

TAT SAT

K.R. Paramahansa

Table of Contents

	Page No
1. Enquiry	11
2. Cosmos	13
3. Physical Matter	14
Sentient Beings	14
Insentient Objects	16
4. Non-physical Categories	17
General	17
Prakrti	18
Reason	20
Ego	21
Mind	23
Sense Organs	31
Organs of Action	32
Subtle Elements	33
Gross Elements	34
5. Cognition	35
Introduction	35
Perception	36
Inference	38
Comparison	39
Postulation	40
Non-cognition	41
Word or Language	42
General	43
6. Metaphysics of the Cosmos	44
7. Metaphysics of Human Beings	45
General	45
Self	46
Soul	49
Subtle Body	53
Sheaths	55
8. Reality	57
9. Truth	58
10. Quest for Realization	60

11. Basic Thought of the Upanisads	63
12. Atman	65
13. The Brahman	66
14. Being - being	71
15. Becoming	75
16. Relative World	79
17. Consciousness	85
General	85
Witness Consciousness	90
Existential Consciousness & Phenomenological Consciousness	91
Inner Controller	95
Infinite Consciousness	96
18. Realization - Bliss	100
19. The Path of Ethical Action	104
General	104
Ethics - Merit and Demerit	108
<i>Samskaras</i>	112
Rational Consciousness	113
Action Differentiated	114
20. The Path of Devotion	116
General	116
Attributes of Devotion	119
Stages of Devotion	122
Divine Incarnation	124
Faith	128
21. The Path of Yoga	129
General	129
Raja-yoga	132
<i>Tantra-Kundalini</i>	137
Aum	141
Other Types of Yoga	142
22. The Path of Discrimination and Knowledge	143
General	143
'I', conscious Ego and the Brahman	147
Levels between the 'I' and the Brahman	149

Cosmic Person, Personal God and the Brahman	151
Apperception - Time, Space and <i>Akasa</i>	153
<i>Maya</i> as a Measure	159
Unconscious	162
Darkness	165
Bondage	168
Liberation	170
23. Non-dualism	173
Appendix	175
Glossary	181

Prologue

Mahamahopadhyaya
Vedanta Siromani, Vedanta Visarada, Vidvan,
Dr.P.Sriramachndrudu,
MA. Ph.D (Skt), M.A. (English), M.A. (Hindi)
Recipient of President's Certificate of Honour,
Visvabharati Award and Sahitya Academy Award,
Professor of Sanskrit, Osmania University (Retd).

Om tat sad iti nirdes brahmanas tri-vidhah smrtah

(Bhagavad-Gita XVII-23)

The Brahman, the Supreme Being, is referred to by three words OM, TAT and SAT. The Brahman is the ultimate reality. It is pure consciousness devoid of all attributes (*nirguna*) and all categories of the intellect (*nirvisesa*). Being associated with Its potency (*maya*), The Brahman appears as the qualified one, *Saguna* Brahman, or the Lord (Isvara) who is the creator, preserver or destroyer of the world which is nothing but His appearance. It is thus, because of *maya*, the Brahman is said to be the creator of the world.

Maya is not pure illusion. It is not only absence of knowledge, but also positive wrong knowledge and is, therefore, *bhavarupa* (of positive nature). It 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 on the Brahman. 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 is not a non-entity like the horn of a hare. A rope is mistaken as a snake. The rope is the ground on which the snake is super-imposed. When right knowledge arises, this error vanishes. 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 on which the world appears through the power, *maya*. When right knowledge dawns, the real nature of the so called *jiva* is realized, and *maya* vanishes.

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 full well that he is seeing the unreal, at the same time gets the experience

through his eyes and ears, of that which 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).

Once it is established that Consciousness (the Brahman) is One, All-pervading, Supreme Being, Peerless and Eternal, there can be no second consciousness called *jiva*, independent and different from the Brahman. *Jiva* is nothing other than *antahkarana* which is translucent and is the purest (*nirmala*) of all the non-sentient objects (*achetana padarthas*) being capable of reflecting and radiating of *cicchakti* of the Brahman with which it is constantly connected and, therefore, is never without *chaitanya*. There is no question of *jiva* moving from place to place (one life to another). It is only the *antahkarana* with all its constant associates like the subtle body, sense organs, etc which moves and migrates from place to place (life to life) and from one world to the other. It receives the *chaitanya* from the all-pervading Brahman wherever it goes. This point may be explained with the help of an example, apart from the well known examples of *ghatakasa* (the sky delimited by parts) and *jala-surya* (reflection of sun in water). Every living being requires *prana* (related to inhaling of oxygen). But it does not carry it wherever it goes, but finds it at every place it visits, lives on it and continues to be a *prani*. Similar is the case with *antahkarana* which draws *chicchakti* from the All-pervading Consciousness, and itself appears as *chetana*. The main difference is that the *prana* is not all-pervading like the Brahman.

Jiva is not a particle emerging from the Brahman or a piece cut out of the Brahman to be ultimately united with It, because the Brahman is all-pervading like *akasa* with no form or parts. As the *chaitanya* part of the so called *jiva* is nothing but the Brahman, it is declared *Jivo Brahmaiva naparah*. This is, in short, the philosophy of *Advaita* taught in the Upanisads and expounded by Sri Sankaracharya.

In this scholarly work *TAT SAT* Sri K.R. Paramahansa deals with the doctrine of *Advaita* in detail. At the practical level, the *advaitins* accept, like any *dvaitin*, that the world consists of actions, results and experiences as the *vyavaharika satya* (reality). Therefore they accept their own *pramanas*, the means of correct cognition, which are six in number being almost similar to those accepted by *Bhattas*, the Principal Section of *Mimamsakas*. The *jagat* is created, sustained and withdrawn by God whom they call *Saguna-Brahman*. There are *punya* and *papa* (merit and demerit), different worlds like *svarga* and *naraka* which are peopled by different types of beings. While the main *sidhanta* (philosophy) of *Advaita* (Non-dualism) can be explained in one or two sentences, there are many theories regarding the creation of the world, its nature, different types of *karmas* which give different results, various *upasanas* which are the means to attain *jnana* leading to *moksha*. All these topics are discussed in different chapters. The chapters 11-18 are devoted to explain the main tenets of *Advaita*. The three *yogas* – *Karma-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga* and *Raja-yoga* which are the means to get *jnana* are given due place in the discussion in chapters 19 - 21. Each chapter shows the deep study and clear understanding of the subject on the part of the author who must have been constantly engaged, for several years, in *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, the three requisites of *sadhaka* for approaching and appreciating *Advaita* in which mere devotional emotion and emotional devotion cannot make a dent.

This is a comprehensive treatise on *Advaita*. I am sure all those who make a careful study of this work will be immensely benefited in understanding the otherwise abstruse subject.

P.Sriramachandrudu.

1. Enquiry

Voltaire tells a story of 'The Good Brahmin' who says, 'I wish I had never been born... because, I have been studying these forty years, and I find that it has been so much time lost... I believe that I am composed of matter, but I have never been able to satisfy myself what it is that produces thought. I am even ignorant whether my understanding is a simple faculty like that of walking or digesting, I have said to myself a thousand times that I should be happy if I were but as ignorant as my old neighbor (who claims to be the happiest); and yet it is happiness which I do not desire...'

The story relates the basic enquiry into what is ultimately true and real. What is it that exists ultimately? What is the human being? How is he related to the society in which he lives, the other species on earth and the cosmos? What is man's life? What is its meaning and purpose? How is man to plan his life so that he can attain his ideal? Is there any Reality? If life is part of Reality, how is he to know this Reality?

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in living form, etc. Life evolves out of material elements and Mind out of living form for the reason that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life. This is for the reason that Matter is a form of veiled Life and Life a form of veiled consciousness. The impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organization in man. So in man there is the same ascending series, the preparation for a higher and divine life.

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 himself 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.

The ascent to the divine life is then the human journey. This alone is the justification of his existence, without which he would only be an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water, which has managed to form itself amid the immensities of the physical universe.

The preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts is the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed

Bliss, the sense of a secret Immortality. The urge is to know God, Light, Freedom and Immortality.

This enquiry has engaged several seers for over two millenniums, through the preceding millennium, mainly in India and recently around the world. The enquiry has related to the spirit and the soul; it has been soul - searching. Several enquirers have succeeded in finding answers in their own way. They continue to do so. They are seers having realized the ultimate Truth and Reality.

The enquiry is anthropocentric as it is related to human species. It is mainly because of the high level of consciousness endowed on the human being. The human being himself consists of three main components—physical, non-physical and metaphysical. The enquiry relates to his *being-ness*. It is, therefore, ontological and metaphysical.

P.T. Raju classifies 'Being' into two concepts - ontological and classificatory. Classificatory 'Being' is conceived when everything in the world is classified as an individual being. But ontological 'Being' is conceived in the form 'That is' or 'That exists'. While 'Being' is considered of the highest class under the concept of classificatory being, 'I am' is the highest form of the ontological Being. If one says 'that is', the object, whatever it may be, may or may not exist. The 'is' is regarded as being implied grammatically, but not in actuality and truth. But in the 'I am', both the noun and the verb coincide. They are identical. Ontological 'Being' is the identity of noun and verb, agent and action, being and becoming, assertion and its truth.

2. Cosmos

Our planet earth is in a sparse section of the Milky Way with only eight stars that are ten light years from the sun. This galaxy has more than two hundred billion stars. The universe is currently speculated to have hundred billion galaxies. This gives us an idea how tiny is the earth in the universe. It is like a grain of sand at the edge of a galactic shoreline of a vast sea in the universe.

The planet earth rotates round itself and rotates around the sun at exorbitant speed. Similarly, the other planets of the sun in the solar system, which are very huge compared to the earth, rotate round themselves and around the sun. All the heavenly bodies in this galaxy and all the galaxies themselves follow suit. The earth and the other planets have their own satellite bodies revolving around them.

The cosmos is always in vibration - motion. It is ever growing. Scientists observe that the present cosmos had its beginning. It has been growing ever since. A time comes when the growth stops and the cosmos starts contracting until it dissolves into its Being. It is a cycle that repeats. Even when it contracts until its dissolution, it is still growth, but in the negative direction. There is a perfect order in the manner of evolution and the possible involution of the cosmos. What keeps the cosmos intact in its functioning is stated to be the gravitational force. The space in between the heavenly bodies in the cosmos is no vacuum. The entire space is a beehive of activity. It is a potential source of energy quanta and matter particles.

Everything in the cosmos emits energy in every direction. This energy mixes with all other energies, similarly arising from everything else. These energies crisscross in patterns of complexity beyond the ability of the most powerful computers to analyze. The crisscrossing, intermingling, intertwining energies racing between everything that is considered physical is what holds the physicality together. As such, the cosmos is a unified organic whole which holds together, ever changing and in motion. What we know at the moment is only a fraction of what it is.

In late 1998, a team of astronomers and physicists made a revelation of the possibility of existence of another universe, about 13 billion light years away from earth. Do one or more universes other than the one of which our planet is part exist? If it does, an interesting possibility is that the astronomers and the physicists will have an opportunity to study how that universe(s) was developing and evolving 13 billion years ago. What our scientists will see today is what was then happening. It will be very exciting and gives a tremendous insight into the evolution of the universe (s). Some other scientists advance theories as to the possibility of existence of parallel universes.

3. Physical Matter

Sentient Beings

The genesis of human species on earth like every other object of creation is a great wonder, may be a mystery. The human species—homo-sapiens has 23 pairs of chromosomes in each of its somatic cells. In the somatic cells, multiplication takes place. It is the duplication of each chromosome pair. The reproduction of the species depends on the exact number of chromosomes in each zygote.

One ovum is ovulated ordinarily either from the right or left ovary sometime in mid menstrual period of a woman, while millions of sperm are present in the semen of one ejaculation of a man. When they mate, all these sperms run a race in the female genital tract and try to reach the ovum. Only one sperm out of millions enters into the ovum. Immediately thereafter, a wall is formed around the freshly fertilized ovum, impenetrable to any other sperm. The race terminates. The gene is formed.

Supposing another sperm enters the ovum, the chromosome number changes in the zygote. There cannot be a homo-sapiens offspring. In such an eventuality, it may be a different species. It does not happen.

The fetus inside the mother's womb collects sufficient quantity of iron from the mother's blood and stores in the fetal liver and spleen. This is done to manage the first few months of the post-natal life of the newborn, when mother's milk deficient in iron is its sole food. On the birth of the child, milk is produced in the mother's mammary glands. Under the influence of the pituitary, the ovarian and the thyroid hormones, the ducts and the alveoli of the mammary glands develop, depositing fat in the bosoms. The anterior pituitary hormone prolactin is secreted resulting in availability of milk to the newborn child. This does not arise prior to the birth of the child, nor does it arise for any woman with no newborn child.

Let us see the empirical human being. Its physical component is the body. This is a physiological wonder. It consists of over hundred thousand billion cells, arising and decomposing continuously. One cell becomes two, four and more. The multi cellular embryo differentiates into ectoderm, mesoderm and endoderm. Different organs are formed. Specialized tissues are differentiated from the organs. The brain, the spinal cord, the peripheral nerves, the skin, etc. are formed from the ectoderm. The liver, the kidneys, the eyes, the ears etc. are wonderful special organs made of fine-tuned macro and micro constituents. All are sourced from the zygote.

The physiology of each system of the body is too wonderful to contemplate. Billions of human beings are born, grow and die, with no identical resemblance between any two of them.

Besides the homo-sapiens, there have been several million species of macro and microstructures of living organisms. They range from various bacteria, amoeba, plants, animals, etc. Several of them have remained for some time and perished, giving place to new variations. The sub-cellular constituents, the cells, the tissues, the organs etc. of these organisms have been fine-tuned to meet specific needs. All the

biological components constitute an integrated whole in each, and function with perfect coordination. All the biological bodies are extremely complex in their structure. They become sentient because of an element of consciousness introduced therein. Its induction into the body structure is unrelated to its physicality, but to what may be called the Divine. All the beings are ever in vibration (motion) and change.

The sentient beings are on the planet Earth as we know of now. They are scattered on the land, in the water and the atmosphere enveloping it. The sentient beings occupy a fraction of the surface of the planet. The other surface is covered with insentient matter such as solids, liquids and gases.

Insentient Objects

At the micro level of the matter on earth and in the cosmos, the mystery is no different. Let us look at a small stone. It is filled with millions of atoms, protons, neutrons and sub-atomic particles. These particles move about continually, in a pattern, each particle going from 'here' to 'there' and taking time to do so. Everything that comprises the stone is moving at an incredible speed in time and space in a pattern, which is perfect. In between the atoms and the sub-atomic particles, there is space which accounts for about 98 percent of the volume of the stone itself. This space is again filled with energy and such quanta particles as are not discernable. Together, the entire matter called stone is an organic whole.

The very movement of the heavenly bodies in the cosmos, and the very movement of the atomic and sub-atomic particles in a tiny stone at incredible speed are what they keep the cosmos on one hand and the stone on the other, in perfect equilibrium creating their stillness. They remain unmoved, and still movers themselves. For the same reason, the earth, though rotates round itself and around the sun at incredible speed, remains still for its inhabitants. Not only the planet as such, has even the atmospheric zone around it remained still for us.

Who organizes this extraordinary creation? Who organizes this extraordinary motion? To say that the Nature does act that way is only to admit our ignorance as to the cause of the process.

Either the cosmos as a whole, or the tiny stone, ever in motion and yet stable and unmoved is in the process of becoming. Becoming is the effect of the process in which each is in. Becoming is empirical and apparent of what is termed the being of the cosmos or of the stone. The becoming is ever changing and in motion; the being is unmoved, stable and never changing.

What applies to the insentient matter applies to the sentient beings, too. Sentient beings are only matter with life and consciousness. Matter associated with life is sentient; matter without life is insentient.

As we understand, there is no life in ordinary matter such as a stone or any other insentient object. Yet it is full of activity, being ever in motion. What makes it active? It is a force or energy, may be Divine. This force is consciousness. It permeates all sentient and insentient objects in the cosmos. This is the common string (strand) that binds the micro particles and organisms to the All and makes IT an organic whole.

4. Non-physical Categories

General

Besides being physical, a human being is non-physical, too. So is the cosmos.

The non-physical categories apply to the 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.

An analysis of the categories may be significant to understand the Reality.

Prakrti

Prakrti (Un-manifest) is the world of change in its un-manifest state. For this reason it is called the Un-manifest (*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.

Prakrti is considered to be in a state of dormancy when its three attributes are in perfect equilibrium. This is said to be the original state of *prakrti* when there is no world of forms and names - objects. The *Sankhya* philosophy states that when the reflection of the Supreme Being (*Purusa*) is thrown in *prakrti*, the latter is disturbed. This disturbance upsets the original equilibrium of the three attributes. As a result, any one attribute dominates the other two. Evolution ensues into the world of forms.

Ontologically, the attributes constituting *prakrti* are ever active. But the stability of *prakrti* like any other object or any society means that the forces inherent in it are in a state of equilibrium, none becoming dominant over the others, all being equally active and the activities of each force being harmonious with the activities of the others. Stability, then, does not mean inactivity, or lethargy, but harmony in activity. What is essentially and by nature force cannot but be active. What we call its in-activity may really be its pulsations of activity under the same conditions and in the same circumstances and pattern. In such an event, the change is not observable, though it always exists.

This is in consonance with what is called the Super-string theory, stated to be still in the process of development in the last three decades. As a violin string vibrates at many different frequencies called harmonics, and the different harmonics correspond to different musical sounds, it is postulated that the fundamental particles making up the fundamental forces such as the electrons, the gravitons, the photons, the neutrinos, etc cause vibrations in the universe in a perfect rhythmic harmony creating the seen objects of form called the cosmos. This postulation is subject to detailed study and empirical proof. It, however, corresponds to the normal physical process of materialization of objects arising from radiation through vibration.

Prakrti cannot be an object of perception. It is too subtle to be so. It can only be inferred from its effects. The inner sense, the outer senses and all the objects are its effects.

The Supreme Being (*Purusa*) carries in IT all of *prakrti*, sometimes keeping its forces latent and other times patent, and identifying IT with its manifestations.

For the Supreme Being to throw reflection into *prakrti*, Its consciousness must have a direction towards *prakrti* into which Its reflection is to be thrown. The Supreme Being is, therefore, to hold *prakrti* as Its innate part. This is best explained in Svetasvatara Upanisad that *prakrti* is an ingredient of the Supreme I-am. This directionality or intentionality has its orientations within Existence itself, in which a split is introduced. We may not know why it has been introduced, but it is a matter of

experience of its being. This experience cannot be explained without assuming transcendental implications pointing to the ultimate unity of Existence or Being.

From the point of view of ontology, *Prakrti* may be the process of the energy emanating from the Being, forming into objects all around. The split in the Being may be due to Becoming issuing out of Being, which the transcendental I-AM is. There is no becoming without being. The activity of becoming has to occur in a field, sub-consciously stable in order to be recognized as the activity of becoming. There can be no becoming without a force behind. This force is to be operative in the being Itself. There can be no other source for it.

