who, while living an apparently normal life, experiences the whole world as emptiness. He is awake but enjoys the calmness of deep sleep. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain. He is awake in deep sleep, but never to this world. His wisdom is unclouded by latent tendencies. He appears to be subject to likes and dislikes, but is as free as space. He is totally free from egotism and volition. His intelligence is unattached whether in action or in inaction. He is afraid of none, nor is anyone afraid of him. He becomes the *videha-mukta* when, in due time, he drops his body.

He who does not , like a blind person, recognize his relatives, who dreads attachment as he would a serpent, who looks upon sense-enjoyments and diseases alike,

who regards the company of women as he would a blade of grass, and who finds no distinction between a friend and a foe, experiences happiness in this world and the next.

Attachment is the cause for this world-illusion; it alone creates objects. Attachment causes bondage and endless sorrow. Attachment makes the conditioning of the mind denser by repeatedly causing the experiences of pleasure and pain in relation to the existence and the non-existence of the objects of pleasure. The abandonment of attachment is itself liberation. One that is liberated, experiences happiness in this world and ever thereafter.

He who casts away from his mind all objects of perception and, attaining perfect quiescence, remains still as space, unaffected by sorrow, is a liberated man; he is the Supreme Lord.

Samadhi is a state in which one realizes the objects of the senses as ‘not-Self’ and thus enjoys calmness and tranquility within, all the time. Whether one is engaged in activity or lives in isolation, in enlightenment there is no distinction. When the mind is unconditioned, whatever action one does is non-action. The non-action of the mind is known as quiescence (*samadhana*). It is total freedom – blessedness. One, who attains quiescence, is liberated.

The noble-hearted man whose desires of the heart have come to an end is a liberated man. It does not matter whether he does or does not practise meditation or perform action.

There is no bondage other than craving for acquisition and the anxiety to avoid what one considers undesirable. The mind does not reach the state of utter tranquility till these two impulses of acquisition and rejection have been eliminated. As long as one feels that ‘this is real’ and ‘that is unreal’, etc, one’s mind does not experience peace and equilibrium. Desirelessness, fearlessness, unchanging steadiness, equanimity, wisdom, non-attachment, non-action, goodness, absence of perversion, gentleness, courage, endurance, friendliness, intelligence, pleasant speech are the natural qualities of one who is free from the instincts of acquisition and rejection. One who is liberated spontaneously possesses these qualities.

The idea of Self in the non-Self is bondage. Abandonment of it is liberation. There is neither bondage nor liberation for the ever-free Self.

The Self is the intelligence dwelling in the body. IT is the universe, though the universe is not the Self. IT is pure intelligence. The Cosmic Intelligence in which the universe, as it were, ceases to be, is the Self. In IT the subject-object relationship appears to have ceased, as such. IT is the void in which the universe appears to exist. Only if one is firmly established in the unreality of the universe like the blueness of the sky, can the Self be realized. Only when the creation is known to be utterly non-existent is the Self realized. The Self is infinite, ever-free and omniscient. There is neither bondage nor liberation for the ever-free Self.

If, by perceiving that the objects of perception do not really exist, the mind is completely freed from those objects, there ensues the supreme bliss of liberation.

The Creator is the Intelligence (Consciousness) that supports the entire universe. Every thought that arises in that Intelligence gives rise to a form. Though all these forms are of the nature of pure Intelligence, on account of self-forgetfulness of this nature and of the thought of physical forms, they freeze into physical forms. This is similar to ghosts, though formless, seen to have forms on account of the perceiver's delusion.

The materiality of the creation is like the castle in the air, an illusory projection of one's mind – imaginary.

Cosmic Consciousness alone exists ever. That Consciousness reflected in Itself appears to be creation. Even as the unreal nightmare produces real results, this world-creation seems to give rise to a sense of reality in a state of ignorance.

If one thus realizes that what one perceives is not real but imaginary, is one liberated as one is freed from attachment to the objects of perception.

Abandonment of all latent tendencies is said to be the real liberation, by the wise; that is also the faultless method of attaining liberation.

The pure mind alone is free from latent tendencies and, therefore, it attains self-knowledge. That mind is pure in which all cravings are in a state of quiescence. Whatever such pure mind wishes materializes. As the entire universe is within the mind, the notions of bondage and liberation are also within it. One should constantly direct the mind towards liberation through self-effort. An uncontrolled mind is the source of sorrow. But when renunciation arises out of the fullness of understanding, of wisdom born of enquiry into the nature of the mind, the renunciation leads to supreme bliss. One is liberated.

Liberation is not on the other side of the sky; nor is it in the nether world, nor on the earth. The extinction of the mind resulting from the eradication of all desires is itself liberation.

When objectivity arises in one's consciousness, one becomes conditioned and limited. That is bondage. When objectivity is abandoned, one becomes mindless. That is liberation. When one thinks 'I am the *Jiva*', etc the mind arises and with it the bondage. When one thinks 'I am the Self; the *Jiva* and such other things do not exist', the mind ceases and with it arises liberation.

Oh Rama! There is no intellect, no nescience, no mind and no individual soul (*Jiva*). They are all imagined in the Brahman.

The Brahman or the Self alone is the reality in all beings as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots. As wind and its movement are not different,

Consciousness and its internal movement (energy) that causes all these manifestations are not different.

The Infinite, which is without beginning and end, exists as pure experiencing consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe, which is its body, as it were. There is no other substance known as the intellect, nor is there an outside or void, nor nescience, nor mind, nor individual soul. The essence of existence is pure experiencing, which is, therefore, the essence of Consciousness. Just as liquidity exists inseparable from water or any other liquid, Consciousness and unconsciousness exist together. Since there is neither a contradiction nor a division in Consciousness, it is self-evident. It is, therefore, inappropriate to associate the created universe with the Brahman, and to associate the inert with the Infinite Consciousness. The creation, which is of infinite form, is the self-reflection of the Brahman. It is the Brahman, which knows Itself as the universe and appears to be such.

To one who is established in what is infinite, pure consciousness, bliss and unqualified non-duality, where is the question of bondage or liberation, seeing that there is no second entity?

The wise declare that the mind of the enlightened one is neither in a state of bliss nor devoid of bliss, neither is in motion nor static, neither real nor unreal, but between these pairs of opposites. His unconditioned consciousness blissfully plays its role in this world-appearance as if in a play. He does not even entertain the notion of liberation, or that of bondage. He sees the Self alone.

Oh Rama! The mind has by its own activity bound itself. When it is calm it is free. Consciousness free from the limitations of the mind is known as the Inner Intelligence. It is the essential nature of no-mind. It is not tainted by the impurities of concepts and percepts. That is the Reality; that is Supreme Consciousness; that is the state known as the Supreme Self; and that is omniscience. That vision is not had when the wicked mind functions. Such consciousness does not give rise to the world-illusion and the cycle of world-appearance. When Consciousness realizes itself and abandons its self-limiting mental conditioning, the mind is freed from its colouring and rests in its essential nature, which is Consciousness. When all external (material) and internal (notional) objects merge in Consciousness, there is pure being of Consciousness. This is the supreme vision, which the liberated sages attain.

4. Transcendence of the Mind

Consciousness, which is undivided, imagines to itself desirable objects and runs after them. It is then known as the mind.

The pure Infinite Consciousness appears to become whatever forms It takes whenever It manifests Itself. The mountains, the forests, the earth, the celestial bodies in the cosmos are all but Infinite Consciousness. When the Infinite Consciousness in the form of life breath enters into bodies and begins to vibrate various parts, it is said that those bodies are living. It is a small part of the Infinite Consciousness that becomes the intelligence in these bodies. This intelligence, entering into these bodies, brings into being the different physical organs like the eyes, different non-physical categories such as mind.

Everything in the world is dependent upon the mind, upon one's mental attitude. On examination, the mind itself appears to be unreal. But we are bewitched by it. With mind controlling our activity, we seem to be running after mirage.

From the omnipresent and the omnipotent Supreme Self arose, like ripples in water, the power of imagining separate objects.

It is the intelligence, which is part of the Infinite Consciousness that fancies itself differently in different objects. When it fancies itself to be a rock, a tree, a bird, an animal, a human being, etc, it becomes so. The Infinite Consciousness is present everywhere and permeates equally; there is no distinction between the sentient and the insentient, and between the intelligent and the inert. The differences in the objective world are only due to the intelligence identifying itself as different substances. The same Infinite Consciousness is known by different names in these different substances.

Just as fire born out of wind is extinguished by the same wind, so also that which is born of imagination is destroyed by imagination itself.

Nescience is not a real entity, even as oil in sand is not a real entity. Nescience and the Self can have no relationship, as relationship is possible only between similar entities. This is obvious in everybody's experience. Thus, it is only because Consciousness is infinite and all pervasive that everything in the universe becomes knowable. It is not as if the subject illumines the object which has no luminosity of its own. But since Consciousness is all this, everything is self-luminous, without requiring a perceiving intelligence. It is by the action of Consciousness becoming aware of Itself that intelligence manifests itself, not when Consciousness apprehends an inert object.

The mind has come into existence through imagination on account of forgetfulness. Like the experience of one's own death in a dream, it ceases to exist when scrutinized.

Mind is only perception, and perception is movement in consciousness. The expression of this movement is action, and fruition follows it. Whatever the mind thinks of, the organs of action strive to materialize. As such, mind is action. However, mind, intellect, egotism, etc are only concepts that are conceived to exist in the Infinite Consciousness when the Infinite Consciousness, in a moment of forgetfulness, views Itself as the object of perception.

Mind constantly swings like a pendulum between the reality and the appearance, and between consciousness and inertness. When the mind contemplates the inert objects for a considerable time, it assumes the characteristics of such inertness. When the same mind is devoted to enquiry and wisdom, it shakes off all conditioning and returns to its original nature as Pure Consciousness.

The idea of Self in what is not the Self is due to incorrect understanding. The idea of reality in what is unreal, oh Rama, know that to be the mind.

It is the ignorant self-limiting tendency of the mind that views the Infinite as the finite. As the sun dispels mist, enquiry into the nature of the Self dispels this ignorant self-limiting tendency. The mind seeks the Self in order to dissolve itself in the Self. This realization arises in the mind when it itself is stilled and transcended.

Ideas such as ‘This is he’, ‘I am this’, ‘That is mine’ constitute the mind; the mind disappears when one ponders over these false ideas.

When the mind entertains notions of objects, there is agitation or movement in the mind. When there are no objects or ideas, then there is no movement of thought in the mind. When there is movement, then the world appears to be. When one does not see the Truth, there are the feelings of ‘I am’, ‘this is mine’, etc. When there is no movement in the mind, there is cessation of world-appearance. The mind itself is transcended.

It is the nature of the mind to accept certain things and to reject others; this is bondage, nothing else.

Ignorance arises when craving envelops the mind-stuff. This craving dries up the good and noble qualities of the mind and heart. It makes one hard and cruel. It is this craving that is responsible for bondage and misfortune. It breaks the heart of man and creates delusion in him. Caught in its whirlpool, man is unable to enjoy the pleasures that are within his reach. Though it appears that the craving is for happiness, it leads neither to happiness nor to fruitfulness in this life. This is nothing but bondage.

The mind is the creator of the world; the mind is the individual person; only that which is done by the mind is regarded as done, not that which is done by the body. The arm with which one embraces one’s wife is the very arm with which one embraces one’s daughter.

Creation of the mind is but agitation in Infinite Consciousness. And the world exists in the mind. It seems to exist because of imperfect vision, imperfect understanding.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world.

One beholds with physical eyes only such objects as have been created by one in one's own mind, and nothing else. Whatever appears in one's consciousness seems to come into being, gets established and bears fruit. Such is the power of the mind. A person is made of whatever is firmly established as the truth of his being in his own mind, and he is nothing else.

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. When the mind confidently engages in self-effort, whenever it strives, it surely finds the fruition of its striving. On the other hand, the physical body is only physical matter. Yet the mind deems it as its own.

It is the mind that creates the body by mere thoughts, just as the potter makes a pot out of clay. It creates new bodies and brings about the destruction of what exists, and all this is by mere wish. Within mind exist the faculties of delusion or hallucination, dreaming and irrational thought. It creates the appearance of the body within itself. But in ignorance, one sees the physical body in gross physical vision as different from and independent of the mind.

In all the experiences of happiness and unhappiness, as also in all the hallucinations and imaginations, it is mind that does everything and experiences everything. It is the performer of all actions. The body and the mind are non-different, being mind alone.

The mind is the cause of the objects of perception. The three worlds depend upon it. When it is dissolved, the world is also dissolved. It is to be cured (purified) with self-effort.

External objects like space, psychological factors like 'I', etc exist only in mind. In reality, neither the objective universe, nor the perceiving self, nor perception as such, nor void, nor inertness exists; only One is. IT is cosmic Infinite Consciousness (*cit*). It is the mind that conjures up the diversity, the diverse actions and experiences, the notion of bondage and the desire for liberation. When the mind is transcended with self-effort, the objective universe dissolves into its source; it vanishes.

The mind is bound by the latent impressions (*vasanas*). When there are no impressions, it is free. Therefore, oh Rama, bring about quickly, through discrimination, the state in which there are no impressions.

Mind is the individualized consciousness with its own manifold potentialities, even as spices have taste in them. That consciousness is the subtle or ethereal body. When it becomes gross, it appears to be a physical or material body. That individualized consciousness itself is known as the *Jiva* or the individual soul when the potentialities are in an extremely subtle state. When the *Jiva* sheds its individuality, it shines as the Supreme Being.

Even as an error of the past can be rectified and turned into good action by self-effort today, the habits of the past and the corresponding impressions (*samskaras*) can be overcome by appropriate self-effort. However, the notion of the *Jiva*-hood can be overcome only by the attainment of liberation.

Self-effort, which is not in accord with the scriptures, is motivated by delusion. When the desired result of self-effort is not there, one should examine if there is such deluded action. If so, it needs to be corrected. There is no power greater than right action in the present. One is, therefore, to take recourse to self-effort to overcome evil by good and fate by present effort.

Just as a streak of cloud stains (or appears to stain) the moon, or a blotch of ink a lime-plastered wall, so also the evil spirit of desire stains the inner man.

There is no bondage other than craving for acquisition and the anxiety to avoid what one considers undesirable. The mind does not reach the state of utter tranquility till these two impulses of acquisition and rejection have been eliminated. As long as one feels that 'this is real' and 'that is unreal', etc, one's mind does not experience peace and equilibrium. The desire for acquisition or avoidance is the result of attachment to the perceived objects. Attachment is the cause for this world-illusion; it alone creates objects. Attachment causes bondage and endless sorrow. The abandonment of attachment is itself liberation.

Oh Rama! He who, with mind transcended, offers all the three worlds, like dried grass, as an oblation in the fire of knowledge, becomes free from the illusions of the mind.

The firm conviction that 'I am not the Absolute Brahman' binds the mind. The mind is liberated by the firm conviction that 'Everything is the Absolute Brahman. The objective world is transient and unreal.' Ideas and thoughts are bondage. Their transcendence is liberation. As thought or idea 'sees' blueness in the sky the mind sees the world as real. The mind transcended sees the Absolute Brahman as the only Reality.

To remain established in self-knowledge is liberation. The state of self-knowledge is that in which there is no mental agitation, distraction and dullness of mind, egotism or perception of diversity. This is the state of the mind transcended.

Liberation arises when ignorance ceases through self-enquiry and discrimination.

When one knows the real truth about acceptance and rejection and does not think of anything, but abides in oneself, abandoning everything, one's mind is transcended.

The fictitious moment of energy in Consciousness is known as mind. The expressions of the mind are thoughts and ideas. A small part of the Consciousness in the heart is known as the finite intelligence or individualized consciousness. This converts into the thinking faculty, abetted by the ego-sense, with acceptance and rejection as its inherent tendencies. The mind appears to be intelligent and active only because of the inner light of the individualized consciousness.

The mind has no self, no body, no support and no form. Yet by this mind is everything consumed in this world. This is indeed a great mystery.

Consciousness minus conceptualization is the eternal Brahman. Consciousness plus conceptualization is thought. When the mind is transcended and is in the state of thoughtlessness, it is only consciousness, and one with the eternal Brahman.

The mind is terrible (*ghoram*) in the waking state, gentle (*santam*) in the dream state, dull (*mudham*) in deep sleep and dead when not in any of these three states.

In the waking state, the mind flits in all directions all the time and is unable to find happiness anywhere. Like the lion in a cage, the mind is ever restless, having lost its freedom. It is never happy with its present state.

The mind is able to create different states of consciousness such as waking, dreaming and deep-sleep. It experiences what it itself constructs. It is no more than what has been put together by thought. The dream and deep sleep states arise the way the mind constructs them. Towards whichever object the mind flows with intensity, in that it sees the fulfillment of its craving. Of course, there is no mind without restlessness; restlessness is the very nature of the mind. It is the work of the restlessness of the mind based on the Infinite Consciousness that appears as this world.

The fourth (*turiya*) state of consciousness is beyond the three states of human consciousness. This is the state attained when the mind is transcended.

Just as the powder of the *kataka* seed, after precipitating the dirt in water, becomes merged in water, so also the mind itself, when transcended, merges in the Self.

It is the ignorant self-limiting tendency of the mind that views the Infinite as the finite. As the sun dispels mist, enquiry into the nature of the Self dispels this ignorant self-limiting tendency. The mind seeks the Self in order to dissolve itself in the Self. This indeed is the very nature of the mind. This is its supreme goal.

The mind is *samsara*; the mind is also said to be bondage; the body is activated by the mind just as a tree is shaken by the wind.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world.

When objectivity arises in one's consciousness, one becomes conditioned and limited. The conditioned mind alone is bondage; liberation is when the mind is unconditioned.

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. The physical body is only physical matter. The mind deems the physical body as its own. The mind experiences what it contemplates, through the body.

Conquer your mind first by pressing the palm with the palm, grinding the teeth with the teeth and twisting the limbs with the limbs.

The very best intelligent means by which the mind can be subdued is complete freedom from desire, hope or expectation in regard to all objects at all times. Just as there is no harvest without sowing, the mind is not subdued without persistent practice. The practice is of renunciation. No one can reach the state of total dispassion without persistent practice.

Does not the fool feel ashamed to move about in the world as he pleases and talk about meditation when he is not able to conquer even the mind?

The unconditioned mind, in itself, is meditation, freedom and peace eternal. *Samadhi* or meditation or contemplation is the state in which all the desires and hopes concerning the world have ceased, which is free from sorrow, fear and desire, and by which the self rests in itself. It is the state in which there is eternal satisfaction, clear perception of 'what is', egolessness, not being subject to the pairs of opposites, freed from anxiety and the urge of acquisition or rejection. Unless one's mind is unconditioned and transcended, one cannot be considered to be ever in meditation.

The only god to be conquered is the mind. Its conquest leads to the attainment of everything. Without its conquest all other efforts are fruitless.

The mind is conquered or transcended, or ceases to be when both happiness and unhappiness do not divert a man from his utter equanimity, when the notions 'this I am', 'this I am not', etc do not arise in him thus limiting his consciousness. When the very notions of calamity, poverty, elation, pride, dullness and excitement do not arise, one is liberated while living.

Liberation is but a synonym for pure mind, correct self-knowledge and a truly awakened state. It is the attainment of inner peace by total non-attachment to anything in the world.

To be unperturbed is the foundation of blessedness. One attains liberation by it. To human beings, even the conquest of the three worlds, without the conquest of the mind, is as insignificant as a blade of grass.

When the mind is unconditioned, whatever action one does is non-action. The non-action of the mind is known as quiescence (*samadhana*). It is total freedom-blessedness.

As long as the mind is not conquered or transcended, it is not free of delusion. Even the conquest of the world does bring no solace or happiness or blessedness in the absence of transcendence of mind.

Association with the wise, abandonment of latent impressions, self-enquiry and control of breathing are the means of conquering the mind.

Knowledge of the Self, company of holy men, the abandonment of conditioning and the restraint of *prana* are the means to overcome the mind. Self-knowledge is not within the reach of the senses. It arises when the senses are transcended. Transcendence of the mind follows.

One acquires victory over mind with the aid of one's own self-effort when one attains self-knowledge and abandons the craving for what the mind desires as pleasure. By intense self-effort it is possible to gain victory over the mind. Then, without the least effort, the individualized consciousness – the mind is absorbed in the Infinite Consciousness. Only by self-effort and self-knowledge, one is to make one's mind no-mind.

To one who is shod with leather, the earth is as good as covered with leather. Even so to the pure mind which is undivided consciousness, the world overflows with nectar.

The pure mind is free from latent tendencies and, therefore, it attains self-knowledge. It is no other than undivided consciousness. That mind is pure in which all cravings are in a state of quiescence. Whatever such pure mind wishes materializes.

As the entire universe is within the mind, the notions of bondage and liberation are also within it. One should constantly direct the mind towards liberation through self-effort. An uncontrolled mind is the source of sorrow. But when renunciation arises out of the fullness of understanding, of wisdom born of enquiry into the nature of the mind, the renunciation leads to supreme bliss.

The mind becomes bound by thinking 'I am not the Brahman'; it becomes released by thinking 'I am the Brahman'.

The firm conviction that 'I am not the Brahman' binds the mind. The mind is liberated by the firm conviction that 'I am the Brahman'. Ideas and thoughts are bondage.

Their transcendence is liberation. As thought or idea sees blueness in the sky, the mind sees the world as real. The mind transcended sees the Absolute Brahman as the only Reality.

When the mind is transcended there is no perception of duality or unity. What remains is the Supreme Brahman, peaceful, eternal and free from misery.

When the mind perceives duality, then there is both duality and its counterpart unity. When the mind drops the perception of duality, there is neither duality nor unity. The mind, in that state, is free of delusion when it becomes devoid of all attachment, when the pairs of opposites do not sway it, when it is not attracted to objects and when it is totally independent of all supports. This is the state of Supreme Consciousness – the Supreme Brahman, peaceful, eternal and blessed.

There is nothing to equal the supreme joy felt by a person of pure mind who has attained the state of Pure Consciousness and overcome death.

When the mind is transcended or ceases to be, purity and noble qualities arise. The existence of such purity in a liberated sage is known as *sattva*. This state of the mind is called ‘death of the mind where form remains’.

The death of the mind where even the form vanishes pertains to the disembodied sage. In the case of such a mind, no trace is left. In it there are neither qualities nor their absence, neither virtues nor their absence, neither light nor darkness, neither existence nor non-existence, neither conditioning nor notions, etc. It is a state of supreme quiescence and equilibrium. This is the state of *Nirvana*, the state of supreme peace.

5. The Latent Impressions

Oh Rama! The enquiry into the Self of the nature of ‘Who am I?’ is the fire which burns up the seeds of the evil tree which is the mind.

None of the objects in the world is meant to give happiness to anyone. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world. Wealth, pleasure, all sense-objects are the playthings of egotism. Only the man of self-knowledge is free from this delusion. He who is free from egotism and not swayed by craving for sense-pleasure can alone be happy.

Just as the wind does not affect the creepers in a picture, so also afflictions do not affect one whose understanding is fortified by firmness and always reflected in the mirror of enquiry.

Liberation or realization of the Infinite is attained when one arrives at the state of supreme peace after intelligent enquiry into the nature of the Self, and, after this, has brought about an inner awakening. *Kaivalya* or total freedom is the attainment of ‘pure being’ after all mental conditioning is transcended consciously, after thorough investigation, in the company and with the help of enlightened sages.

The knowers of Truth declare that enquiry into the truth of the Self is knowledge. What is to be known is contained in IT like sweetness in milk.

What is ‘Truth’? ‘I have nothing to do with sorrow, with actions, with delusion or desire. I am at peace, free from sorrow. I am the Brahman’ – such is the Truth. ‘I am free from all defects; I am the All; I do not seek anything nor do I abandon anything; I am the Brahman’ – such is the Truth. ‘I am Consciousness; I am the Brahman’ – such is the Truth. ‘I am the entire space; I am the Brahman’ – such is the Truth. ‘I am the Consciousness in which all things are strung and through whose power all beings engage themselves in all their activities; I am the essence of all things’ – such is the Truth. ‘All things exist in the Brahman; all things flow from IT; all things are the Brahman; IT is omnipresent; IT is the One Self; IT is the Truth’- such is the Truth.

“Even as the taste of the juice of sugarcane cultivated in a hundred fields is uniform and the same, so the Consciousness indwelling all beings is the same – that Consciousness I am. I am that Conscious Energy (*cit-sakti*) which is larger than the universe and yet subtler than the minutest sub-atomic particle and, therefore, invisible. I am the Consciousness that exists everywhere like butter in milk, and whose very nature is experiencing. That Consciousness is the Reality that bestows the individual characteristic on each and every substance of the universe. IT is continuous and homogenous in waking, dreaming, deep-sleep and the transcendental states of consciousness. It is devoid of desire and ego-sense, and is indivisible”. Established in the realization of this Truth, the great sages have lived forever in peace and equanimity.

The Truth which is omnipresent and which is pure Consciousness devoid of objectivity is referred to variously as Consciousness, Self, The Brahman, Existence, Truth, Order and also Pure-knowledge. IT is pure and in Its light all beings know their own self.

To one who has realized the Self by enquiry, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are objects of compassion.

The Self is the reality in all, and infinite. IT is the eternal light that shines in the sun, the moon and the fire, but independent of them all. IT illumines all from within. IT alone is the intelligence that indwells all sentient and insentient beings, and preserves them. It indwells all perceived objects in the cosmos. From the ordinary point of view, the Self is considered Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector and Siva the overlord of all. But from the absolute point of view, in reality, being the self of all, IT has no such limited role. IT is the All.

To one who is fond of enquiry into ‘What is this vast universe?’ and ‘Who am I?’ this world becomes quite unreal.

In the waking state there is no materiality in the objects seen in a dream, though, while dreaming, the objects appear to be solid. The dream-like appearance is yet true during the period of the dream itself. Similarly, the world-appearance is but a long dream. This world, therefore, appears to be material, though in reality it is all Pure Consciousness.

The world can be said both real and unreal. It is real because of the reality of Consciousness and unreal because the world does not exist as world, independent of Consciousness. This world is both within Consciousness as solid matter and outside it as its reflection. The world and the Cosmic Consciousness are just synonyms. The existence of Consciousness cannot be denied, as it is a matter of experience.