If *prakrti* is a dynamic force with the three attributes active, then the Being is also active. If the two are ultimately to be one, then the dynamism of *prakrti* is to be a derivation from the dynamism of the Being and *prakrti* must belong to the Being. There seems to be some primordial intention, inherent potentially in the Supreme Being, to set *prakrti* in motion. That potentiality is the potentiality of Becoming.

Prakrti is truly the inherent nature of the Supreme Being with the drive to become the world and also to return to the Supreme Being. The forward movement manifesting in the world and the return movement in dissolution are the two directions of Becoming. The two forms of the activity of *prakrti* called evolution and involution are really the two forms of becoming founded in 'Being'.

Reason

Reason (*buddhi, mahat, 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.

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

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.

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 (*chitta*) 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.

Mind

Mind (*manas*) is part of the Inner Instrument (*antahkarana*) to unite all the sensations and present them to the 'I' consciousness (*atman*). Mind is to convey pains and pleasures to it.

Generally, it is said that the mind experiences pains and pleasures. In fact, it is the individual 'I' consciousness that experiences the pains and pleasures, the colors and smells, etc. The mind performs the function of receiving the impressions of the different senses and uniting them into phenomenal objects, and presents them as the sense for which pleasures and pains are objects, to the 'I' consciousness.

The objects of unified impressions and also of pleasures and pains are conveyed to the individual 'I' consciousness for enjoyment and suffering, and also for appropriation as its own. This is the process responsible for the experience of 'mine', as distinguished from 'thine' and the neutral. Thus appears the ego or the ego sense.

The experience of seeing some things only at some times, remembering some things at some times, remembering such experiences as we want to remember, and forgetting some others even if we want to remember them relate to the functioning of the mind. This experience is due to a mediating link between the all-conscious 'I' consciousness and the experience. This link fails in forgetfulness to connect the 'I' consciousness to the object of that experience.

If there is not such an intervening mediating link between the 'I' consciousness and the experience, one must remember all things all times. The memories will be flooding, with no new perception and organization of experience to be possible or effective.

Similarly, one experiences pains and pleasures only some specific times, not always. These pains and pleasures are due to the experience of different objects. This is possible only when there is something directing or pulling the 'I' consciousness towards such experiences at those times. It funnels and focuses the outwards-directed consciousness as the inner instrument. It is what causes memory or forgetfulness, different forms of sleep, pointed-ness, intentionality or directedness, and through it, to the 'I' consciousness.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

External objects like space, etc, 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.

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.

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.

The mind is sentient because it is based on consciousness. When viewed as something apart from consciousness, it is inert and deluded.

To control one's thought one is to assume a different perspective. One will then have a different thought. This way one will have learnt to control one's thought. In the creation of one's experience, controlled thought is everything. This controlled thought is the constant prayer. Thought control is the highest form of Prayer. Therefore, one is to think only of the Divine and the righteous. One is not to dwell in

negativity and darkness. Even in bleak moments, one is to see perfection, express gratefulness and then imagine what manifestation of perfection one chooses next. This process leads to tranquility and peace. In this awareness is found joy.

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. Hence one is to endeavor with the mind to make the mind take to the pure path.

Mind and body do not act upon each other. Spinoza observes that the body cannot determine the mind to think; nor can the mind determine the body to remain in motion or at rest, or in any other state, for the decision of the mind and the desire and determination of the body are one and the same thing. The inward 'mental' process corresponds at every stage with the external 'material' process; the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. According to him, the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same thing, comprehended now through this, now through that, attribute. Nothing can happen to the body, which is not perceived by the mind and consciously or unconsciously felt.

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.

If 'the mind is elsewhere', the taste of food being eaten is not really experienced. If 'the mind is elsewhere' one does not see what is right in front of oneself. The senses are born of the mind, but not the other way. The body and the mind are non-different, being mind alone.

What is man but 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 indeed is the very nature of the mind. This is the supreme goal.

The mind is able to create different states of consciousness such as waking and dreaming. It experiences what it itself constructs. It is no more than what has been put together by thought. Towards whichever object the mind flows with intensity, in that it sees the fulfillment of its craving.

Mind constantly swings like a pendulum between the reality and the appearance, 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.

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.

All the powers that are inherent in the Infinite Consciousness and by which the world has been brought into being are found in the mind. The sages have, therefore, declared that the Infinite Consciousness is omnipotent.

The fictitious moment of energy in consciousness is known as mind. The expressions of the mind are thoughts and ideas. 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. The mind appears to be intelligent and active only because of the inner light of 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.

Conditioning of the mind is the conviction of the reality of the body in one who has abandoned the distinction between the body and the self. Conditioning is of two kinds - the adorable and the sterile. Sterile or barren conditioning exists in the minds of those who are ignorant of self-knowledge. The adorable conditioning is in those who have self-knowledge.

The very nature of the mind is stupidity. When it 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.

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 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.

The seed for this world-appearance is the body-consciousness within, with its notions and concepts of good and evil. That body has a seed, which is the mind that moves constantly in the direction of hopes and desires. The world-appearance, therefore, arises in the mind, as illustrated by the dream state. Whatever is seen here as the world is but the expansion of the mind, even as pots are transformations of clay!

The two seeds of the mind are the movement of *prana* (life-force) and obstinate fancy. When there is movement of *prana* in the appropriate channels, there is movement in consciousness, and mind arises. Again, it is the movement of *prana* alone, which is seen as the world-appearance that is as real as the blueness of the sky. The cessation of the movement of *prana* is the cessation of world-appearance, too. In order to bring about quiescence of the mind, the yogi practises *pranayama* - restraint of the movement of the life force, meditation, etc. Great ascetics consider that *pranayama* itself is the most appropriate method for achievement of the tranquility of the mind and peace.

There is another view that the mind is born of one's obstinate clinging to a fancy or deluded imagination. When obstinately clinging to a fancy and, therefore, abandoning thorough enquiry into the nature of Truth, one apprehends an object with that fancy. Such apprehension is described as conditioning or limitation. When such fancy is persistently and intensely indulged in, this world-appearance arises in consciousness.

Of the two seeds of the mind that give rise to this world-illusion – the movement of *prana* and the clinging to fancy, if one is got rid of, the other also goes away, for the two are interdependent.

The notion of an object, either knowledge or experience of it, is the seed for both the movement of *prana* and for the clinging to a fancy. It is only when such desire for experience arises that such movement of *prana* and mental conditioning take place. When such desire for experience is abandoned, both these cease instantly.

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.

One is to live in the present, with one's consciousness externalized momentarily but without any effort. When the mind stops linking to the past and the future, it becomes no-mind. If, from moment to moment, one's mind dwells on what is, and drops it effortlessly at once, the mind becomes no-mind, full of purity. If consciousness ceases to be the finite mind, one is to know for certain that cyclic world-illusion no longer exists, and there is perfection.

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.

The pure mind 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.

Where is mind? It is not an independent physiological component of the human body. It is like butter in milk, spread all over. Every cell of the human body is stated to contain mind of its own which, together for the system, is reflected as its functions. The density of the cells in the brain is quite intense. It is, therefore, felt that the activity of mind is more in the sphere of the brain. The process of thinking is detected by observing the involuntary vibrations of the vocal cords that seem to accompany all thinking. It is said that mind comes into contact with the body at the pineal gland.

Mind is the highest force in man. Yet mind in man is an ignorant, clouded and struggling power. But super-mind is free, master and expressive of divine glories.

Because man is a mental being, he naturally imagines that mind is the indispensable agent in the universe. This is an error. Even for knowledge, mind is not the only possible instrument or discoverer. Mind is a clumsy instrument between the Nature's subconscious action and the infallible superconscious action of the Godhead.

Neale Donald Walsch states that mind makes decisions and choices from one of at least three interior levels - logic, intuition, emotion and sometimes from all the

three. Within the level of emotion, there are five more levels. These five are the natural emotions - grief, anger, envy, fear and love. Of these five levels, the levels of love and fear are the final ones. The basic emotions are love and fear. The other three are the out- growths of these two.

All thoughts are sponsored by love or fear. All thoughts, ideas, concepts, understandings, decisions, choices and the resulting actions are based in one of these two. Even fear, the bipolar opposite of love, is itself an outgrowth of love and is based in it. In the end, the only emotion that is true and exists is love. In its highest form, everything expresses love.

Grief is a natural emotion to express the sadness within, at the experience of any kind of loss. When expressed naturally, one gets rid of it. If it is suppressed without being expressed, it results in chronic depression, an unnatural emotion.

Anger is another natural emotion. When expressed naturally, one gets over it and returns to one's usual self very quickly. It will result in one's dealings appropriately with others, whenever one overcomes it. If suppressed, it results in rage, an unnatural emotion.

Envy is another natural emotion. It makes one to strive to act until one succeeds. It is healthy to be envious, a natural emotion. It brings a healthy attitude to an individual in the pursuit of his goals in his later life. If it is suppressed, it results in jealousy, a very unnatural emotion.

Fear is a natural emotion. The purpose of natural fear is to build in a bit of caution. Caution is a tool that helps keep the body alive. It is an outgrowth of love. It is love of self. If fear is suppressed, it results in panic.

Love is a natural emotion. When it is expressed without limitation or condition, inhibition or embarrassment, normally and naturally, it serves itself and results in joy and bliss. If it is suppressed, it results in possessiveness, an unnatural emotion.

Perfect love is to feeling what perfect white is to color. Love is not the absence of an emotion. It is summation of all feeling.

Love is life. One loves another only when the other has life. When life terminates in the other, one treats the other's body as dead and is no more concerned. Love is an all-inclusive emotion expressed as pure, unconditional love or in some other modified form. *Prakrti* or Nature showers its pure and unconditional love on its constituent whole.

Bondage and liberation are of the mind alone. The mind will take the color one dyes it with. One is free if one constantly thinks that way. Repeating with grit and determination 'I am free, I am not bound', one really becomes free. The one who constantly says 'I am a sinner, I am bound' really becomes so.

Sri Ramakrishna says "the mind is like milk. If one keeps the mind in the world, which is like water, the milk and water get mixed up. That is why people keep milk in a quiet place and let it set into curd, and then churn butter from it. Likewise,

through spiritual discipline practised in solitude, churn the butter of knowledge and devotion from the milk of the mind. Then that butter can be kept in the water of the world, without being affected by it. The mind, spiritually enlightened, will float, detached, on the water of the world”.

The animal life emerging out of Matter is the inferior term of man’s existence. The life of thought, feeling, will, conscious impulsion etc which we call Mind is his middle term. There is a higher term which Mind in man searches after so that, having found, he may affirm it in his mental and bodily existence. This practical affirmation of something essentially superior to his bodily and mental self is the basis of the divine life in the human being.

There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind’s immobility and thought-free stillness. When mind is still, then Truth gets its chance to be heard in the purity of silence. Truth cannot be attained by the mind’s thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces. It does not intervene in the noise of logical debate.

Sri Aurobindo says: ‘cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you and look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in you from all around you’. This will arise only if the mind is no less intense in its purity than its silence. Otherwise, in an impure mind, the silence will soon feed with misleading lights and false voices.

Sense Organs

Sense organs (*jnanendriyas*) are five 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.

Stimulus-receptors are present in each sense organ. Once a stimulus is generated, it is transmitted through the fibers of a nerve in the form of an impulse which is electrical in nature. The impulse is received by some nuclei in the brain. Corresponding to the five types of sense organs, there are five loci in the brain to receive the external stimuli and interpret the messages in the form of cognitions. In addition, there are collateral nerve fibers that connect all cognitive areas in the brain for information and coordination.

‘Psychic power’-knowing about things may be considered the sixth sense. It is the ability to step out of one’s limited experience. It is the ability to tap into the larger truth all around oneself, sensing a different energy. One who exercises psychic power is aware that all thought is energy and all things are in motion. The psychic becomes adept at feeling these energies that are very subtle and fleeting. The psychic works, out of his mind, through intuition. The psychic feels the feelings of the other which he is to interpret, and knows them intuitively.

Organs of Action

Organs of action (*karmendriyas*) are called the motor organs. They are the hands with which we receive or give, the mouth by which we speak, the feet with which we move about, the organ of generation and the organ of evacuation. These are the powers of action and the products of ego - *ahankara*.

Subtle Elements

Subtle elements (*tanmatras*) are considered derived one out of another; air out of ether, fire out of air, water out of fire and earth out of water. In other words, it is touch out of sound, color out of touch, taste out of color and smell out of taste, all of them being subtle elements. They are impersonal qualities that do not inhere in substances. But substances in their gross form are formed out of them. They lie in wait for each created person to be appropriated by him as his potentialities of action.

The subtle elements are the potentialities or latent forms of the different senses or sensation possibilities. Further these potentialities have to be taken as belonging to the 'I' consciousness, and our senses have to be taken as the channels of the manifestations, rays, and expressions of the said consciousness. By senses, we do not mean the physical or the psychological senses, but the fields of the sensations, the objects of the senses and the fields of their correlation. Rather, they are the impersonal sensation potentialities or sense fields of the Cosmic Person of whom each individual is part. This explains that the finite person partakes of the Cosmic Person.

The subtle elements can be treated as the transcendental grounds of the substance-quality or substance-property manifestations. That is why they are called *Thats* only, even though they are identified with the help of specific qualities such as *sabda-tanmatra* (sound-That), *sparsa-tanmatra* (touch-That), etc. These qualities are the potentialities of the activity of the self-manifestation of the Cosmic Person as the experience of this or that object, the objects or the objective ends of the activities of mind and senses - the manifestations of the Cosmic Person. What we call senses like my sight and hearing are the instrumentalities and channels by which I sense objects or the instrumentalities by which the objects reveal and manifest themselves. Significantly, they are the channels of the manifestation of myself, my *atman* and also the channels through which I withdraw and assimilate my manifestations to myself.

Gross Elements

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.

5. Cognition

Introduction

The enquirer seeks valid ways of knowing for cognition of truth and other aspects of the self and the world. Hearsay and rumour cannot be accepted as valid ways of knowing.

Different seers have recognized different ways of knowing. The *Mimamsa* tradition accepts generally six valid ways of knowing - perception, inference, comparison, postulation, non-cognition and word or language. The *Vedantic* tradition also accepts the same as valid ways of knowing.

An analysis of the ways of knowing gives an idea of their role in knowing the truth about the Self, and the world.

Perception

Perception (*pratyaksha*) is direct knowledge of objects through senses and mind. It is external and internal. The senses come into contact with the objects, mind with the senses and the 'I' consciousness with mind. Knowledge arises as consciousness, when mind and the 'I' consciousness or *atman* comes into contact. Internal objects like pains and pleasures are known by mind coming directly into contact with them without the aid of senses. Mind directly conveys them to the 'I' consciousness. This concept of perception excludes the theory of correspondence.

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". In the act of experience whether it is the perception of a book, the feeling of pain or going through abstract thinking, the process takes place in an indeterminate way. In it are involved the epistemological subject and object, the logical subject and predicate, the individual object and name, and the individual and the universal. But their distinctions are not experienced in the live act, just as the distinctness between the waking I present in the background of the dream and the dream I in it is not experienced. But in the reflective consciousness as in "I know that I experienced X in my dream", the distinction arises. Similarly, in the reflective stage of perception following the indeterminate perception, the distinctions between the universal and the individual, and the logical subject and the predicate come in.

What is of importance is that in this cognitive act of indeterminate perception, my I-am, mind and sense of vision are involved and they cut out a specific contour out of the cosmos. They are involved by being identified with the object.

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?

What cannot come into contact with the senses is not considered an object of sense perception.

Perception is a function of the inner sense (instrument), which consists of four parts or levels - mind (*manas*), ego (*ahankara*), reason (*buddhi*) and apperception (*chitta*). The function of mind is analysis and synthesis of whatever is perceived by

the senses. The function of the ego is to appropriate the object as its object as in 'I see X'. Reason makes the object as an existing one as in 'that is an apple'.

Until reason does its work, the object is an object of my experience, not an object of the world. The function of reason is to make it an object of the objective world through an assertion or decision. But the inner instrument goes further in its work. In turning the sensations into a unified object, the inner instrument brings in past experiences also into the unity. This *relating* is the function of apperception. It collects different ideas about the object and relates them.

Before the perceptual cognition of the object arises, one is ignorant and unconscious of its existence. The darkness of this Unconscious has to be lighted up for the cognition to arise. The consciousness present in the senses and the mind coming into contact with the object lights up the area disclosing the object. The object has its own reality, its own place in the world. The mind also has the power to take exactly the same form and then abstract the mental form later, if necessary, for instance, when it remembers the object.

Perception reveals not only the forms of objects but their being (*satta*) that is common to every existent and without which the forms cannot be real and cannot have objective status. In 'That is a horse' and 'That is a baby', along with the forms of the horse and the baby, being is also revealed through the 'is', whether or not the cognition is expressed in words.

Inference

Inference (*anumana*) is syllogism, in Indian epistemology. Inference does not cover all the thought processes covered by the word in western epistemology. For the Indian logicians, generally, the major premise has to be accompanied by an example. This excludes the universal negative. The mention of the example is considered necessary to establish that the major premise is, in fact, based upon an actual instance. The major premise, being a universal proposition, can then be shown to be a true induction and not an imaginary combination of universals.

Inference has two forms of syllogism - inference for oneself in which all the premises need not be mentioned and inference for another in which all of them are to be stated.

If there is conflict between perception and inference, the Advaitins accept inference and reject perception. Similarly, if there is conflict between inference and scriptural testimony, they accept the latter and reject the former. The other Vedantins do not reject any of the valid means of cognition and say that, in cases of conflict, they shall be reconciled and none of them treated as false at face value.

Comparison

Comparison (*upamana*) is not the deliberating process of comparing two objects. It is the spontaneous cognitive process to be called the observing of similarity. The cognition of similarity is a special kind of cognitive process showing that mind has a spontaneous capacity to observe similarities.

Postulation

Postulation (*arthapatti*) is the positing of something for making any unit of cognition self-complete. It is to accept a fact or principle for explaining a truism, which, otherwise, cannot be explained. Our understanding of a situation becomes incomplete without accepting the truth of something not seen. Then that something is the object of postulation, which is a spontaneous cognitive process of mind.

In postulation, there is no major premise. It is, in a way, the framing of a hypothesis or constructive imagination. Postulation is not regarded as the same as induction. Generally we postulate something when there is conflict between two accepted facts. We may also do so when we do not find the reason for an event. Instances for this kind of postulation are such as gravitation, magnetic force, burning power of fire, etc.

Postulation is of two kinds - to explain something what is postulated being perceivable or unperceivable, and to explain a meaning for making words intelligible.

Non-cognition

Non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*), also called non-apprehension, is not mere absence of knowledge or awareness, but the cognition of the absence or negation of an object. It is a distinct way of knowing as it establishes the reality of absence and negation.

Word or Language

Word or Language is the way of knowing verbal testimony or knowledge obtained through words. Words have a double face. On the one hand, they are sounds perceived by the sense of hearing. As such, they are only objects of perception. But on the other hand, they mean objects or facts other than themselves. These objects or facts are not perceived by the ear, but cognized through words. A deaf man does not understand words, as he does not hear the sounds. But ordinary people understand words not as mere sounds, but as meaning objects different from the words. Hence verbal knowledge becomes a distinct way of knowing. It is not inference.

It is possible that verbal knowledge can be false. But the possibility of being false is not confined to verbal knowledge alone. Perception and the other forms of knowing can as well be false. Even if the person communicating knowledge to another is honest and truthful, he himself may be mistaken. So the minimum requirement is that the communicator is authentic.

It may be of interest to note that the *Vedic* texts are believed to have been revealed to great seers. The seers are not their authors. They are only receptors of what has only existed in the universe, but in the shape of sounds. Inspired by the Divine will, different seers are believed to have comprehended the sounds into structured hymns and the texts of the Vedas, through their inner sense. All of them have been realized in their own way, in the absence of which it would not have been possible for them to comprehend the *Vedic* texts. It may be for this reason that the philosophies in India, which are the Brahman-centered, are considered *Darsanas* (*Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaiseshika*, *Purva-Mimamsa* and *Uttara-Mimamsa* or *Vedanta*) or perceptions of Truth or God. The names of the seers are associated with what has been comprehended by them.

In fact, the Sanskrit language is stated to have been structured out of the *Vedic* texts to convey the meanings comprehended by the seers. The structure of this language is subsequent to the coming of the *Vedas* into the experience of the seers.

By the time of Patanjali, about twenty-five centuries ago, one thousand one hundred and thirty one *samhitas*, which constitute the core text of the Veda, were stated to be in the knowledge of the *Vedic* seers. The *samhitas* and the other *Vedic* texts have been orally transmitted by the gurus to the pupils through the centuries. But the number of the *samhitas* presently in the knowledge of the *Vedic* scholars is only ten.

General

The valid means of cognition are not limited. There may be as many ways of cognition as is possible to cognize a reality. Valid means of cognition are different measures of cognizing reality by fixing limits. They are the ways by which cosmological reality is obtained, established and accepted.

For instance, memory, too, is to be recognized as a distinct way of knowing. Memory is not mere fantasy, a mere flow of mental images. It is remembering one's being involved in the past experience. Indeed, the past cannot be known without memory. There is no other way of knowing one's past, autobiography and history.

Practical activity is only to confirm or disconfirm the truth of all empirical cognitions, as the empirical world is the world of action. Generally we trust the empirical cognitions to be true unless any one of them turns out to be false from another cognition. The conflict between a perception and its consequent rejection as false as in the case of seeing a rope as a snake arises only in the reflective consciousness, that is, the witness consciousness.

These ways of knowing are not foolproof, but generally correct. They substantiate one another. If we do not depend on cognition to know what an object is, on what else can we depend? It is true that cognition goes wrong now and then. But it is possible to get corrected by another cognition or action. It is important to realize that valid cognition is not exactly the same as cognition tied to *being* in the ontological sense.

6. Metaphysics of the Cosmos

In religious mythologies, it is stated God has had many spirit children. Human experience knows that life multiplies itself as suddenly as it dissolves. This parallel to the human experience is made to hold in reality the idea of the existence of countless spirits in the metaphysical world. The spirits are considered the offspring of the Supreme Being, as much as the living beings on earth are so considered. In a way, according to mythologies, the spirits of the metaphysical world assume forms of the living beings.

Space in the universe is not to be considered as physical space only. There is dream space as vast and infinite for me as the physical space. There is psychological space in which the objects of my imagination exist. There is logical and mathematical space in which logical and mathematical realities exist.

There is enough human experience that human souls (subtle bodies) transmigrate on death of their physical bodies. They re-incarnate at their choice of time, place and circumstance, some of them carrying very vivid details of their past lives. Besides, several yogis display transmigration of their souls from one body to another, even before the clinical death of their bodies, through the powers secured by the practices of *yoga*. There is to be space for the souls to stay on, in between the lives they assume. It seems logical that the spirit world exists, as vast and infinite as the physical universe, though not perceived by the human mind.

The cosmos is, as we can speculate, infinite. Even the physical matter that exists in the cosmos is not fully known to human beings, by its very nature of being infinite. The existence of a parallel spirit world across the universe is a matter of conjecture. In sleep, we dream. We imagine wild. There is to be space for the objects of dreams and imagination. Besides, logic and mathematics need space for their exposition. What else is contained metaphysically is not even conjectured. 'What It Is' is, however, known. It is pure consciousness at all levels - physical, non-physical and metaphysical.

7. Metaphysics of Human Beings

General

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.

The human birth in this world is a complex of two elements on its spiritual side - a spiritual person and a soul of personality. The former is man's eternal being. The latter is his cosmic and mutable being. As the spiritual impersonal individual, he is one in his nature and being with the Absolute that has willed his involution in the nescience for a certain round of soul-experience and ensures its evolution. As the soul of personality, he is himself part of that long development of the soul-experience in the forms of nature. This means that his evolution must follow the laws and the lines of the universal evolution. He is one with the Transcendence Immanent in the world. As a soul he is at once one with and part of the universality of the Absolute self-expressed in the world. His self-expression must go through the stages of the cosmic expression. His soul-experience must follow the revolutions of the wheel of the Absolute in the universe. He now appears as a human soul, the spirit accepting the inner and outer form of humanity. But this form does not limit him any more than the plant or animal forms previously assumed by him limited him. He can pass on from his present form to a greater self-expression in a higher scale of nature.

The seeker after Truth realizes that he is not the physical body, nor does he constitute the non-physical categories alone. The body is the container and the non-physical constituents are the tools for the experience of his self. This self is something, different from the other two, though related to them, and seeks to experience itself. This is what the seeker calls the 'I' consciousness. In the Indian philosophy, it is the *atman*. It is neither physical, nor non-physical, but the basis of his experience. It is, therefore, metaphysical. Besides the self, the individual has the experience of the soul, the subtle body and also the sheaths as the metaphysical constituents of his being.

Self

What is the self of a human being? The self is pure awareness. It is pure consciousness. It is a source of all kinds of illumination. It is the infinite 'I'. It is eternal.

The self is that where there is absolutely no 'I'-thought. 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.

There is no one who even for a moment fails to experience the self. No one ever stands apart from the self. He is the self.

The self is consciousness and as consciousness is eternal.

Knowing the self means being the self. Self-knowledge is unique in that the knowing self is itself the known self. It can never become a known or unknown object.

To be the self in the heart is supreme wisdom.

The self 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 'I-am that I-am'.

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. 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.

The Lord - the Self is the intelligence dwelling in the body. He is the universe, though the universe is not He. He is pure intelligence. The Cosmic Intelligence in which the universe, as it were, ceases to be, is the Lord. In Him the subject-object relationship appears to have ceased, as such. He 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 Lord be realized. Dualism presupposes unity; non-dualism suggests dualism. Only when the creation is known to be utterly non-existent is the Lord realized.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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, being proximate to water, is reflected in it. These 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.

Soul

What is the soul in relation to man? Is soul a new creation of our mentalized life, or is it not a permanent entity, the eternal companion of the energy we call Nature, its very spirit and reality?

The soul shaped into humanity is a being of 'Being'. This has risen out of material involution by increasing self-expression in a series of births. Our humanity is the conscious meeting place of the finite and the Infinite. To grow more and more towards that Infinite in this physical birth is our privilege. This Infinite - the Spirit - housed within us is not bound or shut in by mind or body. It is our own self. To find and be our self has always been the object of our human striving, for it is the object of the whole working of Nature.

Human birth, thus, is a term at which the soul must arrive in a long succession of rebirths and that it has had the lower forms of life on earth in succession for its previous and preparatory terms. It has passed through the whole chain that life has strung in the physical universe on the basis of the body, the physical principle. As the soul has not finished what it has to do by merely developing into humanity, it has to go through a succession of human births. It has still to develop that humanity into its higher possibilities. We may reasonably assume that a Vedavyasa or a Sankara marks the crown of the out-flowering spirit in man. There may be a higher possibility, which the Divine intends yet to realize in man. This highest point may have to be reached before there can be no recurrence of the human birth for the individual.

Ontologically, the finite individual is to be considered as the finite soul the *jiva*. The 'I-consciousness' of the individual is the *atman*. It may also be called the spirit. The soul is the same as the *atman* and so the same as the Brahman, according to Sankara. There can be no difference between the soul and the *atman* according to him, for the reason that "difference" is not a valid category.

The soul of an individual is, in effect, the Brahman as limited by, or reflected in *avidya* (*unconscious*). It consists of the internal organ, the senses, the subtle elements and the *atman* (Brahman). The *atman* (Brahman) is the innermost constituent of the soul as it pervades everything, like butter in milk. The soul (individual *jiva*), through which God sports, is endowed with His special power.

All life one thinks one is one's body. Occasionally, one thinks one is one's mind. It is only at the time of death that one realizes what one really is. At the time of death, the soul makes a decision that it is time to leave the body. If the soul realizes that there is no further way to evolve through its body, the soul exits the body. Nothing can stop it.

The body and the mind are subservient to the soul. The soul is very clear that its purpose is only evolution. It is not concerned with the achievements of the body or the development of the mind. If one is able to listen to the soul, one will pass away in peace and without pain. There will be no frustration or anxiety to the dying individual.

The mind very often seeks to exert its will on the body and does so. Similarly, the body often seeks to control the mind. Frequently it succeeds. Together the body and the mind do not have to do anything to control the soul, for the soul is completely without need. So it allows the body and the mind to have their way until and unless they care to listen to it. The soul indicates its desire, rather conceives. It is for the mind to choose from its alternatives and to seek to create what the soul conceives. The body is to act out the choice. If the body, the mind and the soul work in harmony and in unity on the path of evolution consciously chosen by the soul, it leads towards soul - self-realization. The soul knows itself in its experience.

The three aspects of the self - body, mind and soul are in no way unequal to one another. Each has a function and no function is greater than another. Nor does any function precede another. All are inter-related. That is why it is said that if one causes one's body to experience something, one will soon have the feeling of it in one's soul. The soul conceives of itself in a new way and presents the mind with a new thought. From the new thought arises more action or experience by the body. The body begins living a new reality. The body, the mind and the soul are one. The triune reality of the self is a microcosm of the Supreme Being.

The purpose of all life is to experience its fullest glory. Everything else is attendant to that function. That is what the soul seeks to do. The purpose is never ending. If one realizes that one is at the point of experiencing oneself the fullest glory of the soul, the same moment one will feel that there is even greater glory to fulfill. The more one is, the more one can become; and the more one can become, the more one can yet be. The secret of all life is that it is a process of creation, not discovery.

Life is an opportunity for one to know experientially what one already knows conceptually. The soul knows all there is to know all the time. There is nothing unknown to it. What it seeks is experiencing what it knows. This is creating its knowledge into experience. It is the desire of one's soul to turn its grand concept about itself into its great experience. Until concept becomes experience, there is only speculation.

Desire is the beginning of all creation. It is first thought. It is a grand feeling within the soul. It is the will of the Supreme Being that the whole life process is to be an experience of constant joy, continuous creation, never ending expansion and total fulfillment in each moment. This is what the soul seeks to realize as it evolves.

One's life is always a result of one's thoughts about it including, obviously, one's creative thoughts. One's life proceeds out of one's intentions for it. One can choose to be a person that has resulted simply from what has happened, or from what one has chosen to be and do about what has happened. When one chooses the latter course, one creates one's self, consciously. It is in this experience that the self becomes realized.

The soul has come to the body for the purpose of evolution. One is to evolve, to become. This is the purpose of life. This is the joy of creating self. This is the joy of knowing self, of becoming. This is being self-conscious. 'Blessed are the self-centered, for they shall know God'.

The purpose of the soul is to fully realize itself while in the body. It seeks to become the embodiment of all that it really is.

Feeling is the language of the soul. Feelings are sometimes difficult to discover. Yet hidden in one's deepest feelings is one's highest truth.

The soul is the sum total of every feeling one has ever had. The awareness of some of these feelings is called memory. When one has a memory, one is said to remember, that is, to reassemble the parts. When one reassembles all the parts of oneself, one will have re-membered who one really is.

What the soul is after is the highest feeling of love one can imagine. This is the soul's desire. This is its purpose. The soul is after the feeling, not the knowledge. The soul wants to know itself in its own experience. The highest feeling the soul yearns is the experience of unity with the Supreme Being. This is the feeling of perfect love. It will seek to realize its highest feeling through action. The urge to do this is passion. It is the way to self-realization.

Doing is a function of the body. Being is a function of the soul. The soul is forever being. It is a state of being-ness, not a state of doing-ness.

The soul conceives every experience. Nothing is visited upon the soul against its will. The soul has everything - all wisdom, all knowing, all power and all glory. It never sleeps; never forgets.

The soul only leaves the body on its 'death'. It changes its bodily form when it realizes that it no longer serves the purpose in remaining in that form. It changes form willfully, voluntarily, joyfully and moves on the cosmic wheel. No soul dies ever.

Many souls seek to return to this world of relativity for another chance to experience out the decisions and choices one makes about one's self in one's present life.

The enlightened souls return to this world for the soul purpose of helping others realize their selves. Always there are on earth several such souls in all generations that have made such a choice. They return to earth only to help others, even though their work is finished. This is their joy. This is their exaltation.

If a soul chooses to return to earth to experience itself, it reincarnates at a place, a time, a circumstance and an environment of its choice. Its self will once again separate its true dimensions into what one calls body, mind and spirit. In truth all are one-energy, with different characteristics. The soul taking the form of a body on reincarnation is the creation of pure thought - the work of the subtle mind forming part of the soul.

Where is the soul situated in relation to the body? Neale Donald Walsch states that a common perception is that it is within the body, like mind. His understanding is that the soul is within and without, and larger than the body. It is not carried within the body, but carries the body within it. The soul is that which holds one together, as the Soul of the Supreme Person holds the universe together. When the soul of a body envelops it, the soul of one is to overlap the soul of another and without end. It is in

the nature of 'aura' enveloping each body and overlapping with other bodies. While the soul relating to one is dense in relation to that one, it gets less dense or thin as it overlaps the souls of others. This relates the possibility of one soul never ending and another beginning in the world. This also relates to the universal Soul of the Supreme Person - the Absolute being the same as the souls of all the individual beings. What is metaphysically said that We Are All One appears physically true.

This conforms to the studies made in Para-psychology and the Kirlian photography made at the University of California, Los Angeles. According to these studies, each living person projects his own colored aura. In human form, we have an ionized energy field flowing out and around our physical bodies, connected by a network of vital power points called *chakras* corresponding to the *chakras* of the *Kundalini* of the *Tantra*. The electro-magnetic energy required to hold a soul on our physical plane could be a factor in producing different earthly colors. The human aura reflects thoughts and emotions combined with the physical health of the individual concerned. Each soul may emit a specific colour aura.

At the time of death, the soul is stated to leave the dying individual a few moments earlier than his clinical death. The emanation of the soul from the individual body is recorded in the rapid movement photography.

Subtle Body

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 *puryastaka*. It is also known as the subtle body - *lingasarira*. As long as the *puryastaka* functions, the body lives. When it ceases to function, the 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.

This leads us to an enquiry of what is death and how an individual is to accept it.

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.

It may be helpful to anticipate death and wish to die well. In it lies the wish to live well, while alive. This will result in peace of mind and urge for self-realization. Buddha says, "It is in the nature of all things that take form to dissolve again. Strive with your whole being to attain perfection." Spinoza says, "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death; and his wisdom is a meditation not on death but on life".

Most religions preach that the state of mind at the time of death will influence the quality of life in the next birth of the individual. If one makes a special effort to generate a virtuous state of mind at the time of death, it is possible to bring about a happy rebirth. But if one continues to live an ego-centered and egoistic life, it will not certainly result in having a serene and peaceful state of mind at the time of death. To have such a state of mind at that moment, it is necessary to have ethical conduct and spiritual approach, while in active life. The religious precept is, possibly, to inculcate ethical conduct among men, while in active life.

When one 'dies', one does not die at all, but only shift 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, and on, and on, forever 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.

Equally significant is the need to be of great comfort and solace to those who are dying. The dying persons are unable to help themselves. We should attempt to relieve them of discomfort or anxiety, and assist them, as far as we can, to die with composure. The prime aim is to help a dying person to be at ease. If he is familiar with any spiritual practice, he may be encouraged and inspired to follow it. Even some kind of a reassurance on our part will help engender a peaceful, relaxed attitude in the mind of the dying person. A dying person needs only comfort and spiritual solace, and not sympathy or expression of anxiety for the worldly after-effects.

Sheaths

The *Vedanta* philosophy describes the 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 *manomayakosha* 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 *koshas* 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.

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.

The movement of *prana* is also arrested by the effortless practice of breathing without strain, or the repetition of the sacred *AUM* with the experience of its meaning when the consciousness reaches the deep-sleep state.

Prana is the energy that vibrates in the heart-lotus. It enables the sense organs to experience objects. It has two different roles, one above and one below in the body, known as *prana* and *apana* respectively. *Prana* and *apana* are constantly in motion inside and outside the body. While *prana* is the vital air established in the upper part of the body, *apana* is the vital air established in the lower part of the body.

The efflux of the vital force of the heart lotus, of its own accord and without effort, is known as *rechaka* or exhalation. The contact with the source of the *pranic* force, which is located downward to the length of twelve 'fingers', in the heart-lotus is known as *puraka* or inhalation. When the *apana* has ceased to move and when the *prana* does not arise and move out of the heart, and till these begin to happen, it is known as *kumbhaka* - retention as of a filled pot.

Apana terminates in the heart where *prana* arises. Where *prana* is born, there *apana* perishes; where *apana* takes birth, *prana* ceases. When *prana* has ceased to move and when *apana* is about to rise, one experiences external *kumbhaka*. When

apana has ceased to move and when *prana* arises just a little, one experiences internal *kumbhaka*. Rooted in these states, one does not grieve anymore.

Whether one is awake or asleep, is at work or in rest, these vital airs are restrained by the orderly practices of the forces of *prana*, *apana* and *kumbhaka*. Then one's mind and heart become pure and one is freed from delusion attaining awakening, and rests in one's own self.

Consciousness alone is the reality in all forms and all experiences. Action springs from thought; thought is the function of the mind; mind is conditioned consciousness; but consciousness is unconditioned. The *jiva* is the vehicle of consciousness; ego-sense is the vehicle of the *jiva*; intelligence is the vehicle of ego-sense; mind is the vehicle of intelligence; *prana* is the vehicle of the mind; the senses are the vehicle of *prana*; the body is the vehicle of the senses, and motion is the vehicle of the body. Such motion is *karma* - action. When the mind is merged in the spiritual heart - consciousness, *prana* does not move and the mind attains a quiescent state.

The control of the life force restrains the mind. Even as the shadow ceases when the substance is removed, the mind ceases when the life force is restrained. The life force is restrained by dispassion, the practice of *pranayama* (breath control), the practice of enquiry into the cause of the movement of the life force, the ending of sorrow through intelligent means, and direct knowledge and experience of the supreme Truth.

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.

8. Reality

What is the human soul or the spirit seeking to experience? What is the Reality it is seeking to realize?

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.