The world is as true in relation to the Brahman as the dream-city is to the waking consciousness.

Just as in a mirage the idea of water does not occur to one who knows it, even so latent impressions do not rise in one whose ignorance has been destroyed by realizing that everything is the Brahman.

The *samskaras* (tendencies, impressions) brought forward from the previous lives are of two kinds. The pure ones lead one to liberation and the impure ones keep one in bondage. One is Pure Consciousness oneself, not inert physical matter. One is not impelled to action by anything other than oneself. It is open to one to strengthen the pure latent tendencies in preference to the impure ones. This amounts to conscious abandonment of latent impure impressions. That is the reason why the holy men advise that one shall tread consciously the path that leads to the eternal good. The wise seeker knows that the fruit of his endeavor is always commensurate with the intensity of his self-

effort. Fate or destiny or god does not ordain it otherwise. The seeker is, therefore, to endeavor for his true good – his salvation by a keen and intelligent study of the scriptures, by having the company of the holy ones and by right self-effort.

By the abandonment of latent impressions or by the control of breathing, mind ceases to be the mind. Practise whichever you like.

In a living organism, *prana* is the energy that circulates in energy channels known as *nadis*. In accordance with its diverse functions in the body, it is also known as *apana*, etc. This *prana* is indistinguishably united with the mind. In fact, mind is the consciousness that tends towards thinking on account of the movement of *prana*. Movement of thought in the mind arises from the movement of *prana*. And the movement of *prana* arises because of the movement of thought in consciousness. They thus form a cycle of mutual dependence, like waves and movement of currents in water. The wise, therefore, declare that by the restraint of the *prana*, the mind becomes quiescent. The movement of *prana* is arrested with the cessation of the movement of thought in the mind. Thus, by the abandonment of latent impressions or by the control of breathing, mind ceases to be and is transcended.

Oh Pure Soul! Cherish the association of sages and true scriptures; you will attain the state of Supreme Consciousness not in the course of months but days.

The company of holy and enlightened persons – *satsanga* is a way to liberation. Such company enlarges one's intelligence and discrimination, and destroys one's ignorance and psychological distress. It is the light that guides one on the path of spiritual enlightenment.

The constant company of holy ones rises wisdom in one concerning what is worth seeking and what is to be avoided. This leads to pure wish to attain liberation, which in turn leads to serious enquiry based on the true scriptures. Then the mind becomes subtle, because this enquiry thins out mental conditioning. As a result of the rising of pure wisdom, one's consciousness moves in the reality. Then the mental conditioning vanishes leading to non-attachment. Bondage to actions and their fruits ceases. The vision is firmly established in Truth as the apprehension of the unreal is weakened. Living this way, one is fully liberated, transcending all the lower states in no time.

Latent impressions cease to be active when one associates with sages, discards all thoughts of *samsara* and remembers that the body has to die.

Satsanga – the company of holy men is the best companion. This leads the seeker to attain the supreme good – liberation.

Oh Raghava! Even ignorant persons convert, by the firmness of their conviction, poison into nectar and nectar into poison.

To an immature and ignorant person who is confirmed in his conviction that this world is real, it continues to be real. He who sees the objective world does not see the Infinite Consciousness, which alone is true. For him the ego-sense and the fancy of the objects of the world are real, though they are no more real than the dream objects.

When this body is taken to be real, it serves the purpose of a body. But when it is seen to be unreal, it becomes like space (not material).

It is the mind that creates the body by mere thoughts, just as the potter makes a pot out of clay. It creates new bodies and brings about the destruction of what exists, and all this is by mere wish. Within mind exist the faculties of delusion or hallucination, dreaming and irrational thought. It creates the appearance of the body within itself. But in ignorance, one sees the physical body in gross physical vision as different from and independent of the mind.

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. It is only physical matter. Whenever the mind strives, it surely finds the fruition of its striving. The mind deems the body as its own. The mind experiences only what it contemplates. When the mind considers the body physical and useful for a purpose, the body becomes a tool for achievement of the purpose. If the mind considers it ethereal, it is no longer physical or material for the mind. If the mind turns towards the Truth, it abandons its identification with the body and attains the supreme state. Hence the seeker is to endeavor with the mind to make the mind take to the pure path.

Oh Rama! While lying on a soft bed, you wander about in all directions with a dream body; but in the waking state, where is that body?

In the waking state there is no materiality in the objects seen in a dream, though, while dreaming, the objects appear to be solid. This dream-like appearance is yet true during the period of the dream. Similarly, the world-appearance is but a long dream. This world, therefore, appears to be material, though in reality, it is all Pure Consciousness.

Just as a respectable man avoids contact with an outcaste woman carrying dog's flesh, so also one should discard the thought 'I am the body', even if everything were to be lost.

The firm conviction that 'I am the body' binds the mind. The mind is liberated by the firm conviction that 'everything is the Absolute Brahman'. Ideas and thoughts are bondage. Their transcendence is liberation. As thought or idea sees blueness in the sky, the differentiating mind sees the world as real. The mind transcended sees the Absolute Brahman as the only Reality.

When the aspirant thinks only of the Brahman, and remains calm and free from sorrow, his egoity dies of itself.

All suffering revolves around egotism. Egotism is the sole cause of mental distress. Spreading the net of worldly objects of pleasure, it is the egotism that traps the living beings.

Indeed all the terrible calamities in this world are born of egotism. Egotism eclipses self-control, destroys virtue and dissipates equanimity. When one is under the influence of egotism, one is unhappy. Free from egotism, one is ever happy.

Egotism is quietened by constant practice – *abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* is thinking of ‘That’ alone, speaking of ‘That’, conversing of ‘That’ with one another and utter dedication to ‘That’ alone. When one’s intellect is filled with beauty and bliss, when one’s vision is broad and when passion for sensual enjoyment is absent in one, then that is *abhyasa* or practice. When one is firmly established in the conviction that this universe has never been created and, therefore, it does not exist as such, and when thoughts like ‘this is the world’, ‘I am pleased’, etc do not arise at all in one, then that is *abhyasa* or practice. In such state one is beyond attraction and repulsion and, as such, egotism. One will have attained true wisdom. This is the practice of the yoga of true wisdom by means of which one gets established in the Brahman.

If one realizes the unity of things everywhere, one always remains tranquil, inwardly cool and pure like space without the sense of ‘I’.

When the mind perceives duality, then there is both duality and its counterpart unity. When the mind drops the perception of duality, there is neither duality nor unity. In this state, the mind is free of delusion when it becomes devoid of all attachment, when the pairs of opposites do not sway it, when it is not attracted to objects and when it is totally independent of all supports. This is the state of Pure Consciousness, one with the Brahman.

If inwardly one is cool, the whole world will be cool. But if inwardly one is agitated, the whole world will be a burning mass.

The seeker is no other than the *Jiva* in Consciousness. How does the *Jiva* perceive the objects outside? On account of the notion of ‘I am’, consciousness abides as *Jiva* in the body. When its senses descend upon similar bodies outside itself, there is contact between the two and there is a desire to know and to become one with them. When there is this contact, the object is reflected within itself and the *Jiva* perceives this reflection, though it believes that the reflection is outside. The *Jiva* knows only this reflection, which means it knows itself. This contact is the cause of the perception of the external objects. If the consciousness within is tranquil and placid, the whole perceived world is tranquil and placid. If the consciousness within is agitated, the perceived world is no different.

6. Meditation

I, the pure, stainless and infinite Consciousness, beyond *maya*, look upon this body in action like the body of another.

Just as water remains water and flows down, and as fire does not abandon its nature of rising up, consciousness remains forever consciousness. To the enlightened person, there is only one Infinite Consciousness. The notions that 'I am', 'these are', etc do not exist for one. The enlightened person knows no difference between his body and that of another.

The mind, the intellect, the senses, etc are all the play of Consciousness. They are unreal and seem to exist only owing to lack of insight.

To an immature and ignorant person who is confirmed in his conviction that this world is real, it continues to be real. He who sees the objective world does not see the Infinite Consciousness, which alone is true. The ego-sense and the fancy of the objects of the world are as real as the dream objects. The sole reality is the Infinite Consciousness, which is omnipresent, pure, tranquil and omnipotent whose being is the Absolute Consciousness, which is not an object and, therefore, not knowable. Wherever this Consciousness manifests in whatever manner It chooses, It is 'That'. The mind, the intellect, the senses, etc are but the play of Consciousness. Because the substratum – the Infinite Consciousness is real, all that is based on It acquires reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. As for the objects, the reality is relative. This relative reality is like the reality of the dream objects.

Unmoved by adversity, a friend of the entire world in prosperity, without ideas of existence and non-existence, I live free from misery.

Whatever the mind does alone is action. Hence the mind alone is the doer of actions, and not the body. The mind alone is the world-appearance, which arises and rests in it. When the experiencing mind becomes tranquil, consciousness alone remains. This is the state of Pure Consciousness – the mind transcended.

The wise declare that the mind of the enlightened is neither in a state of bliss nor devoid of bliss, neither is in motion nor static, neither real nor unreal, but between these pairs of opposites. His unconditioned consciousness blissfully plays its role in this world-appearance as if in a play. He does not even entertain the notion of liberation, or that of bondage. He sees the Self alone.

Inactive am I, desire-less, clear as the sky, free from hankering, tranquil, formless, ever-lasting and unmoving.

The Self, being infinite, moves not though moving, and yet is forever established in every atom of existence. The Self does not go, nor does IT ever come, for where can the Self go when All That Is, is within IT? If a pot is taken from one place to another, the

space within does not move from one place to the other, for everything is forever in space.

I have now clearly understood that the five elements, the three worlds and I myself are Pure Consciousness.

The pure Infinite Consciousness appears to become whatever forms It takes whenever It manifests Itself. The mountains, the forests, the earth, the elements, the celestial bodies in the cosmos are all but Infinite Consciousness. When the Infinite Consciousness in the form of life breath enters into bodies and begins to vibrate various parts, it is said that those bodies are living. It is a small part of the Infinite Consciousness that becomes the intelligence in these bodies.

It is this intelligence, which is part of the Infinite Consciousness that fancies itself differently in different objects. When it fancies itself to be a rock, a tree, a bird, an animal, a human being, an element, a celestial body, etc, it becomes so. The Infinite Consciousness is present everywhere and permeates equally; there is no distinction between the sentient and the insentient, and between the intelligent and the inert. The differences in the objective world are only due to the intelligence identifying itself as different substances. The same Infinite Consciousness is known by different names in these different substances.

I am above everything; I am present everywhere; I am that which exists; I am unable to say anything beyond this.

The homogenous mass of Cosmic Consciousness does not give rise to anything other than what is its essence. Consciousness never becomes unconsciousness. Even if there is modification, that, too, is Consciousness. Hence, whatever there may be, wherever and in whatever form – all is the Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness. Everything exists forever in the potential state in the mass of homogenous Consciousness.

The Brahman or the Self or the Consciousness alone is the reality in all beings as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots. As wind and its movement are not different, Consciousness and Its internal movement (energy) that causes all these manifestations are not different.

Let imaginary waves of universe rise or fall in Me who am the ocean of Infinite Consciousness; there is no increase or decrease in me.

In the seed, there is no diversity. However, there is a notion of potential diversity of leaves, flowers, fruits, etc supposedly present in the seed. Even so, Cosmic Consciousness is one devoid of diversity. Yet the universe of diversity is said to exist potentially in the said Consciousness.

As in the tangible ocean, tangible waves are seen, in the formless Brahman, the world also exists without form. From the Infinite, the Infinite emerges and exists in It as the Infinite. The illusory world-appearance in the Infinite Consciousness makes no difference to It.

How wonderful that, in Me, the infinite ocean of Consciousness, waves of *Jiva* (individual souls) rise, sport for a while and disappear according to their nature.

In the mirror of Infinite Consciousness are seen countless reflections, which constitute appearance of the world. These are the *Jiva*. Each *Jiva* is like a little agitation on the surface of the ocean of the Brahman. When, in that slight agitation, the infinitude of the Infinite Consciousness is veiled, limitation of consciousness appears to arise. This, too, is inherent in that Infinite Consciousness. That limitation of consciousness is known as *Jiva*. This limitation of consciousness when it is fed by latent tendencies and memories condenses into egotism – ‘I’-ness. This ‘I’-ness is not a solid reality. But the *Jiva* sees it as real, like the blueness of the sky. When the egotism entertains its own notions, it gives rise to the mind-stuff, the concept of an independent and separate *Jiva*, mind, *Maya* or cosmic illusion, cosmic nature, etc. These countless *Jiva* arise, sport for a while, disappear and re-arise in the Infinite Consciousness in a cycle without end.

The world which has come into existence on account of my ignorance has dissolved likewise in Me. I now directly experience the world as supreme bliss of Consciousness.

It may be that the world appearance is real so far as it is the manifestation of Consciousness and because of direct experience. It may be that it is unreal when it is grasped by the intellect. This is similar to wind being perceived real in its motion while non-existent when there is no motion. The mirage-like appearance of the cosmos exists as not different from the Absolute Brahman.

Being non-different from the Infinite Consciousness, the world-appearance has a mutual causal relationship with IT. It arises in IT, exists in IT and is absorbed in IT. Though like the deep ocean, IT is not agitated, yet IT is agitated like waves on the surface of the ocean. Even as one who is intoxicated sees himself as another, the Consciousness, being conscious of Itself, considers Itself as another in the form of world-appearance.

It is only wisdom and self-knowledge that take a seeker to the highest state of consciousness. The seven states or planes of wisdom are pure wish or intention, enquiry, to become subtle, to be established in Truth, total freedom from attachment or bondage, cessation of objectivity and to be beyond all the preceding states, the state of transcendence. This is the state of one who is liberated while living, the *jivan-mukta*. Beyond the seventh state is the state of one who has transcended even the body. All the great ones who ascend these planes of wisdom are holy men. They are liberated and transcend happiness and unhappiness. They may or may not work or be active. They rejoice in the Self and do not stand in need of others to make them happy.

I prostrate to Myself who am within all Being, the ever-free Self abiding as Inner-Consciousness (Intelligence).

Consciousness free from the limitations of the mind is known as the Inner Intelligence. It is the essential nature of no-mind. It is not tainted by the impurities of concepts and precepts. That is the Reality; that is Supreme Consciousness; that is the state known as the Supreme Self; and that is omniscience. That vision is not had when the wicked mind functions. Such Consciousness does not give rise to the world-illusion and the cycle of world-appearance. When Consciousness realizes Itself and abandons Its self-limiting mental conditioning, the mind is freed from its colouring and rests in its essential nature, which is Consciousness. As the wave merges in the ocean and becomes one and not different from it, the Consciousness abandons Its objectivity and regains Its absolute purity. When all external (material) and internal (notional) objects merge in Consciousness, there is pure being of Consciousness. This is the supreme vision, which the liberated sages attain.

7. Purification

Oh Raghava! Be outwardly active, but inwardly inactive; outwardly a doer, but inwardly a non-doer. Thus play your part in the world.

The seeker who rests his mind in the eternal is fully self-controlled and is, therefore, in peace. He sees that pain and pleasure chase and cancel each other. In that wisdom there is self-control and peace. One cannot rest one's mind in the eternal by rites and rituals, by pilgrimage or by acquisition of life. Such state is attained only by transcending the mind and by the cultivation of wisdom. The transcending of the mind with the resulting self-control is the fruit of wisdom. When the mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination and free from cravings of sense pleasure, it does not long for anything, nor does it reject anything.

Self-control is the best remedy for all physical and mental ills. One who is neither elated nor depressed by sense objects is self-controlled. Such seeker is outwardly active, but inwardly inactive as he is unaffected by the results of his action. He is outwardly a doer, and inwardly a non-doer.

Oh Raghava! Abandon all desires inwardly, be free from attachments and latent impressions, do everything outwardly and thus play your part in the world.

The surest sign of a man of the highest wisdom is that he is un-attracted by the pleasures of the world. In him even the subtle tendencies have ceased. When these tendencies are strong, there is bondage. When they have ceased, there is liberation.

Contentment is a way to liberation. To renounce all craving for what is not obtained unsought, and to be satisfied with what comes unsought without either elation or depression is contentment. As long as there is no contentment in the self, one is subjected to sorrow. With contentment in the self, the purity of one's heart blooms. One who attains contentment does not relish craving for sense-pleasures. No delight in this world is as sweet as contentment.

Oh Raghava! Adopt a comprehensive view characterized by the abandonment of all objects of contemplation, live in your innate Self, liberated even while alive, and thus play your part in the world.

There is no cause for sorrow in this world other than ideation. To avoid sorrow, one is not to entertain ideas. One shall not hold on to the notion of one's existence. For, it is only by these ideas and notions that the future comes into being. When there is no thought, ideation ceases. Transcendence of thought leads to happiness and avoidance of sorrow.

Bondage is bondage to these thoughts and notions. Freedom is freedom from them. One is, therefore, to give up all notions, even those of liberation. First, by the

cultivation of good relationships, one is to give up gross and materialistic tendencies and notions. Second, one is to give up all desires and contemplate the nature of Cosmic Consciousness. Third, one is to give up even the tendency of contemplation of the Cosmic Consciousness, as it is also within the realm of ideation or thought. One is, therefore, to rest in what remains after all these have been given up. One is, thus, to renounce the renouncer of these notions. When the notion of the ego-sense has thus ceased, one will be a *jivan-mukta*, like infinite space and will have attained salvation.

Burn the forest of duality with the fire of the conviction 'I am the one Pure Consciousness' and remain happy.

Bondage lasts as long as one invests the perceived object with reality. Once the notion of objective reality ceases, does bondage cease. As long as one clings to the notion of reality of 'you' and 'I', there is bondage. It is not obliterated by merely and orally denying such a notion of existence. On the other hand, such denial itself becomes a further distraction.

When objectivity arises in one's consciousness, one becomes conditioned and limited. When objectivity is abandoned, one becomes mindless. When one contemplates with firm conviction 'I am the Pure Consciousness', the mind ceases and with it arises liberation.

You are bound firmly on all sides by the idea 'I am the body'. Cut that bond by the sword of knowledge 'I am Consciousness' and be happy.

Differentiated consciousness is bondage; liberation is its absence. One is ever happy and blessed when one transcends one's differentiated consciousness.

Discarding the attachment to non-self, regarding the world as one and whole, with attention concentrated and turned inward, remain as Pure Consciousness.

The universe exists in the Infinite Consciousness. Infinite Consciousness is unmanifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as the reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness, is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the universe. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. It is all Pure Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness, shining as Consciousness and existing as Consciousness.

Remain always as Pure Consciousness which is your true nature beyond the states of waking, dream and deep-sleep.

The world-appearance is the waking state of consciousness. Egotism is the dreaming state. The mind-stuff is the deep sleep state. Pure Consciousness is the fourth state. The liberated seeker is ever established in the fourth state – the state of Pure Consciousness.

Oh Mighty-armed! Be always free from mental concepts like the heart of a rock, though not insentient like it.

Consciousness minus conceptualization is the eternal Brahman. Consciousness plus conceptualization is thought. A small part of the Consciousness in the heart is known as the finite intelligence or individualized consciousness. This converts into the thinking faculty, abetted by the ego-sense, with reception and rejection as its inherent tendencies. These are mental concepts that give rise to duality in perception. The seeker is always to be beyond duality which is possible when his consciousness is devoid of conceptualization. He will be then established in the eternal Brahman.

Do not be that which is understood, or the one who understands. Abandon all concepts, and remain what you are.

When Consciousness, clothed as it were, by its own energy, limits itself and considers itself *Jiva*, that *Jiva*, endowed with this restless energy, is involved in the world-appearance. This limitation of Consciousness when it is fed by latent tendencies and memories condenses into egotism – ‘I’-ness. This ‘I’-ness is not a solid reality. But the *Jiva* sees it as real, like the blueness of the sky. When the egotism entertains its own notions, it gives rise to the mind-stuff, the concept of an independent and separate *Jiva*, mind, *Maya* or cosmic illusion, cosmic nature, etc. One is to transcend the mind to be established in Pure Consciousness which is his true self.

Eliminate one concept by another, mind by the mind and thus abide in the Self. Is this difficult, oh holy man?

Man is no other than his mind. It is the ignorant self-limiting tendency of the mind that views the Infinite as the finite. As the sun dispels mist, enquiry into the nature of the Self dispels this ignorant self-limiting tendency. The mind seeks the Self in order to dissolve itself in the Self. This indeed is the very nature of the mind. This is its supreme goal.

Sever the mind which has, on account of its cares, become red-hot, with the mind which is like iron sharpened by the study of the scriptures.

The study of scriptures, the company of holy men and the unceasing practice of Truth enable one to reach the state of Pure Consciousness. The self alone is the sole aid for realization of the supreme Self or the Infinite Consciousness. When one is firmly established in self-knowledge that is infinite, unlimited and unconditioned, the delusion or ignorance that gives rise to world-appearance comes to an end. Where there is self-

knowledge, there is neither mind nor the senses, nor tendencies and habits. There arises neither desire nor aversion towards anything, pleasant or unpleasant.

Oh Raghava! What have you to do with this inert and dumb body? Why do you feel helpless and miserable by joys and sorrows on account of it?

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. It is only physical matter. When the mind confidently engages in self-effort, whenever it strives, it surely finds the fruition of its striving. The mind experiences only what it contemplates. If the mind turns towards the Truth, it abandons its identification with the body and attains the supreme state, beyond the states of joy and sorrow. Hence one is to endeavor with the mind to make the mind take to the pure path.

What a vast difference between the flesh, blood, etc comprising the body and you, the embodiment of Consciousness! Even after knowing this, why do you not abandon the idea of the Self in this body?

It is the mind that creates the body by mere thoughts, just as the potter makes a pot out of clay. It creates new bodies and brings about the destruction of what exists, and all this is by mere wish. Within mind exist the faculties of delusion or hallucination, dreaming and irrational thought. It creates the appearance of the body within itself. But in ignorance, one sees the physical body in gross physical vision as different from and independent of the mind. The body is just physical matter consisting of flesh, blood, bones, etc. It does nothing. It is the mind that is swayed by joys, sorrow, etc. It deems the body as its own.

On the other hand, the true self of an individual is the Self, which is Pure Consciousness. IT exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times. The true self is not limited to the physical body of the individual. It is the All.

The mere knowledge that this body is like a piece of wood or a clod of earth enables one to realize the Supreme Self.

The realization that the physical body is only physical matter and does really nothing establishes for the seeker that the body is no different from the mind. He realizes that the mind alone experiences whatever it contemplates. If the mind turns towards the Truth, it abandons its identification with the body, and this enables the seeker to realize the Supreme Self.

How strange that, while the Brahman is forgotten by men, the unreal called *avidya* (nescience) appears to be real to them!

Nescience is not a real entity, even as oil in sand is not a real entity. Nescience and the Self can have no relationship, as relationship is possible only between similar entities. This is obvious in everybody's experience. Thus, it is only because

Consciousness is infinite and all pervasive that everything in the universe becomes knowable. It is not as if the subject illumines the object which has no luminosity of its own. But since Consciousness is all this, everything is self-luminous, without requiring a perceiving intelligence. It is by the action of Consciousness becoming aware of It that intelligence manifests itself, not when Consciousness apprehends an inert object.

The sole reality is the Infinite Consciousness, which is omnipresent, pure, tranquil and omnipotent whose being is the Absolute Consciousness, which is not an object and, therefore, not knowable. Wherever this Consciousness manifests in whatever manner IT chooses, IT is 'That'. Because the substratum – the Infinite Consciousness is real, all that is based on IT acquires reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. As for the objects, the reality is relative. This relative reality is like the reality of the dream objects.

It is again strange that while the Supreme Brahman is forgotten by men the idea 'This is mine' called *avidya* is firmly held by them.

Bondage lasts as long as one invests the perceived object with reality. As long as one clings to the notion of reality of 'This is mine' or 'That is yours', there is bondage. It is not obliterated by merely and orally denying such a notion of existence. Often times, such a denial becomes a further distraction. Objectivity arising in one's consciousness leads to one being conditioned and limited. When the objectivity is abandoned, one becomes mindless. One is then liberated.

When you do your work, do it without attachment even as a crystal which reflects the objects before it.

The reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal. The reflection is totally unattached to the crystal. Similarly, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness, is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Likewise, whatever work the seeker does, if he does it without attachment to the result intended, he is unaffected by the work so done as is the reflection of an object in the crystal unaffected by the crystal.

The conviction that everything is the Brahman leads one to liberation. Therefore, reject entirely the idea of duality that is ignorance.

When, in the Infinite Consciousness, consciousness becomes aware of itself as its own object, there is the seed of ideation. This is very subtle. Soon it becomes gross and fills the whole space, as it were. This is duality and multiplicity. When consciousness is engrossed in this ideation, it considers the object as distinct from the subject. Then the ideation begins to germinate and to grow, multiplying by itself. This leads to sorrow. There is no cause for sorrow in this world other than this ideation. To avoid sorrow, one is not to entertain ideas. One shall not hold on to the notion of one's existence. For, it is only by these ideas and notions that the future comes into being. When there is no

thought, ideation ceases. Transcendence of thought leads to happiness and avoidance of sorrow. It is being established in the Brahman – Supreme Consciousness.

8. The Self-Awareness

If you separate yourself from the body and abide at ease in Consciousness you will become one with the sole Reality, everything appearing insignificant like grass.

The Self is empty like space; but IT is not nothingness, since IT is consciousness. IT is; yet IT is not as IT cannot be experienced by the mind and the senses. IT being the self of all, IT is not experienced by anyone as an object. Though one, IT is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be many. This appearance is unreal even as a bracelet is an appearance of gold, which alone is real. But the Self is not unreal. IT is not a void or nothingness, for IT is the self of all. Further, Its existence can be experienced indirectly, as the existence of camphor can be experienced by its fragrance. IT alone is the self of all as consciousness, and IT alone is the substance that makes the world-appearance possible.

After knowing that by which you know this world, turn the mind inward, and then you will clearly realize the effulgence of the Self.

The Self is subtler even than space. Neither the mind nor the senses can comprehend IT. IT is Pure Consciousness. The entire universe exists in the Consciousness that is omnipresent. That the Consciousness exists is the experience of all, and it alone is the self of all. Since IT is, all else is.

Oh Raghava! That by which you recognize sound, taste, form and smell, know that as your self, the Supreme Brahman, the Lord of lords.

Even as the taste of the juice of sugarcane cultivated in a hundred fields is uniform and the same, so the Consciousness indwelling all beings is the same; that Consciousness is the Self. The Self is that Conscious Energy (*cit-sakti*) which is larger than the universe and yet subtler than the minutest sub-atomic particle and, therefore, invisible. IT is the Consciousness that exists everywhere like butter in milk, and whose very nature is experiencing. That Consciousness is the Reality that bestows the individual characteristic on each and every substance of the universe. It is continuous and homogenous in waking, dreaming, deep-sleep and the transcendental states of consciousness. It is devoid of desire and ego-sense, and is indivisible. IT is the Supreme Brahman, the Lord of lords, All That Exists.

Oh Raghava! That in which the beings vibrate, that which creates them, know that Self to be your real self.

When the Self – the Infinite Consciousness vibrates, the worlds appear to emerge. When IT does not vibrate, they appear to submerge. Vibrating or not vibrating, IT is the same everywhere and ever. Not realizing it, one is subject to delusion of the world-existence that attains expansion by its repeated affirmation.

After rejecting, through reasoning, all that can be known as non-truth, which remains as Pure Consciousness, regard that as your real self.

In a golden bracelet there are gold and bracelet, the gold being the reality and the bracelet being the appearance. Similarly, in the Self there are both Consciousness and the notion of material (inert) substantiality. Since Consciousness is omnipresent, it is ever present in the mind in which the notion of substantiality in the nature of universe arises.

The Self, which is Pure Consciousness, exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times.

Knowledge is not separate from you and that which is known is not separate from knowledge. Hence there is nothing other than the Self, separate from IT.

The Self is the intelligence dwelling in the body. IT is the universe, though the universe is not IT. IT is Pure Intelligence. The Cosmic Intelligence in which the universe, as it were, ceases to be, is the Self. In IT the subject-object relationship appears to have ceased, as such. IT is the void in which the universe appears to exist. Only if one is firmly established in the unreality of the universe like the blueness of the sky, can the Self be realized.

Always think 'All that Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra and others always do is done by me, the embodiment of Consciousness.'

The Self is the reality in all, and infinite. The reality in fire is the Self or Consciousness. IT is the eternal light that shines in the sun, the moon and the fire, but independent of them all. IT illumines all from within. IT alone is the intelligence that indwells even trees, plants and creepers and preserves them. From the ordinary point of view, the Self is considered the creator, the protector and the overlord of all. But from the absolute point of view, in reality, being the Self of all, IT has no such limited role.

Reflect as 'I am the whole universe. I am the undecaying Supreme Self. There is neither past nor future.'

In the Infinite Self, there is no creator, no creation, no worlds, no heaven, no humans, no demons, no bodies, no elements, no time, no existence, no destruction, no falsehood, no truth, no 'you', no 'I', no notion of diversity, no contemplation and no enjoyment. Whatever is is that supreme peace. There is no beginning, no middle and no end. All is all at all times, beyond the comprehension of thought and word.

Reflect as 'Everything is the Brahman, Pure Consciousness, the Self of all, indivisible and immutable.'

The Infinite Self is ever infinite. IT is like the ocean, but without its movement. IT is self-luminous like the sun, but without its activity. In ignorance, the Infinite Self is

viewed as the universe. But in truth, the universe is the Brahman existing in the Brahman as the Brahman, as the space exists in space and is one with the space.

Meditate calmly on ‘There is neither I nor any other thing. Only the Brahman exists always full of bliss, everywhere.’

The Brahman or the Self alone is the reality in all beings as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots. As wind and its movement are not different, Consciousness and its internal movement (energy) that causes all manifestations of the perceived objects are not different.

The Infinite, which is without beginning and end, exists as pure experiencing Consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe, which is its body, as it were. The essence of existence is pure experiencing, which is, therefore, the essence of Consciousness. Just as liquidity exists inseparable from water or any other liquid, Consciousness and unconsciousness exist together. Since there is neither a contradiction nor a division in Consciousness, it is self-evident. It is, therefore, inappropriate to associate the created universe with the Brahman, and to associate the inert with the Infinite Consciousness. The creation, which is of infinite form, is the self-reflection of the Brahman. It is the Brahman, which knows Itself as the universe and appears to be such.

The sense of perceiver and perceived is common to all embodied beings. But the yogi worships the Self – the only One.

Perception is of two kinds – determinate and indeterminate. Determinate perception is the perception of an object as belonging to a class and as determined by a universal. This perception involves memory of the object seen in the past and the distinction between the individual object and the universal.

Indeterminate perception is the knowledge of a mere object without the universal. In it, the individual object and the universal are present and known without being distinguished. All living experience, actual experience or experience in act requires the acceptance of indeterminate cognition (perception) which is “cognition by being”, but not “cognition by facing or opposing”.

When an external object is imagined, a seer has been created. If there is no subject, there is no object either. It is the subject that becomes the object. There is no object (scene) without a subject (seer). Therefore, the seer alone is real, the object being hallucination. Gold alone is real; the ‘bracelet’ is only a name and a form. The subject exists because of the object, and the object is but a reflection of the subject. Duality cannot be if there is not one, and where is need for the notion of ‘unity’ if one alone exists? The enlightened one sees only one – the Self.

9. The Self-Experience

When this assemblage of body, senses, etc acts of its own accord, there arises an idea 'I am this'. This is the *Jiva* stained by the dirt of ignorance.

From the vibration in the Infinite Consciousness, the *Jiva* becomes manifest. The mind becomes manifest from the *Jiva* as the *Jiva* thinks. The mind itself entertains the notions of the five elements and it transforms itself into those elements. Whatever the mind thinks of, it sees. Thereafter, the *Jiva* acquires the sense organs one after the other. In this there is no causal connection between the mind and the senses, but there is the coincidence of the thought and of the manifestation of the sense organs. This is how the cosmic *Jiva* comes into being. The intelligence that identifies itself with certain movements of life force in the Self is thus known as the *Jiva* or the living soul.

Consciousness, which is surrounded by all these, is thus the *Jiva*.

When the conviction that everything is the all-pervasive Consciousness becomes firm, the *Jiva* comes to an end like a lamp without oil.

The *Jiva* is only a name. There is neither one nor many, nor a conglomerate of *Jiva*. What exists is only the Brahman. Because the Brahman is omnipotent, Its thought-forms materialize and appear as many. The Brahman alone is the cosmic soul – *Mahajiva* and the trillions of *Jiva*.

Like a misguided *brahmin* who abandons his own nobility and adopts the life of a *sudra*, the Lord assumes the role of the *Jiva*.

The *Jiva* is an extremely subtle body of Pure Consciousness. When it identifies itself with grossness, it becomes gross. The *Jiva* reflects the external objects and activities and begins to think that they are all within it and that it is the doer of the actions, and the experiencer of the experiences. It is like a mountain reflected in a mirror and is seen as if it were in the mirror.

Just as a child sees an apparition created by its own fancy, so also the stupid *Jiva* creates, on account of delusion, this unreal body and sees it as separate from it.

How does the *Jiva* perceive the objects outside? On account of the notion of 'I am', consciousness abides as *Jiva* in the body. When its senses descend upon similar bodies outside itself, there is contact between the two and there is a desire to know and to become one with them. When there is this contact, the object is reflected within itself and the *Jiva* perceives this reflection, though it believes that the reflection is outside. The *Jiva* knows only this reflection, which means it knows itself. This contact is the cause of the perception of the external objects.

When the *Jiva* wishes to see, eyes are formed in the gross body. Similarly, the skin (tactile sense), ears, tongue, nose and the organs of action are formed resulting from

the desires arising in the *Jiva*. Thus in the body abides the *Jiva*, imagining various external physical experiences and internal psychological experiences. The *Jiva* imagines itself to be this or that finite being and so binds itself to the world-appearance, which is an optical illusion like the blueness of the sky. Thus, the Brahman – the Pure Consciousness appears to be the *Jiva*.

A child super-imposes an elephant on a clay elephant and plays with it; even so, an ignorant man super-imposes the body, etc on the Self and carries on his activities.

The *Jiva* experiences its own wishes. It fancies that it experiences what it had experienced before. Some experiences are considered new. All these experiences, though essentially unreal, appear to be real. All this activity is the product of the reflection in Consciousness.

The picture of a snake does not cause fear of a snake when it is realized to be only a picture. Similarly, when the *Jiva*-snake is clearly understood, there is neither misery nor the cause of misery.

Every *Jiva* turns its own state by its own deeds. Whatever form the energy of the living being takes within itself, that alone comes to fruition in course of time. The consciousness that dwells in the understanding of every person bestows upon that person that which he seeks. Whatever it be that a person seeks of the Infinite Consciousness is bestowed on him. Each individual *Jiva* is the individualized cosmic consciousness, part of the Infinite Consciousness.

The snake super-imposed on a garland merges in it; so also the sense of separateness rising from the Self merges in the Self.

The Self is empty like space; but IT is not nothingness, since IT is consciousness. IT is; yet IT is not as IT cannot be experienced by the mind and the senses. IT being the Self of all, IT is not experienced by anyone as an object. Though one, IT is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be many. This appearance is unreal even as a bracelet is an appearance of gold, which alone is real. Self-knowledge merges the sense of separateness rising from the Self, into the Self.

Although bracelets appear to be many, as gold they are one. Similarly, although the adjuncts are many, the Self is truly One.

As long as one sees the bracelet as a bracelet, it is not seen as gold. When it is seen that 'bracelet' is just a word and not the reality, then gold is seen. Similarly, when the world is assumed to be real, the Self is not seen. When this assumption is discarded, Consciousness is realized. The Self is experienced in the *atman* (soul). IT is the All and One.

Like the organs of the body and modifications (vessels) of clay, non-duality appears as duality and multiplicity in the form of the moving and unmoving objects.

The Creator is the Intelligence (Consciousness) that supports the entire universe. Every thought that arises in that Intelligence gives rise to a form. Though all these forms are of the nature of pure Intelligence, on account of self-forgetfulness of this nature and of the thought of physical forms, they freeze into physical forms. This is similar to ghosts, though formless, seen to have forms on account of the perceiver's delusion.

The materiality of the creation is like the castle in the air, an illusory projection of one's mind – imaginary.

Cosmic Consciousness alone exists ever. That Consciousness reflected in Itself appears to be creation. Even as the unreal nightmare produces real results, this world-creation seems to give rise to a sense of reality in a state of ignorance.

Just as a single face is reflected as many in a crystal, in water, in ghee or in a mirror, so also the Self is reflected in many intellects (minds).

The Self, though only One, is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be many. This appearance is neither real nor unreal.

Just as the sky appears to be stained by dust, smoke and clouds, so also the pure Self, in contact with *Maya*, appears to be soiled.

As long as one sees dust, smoke and clouds in the sky, one does not see the non-relation of the sky to the objects floating in perception. When one sees the finitude of the perceived objects and the infinitude of space, one sees the distinction between the objects and the sky. So is it with the Self. As long as one sees the infinitude of the true Self, does one not take cognizance of the adjuncts of *Maya*.

Just as metal in contact with fire acquires the quality of fire, namely heat, so also the senses, etc in contact with the Self acquire the quality of the Self.

The only way to cross the formidable ocean of world-appearance is the successful mastery of the senses. When one is equipped with the wisdom gained by the study of the scriptures and the company of the sages and has his senses under control, one realizes the utter non-existence of all objects of perception. In the state of liberation, the senses dissolve into the Self.

Just as the invisible Rahu becomes visible when it is seized by the moon, even so the Self is known by experiencing the objects of perception.

The objects of perception bring into focus the illusory nature of their existence, and the true nature of the Self being infinite and all-pervasive.

When water and fire come together, they acquire the qualities of each other. Similarly, when the Self and the inert body come together, the Self looks like the non-self.

The Self and the body of an individual are ever different. The mud never spoils a coin of gold fallen into it. Similarly, the Self is untainted by the body. Even as the sky is not affected by the dust particles floating in it, the Self is unaffected by the body. The Self is one thing and the body is another, even as the water and the lotus. But in ignorance, one is liable to equate the Self with the body.

Just as fire thrown into a large sheet of water loses its quality, so also Consciousness in contact with the unreal and the inert seems to lose its real nature and becomes inert.

The Infinite Consciousness being omnipotent, Its infinite potencies appear as this visible universe. All the diverse categories such as reality, unreality, unity, diversity, beginning, end, perceived objects, etc exist in the Infinite Consciousness. The ocean is tranquil in some places and agitated in other places though it is one. Similarly, the Infinite Consciousness seems to embrace diversity in some places though IT is Itself non-dual. It is natural for the omnipotent Infinite Consciousness to manifest in all Its infinite glory. Its manifestation enters into an alliance with time, space and causation, which are indispensable to such manifestation. As a result arise infinite names and forms but all these apparent manifestations are in reality not different from the Infinite Consciousness.

The Self is realized in the body only with effort like sugar from sugarcane, oil from sesame seeds, fire from wood, butter from a cow, and iron from ore.

One should never yield to laziness, but strive to attain liberation, realizing that life is ebbing away every moment. One should not revel in the filth known as sense-pleasure, as a worm revels in pus. One is to acquire wisdom by self-effort and then realize that the end of self-effort is the direct realization of Truth. There is no power greater than right action in the present. As is the effort, so is the fruit.

Like the sky seen in an unbroken crystal, the Supreme Lord – Supreme Consciousness exists in all objects.

The Infinite Consciousness is one, omnipresent, pure, tranquil and omnipotent. Though one, IT is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be many. IT is all-pervasive as IT is omnipresent. IT is like the sky reflecting in all directions in an unbroken crystal.

Just as a big lamp kept inside a vessel made of precious stones illumines by its light both outside and inside, so also the one Self illumines everything.

The Self is the reality in all, and infinite. The reality in fire is the Self or Consciousness. IT is the eternal light that shines in the sun, the moon and the fire, but independent of them all. IT illumines all from within. IT is self-luminous like the sun, but without its activity. IT is like the ocean, but without its movement.

The Self, which is Pure Consciousness, exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times.

Just as the sun's reflection in a mirror illumines other things, so also the reflection of the Self in pure intellects illumines.

The Infinite, which is without beginning and end, exists as pure experiencing Consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe, which is its body, as it were. There is no other substance known as the intellect, nor is there an outside or void. The essence of existence is pure experiencing, which is, therefore, the essence of Consciousness. Just as liquidity exists inseparable from water or any other liquid, Consciousness and unconsciousness exist together. Since there is neither a contradiction nor a division in Consciousness, it is self-evident. It is, therefore, inappropriate to associate the created universe with the Brahman, and to associate the inert with the Infinite Consciousness. The creation, which is of infinite form, is the self-reflection of the Brahman – the Self. It is the Brahman, which knows Itself as the universe and appears to be such.

That in which this wonderful universe appears like a snake in a rope is the eternal luminous Self.

The universe exists in the luminous Self as the sprout exists in the seed, liquidity in water, sweetness in sugar, etc. But in ignorance, it appears to be different from and independent of the Self, as a snake in a rope. There is no cause for the world's existence. When there is a notion of creation, the creation seems to be. When, through self-effort, there is an understanding of non-creation, there is no world.

The Self is without beginning or end. IT is immutable Existence and Consciousness. IT manifests space; IT is the source of the *Jiva* and higher than the highest.

The Self is subtler even than space. Neither the mind nor the senses can comprehend IT. IT is Pure Consciousness. The entire universe exists in the Consciousness that is omnipresent and eternal. That the Consciousness exists is the experience of all, and IT alone is the Self of all. Since IT is, all else is.

In a golden bracelet there are gold and bracelet, the gold being the reality and the bracelet being the appearance. Similarly, in the Self there are both Consciousness and the notion of material (inert) substantiality such as the *Jiva*. Since Consciousness is omnipresent, it is ever present in the mind in which the notion of substantiality in the nature of universe arises.

The Self is Pure Consciousness, eternal, omnipresent, immutable and self-effulgent like the light of the sun.

In the Infinite Self, there is no creator, no creation, no worlds, no heaven, no humans, no demons, no bodies, no elements, no time, no existence, no destruction, no

falsehood, no truth, no 'you', no 'I', no notion of diversity, no contemplation and no enjoyment. Whatever is is that supreme peace. There is no beginning, no middle and no end. All is all at all times, beyond the comprehension of thought and word. The Infinite is ever infinite. IT is like the ocean, but without its movement. IT is self-luminous like the sun, but without its activity. In ignorance, the Infinite Self is viewed as the universe. But in truth, the universe is the Brahman existing in the Brahman as the Brahman, as the space exists in space and is one with the space.

The omnipresent Self, the substratum of all, is non-different from the effulgent Consciousness like heat from fire. IT can only be experienced.

To an ignorant person who is confirmed in his conviction that this world is real, it continues to be real. He who sees the objective world does not see the Infinite Consciousness, which alone is true. The ego-sense and the fancy of the objects of the world are as real as the dream objects. The sole reality is the Infinite Consciousness, which is omnipresent, pure, tranquil and omnipotent whose being is the Absolute Consciousness, which is not an object and, therefore, not knowable. IT can only be experienced. Wherever this Consciousness manifests in whatever manner IT chooses, IT is 'That'. The Infinite Consciousness is the substratum that is real; all that is based on IT acquires reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. As for the perceived objects, the reality is relative. This relative reality is like the reality of the dream objects.

Pure Consciousness without intellect, the Supreme Self, the illuminator of all, the indivisible, the all pervading within and without is the firm support of All That Exists.

The Infinite, which is without beginning and end, exists as pure experiencing Consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe, which is its body, as it were. There is no other substance known as the intellect, nor is there an outside or void. The essence of existence is pure experiencing, which is, therefore, the essence of Consciousness. As there is neither a contradiction nor division in Consciousness, IT is self-evident. As IT is all-pervasive, IT is self-luminous. The universe which is of infinite form is the self-reflection of the Infinite Consciousness.

The Self is Absolute Consciousness. IT is pure awareness, undecaying, free from all ideas of acceptance or rejection and not limited by space, time or genus.

The Absolute Consciousness is not an object and, therefore, not knowable. IT is pure awareness and can only be experienced in the fourth (*turiya*) state of consciousness, the state that has transcended the ideas of acceptance or rejection, and time, space or genus.

Just as air (gaseous form) in the universe pervades everything, so also the Self, the Lord, abides in spirit (bodiless) in everything.

The Infinite Consciousness – the Self alone is the reality, ever awake and enlightened. That Infinite Consciousness alone is the unenlightened appearance of this

universe. Even after creation of the universe, IT is the same as ever. When one realizes in the self by the self that the Infinite Consciousness is the Absolute Brahman – the Self, then one experiences IT as ALL, as the one energy – Spirit dwelling in all his limbs and all over the cosmos.

The Consciousness which exists in the expanse of the earth, in the ornaments, in the sky and in the sun exists also inside the worms lying in their shells under the earth.

The Self, being the self of all, is not experienced by anyone as an object. Though one, IT is reflected in the infinite atoms of existence and hence appears to be diverse. As IT is all-pervasive, IT exists everywhere in the physical materiality, may be the ornaments, the sky, the sun, the plants, the worms, etc.

There is neither bondage nor liberation, neither duality nor non-duality. There is only the Brahman always shining as Consciousness.

The homogenous mass of Cosmic Consciousness does not give rise to anything other than what it is its essence. Consciousness never becomes unconsciousness. Even if there is modification, that, too, is Consciousness. Hence, whatever there may be, wherever and in whatever form – all is the Brahman shining as Consciousness. Everything exists forever in the potential state in the mass of homogenous Consciousness.

Awareness is the Brahman; the world is the Brahman; the various elements are the Brahman; I am the Brahman; my enemy is the Brahman; and my friends and relatives are the Brahman.

The Brahman or the Self alone is the reality in all beings as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots. As wind and its movement are not different, Consciousness and its internal movement (energy) that causes all these manifestations are not different.

The ideas of ‘Consciousness’ and an ‘object of consciousness’ are bondage; freedom from such ideas is liberation. Consciousness, the object of consciousness and everything else is the Self; this is the sum and substance of all systems of philosophy.

The entire universe is forever the same as the Consciousness that dwells in every atom, as an ornament of gold is no different from gold. It is the mind that brings the material or physical body into existence. Experience alone is the mind. It is none other than the perceived. The perception of objectivity is what causes bondage. But as an ornament potentially exists in gold, the object exists in the subject. When the notion of the object is firmly rejected and removed from the subject, then Consciousness alone exists without even an apparent or potential objectivity. Even the tendency to objectify ceases. When this is realized, poles of opposites such as attraction and repulsion, love and hate, etc cease in one’s heart, as do false notions of the world. This is true freedom or liberation. This is the sum and substance of all the Vedanta philosophies.

There is only Consciousness here. This universe is nothing but Consciousness; you are Consciousness; I am Consciousness; the worlds are Consciousness. This is the conclusion.

The power or energy of the Infinite Consciousness, ever in motion, is the reality of all creation related to space and time. That power is also known as *Mahasatta* – the great existence, *Mahaciti* – the great intelligence, *Mahasakti* – the great power, *Mahadrsti* – the great vision, *Mahakriya* – the great doer or doing, *Mahabhava* – the great becoming and *Mhaspanda* – the great vibration. It is this power that endows everything with its characteristic quality. The Infinite Consciousness alone appears as one thing in one place and another in another place. There is no division between that Consciousness and Its power, as there is no division between the water and the waves, and the body and the limbs. That power or energy is not different from or independent of the Brahman.

That which exists and which shines is the Self; anything else which seems to shine does not really exist. Consciousness alone shines by itself. Ideas of knower and known are idle postulates.

Infinite Consciousness is unmanifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as the reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness, is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the universe. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness shines as Consciousness and exists as Consciousness. Ideas of knower and known are idle postulates.

10. Nirvana

Supreme bliss cannot be experienced through contact of the senses with their objects. The supreme state is that in which the mind is transcended through one-pointed enquiry.

Supreme bliss is a state in which one realizes the objects of the senses as 'not-self' and thus enjoys calmness and tranquility within, all the time. Whether one is engaged in activity or lives in isolation, in enlightenment there is no distinction. When the mind is unconditioned, whatever action one does is non-action. The non-action of the mind is known as quiescence (*samadhana*). It is total freedom – blessedness.

The bliss arising from the contact of the senses with their objects is inferior. Contact with the sense objects is bondage; freedom from it is liberation.

When objectivity arises in one's consciousness, one becomes conditioned and limited. That is bondage. Bondage lasts as long as one invests the perceived object with reality. When objectivity is abandoned, one becomes mindless. Once the notion of objective reality ceases, does bondage cease. That is liberation. When one thinks 'I am the *Jiva*', etc the mind arises and with it the bondage. It is not obliterated by merely and orally denying such a notion of existence. On the other hand, such denial itself becomes a further distraction. When one contemplates with conviction that 'I am the Self; the *Jiva* and such other things do not exist', the mind ceases and with it arises liberation.

Attain the pure state between existence and non-existence and hold on to it; do not accept or reject the inner or the outer world.

The wise declare that the pure mind of the enlightened is neither in a state of bliss nor devoid of bliss, neither is in motion nor static, neither real nor unreal, but between these pairs of opposites. His unconditioned consciousness blissfully plays its role in this world-appearance as if in a play. He does not even entertain the notion of liberation, or that of bondage. He sees the Self alone.

Depend always on that true reality between the sentient and the inert which is the infinite space-like heart.

The 'Heart' that is spoken of in 'Spirituality' is of the nature of pure consciousness. It is both inside and outside the body, and it is neither inside nor outside. In it is reflected everything which is in the universe. Consciousness alone is the heart of all beings, not the piece of flesh which people call the heart.

When delusion is gone and the Truth is realized by means of enquiry into the nature of the Self, when the mind is at peace and the soul leaps to the supreme Truth, and when the disturbing thought-waves in the mind-stuff subside, then there is peace and bliss in the heart. When this is realized in the heart, the very world becomes an abode of bliss.

The belief in a knower and the known is called bondage. The knower is bound by the known; he is liberated when there is nothing to know.

When, in the Infinite Consciousness, consciousness becomes aware of itself as its own object, there is the seed of ideation. This is very subtle. Soon it becomes gross and fills the whole space, as it were. When consciousness is engrossed in this ideation, it considers the object as distinct from the subject. The concepts of knower and known arise. Then the ideation begins to germinate and to grow, multiplying by itself. This leads to sorrow. There is no cause for sorrow in this world other than this ideation.

To avoid sorrow, one is not to entertain ideas. One shall not hold on to the notion of one's existence. For, it is only by these ideas and notions that the future comes into being. When there is no thought, ideation ceases. Transcendence of thought leads to happiness and avoidance of sorrow. That is liberation.

Abandoning the ideas of seer, seen and sight along with latent desires (*vasanas*) of the past, we meditate on that Self which is primal light that is the basis of sight.

Liberation is attained when one arrives at the state of supreme peace after intelligent enquiry into the nature of the Self, and, after this, has brought about an inner awakening. This becomes possible only when the ideas of seer, seen and sight are totally transcended. *Kaivalya* or total freedom is the attainment of 'pure being' after all mental conditioning is transcended consciously, after thorough investigation, in the company and with the help of enlightened sages.

We meditate on the eternal Self, the light of lights, which lies between the two ideas of existence and non-existence.

The Supreme Self is what in one appears to be the experience of bliss, and is, therefore, realized in oneself. IT cannot be realized by means other than wisdom resulting from meditation. The company of holy men and the study of scriptures, and not the observance of religious rites, are helpful for realization of the Self. Where there is cessation of the knowable and the flow of attention is toward that which is not knowable (pure intelligence) is the Self realized.

We meditate on that Self or Consciousness, the bestower of the fruits of all our thoughts, the illuminator of all radiant objects and the farthest limit of all accepted objects.

The Self is the Pure Intelligence dwelling in the universe. IT is the universe, though the universe is not IT. The Cosmic Intelligence in which the universe, as it were, ceases to be, is the Self. In IT, the subject-object relationship seems to have ceased as such. IT is the void in which the universe appears to exist as celestial bodies exist in space. IT illumines all objects as IT is self-luminous. As IT is all-pervasive and omnipresent, IT exists in all physical and non-physical entities of existence.