The *Nitya* and the *Lila* - the Absolute and the Relative belong to the same Reality. The *Atman* is the Eternal Substance.

The Reality is one and the same. The difference is only in name. He who is the Brahman is verily the *Atman*. He is verily the Bhagavan.

The primordial power is ever at play. It is creating, preserving and dissolving in play, as it were. This power is *Sakti* or Divine Mother. The Divine Mother is verily the Brahman, and the Brahman is verily the Divine Mother. When the sage thinks of the primordial power as inactive, he calls it the Brahman. When it engages in activity, he calls it the Divine Mother. For him, the Reality is one and the same.

In relation to human experience, one great truth is that each individual is a divine creature, divinely creating his reality even as he is experiencing it. Even if one chooses to experience the larger, unified Reality, one will have an immediate opportunity to do that. It is all a matter of one's desire, one's choosing, one's creating and one's experiencing Oneness.

9. Truth

What is Truth? Truth is experience of the Reality in one's consciousness. '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 (*chit-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 state 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, Reality, Order and also Pure-knowledge. It is pure and in Its light all beings know their own self.

The path of enquiry is easy for all, as the self-knowledge is the ever-present Truth.

The seeker of Truth is to resort to moral courage. He is to seek to be a *mahabhokta* (great enjoyer of delight), *mahakarta* (great doer of actions) and *mahatyagi* (perfect renouncer).

A *mahabhokta* is one who does not hate or long for anything, but enjoys all natural experiences. He does not cling to or reject anything even while engaged in activity. He does not experience, though experiencing. He witnesses the world-play unaffected by it. He is beyond pain and pleasure that arise in the course of life. He is stoic and not concerned with calamities, old age, privation or death. His nature is virtuous and non-violent. He enjoys what is sweet and what is bitter with equal relish.

A *mahakarta* is one who, free of doubt, performs appropriate action in all situations. He is not swayed by likes and dislikes, success and failure, ego-sense and jealousy, or *dharma* and *adharma*. He ever remains in a state of silence and purity. Unattached to anything, he ever remains as a witness of everything. He is without

selfish desires or motives, sorrow or grief, excitement or exultation. He is indifferent to action and inaction. His very nature is peace and equanimity in all situations.

A *mahatyagi* is one who is beyond the concepts of *dharma* and *adharma*, pain and pleasure, birth and death, desires and motives, doubts and convictions, etc. He is the one who has abandoned the notion of world-appearance in his consciousness. His ego-sense is totally dissolved in his mind. He is ever virtuous. For him, anger is attenuated; delusion is ineffective; desire is powerless; and greed flees. His senses function on an even keel, never excited or depressed. He is ever in equanimity.

Self-knowledge or knowledge of Truth is not had by resorting to a guru (preceptor), or by the study of scriptures, or by good works. It is attained only by enquiry inspired by the company of holy men. One's inner light alone is the means, nothing else. When this inner light illumines, the darkness of inertia dissolves into it.

One sees the Truth when one realizes that the body is not the self, that in his body pleasure and pain are experienced on account of circumstances and that they do not pertain to him, that he is the omnipresent infinite consciousness, that the Self pervades everything, that the Self is the one infinite light of consciousness and the sole Reality, that the non-dual consciousness that indwells all beings is omnipotent and omnipresent, that he is not the body, that he is not the mind and that all things are strung in the Self as beads in a thread, that all that exists is the Brahman, and that the Self alone exists and that there is no substance in objectivity.

When delusion is gone and the Truth is realized by means of enquiry into self-nature, 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.

Such a person has nothing to acquire or to give up. He is not affected by the defeats of life, nor touched by its sorrow. He does not come into being, nor go out, though he appears to beholders to be engaged in activity. He need not do any religious rites. He is not affected by the past tendencies as they have lost their momentum. He rests in bliss that is his nature. Such bliss is possible only by self-knowledge, and not by any other means. Hence, one should apply oneself constantly to self-knowledge. That alone is one's duty.

He whose mind is firmly established in peace through the practice of yoga has the right vision of Truth. To see that the supreme Self is without beginning and without end and that these countless objects are the Self and no other is the right vision. Right vision leads to salvation – *nirvana*. In it there is no subject-object relationship, for the Self is the knower, knowledge and the knowable

10. Quest for Realization

The seeker is reflective and contemplative in search of fulfillment. The seeking is rational and supra rational, not a development out of dogmas. It is a search for the ground of his being. It is an ontological and metaphysical search, not through pure thought alone, but also through realization.

The quest is for experience, not merely a matter of faith. The seeker is empirical and naturalistic. Everything that is, is natural. It is not only the physical and biological nature, but also the psychological and spiritual will also be natural. If man's conscious being is natural, then whatever such a being implies and involves is also natural.

If it is natural, then it must be capable of being discovered within man's conscious being. This discovery is a matter of experience, not merely of logic. Then the quest belongs to empirical experience; it is to be truthful.

The experience need not be of senses. For instance, illusions and hallucinations are also experiences. But they are false experiences. We have to enquire whether the experience sought is true or false. To determine its truth or falsity, we have systems of philosophy and thought to help us determine, provided we do not reduce the experience to the acceptance of some creed on the basis of faith or dogma.

No one can pass judgment on religious or spiritual experience with standards obtained from experience of physical objects. Rational self-reflection with an earnest attempt to be consistent with itself, with the nature of man and the world, will help one find the truth.

The seeker is aware intuitively that the world and his body form an inter-related and integrated whole. Both are transient, ever changing. He is aware of the possibility of realization of his self within his conscious being – the spiritual being. This may be incomplete unless he is able to integrate the realization of his spiritual being with the being of the world with which he is integrated. This realization is to be by experience and not by way of logic or reasoning.

This is for the reason that the physical and the non-physical constituents of the seeker do not provide the realization the self seeks. The self realizes that the world around is transient, unreal in the sense that it is ever changing, full of imperfections. Neither the external world, nor the physical, nor the non-physical constituents render continuity of happiness or satisfaction. The seeker seeks to rise above the world of impurity, and every kind of imperfection. But external action binds him to the world and he has to enjoy the fruits of his action within the world. He gets caught up in the whirlpool of worldly life with no satisfaction for the self.

The seeker is aware that he is subject to the laws of *prakrti* (*maya* - according to Vedantic thought). He is the object of the fear of pain, old age, misery, fear of the

others and death. Being is above and beyond the laws of *prakrti*. It has no death, nor does It cause other privations. It is one, not many.

The highest ideal of the seeker, therefore, turns out to be to realize his true being, that is, to be real with his being. This is to realize his *atman* or the Brahman. Realization of the *atman* is the same as realization of the Brahman. This realization is not an intellectual conviction. When the realization of the Brahman dawns on the seeker, he enters the state of supreme consciousness where the world of forms dissolves into the Brahman along with his ego. He realizes that he is no longer his particular ego, but the Brahman Itself.

He whose spiritual consciousness is awakened possesses awareness. Only he can be called a true human being. Futile is the human birth without the awakening of spiritual consciousness.

One seeking self-realization does not get disturbed in the face of calamity or disaster. Indeed, one blesses it as an opportunity for growth as from the seeds of disaster sprouts the growth of self. Therefore, another purpose of life is growth. If one is fully self-realized, there is nothing left to do, except to be more of that.

One's purpose as a soul is to experience oneself as All of It. One is evolving. One is becoming. One cannot know until one realizes in one's conscious self. The journey is on. It is joy. As soon as one gets a sense of realization, one looks for a higher idea, thought and state of realization. The journey continues. The joy is on.

Realization is salvation in this very life, ontologically. It lies in overcoming ignorance and forgetting. Our finite being is rooted not only in the being of the Brahman, but also in ignorance. The latter has to be destroyed. Destruction of root ignorance is the destruction of finitude and the attainment of the infinitude. This way of knowledge is not the way of intellectual convictions or belief. This is to realize the deeper levels of our being itself, of our finite "I-am" and so of our existence. This knowledge is essentially ontological, not merely rationalistic.

As the deeper levels of realization are not mere intellectual convictions, strict ethical preparation is necessary. One may know what is ethically right. But one may not care to follow what regulations such ethical code demands one to follow for strict observance. The ethical preparation involves transformation of one's being. The ethics underlying such a concept may be called the ethics of self-realization.

An individual's becoming is determined by his life of action, not merely by his thinking. Thought has to cease to exist if it is to grasp the whole truth including its ontological being. The seeker is to transcend his mind to realize the reality. To be fully true is to become Reality. Otherwise, the ontological basis of Truth remains excluded. But to become Reality is not possible without action. So it is action that strengthens the sense of reality. Realization of the "Supreme I AM" is not possible without action, even if action is not the supreme. The past, the present and the future, the actual and the possible action - all action is to enter cognition as becoming enters being.

The realization of the deeper levels of one's being is self-realization. The emphasis on this realization, which is self-transformation to higher or deeper levels, is

not on what one knows, but on what one becomes. In the process of realization, one becomes the deeper and deeper levels of one's being, until one becomes the same as the Brahman, the deepest Being.

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

What, in essence, is Self-Realization? The *atman* (self) is what manifests itself as the 'I' (*aham*) in our experience. All the Vedantic seers - the highest realized souls consider that the Brahman - the Supreme Being is realized as the I-am (*atman*) in this life itself. This experience of realizing the Supreme Being - the Supreme I-am means its inwardness to my I-am. That is, the Supreme I-am is the highest transcendental I-am. The Supreme I-am is of the nature of the I-am, but transcendental in experience.

Therefore, the essential experience of the transcendental Supreme I-am is personal living consciousness, consciousness of being only. It has to be continuous with my finite I-am in experience and being. The experience of the I-am is like that of personal being, but not that of knowing a person. The difference is essentially between "being a person" and "knowing a person".

It may be understood in terms of 'am-ness' which involves self-consciousness, but not in terms of 'is-ness'. The latter may not involve self-consciousness. Thus, the Supreme Being, even in ontological terms is the most intimate personal experience (*uttamapurusa*), but not that of a particular person, let alone the second and third persons.

The Supreme I-am is, in essence, an I-am within my I-am. Indeed, this experience transcends all thought, but not all experience. What transcends thought is, by its very nature, not amenable to thought. The Supreme Being - the Brahman is verily beyond mind and word.

11. Basic Thought of the Upanisads

The ontological enquiry of the 'Beingness' is the core of the *Vedantic* system of thought. The *Vedantic* system consists of the Upanisads, the Brahma-sutras (*Vedanta* aphorisms) and the Bhagavad-Gita. The *Vedanta* Aphorisms are again based on the essential content of the Upanisads. The Bhagavad-Gita also contains the essence of the philosophical teachings of the Upanisads with emphasis on the paths of realization of the ultimate Reality. Thus the Upanisads, eleven of them are considered the most important, constitute the basic structure on which the ontological enquiry of the Being and the Reality is based.

For the sages and the saintly philosophers of the Upanisads, the basic questions are the meaning and aim of human life. Their approach is to say and teach something profound about the depths of man's being. Their search is for the soul and the *atman* from different perspectives and in different contexts. All the *Vedantins* maintain that there is an essential unity threading the Upanisads together.

The Upanisads mainly aim at explaining the nature of the *Atman*. That is why the Upanisadic philosophy and the *Vedantic* systems based on It are said to be '*Atman*' centered. Their teaching is in line with the teaching of Socrates, 'Know thyself'.

Some of the basic important teachings of the Upanisads are the following:

'That the *Atman* is the Brahman'

(*ayam atma brahma*)

'I am the Brahman'

(*aham brahmasmi*)

'All This is the Brahman'

(*sarvam khalu idam Brahman*)

'All That exists is the *Atman*'

(*sarvam yedayam atman*)

'The Brahman is consciousness and bliss'

(*vijnanam anandam brahman* and
prajnanam brahman)

'The Brahman is Truth, Consciousness and the Infinite'

(*satyam jnanam anantham brahman*)

'Thou art That'

(*tatvamasi*- It means that the 'I' in you is one with the
Atman, the Ultimate Truth.)

‘That Exists’

(*tat sat*)

The Upanisads make various approaches to the *Atman*. The levels of the depth of our inward being as elucidated in the Katha and the Taittiriya Upanisads and the field of the I-Consciousness as elucidated in the Mandukya Upanisad are the most clear and important.

On the whole, the general trend of the Upanisad teachings is idealistic, ontological and existentialistic. The idealistic and the existentialistic teachings are considered generally opposed to each other. But the *Vedanta* reconciles the two trends of thought.

The *Vedantic* systems attempt to base their teachings on all the Upanisads taken together. The systems provide a commentary on the Upanisads and the Brahmasutras from their point of view.

The Upanisads consider that every action, every performance of duty, every act of enjoyment is to be a sacrifice that ultimately reaches the *Atman* through the Cosmic Person. It means that every act in the world is an act of sacrifice. Every transformation is a sacrifice of the transformed. Even the *Atman* is said to have performed sacrifice for creating the universe.

The Upanisads and the *Vedantic* systems seek to answer the basic questions, ‘What is the *Atman*?’, ‘What is the Brahman?’, ‘What is the Ultimate Reality?’, ‘What is the Ideal of life?’ etc.

A brief summary of the most important philosophical doctrines of the eleven most important Upanisads is stated in the appendix.

12. Atman

For a seeker, 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.

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.

Our ignorance of all objectivity in deep sleep is without bounds. But when we wake up, we realize that the totality is an object in our assertion as in "I am aware that I was absolutely unconscious of everything in my deep sleep". It is this self-consciousness - for I was aware that I was present in my totality in deep sleep - that is working in my knowledge. Because of its infinitude, it makes stream consciousness, memory, re-cognition and all the so-called varied forms of cognition possible.

It makes possible also the cognition of the meaning of the sentence consisting of several words uttered in succession by transcending the succession of the meanings of the separate words and again recollecting them into a unitary whole of the meaning-object. Self-consciousness, the consciousness of my existence is the act of self-affirmation and self-assertion, which is the will of affirming itself as continuing existence.

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 '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*.

13. The Brahman

The Supreme I-AM is the highest level beyond which the seeker's consciousness cannot reach. That is the Supreme Being itself. It is the innermost, further unfathomable depth of man's own being and thought. It is the I-AM. It is in which the world including man has its roots and by which it is supported.

The true ontological being - the Supreme I-AM is the God (*Aham Asmi*) of the Upanisads and the Exodus. It is also called the Brahman. The word Brahman is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *brh*, meaning to grow, to expand. The Brahman is the ever growing, the ever expanding and the infinite dynamic being without limits or bounds. This dynamism involves infinite energy, force or power. The Brahman is thus not understood as mere abstract being, but as the root of the world itself.

The idea of the dynamism of the Supreme Being seems to have been obtained, over the millenniums, from the food, which makes living beings grow, the chant of the sacrificial priests that produces the desired results, the magical formulae that produce results overtly, the power of sacrifices themselves and the power of prayer itself.

The Brahman 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.

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 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; 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 Brahman - the Supreme Being is without form; yet It has five attributes - will, space, time, order (destiny) and the cosmic un-manifest nature. It has countless powers or energies or potencies. Chief among them are knowledge, dynamics, action and non-action. All these are pure consciousness though they are called the potencies of 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. Everything exists forever in the potential state in the mass of homogenous consciousness.

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. 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 Cosmic Being has two bodies, the superior body that is Pure Consciousness and the other that is the cosmos. 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.

The Brahman - the highest Being is the Absolute, Transcendental Self. The three distinctions - Being (Existence), Reality and Truth become one in the Absolute Reality. It not only satisfies the criterion of non-contradiction, but also is non-contradictable. It meets the highest criterion of logic, even at the level of transcendental dialectic.

The one eternal immutable Truth is the Spirit or the Brahman. Without the Spirit, the pragmatic truth of a self-creating universe would have no origin or

foundation. The truths of universal existence are two-fold. One relates to the truths of the Spirit that are themselves eternal and immutable. The other relates to the play of the consciousness with the said eternal truths of the Spirit. The constant self-creation which we call birth finds in the universal existence the perfect evolution of all that it held in its own nature. All our births are the births of this Spirit embodying individual spirit (*atman*) and self. 'To be' is the object of our existence.

The ultimate reality of all that is in the cosmos is the triune principle of transcendent and infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, which is the nature of the Divine Being. In addition, the fourth principle that manifests at the level of mind, life and body is what we call the soul. This has a double appearance. Outwardly, the soul strives for the possession and delight of things. Concealed and within, the true psychic entity is the real repository of the experiences of the spirit. This fourth principle of the soul is a projection and an action of the divine principle of infinite Bliss. But this action is in the terms of our consciousness and under the conditions of soul-evolution in this world.

From the cosmological point of view, the world has really colors, sounds, smells, shapes, forms, etc. In the context of the valid means of cognition and the valid cognitions to determine the objects of the world of actions, it is the Absolute Self alone that meets the standards set by them in a negative way, that is, non-contradictability. There is absolute objectivity in it, not mere subjectivity, although it is approached through finite subjectivity and its self-transcendence. The self-transcendence is not a mere point called the I, but the I as including its whole world at that level, as assimilating and transforming it to itself. In fact, it cannot be reached without the finite self somehow merging or becoming one with the Absolute Self.

Self-transcendence is not rational in the sense that we do not build up the world of waking consciousness by elements of the dream world. We jump out of the dream and carry the 'I' consciousness to higher levels through assimilation to our waking 'I' consciousness. We generally take the world of action to be the reality. But the world is a self-contradictory idea, as has been shown by the philosophers of the East and the West. As Bradley says, the world is something hung on its sides from chains the ends of which are fixed to something we know not what.

The idea of Reality is not self-sufficient, self-standing. As we seek to fix Reality through the valid means of cognition with the help of valid cognitions, and as the ultimate Reality is the self-conscious 'I Am' and so Consciousness, we call the Absolute by the name Absolute Truth, too. This is consciousness that is its own object, often called intuition, integral knowledge, etc. Simply because it is consciousness, it need not be identified with subjectivity as opposed to objectivity. At every transcendental level, the opposition between the subject and the object at the lower level is overcome and what transcends and covers both cannot be a mere subject of the lower level. So there is justification to call the highest I Am by the name the Highest Truth. The highest transcendental I Am cannot be one among many.

A question arises whether the Brahman does not get characterized by the quality of being some cause for creation of the world, if the Brahman is considered without qualities (*nirguna*). The non self-transforming cause effects change without

being affected by it. This non self-transforming cause enables *prakrti* (*maya*) to create the forms of the world. As such, *prakrti* is a constitutive quality, characteristic power and energy of the Brahman. If we accept that *prakrti* belongs to the Brahman and *avidya* to the finite *atman* (soul), *avidya* is the constitutive quality of the *atman* as *prakrti* is of the Brahman. Here the word 'belongs' is a way of suggesting in the sense that my 'I' or my character belongs to me, although I am my "I am" and am my character. It is as heat to fire, as is generally understood.

The Brahman is beyond *vidya* and *avidya*, knowledge and ignorance. It is beyond *maya*, the illusion of duality.

Sri Ramakrishna says: 'What the Brahman is cannot be described. All things in the world - the Veda, the *Puranas*, the *Tantras*, the six systems of philosophy - have been defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled and that is the Brahman. No one has ever been able to say what the Brahman is'.

In *samadhi* one attains the knowledge of the Brahman – one realizes the Brahman. In that state, reasoning stops all together and one becomes mute, as mind is transcended.

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. And then, too, one knows only this much of the Brahman: 'It Exists' (*Tat Sat*).

As the all-pervading Spirit, the Brahman exists in all beings. But the manifestations of His power are different in different persons.

There is a state of consciousness where 'the many' disappears, and the One as well; for the many must exist as long as the One exists. It is impossible to explain the Brahman by analogy as between light and darkness. It is light, but not the light that we perceive, not material light.

The Brahman is beyond mind and speech. As for camphor, nothing remains after it is burnt - not even a trace of ash. A salt doll enters the ocean to measure its depth. But it does not return to tell others how deep is the ocean. It melts in the ocean itself. So is the Brahman beyond word and thought. It is only an experience for the seeker.

The Brahman is without taint. The three *gunas* are in the Brahman. But It is untainted by them. The Brahman is like air. The air carries good and bad smells. But the air is unaffected.

The Brahman is neuter, unknown and unknowable. To be objectified, the Brahman covers Itself with a veil of *maya* (*prakrti*), becomes the source of the universe and so brings forth the creation.

Vivekananda says, '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 disembodied-ness is freedom. The *Atman* - the Brahman is beyond what was, or is, or is to be'.

14. Being–being

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. Even in the case of ordinary change, there is a leap from one moment of the process of change to the next. There is a leap from waking to dreaming, then to deep sleep and back again to the different states. But the leap does not mean complete destruction or negation. The being thus 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. This is to say that the Brahman is the ground of everything that exists, the Being of the world, which is ever transient.

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 or the Ultimate Being. Self-contradictory objects like the son of a barren woman are considered insignificant beings, as they do not exist at all. The objects of dreams and illusions 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 being of the whole world as such is the Supreme or the Ultimate Being. The difference among the four levels of being is not merely epistemological, but ontological.

The significance of this classification into four levels of being is that each higher level transcends the lower. This transcending is not by abstraction, but by assimilation and absorption. The Brahman or the Supreme Being is described as swallower, devourer (*atta*) of the world. As the Brahman creates and maintains it, He destroys it, too. Where does it go when it is destroyed? It is absorbed and assimilated into the Brahman. Similarly, the being of the objects of my imagination is the being of my mind into which the objects disappear. The being of the objects of my dream is the being of my empirical, waking self into which the dreams disappear.

That is why I remember my dreams, which sometimes come up to my consciousness, long thereafter. Thus I am the retainer of the objects of my imagination and also my dreams in some form or potency, which can sprout up at a later stage. This way I am the swallower, devourer of these objects. I happen to be the devourer of not only the objects of my imagination and dreams but also the 'I' consciousness, which is the subject of these objects. This is because every object is necessarily related to a subject. Then what is devoured by the 'I' of the waking state are the objects of imagination and dreams of which my I also, in a transformed state, is part. I remember what happened in a dream. Thus the transcending of the lower level by the higher level of being is not by abstraction, but by assimilation and absorption.

As belonging to the three worlds of imagination, dream and the waking states I retain the objects of the lower worlds in myself and become part of the world of

waking without inter-relating the objects of the lower world to the objects of my waking state. Similarly, the world of action transcends itself through my 'I' consciousness, transforms itself into the Supreme I Am consciousness, that is, the Brahman. Ontologically, the I-am is central for consideration of different levels of being culminating into the Supreme Being - the Brahman.

The Brahman is the support of everything that is. It means that the being of everything, that is, the 'to be' of everything lies in its being rooted in the Brahman. This means that the Brahman - the Supreme Being throws out of Itself the shapes and forms of the world.

This makes the Brahman the efficient cause of the world. As ultimately the stuff of the world is the being of the Brahman, It is the ultimate material cause. This gives rise to the idea that the Supreme Being – I Am is everywhere, in all things - sentient and insentient objects, as the Supreme Being is the Consciousness Itself.

As Being and Consciousness, the Brahman is everywhere and is the material cause of the empirical world. Just as I am everywhere, both in my 'I' and every part and every object of my dream and imagination, the Supreme Being is everywhere both in my I-am and in every part of every object I experience.

In many religions, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme I - Am or the Brahman is considered God. As the ultimate ontological Being, He is the foundation of all beings. He is the support of all beings like the ocean of the waves, the sun of its reflections, etc.

The Brahman is Being, Consciousness and Bliss (*sat, cit & ananda*). There is no distinction between Being and Existence. Existence cannot be a predicate; so being cannot be a predicate. What is not a predicate is not finite, limited. It has, therefore, to be identical with being. So Being and Existence have to be one and the same.

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.

The being of the Brahman is, thus, the ground for our saying that the world exists - that the objects exist. Their existence is the Being of the Brahman shining through our 'I's and egos. The Brahman is, thus, immanent in the whole world including ourselves. Without It, there can be no existence of the world or us. In the sense that the Brahman is immanent, the world is the Brahman. Yet, though immanent, It is transcendent, too. The Being of the Brahman shines through the forms of the world. But they themselves are not the Brahman. They are constituted by *prakrti (maya)* and are subject to the natural laws - the laws of space, time, causality and also the laws of change such as birth, decay and death. The Being of the Brahman is not subject to any of these laws because IT is ever present in and accompanies everything.

The idea of causation or creation belongs to the world of objects. Carrying the idea over to a realm beyond the world leads to contradiction. The four ontological levels of the being based on considerations of truth and falsity are not meant to demonstrate that the world is created or caused by something. In fact, when the consciousness is able to rise to the highest level, there is no experience of the world, and the question of relating the world to the Brahman in any way does not arise.

We have seen two kinds of causation with reference to the material cause - causation in which the cause is self-transforming and causation in which the cause is not self-transforming. Here 'material' does not refer to physical matter as such, but the stuff of the world, whatever it may be. The concept is that the effect, that is, the material stuff is in the state of its cause and is identical with it. The cause is not non-being.

In the example of a pot being made of clay, the effect - pot is not different from the cause - clay. What is new is only the form of the pot. We may say that the form of the pot does not have its own being before it is made because its being is the being of clay. As the form does not have its own being, we may be justified in saying that it has no reality of its own. It does not mean that the pot does not exist. It is an empirical reality as long as it exists in that form. As it has no being of its own before it is made of clay, it is considered unreal, relative to its cause - the clay.

It can be generalized that no effect has a reality of its own. Relatively, the cause has reality. This leads us to the conclusion that ultimately the Brahman alone is real and all else is relatively unreal, but empirically exists. This doctrine propounded by Sankara is called '*Satkaranavada*', according to which the cause alone is *being* and real.

The *Advaita* considers the Brahman as one and non-dual. 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. When I raise a question about how and where my being is rooted, I do not ask what class of things it is, but what is 'to be'. The question, whether it is one or more, does not arise for the ontological being. We can reasonably say that 'to be one' is 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. If 'to be' is many, then the 'is' in 'he is' and the 'am' in 'I am', etc should have different meanings. But they do not have.

In the relative world, we are all individuals, with individual egos, bodies etc. There is the Supreme Being - the Brahman, the Being of the universe as It manifests. The Being is the universal soul. Each individual has his own being. The soul of each individual is to be apparently distinct, as belonging to him. This is the divine dichotomy.

Being-ness attracts being-ness and produces experience. At the individual level, one is not to produce anything with one's body. One is to produce something with one's soul. One's body is merely the tool of one's soul. One's mind is the power that drives the body to act. So, what one has is a power tool, used in the creation of the soul's desire. The soul is seeking to be God.

Being is whatever aspect of divinity one wishes to be; whomever one chooses to be. Being is what one is. Being-ness comes from 'what is so' and 'what works'. True awareness brings about an understanding that we have nothing to do, but to be. When we are aware that we have nothing to do but to be, we stop trying to use 'doing-ness' to solving our problems. Rather, we move to and come from a state of being which would cause our experience of those 'problems' to disappear. The conditions leading to such problems, no longer, exist.

This does not mean that 'doing' will be completely eliminated from one's life. It only means what one experiences oneself doing, springs from one's being. The latter does not lead to the former. Everything changes when one comes from 'being' rather than seeking to be. If one is trying to be happy or to love, one cannot 'get there', by doing. The way to 'get there' is to 'be there' itself. Yet, one will be doing wonderful things once one 'gets there'.

Most people believe that if they 'have' a thing like money, time etc, they can 'do' things, 'be' happy, etc. In fact, the reverse is the truth. 'Having-ness' does not produce 'being-ness'. It is the other way round. First one is to be 'compassionate' or 'happy'. One is to start doing things from this point of being-ness. This results in one having compassion or happiness. The paradigm – 'have-do-be' is to be reversed as 'be-do-have'. This is to say that one is to decide ahead of time what one chooses to be, which produces that in one's own experience. Compassion, happiness, etc are states of mind, which reproduce themselves in physical form. 'Act as if you are, and you will draw it to you'. 'What you act as if you are, you become'.

15. Becoming

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 *The Brahman* is All, Pure consciousness and Omnipresent.

A throbbing arose in the Creator whose thought had spread out as the universe. This throb brought into being the subtle body, made of intelligence, of all beings. Made only of thought, all these beings only appeared to be, though they felt that such appearance was real. This appearance, thus imagined to be real, produced realistic results or consequences as enjoyment in a dream does.

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, are 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.

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.

The Intelligence, which entertains these notions, conjures up the gross elements - earth, water, fire, air and space. Associated with these, the same Intelligence becomes a spark of light though it is the cosmic light itself. It then

condenses into countless forms such as plants, worms, birds, animals, human species, etc. Thus the vibration in Consciousness alone is the *jiva, karma*, etc.

Creation emerges in the Infinite Consciousness with no motive or desire as the sun, without intending to shine, is reflected in a pool of water without the water intending to so reflect it. As the sun causes night and day to follow each other without intending to do so, creation arises in the Infinite Consciousness without any volition.

So far as the world (cosmos) is concerned, there is no Becoming without Being, and no Being without Becoming. The Becoming is always patterned in a perfect way. If there is no pattern, the Becoming will be a disconnected plurality. The pattern confers the unity for different aspects of Becoming. This is to say that without something the same running through the different instants or moments of Becoming, Becoming cannot be becoming. Change cannot be change. They will be merely unconnected events.

The way, in which man sees and experiences the universe, imposes on his reason the necessity of a one original eternal substance of which all things are the forms and a one eternal original energy of which all movement of action and consequence is the variation. But the important question arises as to the reality of this substance and the essential nature of this energy. Another question that arises is whether this development is a creation or liberation. In other words, is it a birth of what did not exist before or a slow bringing out of what already existed in suppressed form or in eternal potentiality?

Nature is the force of self-expression, self-formation and self-creation of a secret spirit. Man, hedged in his present capacity, is the first being in Nature in whom the power of Nature is consciently self-creative. The reality of this whole mounting creation is a spiritual evolution.

The word evolution carries with it, in its intrinsic sense, the idea of the necessity at its root of a previous involution. If we believe that a hidden spiritual being is the secret of all the action of Nature, we are to suppose that all that evolves already existed involved, passive or active, but in either case concealed from us in the shell of material Nature. The Spirit, which manifests itself in a body, must be involved from the beginning in the whole of matter. Life, mind and whatever is above mind must be latent, inactive or concealed in all the operations of material energy. Whatever evolves is the release of the compressed powers of Nature involved. This leads us to the idea of a Spirit present in the universe working through the steps of an evolution, thus imposing the necessity of a previous involution.

The spiritual evolution may then be a kind of self-creation. It is not a making of what never was, but a bringing out of what was implicit in the Being. The Spirit involved in material energy is there with all its powers. Life, Mind and a greater Supra-mental power are involved in Matter.

The Spirit is infinite existence, eternal, immortal being, a conscious self-aware being. This world is because of the Spirit's delight of its own infinite self-variation.

Birth arises as all consciousness carries with it power of its own being, and power of being is self-creative and must have the joy of its self-creation. Creation is only self-expression. The birth of the soul in the body is nothing but a mode of its own self-expression. Therefore, all things in the universe are expression, form, energy, and action of the Spirit. Matter itself is the form of the Spirit, life the power of the being of the Spirit; mind is the working out of consciousness of the Spirit. All Nature is the power and action and self-creation of the one Spiritual Being. All Nature is a display, and a play of God. Nature presents to the Spirit at once the force, the instrument, the medium, the result of its powers. All these are the necessary elements for a gradual and developing creation.

The ontological ultimate for the world (cosmos) is a consolidated and concentrated unity of Being and Becoming. It is the 'I Am'. It is a massive, intense, dense, self-conscious experience without determinateness and without any possibility of falsity. Becoming appears within the Being. This is so with the 'Supreme I Am' as with the individual "I am".

He who is the Brahman is also *prakrti* (primordial energy). When thought of as 'inactive', He is called the Brahman. When thought of as the creator, the preserver and the destroyer, He is called the Primordial Energy. The Brahman and *prakrti* are identical, like fire and its power to burn. Water is water whether it is still or moving.

Yogamaya signifies the *yoga* or union of *Purusa* and *prakrti*. Whatever is perceived in the universe is the outcome of this union. In the image of Siva and Kali, Kali stands on the bosom of Siva; Siva lies under Her feet like a corpse; Kali looks at Siva. All this denotes the union of *Purusa* and *prakrti*. *Purusa* is inactive; therefore Siva lies on the ground like a corpse. *Prakrti* performs all its activities in conjunction with *Purusa*. Thus, Kali creates preserves and destroys. That is also the meaning of the conjoined images of Radha and Krishna. On account of that union the images are slightly inclined towards each other.

Existence-knowledge-Bliss Absolute is One and only one. But It is associated with different limiting adjuncts resulting in Its manifestations. This is Becoming.

Ontologically the two ultimate categories of the cosmos are Being and Becoming. Force and Activity are the potential and the kinetic stages of Becoming.

Being and Becoming are inseparable in the world. The force in both is the same. One starts the process and the other fixes the pattern. Both have to be the one and the same.

Becoming is truly applicable to self-conscious beings. They know that they are going through the process of becoming.

It is also applicable indirectly to the insentient objects through the observations of a self-conscious being. It is the self-conscious being that remains the same through the observations of becoming in insentient objects, although the structure and content of the observations, in their turn, go on changing. The observer, then, is the witness consciousness so far as the becoming in the insentient objects is concerned.

‘Becoming is never pure, but is determined by modalities expressed by subjects, objects, etc’, in the words of Bergson.

16. Relative World

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 Un-manifest - *maya*).

The world is like a potter’s wheel. The wheel looks as if it stood still, though it revolves at great speed.

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.

As for creation, material effects are produced by material causes. But the created world has no immediate cause for the effect of creation. Then, surely the cause existed in the past in the form of cosmic memory. Memory is like space, empty. All creation is, therefore, the effect of emptiness. The creation is therefore empty, too, like a dream.

There can be another concept of creation not based on memory of past experience. This is the fortuitous meeting of atoms in Consciousness, which are then able to produce their own effects. Creation ensues.

Either way the creation is no different from the Infinite Consciousness. The Infinite Consciousness alone is thought-form or experience. Because of the essential nature of the Infinite Consciousness, the universe(s), the infinite multitudes of the *jiva* and forms keep arising and arising again and again by their own thought force and return to a state of tranquility. This is in the nature of spontaneous play of a child. There is no cause and effect relationship what so ever. The Infinite Consciousness is forever in infinite consciousness. As consciousness exists everywhere forever, creation of worlds and their dissolution goes on everywhere forever. All these are held together by a mysterious omnipresent power innate in the Infinite Consciousness.

The fanciful conviction that the unreal is real is deep-rooted by repeated imagination. The ethereal body alone is; by persistent fancy, it appears to be linked to a physical body. When the intelligence is established in the conviction of the ethereal nature of the body, the body is forgotten, as in youth one forgets life as just born child. Whatever one thinks within oneself in one's intelligence alone is experienced.

This world is nothing but pure hallucination. It is no more than an idea. In the Infinite Consciousness, the idea of the creation arose, and that is what is.

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 universe is as real as a dream vision, for no one produces it out of anything with any instruments.

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 as the mind ceases to be, and is transcended.

The Infinite Consciousness is free of all modifications. But when there arises the notion of 'I am' in It, that notion is known as the *jiva*. It is the *jiva* that lives and moves in the body. When the notion of 'I' (*ahambhava*) arises, it is known as ego-sense (*ahamkara*). When there are thoughts (*manana*), it is known as mind (*manas*). When there is awareness (*bodha*), it is intelligence (*buddhi*). When seen (*drs*) by the individual soul (*indra*), it is known as the sense (*indriya*). When the notion of body prevails, it appears to be the body. When the notion of object prevails, it appears to be diverse objects. Through the persistence of these notions, the subtle personality condenses into material substantiality. The world-appearance ensues.

The mysterious power of consciousness produces in an inexplicable and miraculous way the infinite diversity of names and forms. This mysterious power is what is known as egotism. When egotism, which is no different from consciousness, comes into being, it entertains notions of the various elements that constitute this universe, and they arise. In unity arises diversity. This consciousness is not knowable. When it seeks to be knowable, it is known as the universe. Mind, intellect, egotism, the five great elements, the world, etc - these innumerable names and forms are all consciousness alone. As a man and his life are indistinguishable being the static and the kinetic manifestations of the same being, the *jiva*, the mind, etc are all vibrations in consciousness. No change or transformation, however, takes place in consciousness. As heat is to fire, liquidity is to water, butter is to milk, coolness is to ice, brightness is to illumination, oil is to mustard seed, sweetness is to honey, and aroma is to a flower, the universe is to consciousness. The world exists because consciousness is, and the world is the body of consciousness.

The cosmic Being is the omnipresent omniscience. It shines eternally. When a vibration arises in the cosmic Being, creation ensues comprising countless varieties of animate and inanimate, sentient and insentient beings in the universe. The cosmic Being shines in all the beings so created.

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.

Some see the creation in different ways, too. Some are of the view that the Brahman, as Being (*satta*), is the material cause, but *maya* (*prakrti*) is only a subsidiary cause responsible for throwing up of forms of the world. Some others are of the view that the Brahman, as the non-self-transforming cause, remains aloof from the created world, while being immanent everywhere as Being, though transcendent, too.

Some are of the view that *prakrti (maya)* alone is the material cause, as the unconscious insentient matter of the world cannot originate in the Brahman. Some others are of the view that the Brahman along with *prakrti* is the material cause, as both being and unconsciousness are present in the world. *Prakrti* veils consciousness and shows only being in the object perceived.

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.

The world consists of the illusory duality of knowledge and ignorance. It contains knowledge and devotion, and attachment to worldly desires, righteousness and unrighteousness, good and evil. But the Brahman is unattached to these. Good and evil apply to the *jiva*, as do righteousness and unrighteousness. The sun sheds its light on all - the virtuous and the wicked alike. It makes no distinction.

The universe and the individual are necessary to each other in their ascent. They always exist for each other and profit by each other. Universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite space and time. The individual is its concentration within limits of space and time. Universe creates in itself a self-conscious concentration of the All through which it can aspire. In the conscious individual *prakrti* turns to perceive *Purusa*; God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God.