We meditate on that immutable Self, our reality, the bliss of which arises in the mind on account of the close contact between the seer and the seen.

In the Self there are both Consciousness and the notion of material (inert) substantiality, the Consciousness being the reality and the notion of material substantiality an appearance. This is similar to the gold being the reality and the bracelet being the appearance in a golden bracelet. Since Consciousness is omnipresent, it is ever present in the mind in which the notion of substantiality in the nature of universe arises. The realization of the close interconnectedness between the Reality and its appearance bestows bliss on the seeker meditating on the immutable Self.

If one meditates on that state which comes at the end of the waking-state and the beginning of sleep, he will directly experience undecaying bliss.

The waking state is that state which endures. The dream state is that which is transient. During the period of the dream, it takes on the characteristic of the waking state. When the waking state is realized to be of a fleeting nature, it gets the characteristic of dream. The two are, therefore, the same. The consciousness which is awake in deep sleep and which is also the light that shines in waking and dreaming is the transcendental consciousness – the fourth (*turiya*) state of consciousness. The seeker meditating in that state of consciousness experiences supreme bliss.

The rock-like state in which all thoughts are transcended and which is different from the waking and the dream states is one's supreme state.

The world-appearance is the waking state of consciousness. Egotism is the dreaming state. The mind-stuff is the deep sleep state. Pure Consciousness is the fourth state. Beyond the fourth state is the absolute purity of Consciousness. Pure Consciousness is the supreme state of the seeker when his mind is stilled and transcended. The state beyond the fourth (*turiyatita*) is the state of *Nirvana* for the seeker.

Like mud in a mud-pot, the Supreme Self that is Existence, space-like Consciousness and Bliss exists everywhere, inseparable from perceived things.

Mud in a mud-pot is mud alone. Similarly, the Self is Existence, space-like Consciousness and Bliss. IT is non-different from the world-appearance though the Self and the world-appearance have a mutual causal relationship. The world-appearance arises in the Self, exists in IT and is absorbed in IT. The Self alone exists everywhere, inseparable from perceived things.

The Self shines by Itself as the one boundless ocean of Consciousness agitated by waves of thought.

Like the deep ocean, the Self is not agitated. Yet IT is agitated like waves on the surface of the ocean. The stillness in the depth and the agitation on its surface are part of the same ocean. Similarly, the Self is the same Infinite Consciousness, tranquil in Its

Reality and agitated in Its appearance as the world. The Self shines by Itself as IT is self-luminous, all-pervasive and eternal.

Just as the ocean is nothing but water, the entire world of objects is nothing but Consciousness filling all the objects like the infinite space.

Infinite Consciousness is unmanifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the objective world that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the objective world. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. The objective world is only the Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness shining as Consciousness and existing as Consciousness.

The Brahman and space are alike as to their invisibility, all-pervasiveness and indestructibility. But the Brahman is also Consciousness.

The Brahman – the Cosmic Being has two bodies, as it were. The superior body is Pure Consciousness and the other is the cosmos (space). All activity that takes place in the cosmos originates in the Pure Consciousness. As a result, the cosmos is seen to be real. The Cosmic Being exists in Its Pure Consciousness, as a sage exists in his *atman* in his meditation.

There is only the one wave-less and profound ocean of pure nectar, blissful through and through everywhere.

Just as water remains water and flows down, and as fire does not abandon its nature of rising up, Consciousness remains forever Consciousness. To the enlightened person, there is only one Infinite Consciousness. The Infinite Consciousness, without beginning and end, exists as pure experiencing Consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe which is its body, as it were. The essence of existence is pure experiencing which is, therefore, the essence of Consciousness. The Consciousness is self-evident as there is no contradiction or division in IT, and is, therefore, blissful.

All this is truly the Brahman; all this is *Atman*; do not divide the Brahman into ‘I am one thing’ and ‘this is another’.

The Brahman is the Absolute. IT is immaterial and only spiritual - Consciousness. IT does not, therefore, admit of any division. IT is one whole, without a second. The Absolute cannot be realized or experienced by another. Only the Absolute can realize Itself.

As soon as it is realized that the Brahman is all-pervasive and indivisible, this vast *samsara* is found to be the Supreme Lord.

The world appearance may be said to be real so far as it is the manifestation of Consciousness and because of direct experience. It may be said that it is unreal when it is grasped by the intellect. This is similar to wind being perceived real in its motion while non-existent when there is no motion. When it is realized that the Brahman is all-pervasive and indivisible, the mirage-like appearance of the cosmos exists as not different from the Absolute Brahman.

One who realizes that everything is the Brahman truly becomes the Brahman. Who would not become immortal if he were to drink nectar?

The homogenous mass of Cosmic Consciousness does not give rise to anything other than what it is its essence. Consciousness never becomes unconsciousness. Even if there is modification, that, too, is Consciousness. Hence, whatever there may be, wherever and in whatever form – all is the Brahman. Everything exists forever in the potential state in the mass of homogenous Consciousness.

If you are wise, you become the Brahman by such conviction; if not, even if you are repeatedly told, it amounts to throwing on ashes (it will be of no avail).

The firm conviction that ‘I am not the Absolute Brahman’ binds the mind. The mind is liberated by the firm conviction that ‘everything is the Absolute Brahman’. Ideas and thoughts are bondage. Their transcendence is liberation. As thought or idea sees blueness in the sky, the mind sees the world as real. The mind transcended sees the Absolute Brahman as the only Reality.

Even if you have known the real Truth, you have to practise always. Water will not become clear and pure by merely uttering the word *kataka* fruit.

One is to free oneself from likes and dislikes and to engage oneself in righteous self-effort to reach the supreme Truth. Self-effort is that which springs from right understanding of the scriptures and the teachings of holy persons.

One should never yield to laziness, but strive to attain liberation, realizing that life is ebbing away every moment. One should not revel in the filth known as sense-pleasure, as a worm revels in pus. One is to acquire wisdom by self-effort and then realize that the end of self-effort is the direct realization of Truth. As is the effort, so is the fruit.

If one has the firm conviction ‘I am the Supreme Self called the undecaying Vasudeva’, one is liberated; otherwise, one remains bound.

The mind is liberated only if there is firm conviction that ‘I am the Supreme Self called the undecaying Vasudeva’. Unless one transcends ideas and thoughts, one is not liberated, as ideas and thoughts are in the realm of duality. The mind transcended alone sees the Absolute Brahman as the only Reality. Otherwise one remains in bondage.

After eliminating everything as ‘not this’, ‘not this’, the Supreme Being that cannot be eliminated remains. Think ‘I am That’ and be happy.

The aspirant, sticking to the path of knowledge, always reasons about the Reality. The *Brahman* is neither “this” nor “that”. It is neither the universe nor the living beings. Reasoning this way, the mind becomes steady. Then it disappears and the aspirant goes into *Samadhi*. This is the knowledge of the *Brahman*. It is the unwavering conviction of the aspirant that the *Brahman* alone is real and the world illusory, like a dream. What the *Brahman* is cannot be described.

Know always that the Self is the Brahman, one and whole. How can that which is indivisible be divided into ‘I am the meditator’ and ‘the other is the object of meditation’?

The Self is Pure Consciousness. IT is immaterial and spiritual. IT is, therefore, one, whole and indivisible.

When one thinks ‘I am Pure Consciousness’, it is called meditation. When even the idea of meditation is forgotten, it is *Samadhi*.

One is in *Samadhi* or not is indicated by whether or not there is movement of thought in one’s mind. The unconditioned mind, in itself, is *Samadhi*, freedom and peace eternal. *Samadhi* is the state in which all the desires and hopes concerning the world have ceased, which is free from sorrow, fear and desire, and by which the self rests in itself. It is the state in which there is eternal satisfaction, clear perception of ‘what is’, egolessness, not being subject to the pairs of opposites, freed from anxiety and the urge of acquisition or rejection. The enlightened ones are forever in *Samadhi*, even though they engage themselves in the affairs of the world.

The constant flow of mental concepts relating to the Brahman without the sense of ‘I’ achieved through intense practice of self-enquiry is what is called *Samprajnata Samadhi*.

The study of scriptures, the company of holy men and the unceasing practice of Truth enable one to reach the state of Pure Consciousness. The self alone is the sole aid for realization of the Supreme Self or the Infinite Consciousness. When one is firmly established in self-knowledge that is infinite, unlimited and unconditioned, the delusion or ignorance that gives rise to world-appearance comes to an end. Where there is self-knowledge, there is neither mind nor the senses, nor tendencies and habits. There arises neither desire nor aversion towards anything, pleasant or unpleasant.

Self-knowledge arises when the ego-sense is thinned out. The ego-sense vanishes only by self-effort, by resolutely turning away from the pursuit of pleasure and by the resolute breaking down of the sense of shame and of false dignity. The attainment of the state of self-knowledge is *Samprajnata Samadhi*.

Let violent winds which characterize the end of aeons blow; let all the oceans unite; let the twelve suns burn simultaneously; still no harm befalls one whose mind is extinct.

One acquires victory over mind with the aid of one's own self-effort when one attains self-knowledge and abandons the craving for what the mind desires as pleasure. By intense self-effort it is possible to gain victory over the mind. Then, without the least effort, the individualized consciousness – the mind is absorbed in the Infinite Consciousness. Only by self-effort and self-knowledge, one is to make one's mind no-mind. When one makes one's mind no-mind, one has transcended worldly consciousness. What happens in the outside world, the world of duality and multiplicity is of no concern to one.

Know that Consciousness which is the witness of the rise and fall of all the beings to be the immortal state of supreme bliss.

The entire creation is like a stage on which all the potencies of Consciousness dance to the tune of time. The foremost among them is known as order - the natural order of things and sequences. It is this potency that ordains that each thing from the blade of grass to the creator Brahma should have a characteristic. This natural order is what causes the world-appearance. The Supreme Being is the Witness Consciousness of this cosmic dance - world-appearance. IT is not different from the cosmic natural order and the happenings. IT is the immortal state of supreme bliss.

Every moving or unmoving thing what so ever is only an object visualized by the mind. When the mind is annihilated, duality or multiplicity is not perceived.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world. When the mind is transcended, the world vanishes, dissolves into its source.

That which is immutable, auspicious and tranquil, that in which this world exists, that which manifests itself as the mutable and immutable objects is the sole Consciousness.

The sole reality is the Infinite Consciousness, which is omnipresent, pure, tranquil and omnipotent. Its being is the Absolute Consciousness, which is not an object and, therefore, not knowable. Wherever this Consciousness manifests in whatever manner It chooses, It is 'That'. Because the substratum – the Infinite Consciousness is real, all that is based on IT acquires reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. As for the objects, the reality is relative. This relative reality is like the reality of the dream objects.

Before discarding the slough, the snake regards it as itself. But when once it has discarded it in its hole, it does not look upon it as itself any longer.

He who has transcended both good and evil does not, like a child, refrain from prohibited acts from a sense of sin, nor does he do what is prescribed from a sense of merit.

If one focuses one's thought on ego-sense, it takes to flight. One is, therefore, able to transcend the phenomenal existence of the ego when one dives deep into the source from where the 'I' thought arises. Everything rises with the rise of the ego. Everything subsides when the ego subsides. To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation.

Renunciation of everything puts an end to all sorrow. By renunciation, everything is gained. There is total renunciation when the mind – *citta* with the ego-sense is abandoned. Renunciation of the ego-sense leads to realization of the Absolute. When one abandons the mind, one is no more afflicted by fear of old age, death and such other events in life. Nor is one affected by the concerns of merit and demerit. That alone is supreme bliss.

Just as a statue is contained in a block of stone even if it is not actually carved out, so the world exists in the Brahman. Therefore, the Supreme State is not void.

Even as the uncarved image is forever present in a block, the world is inherent in the Absolute, whether we regard the world real or unreal. The Absolute is, therefore, not void.

As in the tangible ocean, tangible waves are seen, in the formless Brahman, the world also exists without form. From the Infinite, the Infinite emerges and exists in IT as the Infinite. Hence the world has never been really created-it is the same as that from which it emerges.

Just as a pillar is said to be devoid of the statue when it has not actually been carved out, so also the Brahman is said to be void when IT is devoid of the impression of the world.

Water in the mirage does not come into being and go out of existence. So this world, too, does not come out of the Absolute, nor does it go anywhere. The creation of the world has no cause and, therefore, it has had no beginning. It is only an appearance based on the reality of the Brahman. It is not independent of the Brahman. The Brahman alone exists.

Just as still water may be said to contain or not contain ripples, so also the Brahman may be said to contain or not contain the world. IT is neither void nor existence.

The universe exists in the Infinite Consciousness just as future waves exist in a calm sea, with the potentiality of an apparent difference. Infinite Consciousness is unmanifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as the reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness,

is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the universe. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness shines as Consciousness and exists as Consciousness.

Appendix

Self-Effort

In this world, except a corpse, everything is active and activity yields its appropriate result. For example, if an astrologer predicts that a young man would become a great scholar, does that young man become a scholar without study? No. There is no place for fatalism in life. One shall apply oneself to self-effort to promote one's ultimate good.

Self-effort is of two categories. One is that of the past lives and the other is that of the current life. The latter can effectively counteract the former if it is so willed. Fate is none other than self-effort of past life or lives. There is a continuing conflict between these two in the present life. That which is more powerful ultimately triumphs.

Self-effort, which is not in accord with the scriptures, is motivated by delusion. When the desired result of self-effort is not there, one should examine if there is such deluded action. If so, it needs to be corrected. There is no power greater than right action in the present. One is, therefore, to take recourse to self-effort to overcome evil by good, and fate by present effort.

One should never yield to laziness, but strive to attain liberation, realizing that life is ebbing away every moment. One should not revel in the filth known as sense-pleasure, as a worm revels in pus. One is to acquire wisdom by self-effort and then realize that the end of self-effort is the direct realization of Truth. As is the effort, so is the fruit.

One is to free oneself from likes and dislikes, and to engage oneself in righteous self-effort to reach the supreme Truth. Self-effort is that which springs from right understanding of the scriptures and the teachings of holy persons.

Self-effort has a three-fold root and, therefore, three-fold fruit. It is an inner awakening in the intelligence, a decision in the mind and physical action. It is based on the knowledge of scriptures, instructions of the preceptor (guru) and one's own effort. Fate or Divine dispensation does not enter here. The essence of all scriptures is that he who desires salvation should divert the impure mind to pure endeavor by persistent effort.

Even as an error of the past can be rectified and turned into good action by self-effort today, the habits of the past and the corresponding impressions (*samskaras*) can be overcome by appropriate self-effort. However, the notion of the *Jiva*-hood can be overcome only by the attainment of liberation.

The *samskaras* (tendencies, impressions) brought forward from the previous lives are of two kinds. The pure ones lead one to liberation and the impure ones keep one in bondage. One is Pure Consciousness oneself, not inert physical matter. One is not impelled to action by anything other than oneself. It is open to one to strengthen the pure latent tendencies in preference to the impure ones. That is the reason why the holy men

advise that one shall tread consciously the path that leads to the eternal good. The wise seeker knows that the fruit of his endeavor is always commensurate with the intensity of his self-effort. Fate or destiny or god does not ordain it otherwise. The seeker is, therefore, to endeavor for his true good – his salvation by a keen and intelligent study of the scriptures, by having the company of the holy ones and by right self-effort.

Rishabha-Gita

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Introduction

The Rishabha-Gita is contained in sloka 19 of chapter 4, and chapters 5 & 6 of *Skandha V* of *Srimad Bhagavata* which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The *Puranic* literature was initially a branch of Vedic learning and not a separate and diversified religious literature, though in later days it came to be identified, in some cases, with sectarian religious literature. While the Vedic revelation is considered fixed and unalterable, the *Puranic* literature is sought to embody, explain and popularize the philosophy of the Veda cast in a form and against a background that is its own. The *Puranic* literature is stated to have come into being from the 6th century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. embodying the devotional teachings of numerous cults and sages, and also information on a variety of scientific, occult, social and historical themes.

The Puranas are distinguished as *Maha-puranas* and *Upa-puranas*, both being eighteen in number. *Srimad Bhagavata* is considered one of the *Maha-puranas*. The topics that form the subject matter of a *Maha-purana* are primary creation, secondary creation, means of sustenance, protection including Incarnations, epoch of *Manus*, genealogy of royal and priestly lines from Bhahma down, dynastic history of distinguished emperors, dissolution, purpose of all creative activity and ultimate support or the substratum. Of the ten subjects, the last one, the Supreme Being Who is the final stay of all, and to Which man's devotion is to be unconditional and total, forms the one theme with which the *Bhagavata* is primarily concerned. All other subjects are subordinated to it. The object is to bring man into an adequate conception of His excellences and to generate in him unconditioned devotion to the Lord.

The *Pauranikas* say that their accounts are traditions based on the intuition, inspiration and revelation that have come to wise and realized sages. The immortal works of literature and art that have survived several centuries are always considered the works of intuition, inspiration and revelation. On the other hand, rationalists contend that the contents of the Puranas are either imaginary or absurd and do not have historical validity.

In this regard, it may be said that history, as such, has no spiritual value as events are only at the moment and are not in the next. Events become history to the extent they are remembered and become a tradition. Historical facts become spiritual reality to the extent they stimulate a myth and become a psychic verity. For example, the historicity of Christ as such gives no spiritual significance to Christianity, but its Christ Myth does. The events of the historical life of Christ as such have had no significance to posterity. But when it is accepted that he was the expression of the Second Person of the Trinity, that he was immaculately conceived, that he was the Redeemer of men, that his suffering on the Cross was in atonement for man's sins, that he rose from the dead, and that all who take refuge in him will be saved by his blood – then Christ transcends history and becomes a Myth and a Psychic Verity of universal significance. The above cited statements are not open to historical proof; but they have been accepted by the psychic

being of the community. As such they have a value far transcending the events of the so called history. The same is the case with the Incarnations in the Hindu tradition. Their validity lies in the fusion their traditions have achieved with the supra-historical foundations of life.

It is not always necessary that the stimulations resulting in a Myth should occur in the dimensions of space and time. They can be purely ideal, too. An ideal manifestation in the psychic life of man can be based on the Cosmic Mind from whom events of significance can take place in the external world. It is sheer ignorance if it is considered that what is external and tangible to the senses alone is real, and what is mental or ideal is always illusory or imaginary. A sensual impact is of a much inferior order to an ideal impact of an enduring and powerful nature. So Myths that become spiritual verities need not necessarily have any historical content. They may or may not have such content. Even if they have, of what use are they that have led to these stimulations, as they are dead and gone? Only ideas as powerful psychic verities remain. In fact, even a historical personality, as a series of events, must cease to be as such, and take shape as a Myth before he becomes a spiritual verity. Also, ideal stimulations of the Cosmic Mind without any reference to history can become psychic verities of even greater potency. Such are the deities worshipped by the Hindus like Vishnu, Siva, Sakti, etc. They never had location in earthly space and time except as images used in worship. They are the manifestations of the Supreme Being as Spiritual Verities before which what we call material objects are mere shadows.

The Puranas are not at all to be read as history and geography, nor are they to be regarded as fiction. They belong to an order different from both history and fiction. They are the up-throw of a people's mind struggling to express their quest for a meaning for life and their findings in this respect. They represent the more enduring and enriched reactions of the psyche of a race to the fleeting events of space and time. It is in their cumulative spiritual effect and not in the validity of their individual statements that we should seek the values they embody. They attempt to integrate philosophy, history and traditions in a way to stimulating in man a keen sense of an omniscient, omnipotent and all-loving spiritual Reality that can be communed with, prayed to and visualized in various forms of spiritual glory. God in various forms and divine personages has become concrete to the Hindu psyche. In so far as they are facts of memory in the minds of men, they fulfill the role of history. In so far as the stimulations they generate are of spiritual dimensions, they are linked with Eternal Verities that transcend history.

The questions of three-dimensional factuality, dates and location stated in the Puranas are irrelevant matters. The true question is whether the thought-forms they generate have sufficiently soaked into the psychic substratum of the worshippers and remain potent enough to stimulate their whole being.

Srimad Bhagavata is also known as *Vishnu Bhagavata*. Its excellences are of such a transcending nature that it has practically eliminated all the other Puranas from the minds of men. It is the one book that is widely studied by all devotees and commented upon by scholars of all schools of thought. Though it is a *Vaishnava*-related Purana, and

therefore sectarian in a way, its sectarianism is not one of narrowness and exclusion, but only its way of eliciting the undivided attention and devotion of men to the Deity in focus. In the sublimity, fervour and comprehensiveness of the pattern of devotion it inculcates, in the dignity, elevation and terseness of its Sanskrit diction, in the lyrical beauty and wealth of its imagery, *Srimad Bhagavata* is unparalleled among the Puranas.

The purpose of the *Bhagavata* Purana is to produce a whole-hearted acceptance of the Vishnu concept and evoke devotional responses of the highest order from the mind of man. The synthesizing principle for the *Bhagavata* is *bhakti* or devotion of the highest order considered the fifth value of life. *Bhakti* is not merely the purifying agency, a means for a higher end; but it is the highest end itself, transcending liberation.

According to Prof. Hazra, the present text of the *Bhagavata* must have taken shape in the early half of the 6th century A.D.

The Rishabha-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between Raja Parikshit and Sri Suka as is the text of *Srimad Bhagavata*, with Sri Suka narrating the discourse by the king turned sage Rishabha to his sons and other audience on the content of the Vedanta philosophy, and the way he lived and died. The Rishabha-Gita is a brief exposition of the core content of the Vedanta philosophy revolving round the *Atman*.

The Gitas that find place in *Srimad Bhagavata* such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rishabha-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita propound monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Rishabha's Sermon and After

Once, while moving about the country, Rishabha was in Brahmavarta. There, in an assembly of sages, where a large audience was present to listen to him, Rishabha delivered a sermon especially to teach his sons, though they were endowed with self-control, humility, affection and discipline in all matters of life.

Rishabha was referred to as Rsabha in the Mahabharata, Visnu-Purana and Siva-Purana.

Rishabha said:

Oh children! The sacred human body that you have got in the world is not meant to be utilized for sensuous enjoyment as by low creatures, which too get such enjoyment through the filth they consume. It is to be used for observance of austerity with noble spiritual ends. By such austerity the mind becomes pure, enabling one to attain to the bliss of the *Brahman*.

The seekers that realize God without practising any spiritual discipline are called the *Nityasiddha* - the eternally perfect. Those who realize God through austerity, *japam* and the like are called the *Sadhanasiddha* - the perfect through spiritual discipline.

The practice of mortification does not necessarily lead to a virtuous life. The mortified may practise all the cardinal virtues such as prudence, fortitude, temperance and chastity and yet remain a thoroughly bad man. This is for the reason that his virtues are accompanied by, and connected with, the sins of pride, envy, chronic anger and uncharitableness assuming the proportion of active cruelty. Mistaking the means for the end, the puritan fancies himself holy because he is austere. But austerity is just the exaltation of the ego of the individual. Holiness, on the other hand, is the total denial of the separative self and abandonment of the will to God. To the extent that there is attachment to 'I', 'me' and 'mine', there is no attachment to God and only affirmation of self. Austerity coupled with holiness is what attains the *Brahman*.

The association with holy ones is the door for entrance to the realm of liberation. And the entrance to hell (spiritual degradation) consists in association with worldly-minded men who are intensely attached to women. Holy men are those who are even-minded, tranquil, peaceful, unperturbed, friendly to all, and endowed with all good qualities.

One is to free oneself from likes and dislikes, and to engage oneself in righteous self-effort to reach the supreme Truth. Self-effort is that which springs from right understanding of the scriptures and the teachings of holy persons.

The *samskaras* (tendencies, impressions) brought forward from the previous lives are of two kinds. The pure ones lead one to liberation and the impure ones keep one in

bondage. One is pure consciousness oneself, not inert physical matter. One is not impelled to action by anything other than oneself. It is open to one to strengthen the pure latent tendencies in preference to the impure ones. That is the reason why the holy men advise that one shall tread consciously the path that leads to the eternal good. The wise seeker knows that the fruit of his endeavor is always commensurate with the intensity of his self-effort. Fate or destiny or god does not ordain it otherwise. The seeker is, therefore, to endeavor for his true good – his salvation by a keen and intelligent study of the scriptures, by having the company of the holy ones and by right self-effort.

Or, holy men are those who consider the intense attraction they have for Me as their noblest attainment in life, who have no attachment to worldly-minded people, wife, children, properties, etc, and who are satisfied with such requirements as are enough to live on.

When there is non-attachment to family, property, worldly minded people, etc, the will turns away from the normal life. Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true indifference and perfect willlessness. The phenomenon by which this change is marked is the transition from virtue to asceticism. Voluntary and complete chastity or the denial of the will to live is the first step in asceticism. Second, it shows itself in voluntary and intentional poverty. It arises either as possessions are given away to mitigate the sufferings of others, or it is an end in itself as a constant mortification of wills itself, its visible form, its objectivity and the body. He nourishes the body sparingly lest it excite more strongly the will to seek expression in the worldly possessions. He is absorbed in the inward, direct, intuitive knowledge from which alone all virtue and holiness arise and which is expressed in precisely the same way in the conduct of life. Intuitively every man is conscious of all philosophical truths. Only the ascetic realizes and lives the truths.

Whoever struggles to satisfy the senses is bound to be morally and spiritually lethargic and bound to do many evil deeds. I find no meaning in men doing again and again the very kind of *karma* which has brought into existence this body which, besides being short-lived and ephemeral, is the cause of all suffering. The repetition of the *karma* is bound to result in new embodiments in a series, and more suffering.

Samsara is a series of lives with birth and death with no enlightenment. In ignorance, man binds himself to family and friends, to wealth and possessions and to pleasures associated with body. He gets involved in the cycle of *samsara* with no effort at redemption. He makes no effort to realize the ultimate Truth or the Reality. He lives the life of a beast, caring for satisfaction of the physical senses and appetites.

If a seeker is intent to overcome the series of lives, he is to associate with realized souls to know the way to overcoming *samsara*. The enlightened persons, having realized themselves, will be of help to the seeker in his effort.