How can one explain misery, sin and unhappiness in the world? The answer is that these apply only to the *jiva*, the individual soul, based on the *samskaras* of the past births and of the past in the present birth.

The created world is what it is. It consists of the poles of opposites. There is good and evil, pain and pleasure, joy and sorry in human experience. To experience an emotion or a sensation, the knowledge resulting from the experience of the opposite pole is necessary. In the absence of it, either experience is not possible. Evil is to be as much part of the world as good; pain is to be as much part as pleasure. If the world carries only one emotion, its experience will not make any sense to any person. So is the case with all other aspects of life as it operates.

In the Absolute, however, there is no experience, only knowing. Knowing is a divine state. But the grandest joy is in being. Being is achieved only after experience. The evolution, thus, is knowing, experiencing and being, in the relative world.

It is often asked that if God is all-perfect and all-loving, why God would create pestilence and famine, war and disease and all kinds of natural disaster, worldwide calamity, personal disappointment and the like. The answer lies in the mystery of the world itself. The world is the way it is because it could not be any other way and still exist in the gross realm of physicality. Natural disasters like

earthquakes, floods, etc are but movements of the elements from one polarity to the other. Worldwide calamities are the result of worldwide consciousness. The whole birth-death cycle is part of this movement. These are the rhythms of life. Everything in the relative world is subject to them. Life itself is a rhythm. It is a way, a vibration, a pulsation at the very heart of That All That Is.

Illness and disease are opposites of health and well-being. They are made manifest in one's reality. Each cannot be experienced in the absence of its opposite. One cannot be ill without causing oneself to be. Similarly, one can be well again by willing to be so. Personal disappointments are responses chosen.

The creation of the relative world seems very real. We accept it as truly existing. This way God has created "something else" other than Itself, that is, the realm of the relative. This creates an opportunity for one to choose the real emotion 'love' to experience. This is to realize one's true self. That is why highly evolved souls always choose love, in every instance, in every moment and in every circumstance. That is also why they always love even their oppressors, their persecutors. The greatest souls known to humanity are always considered true embodiments of love - Divine Love.

One only is what one is relative to another thing that is not. That is how it is in the world of the relative as opposed to the world of the Absolute. One, therefore, exists in this world as an identifiable individual only through one's relationship with other people, places and events.

The soul is the energy of life that exists within and around (as the *aura* of) all physical objects. In a way, it holds the physical objects in place. As the soul of the Supreme Person holds the universe, the soul of each individual holds each individual human body. While there is no actual separation among the individual souls, the One Soul holding the universe manifests in physical reality at different speeds, producing different degrees of density, constituting individual beings and objects in the relative world. It is the sacred rhythm of all life.

Every one of us is moving from knowing to not knowing to knowing again, from being to not being to being again, from Oneness to separation to Oneness again, in a never ending cycle. This is the cycle of life – the Cosmic Wheel, the relative world.

There is nothing depressing about the cycle of life. There is only joy. Even the joy would not be joy, were there not a time when there was no joy. This is as true with spiritual as it is with physical joy.

Neale Donald Walsch states, "Life is the process through which God creates Itself and then experiences the creation. This process of creation is ongoing and eternal. It is happening all the time. Relativity and physicality are the tools with which God works. Pure energy - Universal Spirit is what God Is.

Life is like a CD-ROM. Everything that is ever going to happen has already happened. Every possibility exists as fact, as completed events. In a computerized video game, everything is on the disc. The computer knows how to respond to every move the child makes because every possible move has already been placed on the

disc, along with its appropriate response. Every ending, and every twist and turning producing that ending, is programmed on the disc. The computer disc does not care whether the child wins or loses the game. When the game is over, it only offers the child another chance to play again. All the endings already exist and which ending the child experiences depends on the choices the child makes.

So is the case with the universe. The universe is just waiting to see which choice one makes at any given time. The response of the universe is directly related to the choice made. When the game is over, the universe offers a chance again. In the universe, all the possibilities exist and have already occurred.”

17. Consciousness

General

If we ask a man 'do you exist?' he may be surprised or say emphatically 'I do'. His behavior clearly demonstrates that he is conscious of his existence, not merely of the appearance of his body or of his having a body. Consciousness of one's existence is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness can have no clear directedness or intentionality towards anything, not even explicitly towards itself. Sartre defines consciousness as "a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself". In other words, consciousness is a being, the nature of which is to be conscious of the nothingness of its being.

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 behavior or to waking experiences.

This approach to consciousness adopts a strategy termed experimental-empirical-experiential. The approach attempts to understand the nature of human consciousness with reference to varieties of experiences and the factors, which determine an experiential state whether it is a common experience like dreaming or unusual experience like ecstasy or *samadhi*. It studies various varieties of experiences and treats brain mechanisms as one set of determinants. It is experimental for the reason that the understanding of the mechanisms determining consciousness helps to repeat a phenomenon to predict its occurrence and control it.

The approach is experiential on two grounds. First, it emphasizes on the subjective nature of consciousness and accords primacy for experience. Second, the aspirants seeking experience of consciousness practise different kinds of meditation like Transcendental meditation, *Buddhist* meditation and the like techniques. Some investigators go to the ascetics in the Himalayas who are experimenting with consciousness, for first-hand experience. Others experiment with LSD, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, etc. They are self-experimenters.

Classification of phenomenological data based on the experiments related to consciousness reveals that individuals undergo experiences in a systematic way and different kinds of experiences unfold themselves progressively in a systematic sequence. Experiencing different states of consciousness has a definite order while individuals differ with regard to the level of consciousness they reach in their experience. It also reveals that the range and scope of human consciousness is almost infinite, though the variance is wide for different individuals. It establishes that even the waking state of consciousness is not uniform to all human beings, the variation being very significant. Similarly, different states of consciousness lead to differences

on different physiological parameters. Individuals differ significantly for better or worse during or after an experience of altered states of consciousness. Some may show better intellectual and perceptual capacities, improved emotional control, changes in outlook and values, and over all efficient functioning. Some may get disorganized in the personality make-up leading to disturbances in cognitive, emotional and volitional aspects.

A state of consciousness is a manifestation of patterned interaction of physical, biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors. Consciousness is related to human nature as we normally understand, and also to the nature of Reality. This leads to the postulation of the levels of consciousness, some being in a normal state and a few others in a higher state of consciousness. Human beings in their ordinary waking conscious state can become aware of themselves (ego), of others (interpersonal), about human nature in general (realities of human nature), universe (aesthetic) and about the external world as such (reality). Transcendent awareness is available to those who are able to go beyond the confines of space–time frame work. But when one experiences transcendence, one is open to other realities. This experience will have profound influence on other aspects of awareness. The interrelatedness of different aspects of consciousness leads to the breakdown of compartmentalized outlook resulting in the awareness of the Self.

Individuals who have strong motivation of growth, a flexible ego-structure and who are free from internal conflicts and problems can move towards higher states of consciousness, should they make determined efforts adopting experimental–experiential strategy. Different altered states of consciousness refer to psychological functions referred to by Pathanjali as *chittavrittihi*. *Manahstithi* refers to experiential state and *manovikalpa* refers to pathological state of consciousness. The terms *prajna*, *chaitanya*, *dharmabhuta-jnana*, *samadhi*, *brahmistithi* refer to awareness, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness, etc.

Transformation to higher states of consciousness results from adherence to the prescribed meditations whereby consciousness is refined, converted and realigned “from the coarse to the fine”. Enhanced faculties of attention, thought, feeling and sensation characterize the higher states. A different kind of perception, awareness and experience arises conforming to different levels of reality and truth.

The idea that man has access to higher realms of consciousness and reality is prevalent in all contemplative traditions. The Indian tradition speaks of four states of consciousness - *jagrat* or the waking consciousness, *svapna* or the experiencing of reality as the product of one’s subjective projections, *susupti* or the divine wisdom consciousness and *turiya* or the ineffable consciousness.

Individual consciousness is powerful enough. It creates events, occurrences, conditions, circumstances etc. It releases creative energy. Mass consciousness is so powerful that it can create events and circumstances of worldwide import and planetary consequences. When one acts consciously, the act arises out of one’s consciousness. Whatever events one produces, or one draws to oneself without any

thoughts, are unconscious events or actions. Conscious action is a thought consciously put into action.

Sankara 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.

“The universe is conscious on account of the Consciousness of God. The universe is saturated with the Consciousness of God, as the earth is soaked with water in the rainy season,” says Sri Ramakrishna.

There are different planes of consciousness - the gross, the subtle, the causal and the Great Cause. Entering the *Mahakarana* (Great Cause), one becomes silent. One cannot utter a word.

Divine consciousness is in three moods - the inmost wherein one loses all knowledge of the outer world, the semi-conscious when one dances with other devotees in an ecstasy of love and the conscious when one joins the others in loud singing.

All is a matter of consciousness. One has to raise consciousness before one can bring about change of consciousness. It is without limit.

The alternating levels of relative consciousness are waking, dream and deep-sleep states. They are not real, as they come and go. The 'I' or existence that alone persists in all the three states is real.

'Existence and consciousness' is the only reality. Ramana Maharshi says: 'Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real; the pictures are mere shadows on it'.

Whatever is regarded as the real objective world experienced in the waking state is no more real than that experienced during dream. 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. 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.

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.

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.

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'. 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.

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.

Supreme consciousness is a state of being in which one grows until one reaches full awareness, creating and experiencing one's own reality, expanding and exploring that reality, changing and re-creating that reality as one stretches one's consciousness without any limit. In other words, consciousness is everything. It is the basis of all truth, and thus of all true spirituality.

Supreme consciousness is God consciousness. It provides spiritual enlightenment. When one experiences spiritual comfort, one will not find oneself worrying about physical comfort. When once one rises to the level of God consciousness, one will realize that one is no longer responsible for any other individual. One's concern for one's physical comfort gets drastically reduced. It no longer remains a concern.

Supreme consciousness is the *turiya* (fourth) state of consciousness beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. This state is eternal and the other three states come and go in it. As the *turiya* state alone exists and as the three preceding states merge into it and disappear, the *turiya* state transcends itself and becomes the *turiyatita*. The Self is the *turiyatita*, beyond the fourth state of consciousness.

Awareness is experience of the consciousness of the whole, within which the individual soul is imbedded, being awakened. The individual aspect of the All That Is becomes aware of itself. It becomes self-conscious.

Being-ness arises out of a state of total awareness. If one is seeking to become aware, then one cannot be. If one seeks to have something, one cannot have it because the very seeking is a statement that one does not then have it. When one is in a state of total awareness, then one will be able to do all the things that beings in a state of total awareness can do. Complete knowing will work its wonders. There are many on our planet right now that have manifested many of these higher thoughts in their total awareness.

Some seekers after Truth bring awareness to others by example. They seek to be the source of love of the Supreme Person in the lives of others, for they realize that what they give to others, they give it to themselves.

Some seekers in the state of total awareness seek to experience all the peace and joy, limitlessness and freedom, wisdom and love that Oneness brings them during their wakeful state itself. It means living in total awareness. The seeker becomes totally aware of Who He Is. All of life is a meditation for a seeker, in which he contemplates always the Divine. Experienced in this way, everything in life is blessed. There is no more pain or pleasure, happiness or sorrow, anxiety or worry. There is only experience, the experience of bliss.

Witness consciousness, Phenomenological consciousness, Existential consciousness and Inner-controller are concepts related to consciousness with ontological significance. An analysis of these concepts will help to appreciate the relation between the Brahman, *prakrti* and the relative world.

Witness Consciousness

The Brahman is undifferentiated. How does the differentiation take place when the Brahman creates the world without being affected by the creative activity? The answer lies in the idea of the witness consciousness (*sakshi-chaitanya*) 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.

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.

The witness consciousness relating to the Brahman is the Cosmic Mind, which is the attribute itself. The individual's mind is similar to the Cosmic Mind, as its reflection or mode. 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 witness consciousness has different levels. In the above example of the dream and waking states, the witness is at the empirical level. Although it often disassociates itself easily from itself as experiencing the dream objects, it has to make often some special effort for the purpose. Then forgetfulness helps in erasing the dream experiences. But at the deeper and higher levels of the witness consciousness, the disassociation is more and more spontaneous and obvious to oneself.

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.

But existential consciousness is not so directed and knows only itself. As the attribute consciousness directed towards the object includes or comprehends the object for knowing its existence, witness consciousness, directed outwards, that is, towards the object, includes the existence of the object. Directedness as a relation has to include both the terms of the relation. Witness consciousness, then, knows the existence of the object, true or false, as its own existence and the existence aspect of the object are one and the same. Thus the empirical split between the subject and the object must have been based on a transcendental unity to which the power of the creative split must be inherent.

The idea of the witness consciousness is closely related to the ideas of being and becoming. This is to say that without something the same running through the

different instants and moments of becoming, becoming cannot be becoming. The self-conscious beings are aware of the process of becoming so far as they are concerned.

As for the insentient beings, it is the self-conscious being that remains the same through the observations of becoming in insentient objects. The observer is the witness consciousness so far as the becoming in the insentient object is concerned. Here, the Inner Controller is the Cosmic Person of both the observer and the insentient being. This is for the reason that the Cosmic Person constitutes the basic structures and potentialities of the observer and the insentient being, within certain limits, which is the witness consciousness of both. Although, Being and Becoming are ontological, they have cosmological implications.

Existential Consciousness & Phenomenological Consciousness

The concepts of Existential Consciousness (*svarupa-jnana*) and Phenomenological Consciousness (*dharmabhuta-jnana*) throw considerable light on the knowledge situation. The existential consciousness is the *atman*. The phenomenological consciousness is described as working through mind and the senses. It is everything that is said to be internal except the *atman* and mind.

The existential and phenomenological consciousnesses are in essence one and the same, and also are distinct as in the reflective consciousness 'I-know that I-know X'. When I see a star, it is not merely my phenomenological consciousness that becomes one with the existence of the star. In the live act of perception, both the consciousnesses unite. But in reflection, the existential consciousness can transcend the identity and make it its own object. The phenomenological consciousness is only the outward going force of the existential consciousness. It is part and parcel of the latter and can be assimilated to it. The complete disappearance of the phenomenological consciousness in deep sleep is complete withdrawal into the existential consciousness as structured by our finitude. The phenomenological consciousness does not reveal the existential at the time that it reveals an object. But the presence of the existential in the act of seeing and locating the object is revealed in the reflective consciousness through the transcendence of the witness consciousness.

In fact, the light, which reveals the object through the phenomenological consciousness, is the borrowed light of the existential. In other words, it is the light, which is the existential consciousness that reveals the object through the phenomenological consciousness, which is a form of activity of the existential consciousness (*atman*).

It is for this reason that we do not know ourselves when we are focused on the object and know the object. Although phenomenological consciousness denotes something substantive, it is essentially the form of the activity of the *atman*, one of the types of its becoming.

Thus, the *atman* as existential consciousness cannot be excluded from the phenomenological consciousness which itself is a function, power, force of the former. The phenomenological consciousness has, therefore, directedness towards the object, gross or subtle, or even an idea, or a mental image. Direction has necessarily two terms, that from which and that to which it points. Then the two terms must have been included in the direction of the phenomenological consciousness. They have to be inseparable from the consciousness. This direction or directedness is not that of an empty or lifeless relation. It is that of a concrete, living process. It is a case of the concrete, factual, experimental, not merely that of an abstract symbol as in formal logic or mathematics.

Indeed, the phenomenological (*attribute*) consciousness, in a sense, flows through the inner sense (*antahkarana*) and the senses. But they are not patterns external to it. They constitute the very form of the attribute consciousness. They are constituent to it, as its patterns of active directedness, not static or inactive. Thus, the

independence of *prakṛti* from the phenomenological consciousness of either the Supreme Spirit or the finite *atman* is not tenable.

The *atman* absorbs its attribute consciousness and has infinite power or potency to do so. This is to say that the directed knowing (I-know) is absorbed into being (I-am), the phenomenological into the existential consciousness.

A question arises whether the individual *atmans* (the *atmans* of finite individuals) as existential consciousnesses (*svarupa-jnana*) can ultimately remain independent of one another. Empirically, in the world of action, they are often independent, that is, separate, although dependent on one another in practical life. The question is whether they remain separate and be many, through all the transcendental stages. If the Logos and its various levels are the same for every individual, constituting the stages of his higher self, is it possible that at these transcendental stages all the *atmans* are separate and not one?

In Indian philosophy or thought, the question whether something remains so and so ultimately is considered from the point of view of what it will be in liberation. The presumption is that in the liberated state, everything assumes its absolutely original form.

If the phenomenological (attribute) consciousnesses are each infinite by nature, overlapping, interpenetrating, conscious, and conscious of one another, it is not intelligible that they can be separate. If I know whatever is happening in another's mind, his thinking, his pains and pleasures without his telling me, then there is nothing to separate him from me. Both of us have to be identical. But that does not happen.

Regarding sensations and sense data, one may say that there is privacy of experience. However, we cannot be so sure about the privacy of sensations as we can be of pains, pleasures, mental images, illusions, dreams etc. although, all are experiences. If X says, 'I am in pain', I know and the doctor knows that X is in pain. It does not mean that I and the doctor experience the same pain which X experiences. Still our experience, that X experiences pain, is real.

The sensations and the senses are different as belonging to different persons. The *atmans* are each infinite and even the attribute consciousnesses of each are infinite. Yet the sensations and the senses overlap and are different without becoming numerically identical. How are we then to account for the identity of the object? In the case of the pain of X, if the object of sensation is not the same for three of us, there will be no identity of the object in perception. If the senses present sensations (sense data), mind their unity as an object as a whole, then what is it in us that presents the identity?

The Upanisads mention the inward structure of the self - senses, life, mind, individual reason, Cosmic Reason and the *atman* in that ascending order. We may have to say that it is the Cosmic Reason, which has to be the same, numerically identical, in all of us. It is what finally confers existence on all the phenomenal objects in so far as they are real. The Cosmic Reason in all of us must be the same and also must be above the impurities of individual reasons. It has to be the higher

aspect or dimension of the individual reason and has also to be its deeper aspect or dimension. The numerical sameness of the object we contend for can be made possible only by something numerically the same for all in our inner beings. Hence, in spite of overlapping of experiences, it cannot be contended that we can be different persons all the way up to the individual *atman*. It ends at the stage of the Cosmic Reason before the *atman* in each individual. Existence is only one. Ontologically, all existences, all beings of both God and the finite individuals are one. Only empirically in the world of action, are they different.

The phenomenological (attribute) consciousness is structured and directed. It has intentionality. The structure of the phenomenal world is due to the structure of the phenomenological consciousness in so far as it works rightly. This consciousness is said to be outward like the Eternal Force (*nitya-vibhuthi*). The two forms of consciousness - of the *atman* and of God - are said to be inward, called the existential consciousness.