As long as man does not make an earnest enquiry about the Spirit within, so long will he, out of ignorance, be debarring the dawn of spiritual consciousness in him. As

long as he works for selfish attainments, so long will his mind be inclined only towards such actions (and not for spiritual enquiry). And for such body-centred men given to selfish actions, embodiments are caused again and again.

There are three kinds of reality – the Supreme Spirit, the individual spirits and the material principle. There are three kinds of relationship – the relation of the Supreme Spirit to the individual spirits, the relations of the individual spirits to matter and the relation of matter to the Supreme Spirit. Each of the three terms is related to the other two. So each relationship has two directions.

One must practise discrimination to enquire the pros and cons of each issue and to choose the one that leads to God. For instance, ‘lust and greed’ is impermanent. God is the only Eternal Substance. Discrimination is the knowledge of what is real and what is unreal. It is the realization that God alone is the real and eternal Substance and all else is unreal, transitory and impermanent. One must cultivate intense zeal and love for God and be attracted to Him as the *Gopis* of Brindavan. The magician alone is real; his magic is illusory. This is discrimination. As long as the seeker does not practise enquiry and discrimination ultimately resulting in realization, so long does he continue to be in *samsara* – the repetition of birth and death.

When ignorance clouds the mind, it is enslaved by *samskaras* -the impressions of actions done earlier. As long as the mind does not develop attraction and love for Me, Vasudeva, so long release from embodiment does not arise.

The *samskaras* are creative and dynamic. They are of two kinds – cosmic and individual. The birth and the way one has been born, which is common to all individuals are due to cosmic *samskaras*. The *samskaras*, which are peculiar to one, are due to one’s own actions in one’s past births. For example, of two children born in a family, one may become a saint and the other a criminal. This is because of the personal *samskaras* of the individuals carried from their previous births.

Likewise, the new *samskaras* acquired during the present life may influence future activities in this life itself or in the next lives.

Buddhism believes that the *samskaras* become constituents of one’s personality by being passed on from moment to moment of its duration. The action-*samskaras* are transmitted from moment to moment of one’s existence, stay in one after one’s death and become active in producing one’s next birth, and so on. Ethical action will produce *samskaras* in the individual self for future action in this life or the later ones, paving the way for ultimate realization.

As long as man, unconcerned of the purpose of life, fails to perceive that the actions of his body-mind are not of the *Atman*, the spiritual Self, he will be completely oblivious of his spiritual nature and behave like an ignorant person, a merely body-centred being, seeking delight in the sex-dominated life of the householder suffering from its endless woes.

Ignorance arises when craving envelops the mind-stuff. This craving dries up the good and noble qualities of the mind and heart. It makes one hard and cruel. It is this craving that is responsible for bondage and misfortune. It breaks the heart of man and creates delusion in him. Caught in its whirlpool, man is unable to enjoy the pleasures that are within his reach. Though it appears that the craving is for happiness, it leads neither to happiness nor to fruitfulness in this life.

The union of man with woman is spoken of by great men as a new knot in their heart, added to the already existing knot of ego-sense. For, from that springs the terrible infatuation causing the extension of the sense of identification, consisting in the sense of 'mini-ness', with regard to house, property, son, friend, money and so on.

The ego is the thought 'I'. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. Other thoughts arise later. Holding a form, it comes into being. It stays on as the form is held. It breeds on it and grows strong. It changes form as suddenly as it assumes form.

All suffering revolves around egotism. Egotism is the sole cause of mental distress. Spreading the net of worldly objects of pleasure, it is the egotism that traps the living beings.

Indeed all the terrible calamities in this world are born of egotism. Egotism eclipses self-control, destroys virtue and dissipates equanimity. When one is under the influence of egotism, one is unhappy. Free from egotism, one is ever happy.

This knot of the heart, the ego-sense (*Ahamkara*), which is the result of tendencies created by past actions, is identical with the mind. So if man is to be totally free from the bondage to sensuous enjoyment, his mind, free from all modifications, should be dissolved in the category superior to it. Then man becomes free from the cause of bondage, namely, ignorance.

In all the experiences of happiness and unhappiness, as also in all the hallucinations and imaginations, it is the mind that does everything and experiences everything. It is the performer of all actions.

The seed of this world-appearance is ignorance. Man acquires this ignorance or mental conditioning effortlessly. It seems to promote pleasure though, in truth, it is the source of grief. It creates a delusion of pleasure only by the veiling of self-knowledge. When one becomes aware of the unreality of this mental conditioning, one's mind ceases to be. As long as there is no natural yearning for self-knowledge, so long ignorance or mental conditioning throws up an endless stream of world-appearance. This ignorance perishes when it turns towards self-knowledge.

The means to be adopted by one who wants to break this knot of the heart are as follows: Devotion to, and service of, an enlightened *guru* who is only Myself – the

Supreme Divinity; renunciation; equanimity in suffering and enjoyment; the constant remembrance that suffering is there in any attainment in this world or in the hereafter; intelligent reflection on the true nature of all experiences; abandonment of works for personal gains; austerity; dedication of works to Me; hearing the recitals of My divine actions every day; contact with great devotees having Me as their object of adoration; singing about My excellences; non-entertainment of animosity towards any one; equanimity; tranquility; cultivation of intense desire to get over identification with home and one's own body; study of scriptures; living in solitude; conquest of the senses and vital energy; strong faith; celibacy; vigilance; restraint of speech; the knowledge and insight to see My presence in everything; practice of *samadhi*; cultivation of equanimity; firmness, perseverance and discrimination. By practising all these, an earnest aspirant can get over the knot of the ego-sense.

A variety of ways to overcome ego-sense is listed above. The egotism covers everything like a veil. All troubles come to an end when the ego dies. Then, though living in the body, one is liberated. The ego is like a cloud. The moon cannot be seen on account of a thin patch of cloud. When the cloud disappears, one sees the moon.

Samadhi is the state in which the ego-sense is overcome completely.

When all functions of the Reason including sleep are stopped, the Reason stays in itself. But Reason is conscious and its consciousness is due to the reflection of the Cosmic Person. The reflection, with no object to know, stays in its original nature. This staying of rational consciousness in it is the *samadhi*. This is the aim of *yoga*.

When this rational consciousness does not stay in itself, the *knower* in it identifies itself with the functions of the Reason and assumes its forms. The final *samadhi* is the staying of the Cosmic Person in Him, not even as the knower. This is the stage of final liberation while in body. The earlier *samadhi* is only the beginning, the gateway to the final one. In the final stage, the three attributes of *Prakrti* will be in perfect harmony, maintaining perfect equilibrium.

The states of *samadhi* – the first and the final – cannot be had merely through physical and mental exercises. The most important preliminary is the purification of one's Reason, which is the 'I-am'. So long as the 'I-am' is activated by inner functions, it cannot be pure and stable. It can be made steady by practice and detachment. Practice is effort repeated. Detachment is equanimity and non-egoistic.

To obtain these faculties one is to practise friendliness with generous people, compassion for those in distress, affection instead of jealousy for those who are meritorious, and indifference towards the evil of evildoers. One is to practise self-control such as non-injury, non-stealing, truthfulness, celibacy and non-acceptance of gifts. It is significant that the preparation for achieving the states of *samadhi* is based on ethical action.

After one has, by the instruction of the *guru* and the careful practice of the above disciplines, completely overcome the knot of the heart (the ego-sense), which is born of ignorance and forms the seat of tendencies leading to works, one can give up all practices of *yoga*.

If, by the grace of the *guru*, one's ego vanishes, then one is liberated. For, once the ego-sense or self-centredness is shattered, *sadhana* by conscious effort becomes redundant.

These instructions should be given by a father to a son, by a teacher to a disciple, and by king to a subject, if they wish to attain to My state or aspire for My grace. It should be done patiently without getting annoyed even when they are found unreceptive. They should not be allowed to get more involved in works for sensuous gratification with which their discriminative faculty has already been dulled. What gain can a teacher have by inducing such men, already blinded spiritually, for want of discrimination, in their involvement in the whirlpool of *samsara*, to works and rituals for worldly advantages?

The ignorant men of the world without a proper awareness of their ultimate good acquire objects of enjoyment out of their intense desire for them. In mutual competition for these petty objects of enjoyment, they quarrel and fight among themselves and suffer misery without end.

God exists timelessly as the Godhead, as the Brahman whose essence is Being, Awareness and Bliss. God who is Spirit can only be worshipped in spirit and for His own sake. The ultimate good is to be sought in an *eternal divine now*, which those who sufficiently desire this good can realize as a fact of immediate experience. The peace that passes all understanding is the fruit of liberation into eternity. In everyday life, peace is also the root of liberation. Where there are violent passions and conflicts for petty enjoyment and sensuous pleasures, this ultimate good can ever be realized. This approach promotes tolerance and non-violence. Every event of violence or one-upmanship interferes with the normal and natural relationship between individual souls and the divine eternal Ground of all being. Such conduct is a sacrilegious rebellion against the divine order.

No wise person, who knows what is good for man and is endowed with a kindly disposition, would, on seeing another man steeped in ignorance and perverted in intelligence, encourage him to persist in the wrong path he is following, even as he would not do so with a blind man going towards a pit.

One, who would not save another from the path of death, on which the latter has entered, cannot be called one's *guru* if he is the *guru*, one's relative if he is a relative, one's father if he is the father, one's mother if she is the mother, one's deity if it is the deity, one's husband if he is the husband.

A guru is in the nature of an inner being sent to the seeker (disciple) by the Divine at the appropriate stage of his *sadhana* (spiritual practice) to attain realization. Age, caste,

creed, gender, vocation, etc of the guru is of no relevance to the seeker. The seeker is to feel the guru in his soul and accept him as such. He is the true guide to elevate the seeker to the realm beyond his mind. One who does not satisfy these criteria is no true *guru*.

This body of mine is of an inexplicable nature, as it cannot be accounted for by *karma*. My mind is dominated by the quality of *sattva* by virtue of which devotion to God flourishes in it, and *adharma* finds no place as it has been left far behind. So wise men call me Rishabha.

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. When the mind confidently engages in self-effort, it is then beyond the reach of sorrow. Whenever it strives, it surely finds the fruition of its striving. On the other hand, the physical body is only physical matter. Yet the mind deems it as its own.

The mind experiences only what it contemplates. If the mind turns towards the Truth, it abandons its identification with the body and attains the supreme state. Hence one is to endeavor with the mind consciously to make it taking to the pure path.

Rishabha was so called on account of his constant consciousness of the inherent bliss of the *Atman* and, as a result, absolute indifference to everything else in the physical world.

Hence all of you, who have sprung from my heart, serve, without any reservations, Bharata, your brother, who is adorable for his excellences. Serving him is equal to looking after the subjects.

Among objects that have existence, plants with life are superior to lifeless things like stone. Among living objects, moving beings like animals with consciousness are superior to plants. Among creatures with consciousness, man is superior. Higher than man are astral beings; higher than these are beings like *gandharvas*, *siddhas* and *kinnaras*.

Greater than *siddhas* and *kinnaras* are the *asuras*; greater than they are the *Devas* with Indra at their head. Greater than them are the sons of Brahma, the *Prajapatis*. Among the sons of Brahma, Rudra is the greatest; greater than Rudra is Brahma who is the devotee of Mahavishnu. And Mahavishnu is the devotee of holy men.

I do not consider any one to be equal to a holy man. I do not find any one higher. I accept whatever food men offer Me through holy men with faith and devotion wholeheartedly. This food is dearer than even what is offered in fire at the *Agnihotra*.

In this world, it is the holy man who holds within himself my primeval and the most worshipful form, the Veda. I do not find any one equal to the holy man in whom the

supremely pure qualities of *sattva*, control of mind, control of the senses, austerity, forbearance, truth, benevolence towards all and realization are present.

Attachment breeds desire. Desire leads to anger when desire is frustrated. Anger clouds mind. Such clouding destroys memory and then reason is destroyed, for reason and memory are intimately connected. So the holy man is neither attached to the temporal objects, nor hates them. He performs all actions without any egotism and seeks to attain oneness with the Supreme Being - *Nirvana*.

These supreme devotees who have nothing to call their own do not pray for any personal advantage even from Me, the Infinite and the Absolute Being, and the grantor of heavenly enjoyment and liberation. Why will they then seek small perishable worldly advantages?

One cannot attain God if one has even a trace of desire. Subtle is the way of *dharma*. If one is trying to thread a needle, one will not succeed if the thread has even a slight fibre sticking out.

Seeing that all things, moving and unmoving, are ensouled by Me, you must salute them every moment with sincere feeling. This indeed is real worship to Me.

True worship of the Supreme Spirit is true knowledge of IT - *jnana*. What is *jnana* (knowledge)? It is to know one's own self, dissolving the mind in it. It is to know the pure *Atman*, which alone is our real nature.

Knowledge is discriminative understanding of WHAT IS. Sri Sathya Sai defines it thus: *Advaita Darsanam Jnanam* – Knowledge is realization of Non-dualism.

The means for attaining it are the scripture, *tapas*, tradition, reasoning and experience. It consists in the understanding that the *Brahman* – the Supreme Spirit alone had been before the universe came into being, is what exists in the middle and will continue to be when the universe including Time dissolves itself into IT. The *Brahman* alone is the Reality and the Truth.

The true meaning of all that man does by mind, speech, cognition and actions is only adoration of Me. Without this kind of worship of Me, man will not be able to rid himself of the noose of *Yama*, which consists in the great infatuation of looking upon the body as the spirit.

Supreme consciousness is ongoing action or creation, consciously done with an awareness and sublime intention to experience the Self. This is “being at the spiritual game”. This is to say that one is to dedicate one's whole soul, whole mind and whole body to the process of creating self in the image and likeness of God. This is the process of self-realization or salvation or in whatever way it is called. This is a moment-to-moment conscious action in pursuit of the sole – soul goal.

Sri Suka said:

Though his sons knew all the above teachings in a way, he made his sermon in order that the world at large might understand this doctrine. After this, Rishabha, the friend of all, desired to teach and demonstrate to the world the *dharmā* of the *paramahamsas* characterized by repose in the Self, renunciation of actions, devotion, knowledge and dispassion. He, therefore, installed in succession to him as the ruler of the country, his eldest son Bharata, who was himself the embodiment of *sattva* and who was devoted to the servants of the Lord, and dependent on them in all matters. Then Rishabha left his residence, taking with him nothing but the body. He was henceforth like one inebriated, completely nude, and having dishevelled hair. Withdrawing into his heart the sacrificial fires like the *Ahavamyā* maintained by him, he took to the life of a *sannyasin* and wandered away from his country, the Brahmavarta.

A *sannyasin* is the renouncer of the world or the ascetic. At this stage of life, he gives up all connections with family and all rights and duties. He renounces the world. He spends the rest of his life as a man of God. He owns no property, lives by begging and changes his name so that others do not know his family connections. He wanders about and teaches spiritual truths to whosoever seek them.

In the midst of men he appeared from time to time as a senseless man, blind man, dumb man, a ghoul or a drunkard. In repulsive attires, he was found to remain silent, not answering even any one's questions.

He traveled through towns, villages, military cantonments, cow-pens, cowherd settlements, travelers' shelters, mountains, forests and hermitages. All along the way, as an elephant in rut is pestered by flies, evil men persecuted him by threatening, beating, urinating on him, spitting on him, throwing stones, cow-dung and dust at him, and insulting and abusing him. Being firmly established in the knowledge of the real and the unreal, and in the conviction that one was nothing but the Universal Spirit, he had no identification with the body, which, for men in ignorance, is the most real entity, but was, for him, unreal. So none of these persecutions disturbed him, and he traveled all over the world alone, his mind merged in the *Atman*.

One cannot have the knowledge of the *Brahman* as long as there is the slightest trace of worldliness. One is to keep one's mind aloof from the objects of sight, hearing, touch and other things of worldly nature. Only then, does one realize the *Brahman* as one's own innermost consciousness. As the all-pervading Spirit, the *Brahman* exists in all beings. IT is the beingness of all that exists. IT alone is.

By nature, he was endowed with very handsome and well-proportionate hands, legs, chest, arms, shoulders, neck and face. His face always had shone with a natural smile. His eyes were long and red like a lotus petal, having pupils that assuaged the grief of men. The parts of the face like the ears, eyes, cheeks, neck and nose were all well-proportioned and symmetrical. The veiled smile on his lips had always attracted the

interest of women. This handsome form of his now presented the appearance of a ghoul with dishevelled hair, dirty and unwashed, owing to lack of body consciousness.

The signs of God-vision are that a man who has seen God behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a ghoul, sometimes like an inert thing and sometimes like a mad man.

There are other signs, too. One is intense joy. There is no hesitancy in him. He is like the ocean; the waves and sounds are on the surface; below are profound depths.

When one finds that the very mention of God's name brings tears to one's eyes and makes one's hair stand on end, then it is known for certain that one has freed oneself from attachment to lust and greed, and attained God.

Rishabha realized from the persecutions of ignorant people that society was hostile to the practice of *yoga*. To retaliate against the persecutors would be still worse. So he gave up the habit of moving about and adopted what is called *ajagaravritti*, the way of life of a python which remains at a spot without going for food anywhere. He lay himself in one place, took whatever food he had there, performed the functions of excretion and stretched himself there rolling in the faecal matter, and got himself covered with it.

Pure love of a devotee has two characteristics. So intense is one's love of God that one becomes unconscious of outer things. One forgets the world. The second is that one has no feeling of "my-ness" toward the body. One wholly gets rid of the feeling that the body is his. Chaitanya, like Rishabha, experienced this kind of love.

His excreta, however, were so fragrant that the atmosphere up to ten *yojanas* was filled with its sweet smell.

Experienced practitioners of *Yoga* engage in meditative practices all through their life resulting in their attainment. It is often that whatever is excreted of their bodies fills the atmosphere with fragrance. It is also that, often, their bodies do not begin to decay until long after they are clinically dead.

Similarly, he followed also the ways of cow, deer and even of crow – walking, sitting, eating, drinking and excreting like all those creatures.

Bhagavan Rishabha then practised various forms of *yogic* discipline, experienced the unbroken bliss of the Spirit, and attained to the sense of oneness with the all-pervading Being. In the course of it, various *yogic* powers like movement in the sky with the speed of mind, power of disappearance, entry into another body, clairaudience, etc came to him automatically without his striving. But he rejected them all.

The *yoga* enables the seeker to realize the identity of his particular being with the whole world of nature (*Prakrti*) just as he realizes his identity with his physical body. He

can have as much control over the world, as over his body. The extraordinary powers resulting from such a control are not supernatural, but natural. He has to distinguish himself from every aspect of *Prakrti*, realize his separateness from it, then enter it and be one with it, without at the same time losing his discriminatory power attained, and then controls its movements from within. The first requirement is a kind of detachment from *Prakrti*, which results in its control.

As the final realization of such discriminatory oneness with the evolutes of *Prakrti* arises, at every stage, some extraordinary powers are attained. The achievement of *siddhis* or psychic powers such as becoming infinitesimally small (*anima*), becoming infinitely large (*mahima*), becoming infinitesimally light (*laghima*), becoming infinitesimally heavy (*gurutvam*), the power of touching anything at any distance (*prapti*), obtaining anything desired (*prakamya*), lordship over everything (*isitva*) and control over everything (*vasitva*) is dependent upon four factors – time, place, action and means. Among these, action or effort holds the key to all endeavors. All achievements are possible through the practice of *pranayama*.

At the end of the ultimate *samadhi*, the cognition of the seeker (*yogi*) is always truth. It is direct intuition of anything in the world like the intuition of the existence of one's body. How much of the cosmos can be known depends on the perfection of the *samadhi*. But one can obtain other powers (*siddhis*) by following other methods of concentration, at different levels.

2. Rishabha's End

Raja Parikshit said:

Oh great one! In the case of those who are established in the *Atman*, they have already burnt the seeds of *karma* in the fire of *yoga*. How can the powers of *yoga* that have come to them automatically, prove to be a bondage to them? Why did then Rishabha refuse to accept them?

The self-conscious *atman* in the *Jiva* is the spirit within, ontologically. It seeks realization of itself, meaning to be real with it. It is self-realization. It is an experience for the spirit or the self. It is beingness what it seeks.

The 'I' consciousness is the pure being, eternal existence, free from ignorance and thought illusion. If the seeker stays as the 'I', his being alone, without thought, the 'I' thought for him will disappear. The illusion will vanish for him forever.

The real Self is the infinite 'I'. The infinite 'I' is eternal. It is perfection. It is without a beginning or an end.

When the 'I' (ego) merges into the 'I' (existence-consciousness – *sat-cit*), what arises is the infinite 'I'. This is the true 'I' consciousness – the *Atman*.

Sri Suka Said:

What you say is true in a way. But though the mind has been controlled, it cannot be trusted too much. The best of *yogis* do not do so, knowing its fickleness and untrustworthiness, just as a determined hunter would not entrust a captured animal with any freedom.

Mind is a stream of thoughts passing over consciousness. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Thought, therefore, is the very nature of mind.

Everything in the world is dependent upon the mind, upon one's mental attitude. On examination, the mind itself appears to be unreal. But we are bewitched by it. With mind controlling our activity, we seem to be running after mirage.

The mind flits in all directions all the time and is unable to find happiness anywhere. Like the lion in a cage, the mind is ever restless, having lost its freedom. It is never happy with its present state.

When objectivity arises in one's consciousness, one becomes conditioned and limited. That is bondage. When objectivity is abandoned, one becomes mindless. That is liberation. When one thinks 'I am the *Jiva*', etc the mind arises and with it the bondage.

When one thinks ‘I am the Self; the *Jiva* and such other things do not exist’, the mind ceases and with it arises liberation.

So it is said: Do not compromise with the fickle mind. For, by doing so, very powerful personages have lost all their spiritual powers.

The conditioned mind alone is bondage; liberation is when the mind is unconditioned. The conditioning of the mind drops away when the Truth is clearly seen and realized. When the conditioning has ceased, one’s consciousness is made supremely peaceful. ‘The Self alone is all that is’ is clear perception. ‘Conditioning’ and ‘mind’ are mere words with no corresponding truth; when the truth is investigated, they cease to be meaningful – this is clear perception. When this clear perception arises, there is liberation. In essence, bondage is the craving for pleasure; its abandonment is liberation.

A *yogi* who trusts his mind too much is like a husband who does so in regard to his unfaithful wife. The fickle mind might betray him into the hands of his enemies like lust and its allies, just as the unfaithful wife might betray her husband by colluding with her paramour.

The mind flits in all directions all the time and is unable to find happiness anywhere. Like the lion in a cage, the mind is ever restless, having lost its freedom. It is never happy with its present state.

Can any man of true discrimination put full trust in the mind in the belief that it has come under his control - the mind which is the root cause of all dangerous passions like lust, anger, pride, greed, sorrow, infatuation, fear and the bondage of *karma*?

Everything in the world is dependent upon the mind, upon one’s mental attitude. On examination, the mind itself appears to be unreal. But we are bewitched by it. With mind controlling our activity, we seem to be running after mirage.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world. When the mind is transcended, the world vanishes, dissolves into its source.

Thus, though he was the king of kings, he veiled his divine nature from vulgar eyes by assuming the attitude of a senseless man in dress, language and conduct. Next, in order to show how great *yogis* abandon their bodies, he established himself in the perpetual consciousness of the *Atman* by recognizing the indivisibility of the *Atman* into the seer and the seen, and thus overcoming even the modicum of tendencies he had assumed for the blessing of the world.

Just as water remains water and flows down, and as fire does not abandon its nature of rising up, consciousness remains forever consciousness. To the enlightened person, there is only one Infinite Consciousness – Pure *Atman*, indivisible and

immutable. In reality one is unborn and one does not die. The notions that ‘I am’, ‘these are’, etc do not exist for the enlightened one.

In the seed, there is no diversity. However, there is a notion of potential diversity of leaves, flowers, fruits, etc supposedly present in it. Even so, Cosmic Consciousness is one devoid of diversity. Yet the universe of diversity is said to exist potentially in the said Consciousness.

Without connection with even the *lingasarira* (subtle body), by the mere remaining momentum left of the impulsion given by *yogamaya*, his body traveled all over the land, and reached the region of Konka, Venkata, and Kutaka included in Dakshina Karnataka. There he traveled in the forest at the foot of the mountain known as Kutakadri like a ghoul – with the mouth filled with stones, hair dishevelled, and stark naked.

The subtle body (*lingasarira*) consists of the inner instrument, the senses and the subtle elements. It is considered the same as the *Jiva* (soul) except the *atman*. It is the subtle body without the gross body that is given by the parents. What transmigrates on the death of an individual is the same subtle body.

The reflection of consciousness within itself is known as *purvastaka*. It is also known as the subtle body – *lingasarira*. As long as the *purvastaka* functions, the body lives. When it ceases to function, the body is said to have died. When the body dies, the subtle body chooses another, suited to fulfill the hidden *vasanas*.

Once a forest fire broke out there, by the mutual rubbing of bamboos in a strong wind. The whole forest, along with his holy body, was burnt in that fire.

Agastya-Gita

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Introduction

The Agastya-Gita is contained in chapters 51 & 52 of Varahapurana. A Purana belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

In a pertinent passage, the Varahapurana observes that the mythological stories should be viewed as pertaining to two different planes, the concrete and the abstract. The concrete is exemplified by the characters figuring in the stories and the abstract by the qualities in them.

As for the Varahapurana, it is in the form of a conversation between Varaha, the Boar-incarnation of Lord Visnu, and Dharani, the Earth held up by him in his tusk, as given by Suta, the mythological narrator. The whole discourse is in reply to the Earth's questions to the Lord seeking enlightenment as to the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world and what constitutes righteous conduct and virtuous action for happiness in life and ultimate liberation from worldly existence.

According to P.V. Kane and R.C. Hazra, the earlier parts of the Varahapurana could not be later than the 10th century A.D. while there could have been some interpolations as late as the 15th century.

The Agastya-Gita is in the nature of exposition of the *Moksha-dharma* and the *Karmakanda* as elucidated in the Veda. The Agastya-Gita is an allegory on liberation and evolution on the basis of Sankhya philosophy.