Now in the *atman*'s act of cognizing an object, how are the two forms - the inward and the outward related? The answer may be that the same phenomenological consciousness, when it reveals an object, reveals itself to the *atman*. For revealing itself to the *atman*, which is inward, it must have inward directedness and for revealing the object, it must have outward directedness. Then, the so-called inward and outward directedness are not absolute distinctions, but are two intentionalities of the same consciousness, that is, the phenomenological consciousness. The *atman* is conscious of the phenomenological consciousness belonging to it like heat of fire. It is the power of the *atman* or the existential consciousness itself. Without the existential consciousness in the background, the phenomenological consciousness cannot be phenomenological.

In the final analysis, my phenomenological consciousness is my rational consciousness with directions outwards and inwards. It is finally to be absorbed, assimilated to and made part of my being, my I-am which will be the true indeterminate consciousness (*jnana*). It is infinite, without contours and fully restful.

The existential consciousness is not revealed only by the phenomenological when it reveals an object, but is cognized by itself. Its cognition of itself is not like revealing an object by the phenomenological consciousness; existential consciousness is not an object of the phenomenological like the book on the table. The phenomenological is known as another to the existential consciousness, but also as being covered, comprehended and within the existential consciousness. It is like my body being an object of my consciousness, but my consciousness extending beyond my body.

Inner Controller

At the level of the Supreme Brahman, *prakṛti* dissolves into the Supreme Being - the Brahman. With *prakṛti* not existent in perception, the 'I' consciousness (*atman*) of the seeker is no longer concerned with *prakṛti*, which is part of the Brahman's self-transparent 'I' Consciousness. The dissolution or vanishing of *prakṛti* means that it has become part and parcel of the seeker and is no longer controlling him. It is being controlled by him. As he cannot find himself as an object distinct from him, he cannot make *prakṛti* his object. Nor does he feel its limiting power when it becomes part of him. In other words, he is in full command as *prakṛti* dissolves into him.

This gives an idea as to how the concept of the Inner Controller works. In my finite individual, my 'I' consciousness is the inner controller of the activities of my senses and my organs of action. In the case of ethical activity, my character, which constitutes my personality, is the inner controller of my conduct. The idea of control becomes meaningful when it is realized that my 'I' consciousness is also the witness consciousness and, as such, guides my activities.

Similarly, with different degrees of detachment, the three stages or levels of the Logos - the *Virat* (Cosmic Person), *Hiranyagarbha* (the soul of the Cosmic Person) and *Isvara* (the personal God), become inner controllers, each higher of the lower. Generally all the three are clubbed. The Logos is considered the Inner Controller and the Witness Consciousness in finite individuals. The Brahman is the eternal Inner Controller and the Witness Consciousness. As there are levels of the witness consciousness, are there levels of the inner controller.

Infinite Consciousness

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.

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.

Infinite Consciousness regards its intelligence in its own Consciousness, as it were, though it is not different from it, even as wind is not different from its own movement and as fire is not different from its own heat. At that very moment, when there is an unreal division, there arises in that Infinite Consciousness the notion of space, which, on account of the power of Consciousness, appears as the element known as space. That later believes itself to be air and then fire. From this notion there arises the appearance of fire and light. That further entertains the notion of water with its inherent faculty of taste. That believes itself to be the earth with its inherent faculty of smell and also its characteristic of solidity. Thus do the water and the earth elements appear to have manifested themselves.

At the same time, the Infinite Consciousness appears to have held in Itself the notion of a unit of time. From this evolved the time scale right up to an epoch, the life span of one cosmic creation. The Infinite Consciousness is uninvolved in these, for It is devoid of rising or setting, or of a beginning, middle and end. The Infinite Consciousness alone is the reality, ever awake and enlightened. It is the same with creation, too. That Infinite Consciousness alone is the unenlightened appearance of this creation. Even after the creation, It is the same as ever. When one realizes in the self by the self that Consciousness is the Absolute *The Brahman*, then one experiences It as All, as the one energy dwelling in all his limbs and all over the cosmos.

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.

It may be said that the world appearance is 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. The mirage-like appearance of the cosmos exists as not different from the Absolute Brahman.

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, *Mahachiti* - the great intelligence, *Mahasakti* - the great power, *Mahadrsti* - the great vision, *Mahakriya* - the great doer or doing, *Mahabhava* - the great becoming and *Mahaspanda* - 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.

Some sages make a verbal distinction between the Brahman and Its power, and declare that creation is the work of that power. The Infinite Consciousness is aware of Its inherent power, as one is aware of the limbs of one's body. Such awareness is known as *niyati* - the power of the Absolute that determines the nature. It is also known as Divine dispensation. *Niyati* functions only as and through self-effort. It has two aspects - human and super-human. The human aspect is seen where self-effort bears fruit and the latter where it does not.

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 the *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 un-

manifest, 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.

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. The 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. This Witness Consciousness becomes involved in latent predispositions and develops the ego-sense.

As for the mind, 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.

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 coloring and

rests in its essential nature, which is consciousness. Even 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.

Vibration and consciousness are inseparable like the whiteness of snow, the fragrance of a flower and the heat of fire. Similarly, mind and movement of thought are inseparable. When one ceases, the other automatically ceases.

The incidental manifestation of the power of the Infinite Consciousness appears as the billions of species of beings in this universe. These countless beings are caught up in their own mental conditioning. They are found in every conceivable kind of situation in every place in the universe.

Just as water acquires the appearance of a whirlpool with a personality of its own, consciousness seems to give the appearance of 'I' etc, within itself. But consciousness is consciousness only, whether it thinks of itself as Lord Siva or a *jiva*.

Division or diversification is not a contradiction of unity. The ramifications of a tree with its leaves, flowers, fruits, etc extend from the seed in which there is no diversification. Similarly, the universe of diversity extends from the Infinite Consciousness, which is One alone.

The heart that is spoken of in spirituality is of the nature of Pure Consciousness. It is both inside and outside, 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.

18. Realization – Bliss

Several seers and sages have realized their selves, through the ages and attained salvation. They have followed different methods for achievement of their goal. Broadly the paths followed are classified as the path of ethical action, the path of devotion, the path of *yoga* and the path of discrimination and knowledge.

But, the experience of the sages and the seers that have realized is that the paths are not exclusive, but interrelated at different levels, one or more leading to another. The seers have indicated the paths for self-realization broadly, only after experiencing the state of oneness with the Divine. The aspirant on the path of realization is to choose the path he considers best, intermingling with other paths at such levels, as he considers most suited to his self.

Bhagavad-Gita stresses that knowledge is higher than the practice of *yoga* (*Pathanjali's*). Meditation is higher than knowledge. Renunciation of the fruits of action is higher than meditation. Finally, peace (*santhi*) is higher than even such renunciation. This may lead to the interpretation that every former leads to the latter, ultimately leading to the absolute peace of mind, that is, salvation within one's conscious self.

According to *Vedanta*, one's ideal is to know the real nature of one's own self. But such knowledge is impossible without the renunciation of ego. The ego is like a stick that seems to divide the water in two. It makes one feel that one is different from the Brahman. Only when the ego disappears in *samadhi*, then does one know the Brahman to be one's own innermost consciousness.

The aspirant ultimately discovers the Brahman by knowing who this 'I' is. He realizes that this 'I' is not the flesh, the bones, the blood, the mind or the intellect. It is none of these. He will realize that he is free from attributes and that he has never been the doer of any action, that he has been free from virtue or vice alike, that he is beyond righteousness or unrighteousness. Through the process of discrimination, he realizes that what he calls 'I' is really nothing but the *atman*. He ultimately realizes that the Reality is the *Atman*, the Indivisible One without qualities or attributes. "I am He" is the ultimate realization.

To rid oneself of the disease of *samsara* or world-appearance, there is no remedy other than wisdom or self-knowledge. Knowledge alone is the cure for the wrong perception of a snake in the rope. When there is such knowledge, there is no craving in the mind for sense-pleasure, which aggravates the ignorance. If there is craving, one is not to fulfill it.

The world-appearance is nothing but the play of the mind. The mind itself is but the play of the omnipotent Infinite Being. The mind veils the real nature of the Self and creates an illusory appearance. This illusion can be overcome only by wisdom - self-knowledge.

Wealth is the mother of evil. Sense-pleasure is the source of pain. Misfortune is the best fortune. Rejection by all is victory. Life, honour and noble qualities blossom and attain fruition in one whose conduct and behavior are good and pleasant and who does not crave for the pleasures of the world. Only self-knowledge is capable of destroying all pain and pleasure. Hence every zealous effort should be directed towards self-knowledge alone.

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. It is only wisdom and self-knowledge that takes them to the highest state of consciousness.

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.

In the state of realization, the aspirant no longer finds the existence of his ego. Who is left there to seek it? Who can describe how he feels in the state of his pure consciousness about the real nature of the Brahman? If one analyses, one does not find any such thing as the ego in that state. If one peels off the red outer skin of an onion, one finds thick white skins. When one peels these off one after another, one finds nothing inside. So does the ego or 'I' vanish in the state of realization of the Self.

When an aspirant realizes the Self and returns to the worldly plane, he retains the 'knowledge ego', the 'devotee ego' or the 'servant ego'. His 'wicked ego' disappears.

Sri Ramakrishna say: 'If God keeps the ego in a man, then he keeps in him the sense of differentiation and also the sense of virtue and sin. But in a rare few, He completely effaces the ego. These people go beyond virtue and sin, good and bad. As long as a man has not realized God, he retains the sense of differentiation and the knowledge of good and bad. One may say, 'virtue and sin are the same to me. I am doing only as God bids me'. But one knows in one's heart of hearts that these are mere words. No sooner does one commit an evil deed than one feels a palpitation in one's heart. Even after realization, God keeps ego - the sense of differentiation - in a devotee as long as he is in the world. This ego is a mere appearance, like the mark left on the coconut tree by its branch that has fallen off'.

In *samadhi* - the state of realization, the seeker becomes one with God and gets rid of egotism. True realization is impossible without *samadhi*. At noon, the sun is overhead. If one looks around, one does not see one's shadow. It will dissolve into one's body. Likewise, one will not find even the trace of one's ego after attaining realization in *samadhi*.

If one realizes *Atman*, one will see the Truth of all. All doubts disappear after the vision of God. When one merges one's *buddhi* -intelligence in *bodha* - consciousness, then one attains the knowledge of the Brahman; one becomes *Buddha* - the enlightened. On realization, the aspirant turns out to be *Nityasuddhabodharupam* - the Eternal and Ever Pure Consciousness.

After realization of the Brahman, the aspirant is over-powered with bliss. He becomes still and silent. If a boiled paddy grain is sown, it does not sprout. Just so, if the fire of knowledge and revelation boils a man, he cannot take part any more in the play of creation. He is in a state of ecstatic bliss. Self-realization and cessation of craving should proceed hand in hand, simultaneously.

If one seeks the Consciousness of the Supreme Person, the Consciousness of All That Is, one will move into total peace, total joy, total awareness, total love and total acceptance, for that is the Consciousness of All That Is. Then one will become one with the Oneness - *nirvana*. One will have this experience in *samadhi*. This is an indescribable ecstasy. This is the Bliss of the Oneness.

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. As such the state attained in realization is Bliss itself.

Souls 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. Those who realize God by His sheer grace are called the *Kripasiddha* - the perfect through Divine grace. Those who realize God-vision suddenly are called the *Hathasiddha* - the suddenly realized. Those who realize God-vision in a dream are called the *Swapnasiddha* - the realized in a dream.

The ever-perfect are of two kinds - those who attain perfection through spiritual practice by the grace of God and those who are born in each life with their spiritual consciousness already awakened. People are eager to see the first manifestations of an ever-perfect soul's zeal for God.

The ever perfect are those who have love of God from the moment of their birth. They are like the natural image of Siva, which springs forth from the earth and is not set up by human hands. The ever perfect form a class by themselves. They are never attached to the world. Prahlada is an example. They are like bees which light only on flowers and sip the honey. They drink only the nectar of Divine Bliss. They are never inclined to worldly pleasures. They are ever realized and in a state of ecstatic bliss.

Eternally perfect souls like Prahlada also practise meditation and prayer. But they have realized God-vision even before their spiritual practice. They are like

gourds and pumpkins, which grow fruits first and then flowers. Those who are born as the companions of an incarnation of God are eternally perfect. For some of them, that birth is the last.

The devotion of the ever perfect is not like the ordinary devotion that one acquires as a result of strenuous spiritual discipline. An ever perfect does not follow the injunctions of ceremonial worship. He develops *raga-bhakti* and loves God as his own. Without intense attachment and passionate love for God, one cannot realize God.

19. The Path of Ethical Action

General

The man's finite being is turned outwards, towards the world of plurality. But the self (*atman*) is inward. The presence and the depths of the inward being cannot be recognized unless mind is purified and man becomes unselfish. He is to be non-ego centered. It is, therefore, necessary to start with ordinary ethics to lift us to a higher level than that of our petty ego.

When one acts according to a universal ethical law one places one's ego at the level of the universal ego and lifts oneself to that level. One does not merely think of a universal ego. One universalizes one's ego in ethics. This universalization is not spatial outward but expansion inward, in which the particular ego is transcended. There is spiritual significance for ethical action for purification of mind and the inner instrument, in the absence of which realization of the self is not ordinarily possible.

As an empirical person, I feel my reality only with reference to the objective world. I am part and parcel of it. Without my active connection with the object, I may live in a world of fantasy and abstractions. The object concerned has to be a real object, not an imaginary one. The reality of the object is made less uncertain in action than in cognition, imagination, etc. The differences may be matters of degree. Even those differences are important for life. Practical life involves not only the reaction of insentient objects to my actions on them, but also the reaction of other persons to my actions towards them and affecting them.

These activities tend to correct one another and keep me away from fantasy about myself. The objects of imagination and mental images like the son of a barren woman are dependent on my imagination. The objects of dreams and illusions are dreamt as reacting to me and existing independently of my desires and imagination. But when the dream is over or the illusion is corrected, the objects are found to have no spatial-temporal and causal relations with the objects of my waking self. Their difference from the objects of imagination lies in their reaction to my actions and in their existence independently of my desires and imagination. This independence is experienced in the objects of my waking consciousness. These objects exhibit necessary spatial-temporal and causal relations.

These necessities are discovered by man through action on the objects and the observation of their reactions. My action on them and their reaction are patterned according to laws of necessity. This necessity reveals the objectivity and reality of both the object and me. It is through action and the expected reaction that my reality sense is confirmed. My own real being apart from my being in the world of imagination and fantasy is repeatedly established only through action, making it possible for realization of true satisfaction, pleasure and happiness.

There is no life without action. No one can live without action; even breathing is action. None can condemn action; even condemning it is action.

The law of action (*karma*) exists. Good work produces good results. Bad work produces bad results. We shall have to reap the results of our past *karma*, either of this or of the previous lives. One must admit the influence of tendencies inherited from the past *karma* either of this life or of the previous lives. It is the result of *prarabdha karma*. The body remains as long as the results of past actions do not completely wear away.

But this law works differently for the devotees of God. The work that is done in the name of God produces only good results. One devoted to God undertakes only those works that present themselves to one and are of pressing necessity. One is to undertake even those works in a spirit of detachment. It is not good to become involved in many activities. That makes one forget God. One becomes more and more attached to lust and greed, when one takes up more and more work.

It is not possible to give up work altogether. To think or to meditate is a kind of work. Even the inhaling and exhaling of air to keep oneself alive is itself work. As one develops love for God, one's worldly activities become fewer and fewer of themselves. One loses all interest in them.

The path of action (*karma-yoga*) is very hard indeed. It is extremely difficult to perform the rites enjoined in the scriptures. Man's life is centered on food alone. He cannot perform many scriptural rites. One's very nature will lead one to action whether one likes it or not. Therefore, the scriptures suggest that one is to work in a detached spirit, that is to say, not to crave for the results of the work done in the manner anticipated.

The path of action (*karma-yoga*) is to work in such a spirit of detachment. One may think that one is working in detached spirit, but attachment creeps into the mind from, nobody knows, where. One may do compassionate and charitable work. One may feel that one does so act without hankering after its results. But unknown to oneself, the desire for name and fame somehow creeps into one's mind. Complete detachment from the results of action is possible only for one who has seen God.

The aim of life is the attainment of God. Work is only a preliminary step. It can never be the end. Even the unselfish work is only a means; it is not the end. The aim of the path of action (*karma-yoga*) is to fix one's mind on God by means of work. It consists of breath-control, concentration, meditation, etc done in a spirit of detachment, surrendering the results to God.

Householders practise *yoga* through *karma*, the performance of duty. There are four stages of life prescribed for men in the scriptures - *brahmacharya*, *grhasthya*, *vanaprasthya* and *sannyasa*.

The first stage is that of the student (*brahmacharya*). When the boy is about eight years of age, he goes to his teacher's house and lives there until he finishes his studies. The second stage is that of the householder (*grhasthya*). When the boy finishes his studies and is grown up, his teacher asks him to go home and pay back the three debts.

The first debt is to the forefathers. It is paid back by marrying and having children. The second debt is to the teachers and is paid back by educating the next

generation. Thereby, the learning acquired by the student is transmitted. The third debt is to the gods who maintain and govern the universe. It is repaid by way of performing sacrifices – *yajnas* and *yagas*. A sacrifice may even be of butter, cooked or uncooked rice or wheat, etc. These three duties, called debts, originally served the society when they were conceived. They are called debts because meeting those obligations produces no rewards, but violating them produces punishment or unhappiness.

The third stage is called the stage of the forest dweller (*vanaprasthya*). After leading the life of the householder and paying back the three debts, one retires to the forest along with one's wife, to reflect on the values of life one has been able to realize. This is the stage of self-reflection and self-examination.

The fourth stage (*sannyasa*) is that of the ascetic. At this stage, the ascetic gives up all connections with family, and all rites and duties. He spends the rest of his life as a holy man. He owns no property. He lives by begging. He even changes his name so that others do not know his earlier family connections. He may teach spiritual truths to men and women who are eager to know them.

It does not matter what kind of action one is engaged in. One can be united with God through any action provided that, performing it, one gives up all desire for its results.

All human actions are motivated at their deepest level by one of two emotions - fear or love. These are the opposite ends of the great polarity in human experience.

Every human thought and every human action is based either in love or fear. All other human motivations and ideas are derivatives of one of these two emotions. The initial or the sponsoring thought is either of love or of fear. Human experience oscillates between love and fear, taking the form of other derivatives in between.

“Fear is the energy which contracts, closes down, draws in, runs, hides, hoards, and harms.

Love is the energy which expands, opens up, sends out, stays, reveals, shares, and heals.”

When one chooses the action love sponsors, then one will succeed and have an opportunity to realize oneself.

To think, speak and do something, which one does not truly believe, is impossible. Therefore, the process of action includes belief or knowing. This is absolute faith. The doing part of action includes knowing. It is complete acceptance as reality of something which one acts upon. Thus, what one thinks, speaks and does becomes manifest in one's reality. All action sponsored by love serves the self as a higher being and takes one toward God.

“The process of action starts with thought - an idea, conception, visualization. Thought is the first level of action. Next comes the word which is a thought expressed. It is creative, and sends forth creative energy into the universe, as words are a kind of vibration, different from thought. Next comes action.... Actions are

words moving. Words are thoughts expressed. Thoughts are ideas formed. Ideas are energies come together. Energies are forces released. Forces are elements existent. Elements are particles of God. The beginning is God. The end is action. Action is God experienced”, says Neale Donald Walsch graphically.