The Gitas that find place in Mahapuranas such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, the Agastya-Gita propound monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Mokshadharmā

Varaha said:

After hearing the account of Dharanivrata from sage Durvasas, Satyatapas went to a slope of the Himalaya mountain where the river there was *Pushpabhadra* (beautiful with flowers), the stone *Citrasila* (beautifully shaped) and the banyan tree *Bhadravata* (particularly attractive), and building a hermitage there, spent the rest of his life in contemplation.

Earth said:

Thousands of aeons have elapsed since I performed this *vrata*, and now I have forgotten all about it.

By your blessings I now begin to get a recollection of all that. I am, therefore, anxious to know more.

Therefore, kindly tell me what Agastya did after returning to the residence of Bhadrasva.

Varaha said;

When the sage returned, Bhadrasva asked him about *Moksha-dharma*.

Bhadrasva said:

Oh sage! By what means is the bondage of worldly existence snapped, and by what means the sorrows in life can be got over?

Agastya said:

Oh king! Listen well to this story relating to what is distant and what is near, and based on the division into the seen and the unseen.

At the time when there was no day, no night, no direction, no heaven, no gods and no sun, a king named Pasupala was looking after numerous beasts.

He once went to see the eastern ocean, and there, on that shore of that limitless expanse of water, saw a forest full of snakes.

There were eight trees and a freely flowing river. Five important persons were there moving horizontally and upwards. One of them was holding an effulgent woman.

The woman was holding on her chest a person having the splendour of a thousand suns, and with three colours and three divisions.

Seeing the king, all of them became silent and still; and as soon as the king entered the forest, they became combined into a single being.

The king was then encircled by the serpents, and he began to think about how he could kill them and escape.

When he was thus thinking, another person having the three colours, white, red and yellow, came out of his body.

He asked by gesticulation where he should go. Just then there arose *Mahat*.

Mahat or Reason (*buddhi, vijnana, sattva*) is the first evolute of *Prakrti*. Its function is to make decisions both cognitively and ethically, both in cognition and in action. It is cosmic and covers the whole world (universe). The world comes into being out of a cosmic assertion or decision “That is”. This cosmic decision is related to the Cosmic Person. While it is cosmic for the world, it is separate for each individual. In relation to the individual, it may be either the transparent or the static. In relation to the transparent character, it exhibits the qualities of knowledge, ethical detachment, etc. In relation to the static character, it exhibits the opposite qualities. Thus Reason may be considered to relate to the Cosmic Person in Its highest character, while it may be related to the individual beings in varying degrees between the highest and the lowest qualities.

The king was covered by that and asked to be alert in mind. He was then confronted by the woman (who was really *Maya*).

The enquiry of Non-dualism or Monism is ontology of the Spirit. *Sankara*, the greatest exponent of the Non-dualism of the *Vedanta*, introduces the concept of *Maya*, synonymous with *Prakrti* as the instrument that creates, sustains and dissolves the world of forms and names.

The verbal root of *Maya* is *ma*, meaning to measure. The etymological root of the word *Maya* makes it clear that it is something that makes the object we experience determinate through spatial, temporal and causal laws.

The Svetasvatara Upanisad gives an idea that *Maya* is a kind of net thrown on Being, making it look like the world fixed by some laws, constituting the structure of the net. This idea makes it clear that *Maya* is not mere illusion. The object of any illusion, like that of dream, disappears later, whatever fright it may have created in the person experiencing it. The idea of the *Brahman* creating the world, which does not exist on its own, through His will, involves something like the idea of illusion. Salvation as the ultimate goal is freedom from determinateness whether it is the life of pain or pleasure, happiness or sorrow, good or bad, knowledge or ignorance. It is the same as freedom from *Maya*.

P. Sriramachandrudu explains succinctly that *Maya* is indescribable. It is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both. It is not existent, for the *Brahman* alone is the existent (*sat*). It is not non-existent, for it is responsible for the appearance of the world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent as such a statement is self-contradictory. It is thus neither real, nor unreal; it is *Mithya*. But it is not a non-entity or a figment of imagination like the son of a barren woman. In the example of a rope mistaken for a snake, the rope is the ground on which the illusion of snake is super-imposed. When right knowledge dawns, the illusion disappears. The relation between the rope and the snake is neither that of identity nor of difference, nor of both. It is unique and known as *non-difference* (*tadatmya*). Similarly, the *Brahman* is the ground, the substratum on which the world appears through Its potency - *Maya*. When right knowledge dawns, the real nature of the world is realized as *Maya* disappears.

He was thus engulfed by *Maya*. Then the Lord of all beings caught him in his possession.

Then five other persons came there and surrounded him.

All these hid themselves within the king's person when the serpents came united to attack.

The king then appeared highly resplendent and all his sins disappeared.

In him were unified earth, water, fire, air and ether and all their qualities.

Gross Elements (*Mahabhutas*) are the products of the five subtle elements (*tanmatras*). They are Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. According to the Vedantic tradition, out of the subtle element of ether, gross ether comes; out of gross ether, subtle air; out of subtle air, gross air; out of gross air, subtle fire; out of subtle fire, gross fire; out of gross fire, subtle water; out of subtle water, gross water; out of gross water, subtle earth; and out of subtle earth, gross earth. Although the Cosmic gross elements are created thus out of one another, every object in the world is considered to contain all the five elements, but in different proportions. This doctrine of every object containing five elements is called Quintuplication. It is doubtful whether this doctrine can have a scientific basis. Even the doctrine of the five elements being based on the five senses may not be scientific in the modern sense of the term.

The gross elements are symbolic of solid matter, liquid matter, energy matter, and gaseous matter in relation to the first four elements, space remaining as such. They are the transformations of the subtle elements. Otherwise, the correlativity like that between hearing and sound cannot be explained. Reversely the correlativity points to the unitary origin in the ego and finally in the 'I' consciousness.

Thus Pasupala unified all these that stood around him.

Seeing the king then, the tri-coloured person said to him:

‘Oh king! I am your son; please command me to do what you wish. We decided to bind you, but were defeated and bound by you, and we now remain hidden in your body. When I have become your son, everything else will arise of its own’.

Told thus, the king spoke to the man.

‘You (say you) are my son, and, as a result, other things arise. But I don’t desire to have attachment to any of the pleasures men may have’.

The divine Ground reveals itself only to those in whom there is no ego-centredness or alter-ego-centredness either of will, imagination, feeling or intellect. It is the state of imagelessness in contemplation and, in active life, the state of total non-attachment in which eternity can be apprehended within time; samsara becomes one with nirvana.

The bliss into which the enlightened soul is delivered is something quite different from pleasure associated with the body. Blessedness depends on non-attachment and selflessness. It can, therefore, be enjoyed without satiety and revulsion. It is a participation in eternity and, therefore, remains itself without diminution or fluctuation. The liberated soul attains to bliss eternal and immeasurable, and abides in the Brahman.

So saying he released the son, and with him others also. And freed from them, he stood alone.

2. Karmakanda

Agastya said:

The king made himself into a tri-coloured being and produced a tri-coloured son named *Aham* (ego).

Ego is the sense of the 'I' in experiences such as 'I know X', 'This is mine'. Its function is to appropriate all experiences to itself. Otherwise, the experiences become impersonal. This is to say that all objective experiences fall within personal experiences and cognitions. Otherwise, there will be no door open even from initial or tentative subjectivism to reach the objective World.

The ego is of three kinds, depending on which of the three attributes is dominant – the transparent ego, the active ego and the static ego. In fact, the three are aspects or phases of the same ego. All the other non-physical categories such as the mind, the five senses, the five organs of action, the five subtle elements and the five gross elements, all of which constitute the world of experience issue out of the ego. It comprehends and covers the entire world. It is not merely related to any one point of reference.

There is no experience that is not the experience of the ego. Neither the mind nor the senses work in the absence of the ego such as 'I see', 'I do', etc. They work only in unison with the ego. If the ego is not present, the mind does not think, nor do the senses perceive. Yet the Ego is a product of *Prakrti* or Nature.

The ego is the thought 'I'. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. Other thoughts arise later. Holding a form, it comes into being. It stays on as the form is held. It breeds on it and grows strong. It changes form as suddenly as it assumes form.

All suffering revolves around egotism. Egotism is the sole cause of mental distress. Spreading the net of worldly objects of pleasure, it is the egotism that traps the living beings.

Indeed all the terrible calamities in this world are born of egotism. Egotism eclipses self-control, destroys virtue and dissipates equanimity. When one is under the influence of egotism, one is unhappy. Free from egotism, one is ever happy.

Egotism is but an idea based on a false association of the self with the physical elements.

When the self of one, self-forgetfully, identifies itself with the objects seen and experienced and thus becomes impure, there arises craving based on ego-sense. This craving intensifies delusion. All sufferings and calamities in the world are the result of craving. Ego-sense is the source of all sins. One is to cut at the very root of this ego-sense

with the sword of wisdom. When the whole universe is realized as illusory, craving loses its meaning.

Craving ascends to the skies and suddenly dives into the nether world. It is ever restless, for it is based on the emptiness of the mind. He alone is happy who is free from egotism. Only he is a hero who is able to cross the ocean known as the mind and the senses.

The delusion known as the ego-sense is like the blueness of the sky.

Of the mind and the ego-sense, if one ceases, the other ceases to be.

If one focuses one's thought on ego-sense, it takes to flight. One is, therefore, able to transcend the phenomenal existence of the ego when one dives deep into the source from where the 'I' thought arises. Everything rises with the rise of the ego. Everything subsides when the ego subsides. To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation.

Renunciation of everything puts an end to all sorrow. By renunciation, everything is gained. Renunciation of the ego-sense leads to realization of the Absolute. There is total renunciation when the mind – *citta* with the ego-sense is abandoned. When one abandons the mind, one is no more afflicted by fear of old age, death and such other events in life. That alone is supreme bliss. All else is terrible sorrow.

Egotism is quietened by constant practice – *abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* is thinking of 'That' alone, speaking of 'That', conversing of 'That' with one another and utter dedication to 'That' alone. When one's intellect is filled with beauty and bliss, when one's vision is broad and when passion for sensual enjoyment is absent in one, then that is *abhyasa* or practice. When one is firmly established in the conviction that this universe has never been created and, therefore, it does not exist as such, and when thoughts like 'this is the world', 'I am pleased', etc do not arise at all in one, and then that is *abhyasa* or practice. In such state one is beyond attraction and repulsion and, as such, egotism. One will have attained true wisdom. This is the practice of the yoga of true wisdom by means of which one acquires the faculty of instantly materializing one's thoughts. By such practice one acquires full knowledge of the past, the present and the future, too.

In other words, what covers the embodied soul is egotism. This egotism covers everything like a veil. All troubles come to an end when the ego dies. Then, though living in the body, one is liberated. This *Maya*, that is, the ego, is like a cloud. The sun cannot be seen on account of a thin patch of cloud. When the cloud disappears, one sees the sun. If, by the grace of the guru, one's ego vanishes, then one is liberated.

The son got a daughter Avabodha (consciousness) and she got a son Vijnana (knowledge).

Consciousness is the central aspect of our inner world and thus, first of all, an experience. Basically the term has been used in three distinct ways. First, it is as a

theoretical construct referring to the system by which an individual becomes aware of. Second, it is to refer to reflective awareness, an awareness of being aware. Third, it is as a general term encompassing all forms of awareness. The first two ways of experiencing consciousness are restrictive. Therefore, consciousness is best utilized as a general term referring to all forms of experience or awareness. This is not restricted to either conscious behaviour or to waking experience.

Shankara says, “If you do not have a consciousness, then everything is dark and nothing in the universe exists.” This corresponds to the view of the modern quantum mechanics that unless you can observe a thing, it just does not exist. This is for the reason that there must be an interaction between the observer and the observed to complete a measurement. It is consciousness that fills the bill in the material world in the sense that it determines its existence.

The Perennial Philosophy considers that pure consciousness is the true state of the divine Ground or the Godhead and it permeates the whole universe as the pure activity of the Godhead. All conscious experiences are the states of consciousness altered or modified with respect to pure consciousness. As a corollary, consciousness is presumed present in all beings – sentient and insentient in the universe. The material world exists. The conscious world exists. They go together. It is the combined cycle that operates. One must have the other. And there is not one without the other. Both are ever in symbolic interaction with each other.

Taittiriya Upanisad propounds that the *Brahman* is the Truth, Consciousness and the Infinite. From the *Atman* is born ether, air, fire, water, earth, plants, food and man as ‘I’, one from the other sequentially. Man is called *atman* because he eats, swallows and absorbs (*adyate*) the different elements constituting the objective world. Inward to the *atman* made of food is the *atman* made of the vital principle (*prana*). Inward to the vital principle lies the mind, inward to mind, reason (*vijnana*) and inward to reason, bliss (*ananda*). Each latter is the *atman* of the former and each former is the body of the latter. But every one of them is a form of *Purusa* (*Atman*) Himself. Thus, *vijnana* (reason) is what leads to bliss (*ananda*), the state of liberation.

He got five sons comprehending all comprehensible objects, and named Aksa and the rest (eye etc).

What comprehend all comprehensible objects are the sense organs (*jnanendriyas*) corresponding to their sense perceptions. They are eye, ear, nose, taste buds in the tongue and skin. The five corresponding powers of sense perception are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling by touch.

These (sense-organs) were the *Dasyus* (hostile aborigines) who were subjugated by the king.

In their abstract form, they made an abode for themselves (in the king's person), a city consisting of nine outlets, a single pillar, four pathways, and numerous rivulets and ponds.

All the nine entered the city together and soon Pasupala became the concrete *Purusa*.

Established in that city, the king brought the Vedas there by contemplating on them.

The king also arranged there for all the *Vratas*, rules and sacrifices laid down in them.

The *Vratas* are primarily meant to propitiate Visnu, but also Siva, Sakti and others with fasting, prayer, worship and gifts. Each *Vrata* is taken as capable of dissolving sins, and to confer special benefits such as health, wealth, progeny, etc. But performance of *Vratas* without any desire is also recommended.

The rules include recitation of *mantras* prescribed for ritualistic worship. They may not be drawn from the Veda, but are only *puranic*.

The king once felt distressed and evoked the *karmakanda* (ritualism), and then the Supreme Lord, remaining in *yogic* slumber, got forth a son with four faces, four hands and four feet, embodying the four Vedas.

Karmakanda is what is prescribed for performance of sacrifices (*yajnas – yagas*) in the Veda. In other words, it is Vedic ritualism.

From then onwards, every object of sense came to be under the king's perfect control.

He found the sea and the forest, the grass and the elephant, etc alike, as a result of his invocation of the *karmakanda*.

Sruthi-Gita

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Introduction

The Sruti-Gita is contained in chapter 87 of *Skandha X* of Srimad Bhagavata which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Sruti-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between Raja Parikshit and Sri Suka as is the text of Srimad Bhagavata, with Sri Suka narrating the discourse by sage Sadanand as explained by *Rishi* Narayana to sage Narada on the content of the Vedanta philosophy. Sruti-Gita is a brief exposition of the core content of the Vedanta philosophy revolving round the Brahman – the Supreme Being.

The Gitas that find place in Srimad Bhagavata such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rishabha-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

The Hymn of the Veda

Raja Parikshit said:

Oh enlightened one! The Vedas, being constituted of words, can only describe entities coming within the scope of the three *gunas* of *Prakrti*. How can they then really reveal *Brahman*, the Absolute Being, who is not included in the *gunas* of *Prakrti*, who cannot be defined or described as an object before us, and who is beyond the relation of cause and effect?

Prakrti (*Unmanifest*) is the world of change in its unmanifest state. For this reason it is called the Unmanifest (*Avyakta*). It is also called the Primary (*Pradhana*) as it is the source, the origin of everything therein.

Prakrti has three attributes – *Sattva* (serenity, tendency to manifestation), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (inertia, obstruction to manifestation). Everything in the world is the product of these three attributes.

The *Brahman*, on the other hand, is considered the Supreme Deity. IT is not one among many. Everything in the world has its being in the *Brahman*. IT is concrete in the sense that IT IS and asserts itself in the form “I-AM”. We only know that IT IS. It cannot be a person, as the word is generally understood. IT IS, and yet indeterminate, beyond speech and concept.

Sri Suka said:

The all-powerful Lord created faculties like intellect, mind, senses and *prana* in the *Jiva* in order that they may enjoy sense contacts in the world, may perform works, gain the felicities of heaven in the hereafter, and attain to liberation from *samsara*.

The faculties such as the mind are in the nature of the non-physical categories that apply to human beings and other living organisms as well as all the objects in the cosmos. The difference may be in terms of degrees of applicability. As consciousness is all-pervading and permeating both the sentient beings and insentient objects, the categories become applicable to all, though in varying degrees.

Different seers consider the non-physical categories differently. The Sankhya philosophy gives 25 categories in the nature of ontological entities. They are *Purusa* and *Prakrti*, Reason, Ego, Mind, five Sense Organs, five Organs of Action, five Subtle Elements and five Gross Elements. Sri Ramakrishna sees in his vision 24 cosmic principles created by the Divine Mother. The categories of the Sankhya philosophy and those stated by Sri Ramakrishna are the same except that Sri Ramakrishna does not include *Purusa* in the list. Sri Ramakrishna considers that these categories relate to *Prakrti* or Nature and are different from *Purusa* or Supreme Consciousness.

It is not proper to doubt the efficacy of the Veda. For, it is the ignorance-shattering science culminating in the knowledge of the *Brahman*, accepted as such by the most ancient of ancient wise men for times immemorial. A man accepting it with faith and sincerity and living a life of renunciation attains to the blessedness of abidance in the Supreme Spirit.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, “The knowledge of the Absolute is absolute in itself. No amount of study will give this knowledge. It is not theory; it is realization. Cleanse the dust from the mirror; purify your own mind. In a flash you realize that you are the Brahman and your self is Its reflection. In other words, the Brahman is known to every human being as “I am”. But man does not know himself as he is.

The *Atman* (Brahman) is self-illuminated. Cause and effect do not reach the *Atman*. This disembodiedness is freedom. The *Atman* – the *Brahman* is beyond what was, or is, or is to be”.

In order to make this clear, I shall narrate to you an episode relating to sage Narayana. It is a conversation that took place between Narada and *Rishi* Narayana.

Once in the course of his peregrinations all over the universe, Narada, the beloved of the Lord, went over to Badaryashrama to see *Rishi* Narayana who has been engaged during the whole *kalpa* in austerity constituted of *dharma* (righteousness), *jnana* (knowledge) and *sama* (practice of *samadhi*) for the material and spiritual good of men inhabiting *Bharatavarsha*.

Narada put this very question to sage Narayana who was sitting there surrounded by *rishis* living in the village of Kalapagrama.

The worshipful Narayana narrated to Narada what had taken place during a seminar on the *Brahman* at a sacrificial assembly held in *Jana-loka* by the ancients.

Rishi Narayana said:

Oh son of self-born Brahma! It was in *Jana-loka*, under the auspices of the mind-born sons of Brahma who are lifelong celibates, and amidst the residents of that region that this prolonged discussion on the *Brahman*, participated in by a large number of savants and self-controlled sages, took place,

You had gone to *Swetadweepa* at that time to pay obeisance to its lord Aniruddha when this assembly for discussion on the *Brahman* took place in *Jana-loka*. The question investigated then was the very question you have now raised.

Though all these sages were equal in learning, austerity, character, and even-sightedness towards friends, foes and neutrals, they made one among themselves, Sanandana the speaker while the others heard him with deep attention.

Sanandana said:

In order to awaken a sleeping emperor in the morning, the minstrels attached to his court come and proclaim his glorious deeds in praise of him. In the same way, in order to awaken the Lord at the end of the *pralaya* from the cosmic slumber into which He had entered when the previous *kalpa* had ended, withdrawing into Himself the whole universe and the powers connected with it, the *Srutis* (the Veda) recited a hymn recalling all His distinctive majesties.

The *Srutis* said:

Hail, Hail unto the Supreme Master unconquerable! Withdraw Thy *Maya*, constituted of the three *gunas*, from covering the knowledge of all *Jiva*, moving and unmoving, with the pall of ignorance. But in Thee, the controller of *Maya*, *Maya* is not the veil of ignorance as it is in the *Jiva*, but Thy inherent puissance and divine majesty. The Veda reveals Thee as sometimes manifesting Thy inherent power of *Maya* and at others as subsisting in Thyself, with all powers quiescent.

The Svetasvatara Upanisad gives an idea that *Maya* is a kind of net thrown on Being, making it look like the world fixed by some laws, constituting the structure of the net. This idea makes it clear that *Maya* is not mere illusion. The object of any illusion, like that of dream, disappears later, whatever fright it may have created in the person experiencing it. The idea of the *Brahman* creating the world, which does not exist on its own, through His will, involves something like the idea of illusion. Salvation as the ultimate goal is freedom from determinateness whether it is the life of pain or pleasure, happiness or sorrow, good or bad, knowledge or ignorance. It is the same as freedom from *Maya*.

P. Sriramachandrudu explains succinctly that *Maya* is indescribable. It is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both. It is not existent, for the *Brahman* alone is the existent (*sat*). It is not non-existent, for it is responsible for the appearance of the world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent as such a statement is self-contradictory. It is thus neither real, nor unreal; it is *Mithya*. But it is not a non-entity or a figment of imagination like the son of a barren woman. In the example of a rope mistaken for a snake, the rope is the ground on which the illusion of snake is super-imposed. When right knowledge dawns, the illusion disappears. The relation between the rope and the snake is neither that of identity nor of difference, nor of both. It is unique and known as *non-difference* (*tadatmya*). Similarly, the *Brahman* is the ground, the substratum on which the world appears through Its potency - *maya*. When right knowledge dawns, the real nature of the world is realized as *maya* disappears.

The whole universe of experience is ultimately Thyself alone. For, it is known to the Veda and the *rishis* that Thou alone remain when everything is dissolved to the subtlest state. Just as the appearance and disappearance of all effects like pots take place in their material substance clay, so do the appearance and dissolution of the universe take place in Thee, their material cause. But there is this difference that, unlike clay, Thy

substance is not in the least affected by the creation of the universe out of, and its dissolution in, Thee. As everything that is conceived by thought and touched by the senses is only Thy manifestation and, therefore, Thyself the various deities and forms of worship described in the Veda really relate to Thee only, though indirectly. The steps we place on any object on the ground, though they appear to be placed on the object, are in the final sense placed on the earth only, as the earth supports all objects. So, too, do all the words and teachings of the Veda point towards Thee, though they may appear to deal with deities.

The world (cosmos) is the realm of cause and effect, and the realm of means and ends or of instruments and effects. This world is the world of process, action. The world of action is an empirical reality. It is also an empirical being. This does not mean that it is only a matter for experience. For instance, dreams are experienced. But they are not considered an empirical reality. An empirical reality is meant to be a realm of action, the result of past actions and impressions (*samskaras*), and is changeable through present actions, controlled by the laws of causes-and-effects and ends-and-means.

Logically and ontologically, the *Brahman* is prior to everything. IT is, therefore, the origin of everything. When the *Brahman* is considered the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world, then IT must be the personal God. This interpretation does not conflict with the position that the *Brahman* is without qualities (*nirguna*). It only means that the *Brahman* is the ground of everything. This conforms to the concept of the four levels of being, each higher being, being the ground of the lower and ultimately the *Brahman* is the ground of all the lower levels and the world.

As IT is the ground or basis, the *Brahman* is called the cause (*karana*), in the ordinary sense of the term, of the world. Incidentally the Sanskrit word '*karana*' also means ground, support and reason besides cause. It, therefore, follows that the *Brahman* is only the supporting being (ground) of the forms of the world. What constitutes the forms of the world is *Prakrti* (*the unmanifest - Maya*).

Anyway, the world of forms is an ordered whole in which the laws of space, time and causation hold true. But it is not a self-contained and self-consistent whole. The self-contradictory nature of the world in relation to space, time and causation establishes it. What lies beyond the world is no chaos, but being itself. The being of the world we experience is the *Brahman* – the Supreme Being. It is the nature of the Being to support the world in spite of its self-contradictions. The self-contradictory aspect always points to something that is at least relatively not self-contradictory. In spite of its self-contradictory nature, causality holds true in the world.

Oh Master of *Prakrti*! Knowing that all the divine manifestations and Incarnations are really Thyself, great sages have dived into the ocean of the world-sanctifying accounts of Thy sportive actions as such divine Incarnations and manifestations, and, through that, assuaged the heat of all their suffering. Oh Thou the Supreme One! It is then needless to say that those who overcome the limitations of space, time and mental

modifications and intuit Thy Being will overcome all suffering, and be established in Thy state of Supreme Bliss.

Mythological epics refer to Divine Incarnations. They represent the actual descent of the Brahman in various mundane forms into the world. The Immanent dwells in all souls and accompanies them in life and death. It is the *Brahman* residing in the spirit (*atman*) of man like lightning in a cloud. The Incarnate as worshiped is the idol of God in various forms acceptable to devotees.

God's play on earth as an Incarnation is the manifestation of the glory of the *Chit-sakti*, the Divine power. That which is the *Brahman* is also Rama, Krishna and Siva.

The special manifestations of the Absolute are the Incarnations – the known and the knowable. God becomes the Incarnations in different ages to show us the way to become perfect.

The concept of Divine Incarnation is the first link in the chain of ideas leading to recognition of the oneness of God and man. God appearing first in one human form, then reappearing at different times in other human forms is at last recognized as being in every human form, or in all human beings.

Man can be said to be a man, truly alive, only if he adores Thee. Otherwise, he is merely a pair of bellows, a breathing machine. For, Thou art the Power that activates the insentient cosmic categories and enables them to take the shape of the universe, including man. In the human personality so formed, Thou, as the *Purusa*, permeates the five sheaths (*kosas*) – the *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnamaya* and *Anandamaya*. Interpenetrating all these and taking their shape, Thou art described also as transcending them as their support – the One remaining as the ultimate substratum when all the distinctions of cause and effect are eliminated.

The *Vedanta* philosophy describes five *koshas* (sheaths) that are stated to exist in a human body. They are the *annamayakosha* or gross physical sheath made of and sustained by food; the *pranamayakosha* or vital sheath consisting of the five vital forces, the *manamayakosha* or mental sheath, the *vijnanamayakosha* or sheath of intelligence and the *anandamayakosha* or sheath of bliss.

The five vital forces constituting the *pranamayakosha* are stated to be *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *vyana* and *udana*. These five denote the physical, biological (vital), mental, rational and blissful functions. The *Taittiriya* Upanisad refers to them as *atmans* (selves) in a person. They are presumed arranged, one inside the other, covering the spirit – *atman*, which is the innermost constituent. These are really levels of one's existence as man.

The *Katha* Upanisad refers to seven levels of existence or of the self, the seventh being the highest, beyond which there can be nothing. This highest level is that of the *Purusa*, the absolute 'I'-Consciousness.

Among the followers of the path of the *rishis*, those who are most gross-minded called *sarkarayanans* meditate on Thee in the stomach region, that is, the centre in the navel called *manipura*, probably including *muladhara*. Others, more subtle-minded called *arunis*, meditate on Thee in the spiritual dimension in the heart region called *dahara*. From the heart, *sushumna*, the spiritual conduit leads to the head, the highest region where Thou art intuited in the *sahasrara* or the thousand-petalled lotus. There is no more birth and death for those attaining this.

Tantra preaches a kind of *yoga*, called *Kundalini* (*serpent power*), leading to spiritual perception and mystic visions. It is awakening the spiritual energy latent in human beings.

This philosophy elucidates that there are seven centres in the body designated as *Muladhara*, *Svadhista*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddha*, *Ajna* and *Sahasrara*. These are considered to be the dynamic centres where the spiritual energy becomes vitalized.

These centres placed in the *Sushumna* (*antravestika*) form the ascending steps by which the *Kundalini* or the spiritual energy passes from the foot of the spine to the cerebrum. The spiritual energy passes through these centres upward and downward with no resistance, along the *Sushumna*. It is said to penetrate the six centres, also called the six *charkas*, before it gets vitalized in the *Sahasrara* centre. This is known as *Shatchakrabheda* - penetration of the six *chakras*.

The *Sahasrara* is considered the abode of Lord Siva - the Supreme *Brahman*. This abode is stated to be as white as the radiant full moon, as bright as lightning and as mild and serene as moonlight. The *Sahasrara* centre is where the spiritual energy manifests itself in its full glory and splendour. The lotuses of these centres are like the fruits and leaves of a wax tree, in the subtle body. Only a yogi can see them. They are not physiological entities.

The *chakras* (centres) are formed of consciousness. The Primordial Energy resides in all bodies as the *Kundalini*. It is like a sleeping snake coiled up. The movement of the *Kundalini* along the *Sushumna* nerve is called the movement of the *Mahavayu*, the Spiritual current.

Spiritual consciousness is not possible without the awakening of the *Kundalini*. This is, otherwise, to say that when the *Kundalini* is awakened, the *Jiva* goes beyond the realm of *Maya* (*Prakrti*) and becomes united with the Supreme Soul. This is the vision of God.

Though Thou art already present in these diverse creations of Thine as their material cause, still it looks as if Thou hast entered into them again after the creation of the bodies, manifesting identification with their shape and character, just as the fire takes the shape and nature of the fuel it is burning. Therefore, men, who are endowed with a

dispassionate mind and who have renounced all self-centred values, recognize Thee as the enduring Spirit in these transient bodies.

The Brahman, being the Supreme Being, permeating and pervading everything in the world is the Supreme Consciousness. It is also considered the Supreme Spirit or the *Atman*. By its very nature of all-encompassing and all-pervading phenomenon, the Supreme Spirit or *Atman* is considered the innermost attribute or constituent of the individual spirits or *atmans*. The Supreme Being becomes the *Atman* of all the *atmans* - the Universal Spirit residing in all individual spirits. The Supreme Spirit inwardizes into the individual spirits.

The *Purusa* abides in the bodies created by the *karma* of the *Jiva*, without the spiritual nature being effaced by anything within or without, in the midst of the cause and effect relationship. He is described as 'part' (*amsa*) of Thee, and Thou as the Whole endowed with infinite puissance and excellences. Arriving through discrimination at this spiritual origin and destiny of man, wise men adore Thee with deep faith and devotion, having accepted the Vedic teaching that Thou art the fulcrum for dedicating and depositing all one's actions and that devotion to Thee can secure one's release from *samsara*.

Every action has merit or demerit resulting from good or evil it produces. Ethical action includes disciplines for realization. The first is discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal. The seeker is to discriminate at every level of action focusing whether the action leads to grasp of the eternal being. If the objects of action relate to the transient or the temporal beings, he is to withdraw from action related to them. This is ultimately to enable him to grasp the eternal being. The second is detachment from all selfish pursuits - worldly and otherworldly. The third is cultivation of the six virtues - tranquility (*sama*), restraint (*dama*), renunciation (*uparati*), endurance (*titiksa*), meditation (*samadhi*) and faith (*sraddha*). The fourth is desire for liberation.

Of the virtues, renunciation is the most important and of three types - sacrifice, charity and penance (*tapas*). All the three are actions. They purify the soul. They are obligatory actions to be performed without any attachment to the results thereof.

One who does not do actions out of ignorance is under the influence of the attribute of the Darkness (*tamas*). One who gives them up because of the difficulties they involve is under the influence of the attribute of the Active (*rajas*). Either is wrong. The one who performs actions without any self-interest is under the influence of the attribute of the Transparent (*sattva*). He is the true renouncer of action, the true knower and the truly wise.

The ideal man following ethical action is one who has realized his rational being. His reason becomes steady. He preserves his equanimity under all conditions, whether in grief or in joy. He does not have any egoistic desires. He looks upon all events that happen, without being disturbed. He does not have any attachment for the objects of his

senses. He can withdraw his mind and senses from all temporal objects and focus his mind on eternal objects.

Oh Lord of all! In order to reveal this spiritual nature of man which is difficult to comprehend, Thou dost arise as divine Incarnations from time to time. There are some who enter into the vast nectarine ocean of Thy deeds and excellences, revealed through the sportive actions of these, Thy Incarnations, and exclude all other forms of spiritual striving. They leave their homes and all worldly attachments, and join that community of all-renouncing men who constitute the *Paramahamsas* ever sporting with delight at Thy lotus feet. They reject even liberation, and prefer *premabhakti*.

One way of realization is the way of devotion (*bhakti*). The theistic schools of philosophy, mainly Vaishnavism, generally advocate this way. This way is to surrender oneself to God in love and devotion.

Emotional attachment to God is easier than dry detachment from fruits of action. In fact, the detachment from the fruits of action or the ethical way of life automatically brings about surrender to God in love and devotion. The seeker is to realize that he is only an instrument in the hands of God. He is to think that he performs his duties in obedience to the will of God. The fruits of his action belong to God, not to himself.

Devotion implies the difference (duality) between the devotee and God. The plurality exists. The ego of the devotee persists. The *Vedantic* thought indicates that so long as the ego of the aspirant remains, it is not possible for him to realize the Supreme Being. In the case of a true devotee, it is different. The devotee retains a trace of ego to be distinct from the Divine. This ego is not the ego of an ordinary individual, which keeps him away from the Divine. This ego is that of the greatest of the sages like Prahlada and Narada who have been ever realized.

Devotion is intense love of God. The way of devotion results in knowledge. Knowledge perfected, made steady and constant becomes love. Love is, thus, uninterrupted flow of knowledge, uninterrupted like the flow of oil. It is very difficult to practise, as mind by nature is fickle and moves from object to object.

To strengthen the love of God, several types of *yogic* practices, meditations, forms of worship, initiations, etc are recommended. They are also difficult to practise. Strict observance of ethical code and self-control are equally difficult. Action, knowledge and devotion throw man on himself and require absolute self-reliance. But as a finite being, man cannot be perfect in action, knowledge and devotion. Therefore, he has to surrender his self to God, instead of relying on himself.

Self-surrender includes doing what is in conformity with God's will, not doing what is against His will. It involves absolute faith that God saves men, and all are to surrender to Him for His guidance and protection. This is true renunciation. The philosophy of Non-Dualism of the qualified *Brahman* (*Visista-advaita*) states that

devotion and self-surrender are essential for salvation. These two are not opposed to the way of knowledge, but are its consummation.

Pure love is attachment to God alone. It is of the nature of bliss for the seeker. God cannot be realized by logic or reason. Without devotion, all penance, rites, austerities become futile. Nor can man realize God by self-exertion. In the absence of the grace of God, His vision is not possible. The pure mind of the seeker, seeking God-vision in ecstasy, is devotion. In essence, it is the cultivation of divine love for God.

Pure love of a devotee has two characteristics. So intense is one's love of God that one becomes unconscious of outer things. One forgets the world. The second is that one has no feeling of "my-ness" toward the body. One wholly gets rid of the feeling that the body is his. Chaitanya experienced this kind of love.

'Pure love (*prema*) is the rope by which one can tether God, as it were. Higher than worship is *japam*; higher than *japam* is meditation; higher than meditation is *bhava* and higher than *bhava* are *mahabhava* and *prema*. When one attains *prema* (pure love), one has the rope to tie God. Whenever one wants to see Him, one has merely to pull the rope. Whenever one calls Him, He will appear before one' in the words of Sri Ramakrishna.

This human body, so well-suited for Thy service, is now readily available for one like a bosom friend or a dear relative to be used for devotional purposes. So also, Thou art eager to bless the devotee, being very benevolent to him. But alas! Ordinary man shows no interest in Thee because of his indulgence in sense objects of a degrading nature. By this neglect of devotional life, he becomes an annihilator of the soul. By the force of tendencies developed through a life of attachment to this body, he roams about in inferior bodies in this terrible maze of *samsara*.

One cannot attain God if one has even a trace of desire. Subtle is the way of *dharma*. If one is trying to thread a needle, one will not succeed if the thread has even a slight fibre sticking out.

Through remembrance, Thy antagonists attained to the same spiritual goal as the sages that had established complete control over their vital force, mind and senses, and meditated on Thee in the their heart. The *Sruti-Devatas* look upon Thee as equally present everywhere, and ever commune with Thy lotus feet. The *gopikas* of Brindavan that longed for the embrace of Thy arms, powerful and handsome like Adishesha, similarly communed with Thy lotus feet. Whatever is the nature of the passion that moves the devotee, if it makes him intensely think of Thee, Thy grace is ever on him!

To develop love for God, scriptures indicate that the devotee has to build up an intimate personal relationship to God. They suggest that God may be regarded as the devotee's parent, master, friend, child, husband or sweetheart. Each succeeding relationship represents a further intensification of love. These attitudes (*bhavas*) toward God are known as *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *madhur*.

Santa is the serene attitude. Bhishma of the Mahabharata, on the bed of arrows after the Great War at Kurukshetra, awaiting physical death was a glorious example of this attitude. The Vedic seers, too, had this attitude toward God. They did not desire any worldly enjoyment. It is like the single-minded devotion of a wife to her husband.

Dasya is the attitude of a servant toward his master. Hanuman had this attitude toward Rama. A wife feels this attitude toward her husband, with all her heart and soul. A mother also has a little of this attitude, as Yasoda toward Krishna.

Sakhya is the attitude of friendship. The cowherd boys of Brindavan had this attitude toward Krishna.

Vatsalya is the attitude of a mother toward her child, like Yasoda's attitude toward Krishna. The mother feels happy only when the child eats to its heart's content.

Madhur is the attitude of a woman toward her paramour. Radha had this attitude toward Krishna. A chaste wife feels it for her husband. This attitude includes all the other four.

Unconditional love and longing are the two requisites for a devotee to attain the Godhead. *Bhakti* matured becomes *bhava*. Next is *mahabhava*. Next is *prema*. The last of all is the attainment of God. These are the conscious state, the semi-conscious state and the innermost state. In the conscious state, the devotee only chants the name of God. In the semi-conscious state, he dances in ecstasy. In the innermost state, he remains in *samadhi*.

Thou art the Primeval Being prior to whom or by whose side there none else existed. Lo! How can any one who came from Thee, and who is bound to dissolve into Thee, know Thee? From Thee, the creator Brahma arose, and from him the two types of divinities. And when Thou enter into Thy cosmic slumber drawing everything into Thyself, there is nothing left to be known as gross or subtle or as combination of both, no movement of time, no scripture. How can anyone, therefore, know the subtle truth about Thee unless instructed by Thee? So, to practise devotion to Thee, and win Thy grace is the easier way of salvation for man.

The *Brahman* is ontologically prior to everything. IT is, therefore, to be regarded as the origin of everything. The *Vedanta* Aphorisms define the *Brahman* as that to which the birth, maintenance and destruction of the world have to be attributed. The *Brahman* is, therefore, considered the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world.

The world-appearance is said to have the Absolute Brahman as its cause, in the same way as the sky (space) is the cause of the growth of the tree, for the sky does not obstruct its growth. In fact, the Brahman is not an active causative factor.

The *Brahman* has no initial cause. It is, therefore, uncreated (*anadikarana*). IT has no precedent state. IT is not a product. Nothing changes to be the *Brahman*, nor does IT change to anything else. IT does not undergo modification. The Becoming that arises out of IT takes place without affecting Its very nature (*vivartakarana*). *Vivarta* means change without being affected by change. The *Brahman* is changeless.

The Absolute is immaterial; IT is spiritual; so material sources of light like the sun do not illumine IT. IT is self-luminous. Therefore, IT is not inert or dark. The Absolute cannot be realized or experienced by another. Only the Absolute can realize Itself.

The path of discrimination and knowledge is very difficult. Unconditional love and longing for the Divine are what can take a devotee to the God-head. Devotion matured becomes *bhava*, *mahabhava* and *prema* (unconditional love), in that order. *Prema* is the attainment of God.

Different philosophers have different theories of Reality. The *Vaiseshikas* say that real entities arise from a previous state of non-existence. *Naiyayikas* have the theory that existent entities perish. The *Samkhyas* contend that the Spirit is many and, therefore, different in each body. The *Mimamsa*-ritualists find the truth in the fruits of ritualistic works. All these theories are guess-work based on misconception. So also, the materialist's theory that man is a product of the three *gunas* of *Prakrti* and that every being is, therefore, a separate and perishable individual, is a theory based on the ignorance of Thy nature. For Thou, Pure Consciousness, in whom ignorance has no place, is the ultimate Truth.

The Reality is that which exists in the beginning and in the end.

The Reality is only one and that is the Self. It is Pure-consciousness and eternal in nature. To one with the Reality, there is neither the mind nor the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. There is, therefore, no extroversion. The state of the sage with the Reality is the ever-awake state. He is ever awake to the eternal Self. His is the ever-dreaming state as the world is no better than a repeatedly presented dream phenomenon for him. His is the ever deep-sleep state as he is without his body consciousness ever.

Reality must always be real. It has no names or forms. It underlies all limitations, being limitless. It is not bound in any way. Being real, It is That Which Is. It transcends speech and is beyond description such as being or non-being. That alone is real, which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself and which is eternal and changeless.

Reality is Being, Pure existence, Consciousness.

Reality alone exists as a perfect undivided whole. The awareness of this Reality alone is the Truth. There is no other reality. The Reality is in the form of experience throbbing within one's real self.

This universe of the three *gunas*, a mental projection, and the individual self or the *Jiva*, are *asat*, something non-existent in themselves, but become *sat*, or derive existential value, because of Thee who art the substance behind them. The knower of the Self, therefore, recognizes all this as *sat* or existing, because everything is an expression of Thyself. A product of gold is not rejected as illusory because it exists in identification with its substance, gold. Having manifested the universe, Thou dost indwell it as its substance as gold abides in all its products.

Even as the un-carved image is forever present in a block, the world is inherent in the Absolute, whether we regard the world real or unreal. The Absolute is, therefore, not void.

As in the tangible ocean, tangible waves are seen, in the formless *Brahman*, the world also exists without form. From the Infinite, the Infinite emerges and exists in It as the Infinite. Hence the world has never been really created – it is the same as that from which it emerges.

Water in the mirage does not come into being and go out of existence. So this world, too, does not come out of the Absolute, nor does it go anywhere. The creation of the world has no cause and, therefore, it has had no beginning. It is only an appearance based on the reality of the *Brahman*. It is not independent of the *Brahman*. The *Brahman* alone exists.

In the waking state there is no materiality in the objects seen in a dream, though, while dreaming, the objects appear to be solid. This dream-like appearance is yet true during the period of the dream itself. The world-appearance is but a long dream. This world, therefore, appears to be material, though, in reality, it is all pure consciousness.

The universe can be said both real and unreal. It is real because of the reality of consciousness and unreal because the universe does not exist as universe, independent of consciousness. The existence of consciousness cannot be denied, as it is a matter of experience.

The world is as true in relation to the *Brahman* as the dream-city is true in relation to the experience of the waking consciousness. Just as a mountain is seen both inside the mirror and outside it, this world is both within consciousness as solid matter and outside it as its reflection. The world and the cosmic consciousness are just synonyms.

Those who adore Thee as the soul and substance of everything overcome death. The others, who are averse to this truth, are bound by Thee to the life of *samsara* like animals, with the rope of Vedic ritualism, even though they are great scholars. Those who love Thee purify the worlds, not the others who put on a garb of spirituality without love of Thee at heart.

There are three kinds of formal devotion – *tamasic*, *rajasic* and *sattvic*.

While showing devotion to God, if a person is actuated by arrogance, jealousy or anger then his devotion is *tamasic*. It is said to be influenced by the quality of inertia.

If a person worships God for fame or wealth or any otherworldly ambition, then his devotion is *rajasic*. It is said to be influenced by the quality of activity.

If a person loves God without any thought of material gain, if he performs his duties to please God alone, and if he maintains the attitude of friendship and goodwill towards all, then his devotion is called *sattvic*. It is said to be influenced by the quality of harmony.

But the highest devotion to God transcends the three qualities. It is a spontaneous and uninterrupted inclination of the soul towards God. Such devotion springs up spontaneously in the heart of a true devotee, as soon as he hears the mention of God or His attributes. A devotee possessing love of God of this nature desires nothing even if he is offered the happiness of Heaven in whatever way it is conceived. The devotee's desire is only to love God under all conditions – in pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, prosperity and privation.

Though Thou, the self-luminous and self-conscious one, are without limbs and sense organs, Thou art the power that supports the sense faculties of all creatures. Dominated by Thy *Maya*, all the *Devas* and creators like *Prajapatis* offer tribute to Thee as subordinate kings do to their suzerains, and they in turn subsist on what men offer them as sacrificial offerings. Out of fear of Thee, all the *Devas* perform their appointed tasks.

The pure Infinite Consciousness appears to become whatever forms It takes whenever It manifests Itself. The mountains, the forests, the earth, the celestial bodies in the cosmos are all but Infinite Consciousness. When the Infinite Consciousness in the form of life-breath enters into bodies and begins to vibrate various parts, it is said that those bodies are living. It is a small part of the Infinite Consciousness that becomes the intelligence in these bodies. This intelligence, entering into these bodies, brings into being the different organs like the eyes.

It is this intelligence, which is part of the Infinite Consciousness that fancies itself differently in different objects. When it fancies itself to be a rock, a tree, a bird, an animal, a human being, etc, it becomes so. The Infinite Consciousness is present everywhere and permeates equally; there is no distinction between the sentient and the insentient, and between the intelligent and the inert. The differences in the objective world are only due to the intelligence identifying itself as different substances. The same Infinite Consciousness is known by different names in these different substances.

Oh unfettered one! When Thou, the Transcendent Being, desire to sport with Thy *Yogamaya* and cast Thy glance at her, then the powers and tendencies of the *Jiva* that had become latent in Thee at the close of the cosmic cycle are roused up, and as a consequence, the *Jiva*, with bodies moving and unmoving, come into being. These

differences noticed in the nature and the power of the *Jiva* are due to their own *karma* and not of Thy making. For, to Thee, who art the highest of all beings – who art the same towards all like *akasa*, beyond thought and words, and extremely subtle – there is no such difference as the favoured one and the disfavoured one.

In the mirror of Infinite Consciousness are seen countless reflections, which constitute appearance of the world. These are the *Jiva*. Each *Jiva* is like a little agitation on the surface of the ocean of the *Brahman*. When, in that slight agitation, the infinitude of the Infinite Consciousness is veiled, limitation of Consciousness appears to arise. This too is inherent in that Infinite Consciousness. That limitation of Consciousness is known as *Jiva*. This limitation of Consciousness when it is fed by latent tendencies and memories condenses into egotism – ‘I’-ness. This ‘I’-ness is not a solid reality. But the *Jiva* sees it as real, like the blueness of the sky. When the egotism entertains its own notions, it gives rise to the mind-stuff, the concept of an independent and separate *Jiva*, mind, *Maya* or cosmic illusion, cosmic nature, etc.

When Consciousness, clothed as it were, by its own energy, limits itself and considers itself *Jiva*, that *Jiva*, endowed with this restless energy, is involved in the world-appearance.

The universe exists in the Infinite Consciousness just as future waves exist in a calm sea, with the potentiality of an apparent difference. Infinite Consciousness is unmanifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as the reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness, is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the universe. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness shines as Consciousness and exists as Consciousness.

Being non-different from the Infinite Consciousness, the world-appearance has a mutual causal relationship with IT. It arises in IT, exists in IT and is absorbed in IT. Though like the deep ocean, IT is not agitated, yet IT is agitated like waves on the surface of the ocean. Even as one who is intoxicated sees himself as another, the Consciousness, being conscious of Itself, considers Itself as another.

Oh Eternal Being! If the embodied beings (the *Jiva*) are countless in number, and are also eternal and all-pervading, they cannot come under *Thy* control, as each would be its own absolute authority and could go in its own way. They can be under Thy control only if it is otherwise. If the *Jiva* are the manifestation of Thyself through an adjunct, then Thou, as their causal substance, will be permeating them in all their transformations through their adjuncts and would be their controller without losing Thy own original nature as the Supreme Being. But the all-pervading and ultimate seer that Thou art, Thou

cannot be an object of knowledge like other knowable things. To say that the ultimate seer can be the seen will be an absurd doctrine.

Once it is considered that the Supreme Consciousness (Brahman) is One and All-pervading, there can be no second consciousness called *Jiva*, independent of and different from the Brahman. P. Sriramachandrudu states that *Jiva* is no other than *Antahkarana* which is translucent and is the purest (*nirmala*) of all the non-sentient objects (*acetana padarthas*) capable of reflecting and radiating the *cicchakti* of the *Brahman* with which it is constantly connected and, therefore, it is never without *chaitanya*. It is only the *Antahkarana* with all its constant associates like the subtle body, sense organs, etc which migrates from life to life. It receives the *chaitanya* from the all-pervading *Brahman* wherever it moves about. *Jiva* is not a particle emerging from or a piece cut out of the *Brahman* to be ultimately united with IT, as the *Brahman* is all-pervading like *Akasa* with no form or parts. As the *chaitanya* of the so-called *Jiva* is nothing but the *Brahman*, it is declared that *Jivo Brahmaiva naparah* (*Jiva* is the *Brahman* only, not different from IT) – the essence of the philosophy of *Advaita* (Non-dualism).

A living being (*Jiva*) cannot be a product of *Prakrti* (matter) alone or of *Purusa* (consciousness) alone. For, both these are eternal, whereas living beings come and go. They are, therefore, the product of the mutual superimposition of both into a complex unit in which their separateness cannot be understood or experienced. They may be compared to bubbles in which air and water particles combine. When all those *Jiva* dissolve in Thee, the Existence-Knowledge-bliss, either in deep sleep or in liberation, then all their separateness disappears. The only difference is that in deep-sleep the mergence is still in combination with the adjuncts in a subtle form as of flower nectars of various kinds in honey, while in liberation it is absolute mergence as of river water in the ocean.

Knowing that it is due to the delusion caused by Thy *Maya* that the *Jiva* are subjected to birth after birth in the trans-migratory cycle (*samsara*), wise men adore Thee, the granter of release from *samsara*, with intense devotion. How can there be *samsara* for one who serves Thee? For, Thy wheel of Time with its rim of three parts, the past, the present and the future, on which the course of transmigration is mounted, causes fear only to those who do not take refuge in Thee.

Samsara is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘to wander or pass through a series of states or conditions’. It is the beginning-less cycle of birth, death and rebirth, a process impelled by *karma*. Taken together, *samsara* and *karma* provide a causal explanation of human differences and an ethical theory of moral retribution.

The word *samsara* is also applied to phenomenal existence in general to indicate its transient and cyclical nature. *Samsara* is thus the conditioned and ever-changing universe as contrasted to an unconditioned, eternal and transcendent state of the Supreme Self.

Samsara is generally characterized by suffering and sorrow as well as impermanence. The cause of perpetual rebirth is found usually in desire based on ego-sense for individual existence, and in ignorance of the true nature of the Reality.

As such, the supreme goal of human endeavor is considered as liberation from *samsara*, that is, as release from bondage to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, nullifying the impressions (*samskaras*) of *karma* accumulated thus far.

Oh Birthless One! Even though a person has gained control over his senses and the *pranas*, if he has not surrendered himself at the feet of the *guru*, all his effort to discipline the extremely fickle mind, which is like an uncontrolled horse, will result only in the pain and trouble of striving, and he will be overwhelmed with deep sorrow because of failure. His condition will be like that of a party of merchants in the mid-ocean without a helmsman to direct the boat.

A guru is in the nature of an inner being sent to the seeker (disciple) by the Divine at the appropriate stage of his *sadhana* (spiritual practice) to attain realization. Age, caste, creed, gender, vocation, etc of the guru is of no relevance to the seeker. The seeker is to feel the guru in his soul and accept him as such. So is it with the right scripture to elevate the seeker to the realm beyond his mind.

When Thou, the essence of all bliss, art available as his very self to man who has resigned himself to Thee, what further use will he have for such objects as relatives, sons, body, wife, wealth, house, lands, life and properties like chariots, etc? And what joy can a man derive, who, without knowing Thee, the bedrock of Reality, goes after the joy of sex-life and other pleasures of the world that are ephemeral and doomed to destruction by their very nature?

The Brahman is Consciousness. The *Brahman* is Bliss. Bliss is the collecting together of our dispersed and divided being into an intense unity. It is infinitely more intense than the essence of everything in the world. It is the intensity of being. As such the state attained in realization is Bliss itself.

Being, Consciousness and Bliss are not qualities of the *Atman* or the Brahman, which is without qualities (*nirguna*). These three are the attributes of the Brahman. These are not the qualities the *Brahman* possesses. They are the *Brahman*.

Though these devotees, who are free from the pride of narrow egotism, hold Thy lotus-feet in their heart, and have within themselves that all-sanctifying stream of devotion flowing from those feet of Thine, still they resort to pilgrimage to holy centres during their life-time, abandoning hearth and home. For even those who have but once seriously bestowed their mind on the ever-blessed *Atman*, which is Thyself, can never feel happy in the self-centred life of the home, which has a baneful effect on the spiritual essence in man. By their visit to such holy places, they sanctify them, and enhance their holiness.

To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation. Abandonment of home, family, relations, etc is renunciation. Renunciation of everything puts an end to all sorrow. By renunciation, everything is gained. Renunciation of the ego-sense leads to realization of the Absolute. There is total renunciation when the mind – *citta* with the ego-sense is abandoned. When one abandons the mind, one is no more afflicted by fear of old age, death and such other events in life. That alone is supreme bliss. All else is terrible sorrow.

It is contended that all this world has arisen out of *sat*, a really existent cause, and, therefore, it must also be real. This, however, is not acceptable to reason; first it is not universally applicable to all cases of cause and effect, as in the case of father and son. The son has a different identity from that of the father, and cannot be reduced into the latter's form, as a pot can be reduced into mud. Next, sometimes an effect may be a mere appearance on a real cause, as the snake is in a rope in an illusory perception. In such types of instances, the rule that the effect is as real as the cause is not found to fit in. At the most, from the point of view of practical efficiency, it may have some relevance, even as a wrong idea blindly accepted on the ground of a transmitted tradition is found to work in practice, or as a false coin passes for a genuine one undetected. The permanence of the fruits of Vedic rituals based on Thy words, the Veda, is only wishful thinking of dull-witted persons who are not able to comprehend the Veda in its implications, suggestions and many-sidedness. Vedic rituals may bear fruits which may last long, but are not really eternal.

‘The Brahman alone is real. IT is beyond the limits of space and time and is free from all kinds of differences and changes. The ever-changing world is transitory and unreal. It is unreal in the sense that it is not as real as the *Brahman*; but it has practical reality. That is the reason why it is called *Mithya* but not *Asat* (non-existent). It is not an illusion. Things seen in a dream are quite true as long as the dream lasts; they are unreal only when one is awake. Similarly the world is quite real as long as true knowledge does not dawn. The dreams are the creation of the individual being and, therefore, they are private. The world is public. It is the creation of *Isvara*. Therefore, no one can escape from and avoid the worldly activity. Even the man of the highest spiritual knowledge (*jivanmukta*) cannot but witness the worldly activities and participate in them. He is like the cinema-viewer of mature minds who, while knowing fully well that he is seeing the unreal, at the same time, gets the experience through his eyes and ears of what is presented before him on the screen by an unseen operator. Therefore, it is wrong to get alarmed that the world is robbed of its importance and significance by being reduced to the status of *Mithya* (unreal)’, in the words of P. Sriramachandrudu.

This universe did not exist before its creation and will not exist after the cosmic dissolution, too. So its existence in Thee, the *Sat-Cit-Anand*, during the interval, can only be in a phenomenal sense, without any substantiality. It is, therefore, compared to ornaments and pots which are the modifications of gold and mud respectively. Ignorant people mistake these temporary transformations of the mind to be permanent.

The Reality is that which exists in the beginning and in the end. The transformations arise in the middle; and they are only phenomenal and super-impositions on the Reality. They are ever transient and, therefore, unreal, though they are not non-existent during the period of their existence.

Prompted by *Maya*, Thy creative Power, the *Jiva* embraces the ignorance aspect of that Power and gets established in the feeling that it is a body-mind complex. Consequently it loses its blissful nature and becomes subject to birth and death in the trans-migratory cycle. But Thou, who art established in Thy spiritual glory, have shed ignorance, like a snake its slough, and shine in Thy unlimited majesty exhibiting the six-fold powers.

The practical activity in the manifold world is the result of the dynamic, creative aspect of *Maya* or *avidya*. The cognitive aspect of our life and the cognitions of our activities and of the objects toward which our activities are directed are due to the pure, conscious aspect of *Maya* or *avidya*. Indeed, *Maya* or *avidya* is obviously creative.

Said in other words, *Paramatman* as ruling *Maya* is *Isvara*. *Paramatman* as under *Maya* is *Jivatma*. *Maya* is the sum total of manifestations that will vanish in realization. *Maya* is the energy of the universe, potential and kinetic. Until the Divine Mother releases us from *Maya*, we cannot be free.

The ‘why’ of anything is in *Maya*. If one asks why *Maya* arises, it elicits no answer as it is within *Maya*. The question does not arise beyond *Maya* as there is none to raise it.

Oh Lord! If renunciates (*yatis* or *sannyasins*) do not root out the desire for enjoyment from their hearts, then Thou, though present in their hearts, dost not reveal Thy presence to those hypocrites, just as a jewel does not reveal itself to its wearer who has forgotten its presence on his neck. The ascetics who are after sense enjoyment have to suffer misery from two sources, death which is sure to visit them, and from Thee who does not reveal Thyself to them.

Oh Thou Lord of countless glories! In one who is illumined with Thy knowledge, the bond of self-centred life (egoity) is broken and, therefore, he is oblivious of (becomes free from) Thy laws regarding merit and demerit, enjoyment and suffering. The scriptural injunctions pertaining to man, who is body-centred, become meaningless for him. For, he is then established in the bliss of spiritual freedom which is Thyself, who hast entered into the hearts of men through the glorious devotional traditions transmitted in every age by great men through a succession of teachers and disciples.

The ego is the thought ‘I’. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the ‘I’ thought is the first. Other thoughts arise later. Holding a form, it comes into being. It stays on as the form is held. It breeds on it and grows strong. It changes form as suddenly as it assumes form.

If one focuses one's thought on ego-sense, it takes to flight. One is, therefore, able to transcend the phenomenal existence of the ego when one dives deep into the source from where the 'I' thought arises. Everything rises with the rise of the ego. Everything subsides when the ego subsides. To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation.

Egotism is quietened by constant practice – *abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* is thinking of 'That' alone, speaking of 'That', conversing of 'That' with one another and utter dedication to 'That' alone. When one's intellect is filled with beauty and bliss, when one's vision is broad and when passion for sensual enjoyment is absent in one, then that is *abhyasa* or practice. When one is firmly established in the conviction that this universe has never been created and, therefore, it does not exist as such, and when thoughts like 'this is the world', 'I am pleased', etc do not arise at all in one, and then that is *abhyasa* or practice. In such state one is beyond attraction and repulsion and, as such, egotism. One will have attained true wisdom. This is the practice of the yoga of true wisdom by means of which one acquires the faculty of instantly materializing one's thoughts. By such practice one acquires full knowledge of the past, the present and the future, too.

Even leading Divinities like Brahma do not find the limits of Thee; for Thou art the unlimited, and the unlimited by its nature cannot be fully comprehended. For the same reason even Thou dost not know Thy limits. Within that infinite and incomprehensible being of Thine, countless *brahmandas* (universes), each with its seven expansive external coverings, whirl about together under the propulsion of Time like clusters of dust in the air. So the words of the Veda, unable to describe Thee positively, arrive at Thee only as the final residue left after negating all conceivable entities.

An aspirant reasons about the *Brahman* as long as he has not realized IT. One cannot have this knowledge so long as there is the slightest trace of worldliness. The aspirant is to keep his mind aloof from the objects of sight, hearing, touch and other things of a worldly nature. As long as an aspirant is conscious of his body, he is conscious of duality. It is when he tries to describe what he sees, he finds duality. He is to give up his identification with worldly things, discriminating 'not this, not this'. Only thus does he realize the *Brahman* as his own inner consciousness.

The aspirant believes that the acts of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe and all its living beings are the manifestations of Sakti, the Divine Power. By reasoning, he will realize that all these are as illusory as a dream in the sense that they are transient. The *Brahman* alone is the Reality. All else is unreal. Even this very Sakti is unsubstantial, like a dream.

The aspirant, sticking to the path of knowledge, always reasons about the Reality. The *Brahman* is neither 'this' nor 'that'. It is neither the universe nor the living beings. Reasoning this way, the mind becomes steady. Then it is transcended and the aspirant goes into *samadhi*. This is the knowledge of the *Brahman*. It is the unwavering conviction of the aspirant that the *Brahman* alone is real and the world illusory, like a dream. What the *Brahman* is cannot be described.

Rishi Narayana said:

The great sages, born of the mind of Brahma, heard this exposition of the truth of the *Brahman* by Sanandana with great attention, and then saluted the *Rishi*, their hearts illuminated by the knowledge of the *Atman*.

Thus was the quintessence of the Vedas, the Puranas and the Upanisads expounded by the ancient sage Sanandana and others, who move about from sphere to sphere in the universe.

Oh thou, inheritor of the bliss of Brahma! Thinking, with deep faith, over this message of renunciation for men, you may freely move about in the worlds.

Sri Suka Said:

Oh King! The sage Narada, who had perfect control over his mind and who observed strict celibacy in life, heard the teachings of *Rishi* Narayana with deep faith and receptivity and became filled with joy, thinking over them again and again.

Sri Narada said: 'Salutations to Thee the Divine Incarnate, a manifestation of the Supreme Lord Krishna of holy fame who comes down as glorious Incarnations for the welfare of all creatures!'

Paying homage to *Rishi* Narayana, the first and foremost of sages, and to his worthy disciples, Narada went to the *ashrama* where my father Vyasa dwelt.

Received respectfully by Vyasa, Narada took a seat and narrated to him what he had heard from the mouth of *Rishi* Narayana, and I learned it from my father.

Thus have I answered, through the account of the above conversation, your question how the *Brahman*, beyond the *gunas* and words, can be grasped by the mind.

Meditate always on Hari who, as the creator, designed this universe for the benefit of the *Jiva*; who, as its material cause, remains unaffected as its substratum during its creation, sustenance and dissolution; who is the lord and director of dissolution; who is the lord and director of matter and *Jiva*; who, after creating the categories, enters into His creation along with the *Jiva* as the Indwelling Spirit and directs its evolution into various world systems and bodies of living beings; who governs the *Jiva* providing them with food and other conditions for higher evolution; who, through instruction as the *guru*, enables the *Jiva* to take refuge in Him and to abandon identification with the body even in the waking state as in the state of sleep; and who, being ever established in the Bliss-consciousness without the slightest trace of ignorance, is capable of giving complete freedom from fear to all beings.

Bhikshu-Gita

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Introduction

The Bhikshu-Gita is contained in chapter 5 of *Skandha* XII of Srimad Bhagavata which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Bhikshu-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between Raja Parikshit and Sri Suka as is the text of Srimad Bhagavata. The Bhikshu-Gita is a very brief exposition of the core content of the Vedanta philosophy revolving round the Atman.

The Gitas that find place in Srimad Bhagavata such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rishabha-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

The Atman

Sri Suka said:

In this Bhagavata is described again and again the worshipful Sri Hari, the soul and substance of all that exists – Sri Hari from whose creative will Brahma originated and from whose destructive urge Rudra arose.

The Brahman is ontologically prior to everything. It is, therefore, to be regarded as the origin of everything. The *Vedanta* Aphorisms define the Brahman as that to which the birth, maintenance and destruction of the world have to be attributed. The Brahman is, therefore, considered the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world.

The Brahman, being the Supreme Being, permeating and pervading everything in the world is the Supreme Consciousness. It is also considered the Supreme Spirit or the Atman. By its very nature of all-encompassing and all-pervading phenomenon, the Supreme Spirit or Atman is considered the innermost attribute or constituent of the individual spirits or *atmans*. The Supreme Being becomes the Atman of all the *atmans* - the Universal Spirit residing in all individual spirits. The Supreme Spirit inwardizes into the individual spirits.

Oh King! Abandon the feeling that you are going to die – a feeling that befits only animals. For, the real ‘you’ are not, like the body, a previously non-existent thing now come into being.

A homo-sapien is a three-in-one being. He is physical, non-physical and metaphysical. What he truly is, is not physical or non-physical, but is metaphysical. That is why one is said not one’s body or one’s mind or senses. One is the *atman*, the spirit.

The subtle body (*lingasarira*) of an individual consists of the inner instrument, the senses and the subtle elements. It is considered the same as the *Jiva* (soul) except the *atman*. It is the subtle body without the gross body that is given by the parents. What transmigrates on the death of an individual is the same subtle body.

The reflection of consciousness within itself is known as *purustaka*. It is also known as the subtle body – *lingasarira*. As long as the *purustaka* functions, the body lives. When it ceases to function, the gross-body dies. When the body dies, the subtle body chooses another, suited to fulfill the hidden *vasanas*.

It is generally believed that on death, the soul transmigrates to the spirit world, and the body and the mind are dropped in the physical world. In fact, even the body and the mind are not dropped. The body changes form. The dense part of the body is dropped and perishes. The subtle form of the body forming part of the soul transmigrates along with the subtle mind. This mind is not to be confused with the brain. What transmigrates is the one-energy mass - the subtle body with the subtle mind. Death does not attach to the real self of an individual.

The real 'you' did not descend like a son from a father, or like a tree from a seed, generated by a being that is itself originated. You are, on the other hand, like the fire, which, though seen in association with wood, is not its product and is entirely different from it.

For a seeker, the 'I' consciousness is atman. The atman is self-conscious. The self-conscious *atman* is the spirit within, ontologically. It seeks realization of itself, meaning to be real with it. It is self-realization. It is an experience for the spirit or the self. It is Being-ness what it seeks.

The 'I' consciousness is the pure being, eternal existence, free from ignorance and thought illusion. The physical body is only an instrument associated with it. If the seeker stays as the 'I', his being alone, without thought, the 'I' thought for him will disappear. The illusion will vanish for him forever.

The real Self is the infinite 'I'. The infinite 'I' is eternal. It is perfection. It is without a beginning or an end.

When the 'I' (ego) merges into the 'I' (Existence-Consciousness – *sat-cit*), what arises is the infinite 'I'. This is the true 'I' Consciousness – the Atman.

In the dream, one can experience one's own decapitation. Physical death in the waking state is on par with it. The Atman, which is not one with the body, but only its witness, is not affected by death. It is un-originated and deathless.

All cognition involves some kind of memory or recollection. All cognitions are acts of consciousness directed towards particular sets of objects. There is what the psychologists call logical memory. There is intuition. The forms of memory and intuition become possible only when the *atman* is latently self-conscious. To cognize an object, the *atman* is to direct the mind towards it through the relevant sense. The intent to direct the mind presupposes consciousness. It is a result of the *atman* voluntarily directing its consciousness through an idea generated in contact with the mind.

Potential self-consciousness, when interpreted as latent self-consciousness, is comparable to the state of deep sleep. When one gets up from deep sleep into a waking or dreaming state, the *atman* regains consciousness of the waking or the dream world, as the case may be. It may, therefore, be said that mind and consciousness naturally belong to the *atman*.

In addition to consciousness directed towards mind, senses and objects, and towards one's own past experiences in the re-cognition of cognitions, there is also self-consciousness, consciousness of one's existence in all acts of self-affirmation. The peculiar nature of self-consciousness is without dimensions, fathomless.

The *atman* is in the nature of the witness consciousness (*saksi-caitanya*) which witnesses that it is knowing, cognizing, experiencing urges, emotions, etc.

Within the individual's mind, there is the distinction between the witness and the witnessed consciousness. This is similar to one's experience of trying to shake off the identity of the waking I with the dream I and absolve oneself from, and be unaffected by the actions of the dream I, when one comes out of the dream.

The *atman* is eternal, and unaffected by the gross-body. It does not, therefore, die nor is it born.

When a pot is destroyed, the sky enclosed by it becomes one with the universal, un-particularized sky. So also, when the body perishes through *jnana*, the *Jiva* becomes one with the Brahman.

As long as a pot is intact, it contains the space within its enclosure and gives an illusion that it contains the sky to that extent. When the pot is broken, the space within is no longer seen in illusion. It remains where it is, unlimited.

The human body is like a pot. The life principle within is like the limited space. The Self is reflected as individual soul (*atman*) within. When the gross-body perishes on death, the individual *atman* merges into the Self which is eternal and unattached.

It is mind that creates all the adjuncts limiting the Atman like the bodies - subtle and physical, qualities and *karma*. And *Maya*, the Lord's power, is what brings this mind into being, and because of the mind, man has this entanglement in the cycle of birth and death.

Everything in the world is dependent upon the mind, upon one's mental attitude. On examination, the mind itself appears to be unreal. But we are bewitched by it. With mind controlling our activity, we seem to be running after mirage.

The mind flits in all directions all the time and is unable to find happiness anywhere. Like the lion in a cage, the mind is ever restless, having lost its freedom. It is never happy with its present state.

The mind alone is the cause of all objects in the world. The world exists because of the mind-stuff. The mind vainly seeks to find happiness in the objects of this world. When the mind is transcended, the world vanishes, dissolves into its source.

Creation of the mind is but agitation in Infinite Consciousness. And the world exists in the mind. It seems to exist because of imperfect vision, imperfect understanding.

It is the mind that creates the body by mere thoughts, just as the potter makes a pot out of clay. It creates new bodies and brings about the destruction of what exists, and all this is by mere wish. Within mind exist the faculties of delusion or hallucination,

dreaming and irrational thought. It creates the appearance of the body within itself. But in ignorance, one sees the physical body in gross physical vision as different from and independent of the mind.

Every embodied being has a two-fold body. One is the mental body which is restless and which acts quickly and achieves results. The second is the physical body, which does really nothing. When the mind confidently engages in self-effort, it is then beyond the reach of sorrow. Whenever it strives, it surely finds the fruition of its striving. On the other hand, the physical body is only physical matter. Yet the mind deems it as its own. The mind experiences only what it contemplates. If the mind turns towards the Truth, it abandons its identification with the body and attains the supreme state, overcoming the state of *samsara* – the cycle of birth and death. Hence one is to endeavor with the mind to make the mind take to the pure path.

A light is a light as long as there is mutual relationship through contact between oil, its receptacle, the wick and the flame. The trans-migratory existence of the *Jiva* is a situation arising from the combination of several factors. Being a modification of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the constituents of *Prakriti*, *samsara* is a state of constant flux.

Mind is the individualized consciousness with its own manifold potentialities, even as spices have taste in them. That consciousness is the subtle or ethereal body. When it becomes gross, it appears to be a physical or material body. That individualized consciousness itself is known as the *Jiva* or the individual soul when the potentialities are in an extremely subtle state. When the *Jiva* sheds its individuality, it shines as the Supreme Being.

Even as an error of the past can be rectified and turned into good action by self-effort today, the habits of the past and the corresponding impressions (*samskaras*) can be overcome by appropriate self-effort. However, the notion of the *Jiva*-hood can be overcome only by the attainment of liberation.

In this process of birth and death of the embodied being, the Atman is never born, and never dies too. Birth and death apply only to the body, the adjunct of the Atman in embodiment. The Atman on the other hand is the self-conscious Witness – beyond what is gross or subtle, the support of everything like the *akasa*, changeless, endless and incomparable.

For an aspirant, the ‘I’ consciousness is *atman*. The *atman* is self-conscious. All cognition involves some kind of memory or recollection. All cognitions are acts of consciousness directed towards particular sets of objects.

There is what the psychologists call logical memory. There is intuition. The forms of memory and intuition become possible only when the *atman* is latently self-conscious. To cognize an object, the *atman* is to direct the mind towards it through the relevant sense. The intent to direct the mind presupposes consciousness. It is a result of the *atman*

voluntarily directing its consciousness through an idea generated in contact with the mind.

When the *atman* is in no way connected with the gross-body except that it is associated with it for manifestation, it takes the nature of the witness consciousness (*saksi-caitanya*) which witnesses that it is knowing, cognizing, experiencing urges, emotions, etc. This corresponds to the idea of Spinoza of the mind knowing both itself and matter. Husserl's idea of the witness is similar to this concept.

If the witness consciousness, that is, the 'I' consciousness, that is, the *atman* knows the existence aspect of an object and if the existence of the object is different and separate from the *atman*, how can the *atman* know the existence of the object? The witness consciousness witnesses and is, therefore, directed towards the experience it witnesses. It is directed outwards.

Oh noble one! In this way, through discriminative intelligence and constant contemplation on the Lord, grasp the truth of the Atman amidst Its adjuncts of body-mind complex.

There are three kinds of reality – the Supreme Spirit, the individual spirits and the material principle. There are three kinds of relationship – the relation of the Supreme Spirit to the individual spirits, the relations of the individual spirits to matter and the relation of matter to the Supreme Spirit. Each of the three terms is related to the other two. So each relationship has two directions.

A number of questions arise. For example, are all the relations of the same kind? Are they of the same kind in each of the directions? What is the nature of the differences, if the three relations are of different kinds? If each relation is different in each of its directions, what is the nature of the difference? What is the role of the *Brahman* as the Supreme Spirit in creation of the matter – the world?

One must practise discrimination to enquire the pros and cons of each issue and to choose the one that leads to God. For instance, "lust and greed" is impermanent. God is the only Eternal Substance. What does a man get with money? Food, clothes and a dwelling place, and nothing more! One cannot realize God with its help. Therefore, money can never be the goal of life. Such is the process of discrimination. Discrimination is the path of reasoning – *vichara*.

Discrimination leads to the right views or understanding of the nature of the world, the right resolve to follow the truths, the right speech constituting truthfulness, the right action including non-injury, non-stealing, non-sensuality, non-lying and non-intoxication. These, in turn, lead to the right livelihood that does not involve the performing of prohibited actions as means of livelihood, the right endeavor to overcome the temptations of evil, the right mindfulness constantly placing one's ideal before oneself and the right concentration or meditation. When meditation becomes perfect, one attains realization – *nirvana* a state of absolute non-disturbance and liberation.

What is knowledge? It is to know one's own self, dissolving the mind in it. It is to know the pure Atman, which alone is our real nature.

Knowledge is discriminative understanding of WHAT IS. Sri Sathya Sai defines it thus: *Advaita Darsanam Jnanam* – Knowledge is realization of Non-dualism.

The means for developing it are the scripture, *tapas*, tradition, reasoning and experience. It consists in the understanding that the *Brahman* – the Supreme Spirit alone had been before the universe came into being, is what exists in the middle and will continue to be when the universe including Time dissolves itself into IT. The *Brahman* alone is the Reality and the Truth.

If this truth of the Atman is grasped, the serpent *Takshaka* will not consume you under the prompting of the sage's son. The causes that bring about death will not even touch you, who are one with the Lord and verily the Death of death itself.

When one 'dies', one does not die at all, but only shifts into awareness of the macrocosm where there is no 'time' or 'space', now and then, before and after. From a macro perspective, all the particles of everything merely look like the whole. This is to say that on 'death' one returns in consciousness to the macro reality which is but a micro reality of an even larger macro reality – and so on, and on, and on, for ever and ever, without end. This leads to the realization that life is all a matter of perspective.

Death in that instance is a glorious moment, a wonderful experience, as the soul returns to its natural form, its natural state. This leads to an awareness of a sense of total freedom, an awareness of Oneness that is sublime and blissful.

To learn how to die is to learn how to live. To learn how to live is to learn how to act not only in this life, but in the lives to come. To transform oneself truly and learn how to be reborn as a transformed being to help others is really to help the world in the most powerful way of all.

The actual point of death is when the most profound and beneficial inner experiences can come about. Through repeated acquaintance with the processes of death in meditation, an accomplished seeker can use his actual death to gain great spiritual realization. This is why experienced practitioners of *Yoga* engage in meditative practices as they pass away. An indication of their attainment is that often their bodies do not begin to decay until long after they are clinically dead.

Highly realized beings awaken in themselves a perception of Reality in a totally purified form, transparent to them in its entire limitless dimension. The experience of death is no surprise to them. In fact, they anticipate and invite it at the moment of their choice. They embrace it as an opportunity for liberation from the bonds of physical life.

When ‘I am the Brahman, the Transcendent Effulgence’, ‘The Brahman, the Terminal State, am I’ – are your firm convictions, who constantly practise this communion of the individual self with the universal undivided Self in a non-dual attitude, of what consequence is the *Takshaka* lolling his tongue and belching poison? For, everything – this *Takshaka*, his poison, your body, the whole manifested world, etc - will have no existence for you apart from the Brahman.

The aspirant initially feels that God alone is real and all else is illusory. Afterwards, he finds that it is God Himself that has become the universe, *Maya* and all living beings. The process of discrimination involves first negation and then affirmation. The aspirant attains *Satchidananda* by negating the universe and its living beings. But after the attainment of *Satchidananda* he finds that *Satchidananda* Itself has become the universe and the living beings. Every thing is Its manifestation. It is God alone that has become everything. The world by no means exists apart from Him.

“‘I’ and ‘Mine’ – that is ignorance. ‘Thou’ and ‘Thine’ – that is knowledge” is the firm conviction of the aspirant.

Self-realization is realization of one’s self in one’s conscious being. One’s self is one’s *atman*. One’s *atman* is seen to be a reflection of the Supreme Spirit or the Brahman. It is, of course, not an object of one’s senses. It is not an object at all. It is also not the subject in the ordinary sense of the term. The subject of one’s experience is oneself. But one is not the Supreme Spirit. As the Supreme Spirit cannot be experienced outside one’s self, it has to be experienced within. This does not mean that this Spirit is something in one’s mind like an idea or feeling.

The way to the Supreme Spirit is the very self of the individual, referring to itself as ‘I’. As the Supreme Spirit is never an object, it has to be understood as an ‘I’ within one’s ‘I’ as the witness (*sakshi*) of one’s ‘I’ and as transcending it, though within it. It may be said that it is an ‘I-AM’ within one’s ‘I-am’. It may also be said that the Supreme Spirit’s ‘I AM’ is deeper, higher, greater and more comprehensive than one’s “I am”. Spatial meanings have no relevance here.

Oh dear one! Whatever you have wanted to know about the working of Sri Hari - the Supreme Brahman, I have imparted to you, established in the Self. Is there any more question remaining to be answered?