Ethics - Merit and Demerit

In ethics, 'to be' is the aim of 'to do'. So the former is more important than the latter. This is to say that every ethical action is to result in transforming one's personality. Repeated ethical activity is to mould one's personality, that is, one's being. The ultimate result of this molding is one becoming 'one with the Cosmic Person.'

What is ethical action? It is the action according to the structure of the Cosmic Person, the Logos. Such action sets one in the path of the Logos, lifts one above the pettiness and narrowness of one's finite self. It is to lift one to the level of the Cosmic Person leaving behind one's selfish and self-centered desires and ideals. It is at this level that one can realize one's oneness with the Supreme Being. This means that action in accordance with the structure of the Logos is essential.

Purification or universalization of one's mind is impossible without ethical action. This concept of the Bhagavad-Gita seeks one to rise to the level of the Logos and act whether, or not, anyone else acts in the same way. This raises ethics to a higher plane, for the Logos or the Cosmic Person is not merely the structure of the Cosmic Laws, but is more, as a being merciful, just, caring, compassionate, etc.

What is meant by purity of mind (*chitta, antahkarana*, etc)? It may be that it is pure and transparent mind. What does this mean? Is such a mind placid like a mirror, and so empty? If it is empty, it does nothing. On the other hand, it should be directed towards the Supreme Being and reflect the Supreme Being. This reflection means being a perfect image, not the clean mirror. So it cannot be empty. The stages through which one has to pass in order to be such a reflection are the stages of the Cosmic Person. So to be pure means to be one with the Cosmic Person and act according to the processes of the Cosmic Person.

It amounts to saying that one is to develop a universal point of view and rise to the universal level. That reality, objectivity is the law of the cosmos or the Cosmic Person, as conceived in the Upanisads. It contains the factor of necessity, logical, empirical, practical, ethical and even aesthetic. To be pure is to overcome one's ego completely and be one with the processes of the Cosmic Person.

The Bhagavad-Gita says that living beings are born of food, food out of rain, rain out of sacrifice, sacrifice out of action, action out of Brahma the creator and Brahma out of the Brahman (*Purusa*). Thus the Brahman, which is all pervasive, is installed in sacrifice. God Himself is eternally active, with no motive or desire. He is ever active though He has everything.

The seeker is to know what action is right, what action is wrong and what non-action is. Wrong action is the one prohibited. The wise man sees non-action in action and action in non-action. Non-action does not mean non-movement of limbs. In such a case, life becomes impossible. Every living being is always in action, in motion, breathing being ever present as long as life exists.

Ethical non-action is action without any egoity. Merit and demerit, the results of action, do not accrue to the agent of such action. This is for the reason that he does

the action for the sake of law (*dharma*) and not for his own sake. It is not he as the *atman* but as the body, the product of *prakrti* and its attributes, that does the action. Man is to perform all actions as skillfully as he can, as he works as the agent of the Cosmic Person in the discharge of the law. He shall surrender the result to God saying, 'Lord, your will is done'.

Ethical action in family and society is necessary to have reality-sense. A normal person has a sound reality attitude and sense. It is profound ethical conflicts that deepen a person's self and leads him to spiritual depths. One comes to grief, fear, loneliness, anxiety, etc if one forgets that one is only a pole of the polarized Cosmic Person.

Engrossment in one's inner life may turn one into an introvert, instead of leading one to true inwardness. The true inwardness is a correlate of the true outwardness both of which can be realized only through ethical action. That alone correlates one to the object on which one acts, and the consequent achievement. Otherwise, one may be mistaking one's unreal 'I' for one's higher 'I', which is not what is meant by self-realization. The criterion of truth and reality is 'doing what a thing is meant for doing' or 'serving the purpose for which it is meant'. Here, serving means serving in practical activity.

It is often said that the hard facts of reality 'bring us to our senses'. This only reinforces that action is absolutely necessary if one wants that one's 'I' not to belong to a world of fancy, and to be raised to the level of the Cosmic Person.

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.

Renunciation is of two kinds - intense and feeble. Feeble renunciation is a slow process. One moves in a slow rhythm. Intense renunciation is like the sharp edge of a razor. It cuts the bondage of *maya* easily and at once. It is not possible to

renounce the world bit by bit. Such renunciation is to come about at once. Real renunciation is like a man, with everything in the world and lacking nothing, feeling all to be unreal. It also happens that by constantly hearing about renunciation, one's desire for worldly objects gradually wears away. "One should take rice-water in small doses to get rid of the intoxication of liquor. Then one gradually becomes normal". He who wants to renounce needs great strength of mind.

A person, who we consider is on a spiritual path, looks like having renounced all earthly desire. What he has done is to understand the desire, see the illusion and step aside from actions that do not serve him, while loving the illusion for what it has brought to him. The one that renounces never denies passion. He simply denies attachment to results. This amounts to choosing differently, an act of moving towards something else, while turning away from the temptation.

If one frees oneself from attachment to lust and greed, by the grace of God, one cultivates a spirit of strong renunciation. One endowed with a mild spirit of renunciation realizes one's weakness, but still continues to be bound to lust and greed. One expects that one will improve over a period of time. But the one with a spirit of strong renunciation feels restless for God and does not swerve from the path of God. He regards the world as a deep well and feels as if he were going to be drowned in it. He looks on his relatives as snakes and keeps away from them. He has great inward resolution. A strong spirit of renunciation is to give up at once, with determination, what one knows to be unreal.

Renunciation means to have dispassion for the world. One cannot acquire it all of a sudden. It must be practised every day. One must renounce lust and greed mentally first. Then, by the will of God, one can renounce them both mentally and outwardly. By practice, one acquires uncommon power of mind. Then one does not find it difficult to subdue the sense organs and to bring the passions under control. Such a man behaves like a tortoise, which, once it has tucked its limbs in, never puts them out even if it is chopped with an axe to pieces.

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.

The characteristics of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are very different. Egotism, sleep, gluttony, lust, anger and the like are the traits of the people with *tamas*. Pride and delusion come from *tamas*. Lust is another feature of *tamas*. Men with *rajas* entangle themselves in outward activity. A man endowed with *sattva* is quiet and peaceful. He does not hanker after name, fame, position and wealth. Men proud of their scholarship, their education or their wealth cannot attain knowledge of God.

Compassion (*daya*) springs from *sattva*. *Sattva* preserves; *rajas* creates; and *tamas* destroys. None of these three *gunas* can reach Truth. They are like robbers. They rob a man of the knowledge of Truth. *Tamas* seeks to destroy him. *Rajas* binds him to the world. But *sattva* seeks to rescue him from the clutches of *rajas* and *tamas*.

Under the protection of *sattva*, man is rescued from anger, passion and other evil effects of *tamas*. Further, *sattva* loosens the bonds of the world. Even *sattva* is a robber. It cannot give man the ultimate knowledge of Truth, though it shows him the path leading to God. *Sattva*, by itself, is far away from the knowledge of the Brahman. The Brahman is, thus, beyond the three *gunas* that constitute *prakrti*.

Sattva mixed with *rajas* diverts the mind to various objects. From it springs the conceit of doing 'good' to the world. To do good to the world is extremely difficult for an insignificant creature as man. But there is no harm in doing 'good' to others in an unselfish spirit. This is called unselfish action. Through disinterested action, *sattva* mixed with *rajas* gradually turns into pure *sattva*. When a man develops pure *sattva*, he thinks only of God. He does not enjoy anything else. Some were born with pure *sattva* as a result of the potencies of action in their previous births. No sooner does a man develop pure *sattva* than he realizes God, through His grace.

It is God alone that has planted in a man's mind what is called 'free will'. People who have not realized God may get engaged in sinful actions if God has not planted in them the notion of free will. Sin will have increased if God has not made the doer (sinner) feel that he alone is responsible for his actions. If he believes that God alone does everything and God alone is the doer, then he will never take a false step as the Cosmic Reason always dictates right action.

Samskaras

All action is patterned and the patterns of action produce patterns of *samskaras*. They become potential worldly drives in the depths of a person. These drives and potentialities at the higher ethical life can become identical with those of the Cosmic Person who constitutes the gateway to the Supreme Being and emancipation in Him.

Every action produces an impression (*samskara*), a kind of an imprint similar to a trauma, in the causal body and sticks in it like an inherent quality. It bursts into activity when the occasion comes. The causal body is a storehouse of *samskaras*, both cosmic and individual. They are dynamic forces. They influence our life, knowledge and action. All my cognitions and actions, both known and unknown, produce impressions on my personality and mould it. But neither my personality nor the impacts of cognition and action remain static. They become forces constituting the dynamism of my personality.

The *samskaras* are, therefore, creative and dynamic. They are of two kinds - cosmic and individual. My birth and the way I have been born, which is common to all individuals like me, are due to cosmic *samskaras*. The *samskaras*, which are peculiar to me, are due to my own actions in my 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.

Buddhism believes that the *samskaras* become constituents of my personality by being passed on from moment to moment of its duration. The action-*samskaras* are transmitted from moment to moment of my existence, stay in me after my death and become active in producing my 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 realization.

Rational Consciousness

Steadied rational consciousness is the state of what the Bhagavad-Gita calls *sthita-prajna*. It denotes the one whose enlightened mind is steady and not wavering. In other words, rational consciousness marks one's steadied character. This may appear like floating in a current of the processes of the Cosmic Person. It is not so. Only a dead body floats in a current. A living body swims with it. So to be one with the law guiding the processes of the Cosmic Person is to act according to that law. It is for the reason that all processes are patterned and so are controlled by, or are the manifestations of the law of all laws, the law of the Cosmic Person.

This principle of following the law of the Cosmic Person is against the modern general existentialist teaching that man ought not to be guided by any law above him, for it violates his freedom. But freedom does not lie in going against the law of the Cosmic Person, but in being one with Him. To go against Him is self-destructive; and true freedom does not lie in self-destruction. It is action controlled by the cosmic law that confers the proper reality attitude both to the world and to the individual.

The Gita explains the point in two ways. First, God Himself is the desire in man that is not opposed to the law of reality or the universe. This means that the duty sought to be discharged shall be in accordance with the law or nature of the Cosmic Person, one's highest self, and so to attain God. The discharge of duty is not for its own sake. If God himself is the desire that is in accordance with the law of the universe, there is no way of escaping it. For example, there is no way of escaping the action of breathing and eating. Thus action without desire means non-egoistic action, the desire behind which is observance of the law that supports the universe. Without action according to that desire, the society and the world face disintegration.

Secondly, the Gita says that mean people act the way they do, when they desire the result for themselves. But a seeker shall take shelter in reason (*buddhi*). It means that he shall act in accordance with his rational dictates and do that action with all the skill needed. For, *yoga* is skill-fullness in action. Those who are motivated by rational desire act only in one way. Those who are motivated by egoistic desires act in different ways. The action dictated by the rational desire is the one in accordance with the law of the universe. As such, the performer of the action is not bound by its results.

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 ideal 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*.

Action Differentiated

Action is divided into two kinds - that which does some personal benefit and that, which is not so motivated, motivates. Man does not act without a purpose. The distinction may be classified as the non-obligatory and the obligatory. The non-obligatory actions are those which a man performs for enjoying its results. They may, indeed, be ethical, not necessarily unethical. If a man prays to God for a boon, he performs a non-obligatory action. But if he prays to God without seeking any boon, his action may be obligatory. Prayer and action like charity are obligatory actions.

Non-obligatory actions are considered actions with a desire. Similarly all duties discharged for sustaining the society and the world without seeking any reward are considered obligatory actions without any desire. Here desire means one's own personal desire or benefit. Said another way, the non-obligatory actions may be considered selfish and egoistic actions, while the obligatory actions are the selfless and non-egoistic actions.

In the absolute, unconditional sense, there may be no action without desire. Even the desire to do the right action is also a desire. Absolutely desireless action belongs to the machine or the insentient world. In the ethics of the Gita, desirelessness means the absence of desire to enjoy one-self the result of action. Otherwise, the action becomes egoistic.

The three initiators of action are the knower, the known and the knowledge. The three factors of action are the agent, the action and the instruments of action. Of these, the agent, action and knowledge are of three kinds, according as they are determined by the three attributes.

The knowledge that sees unity in multiplicity, the un-manifest Brahman in the manifested differences, is determined by the Transparent. This leads one to act with the welfare of the universe in view. The knowledge that sees only the differences as separate from one another is determined by the Active. This gives the idea of the immediate result and its relevance to the agent in view. The knowledge that leads man to action without any thought whatsoever is determined by the Darkness. This gives no idea of the result of action, as in persons of unsound mind.

The above classification is in relation to knowledge—the instruments of action. Correspondingly, the agents and actions are also classified into three kinds determined by each of the three attributes, with corresponding results.

Action is separately classified into five kinds, according to the kinds of causes that produce it, namely the body, the *atman*, different types of instruments, different kinds of vital functions and fate as the unknown factor. The will of the agent alone will not produce the result aimed at. All have to cooperate in the right mix.

Action is also classified into three categories - bodily action, speech and thought (mental action). All the three have to be pure and be determined by the Transparent.

The mind seems very clear that God will bring good things to one if one gives to another, what one chooses for oneself. If one chooses to be prosperous, one must

cause another to prosper. If one chooses more love in one's life, one must cause another to have more love in his life. If one acts that way sincerely, not because of seeking any personal gain, but because one really wants the other to have them, all things one gives to another will come to one. This is because what one is being; one is creating for oneself. This is true altruism.

One does not have to do one's duty after the attainment of God, nor does one feel like doing it then. Duty drops away by itself, after realization. One goes beyond good and evil. The flower drops off when the fruit appears. The flower serves the purpose of begetting the fruit.

The spiritual life (*adhyatma-jivana*), the religious life (*dharma-jivana*) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three different ways of life. One must know which one desires and not confuse the three together. The ordinary life is that of the average human consciousness separated from its own true self and from the Divine. It is led by the common habits of the mind, life and body, which are the laws of the ignorance. The religious life is a movement of the same ignorant human consciousness, turning or trying to turn away from the earth towards the Divine, but as yet without knowledge and led by the dogmatic tenets and rules of some sect or creed. It may be the first approach to the spiritual, but very often it is only a turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices or set ideas and forms without any issue. The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker, this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.

At the beginning of religious life, a man makes much ado about work. As his mind dives deeper into God, he becomes less active. Finally he renounces all work and goes into *samadhi*.

20. The Path of Devotion

General

Another 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.

The way of devotion purifies one's mind. Purity of mind leads to devotion. It is a two-way path. If one is devoted to God and surrenders everything including oneself, one's ego gets liquidated. By subduing one's passions such as lust, anger and greed, one receives God's grace to realize Him. The way of devotion is primarily concerned with the culture and purification of the emotions.

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 Persian literature it is said that inside the skin is the flesh, inside the flesh the bone, inside the bone the marrow, and so on. But *prema* (pure love) is the innermost and the most sublime of all. Because of the pure love of the devotees for Krishna, Krishna became "*tribhanga*" - bent in three places, bound to the devotees.

A devotee is one whose mind dwells on God without any egotism and vanity. The water of God's grace cannot collect on the high mound of egotism. It runs down. A devotee can realize God if he calls on Him in all sincerity and with earnestness. The feeling "I am the servant of God" helps one realize God. One can realize God only through *prema-bhakti* - *raga-bhakti*. The Divine Consciousness one so attains is like the sudden illumination of a dark room when light is brought in.

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 fiber sticking out.

A devotee can see God if he unites in himself the force of three attractions - the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man, the husband's attraction for the chaste wife and the child's attraction for its mother. If the devotee can unite these three forms of love, then he can see Him at once. The intense love of Radha for Sri Krishna, a six-year-old boy in Brindavan, represents a super-sensuous experience of a true devotee.

Verily God looks into a man's heart and does not judge him by what he does or where he lives.

The name of God has great sanctity. It may or may not produce immediate result. One day it must bear fruit. One can see His forms and His formless aspect as well. The devotee who constantly meditates on God knows that God reveals Himself in various forms and aspects, mainly in the form, which His devotee loves most. However, one cannot see God without His grace.

The whole approach of the devotee is to love God and taste His sweetness. He is sweetness and the devotee is its enjoyer. The devotee drinks the sweet bliss of God. Further, God is the lotus and the devotee the bee. The devotee sips the honey of the

lotus. As the devotee cannot live without God, so also God cannot live without His devotee. Then, the devotee becomes the sweetness, and God its enjoyer. The devotee becomes the lotus, and God the bee. It is the Godhead that has become these two in order to enjoy Its own Bliss. That is the significance of the episode of Radha and Krishna in which the Supreme Being Himself became Radha and Krishna in order to enjoy the bliss of their mutual spiritual communion.

After the realization of God, He is seen in all beings. His greater manifestation, among men, is more clearly in those devotees who embody *sattva* and in those who have no desire whatsoever to enjoy lust and greed.

Realizing God, the devotee becomes like a child. One acquires the nature of the object one meditates upon. The nature of God is childlike. As a child builds up its toy house and breaks it, so does God create, preserve and dissolve the universe. As a child is not under the control of any attribute (*guna*), so is God beyond the three attributes. That is why great saints (*paramahansas*) keep some children with them so that they may assume the nature of the children.

According to Bhagavata, 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.

Attributes of Devotion

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 dishonor, prosperity and privation.

Maya is nothing but worldly desires. A man living in its midst gradually loses his spiritual alertness. He thinks all is well with him. One gradually acquires love of God through the practice of chanting God's name and glories, overcoming the worldly desires. One does not succeed spiritually so long as one has sense of shame, hatred and fear.

Compassion (*daya*) and attachment (*maya*) are two different attitudes. Attachment is the feeling of my-ness towards one's relatives and goods. Compassion is the love one feels for all beings of the world. It is an attitude of seeing God in all beings. Compassion comes owing to the grace of God. Attachment also comes from God. Through *maya* God makes one serve one's relatives. One is to remember that *maya* keeps us in ignorance and entangles us in the world. Compassion makes our hearts pure and gradually unties our bonds.

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.

Vaishnavism preaches a significant concept in regard to *madhur- bhava*. The male devotee is to consider himself as a woman in order to develop the most intense form of love for Sri Krishna - the Supreme Being. This assumption of the attitude of the opposite sex has a psychological significance.

In our experience, we may cultivate an idea to such an intense degree that every other idea is withdrawn from the mind. This attitude can be utilized to subjugate the lower desires to develop spiritual nature exclusively. The basis of all desires and passions in a man is the conviction of his complete association with a male body. If he can inoculate himself thoroughly with the idea that he is woman, he can get rid of the desires peculiar to his male body. The idea that he is a woman is also to give way to another higher idea that he is neither man nor woman (*anyway he is not*), but the impersonal spirit. The impersonal spirit through his being can have real communion with the Impersonal God. This is the transcendental experience of communion with the Divine, close to the Vedantic thought.

The devotee assumes various attitudes towards *Sakti* - the Primal Energy - the attitude of a handmaid, a hero or a child, in order to propitiate Her. A hero's attitude is to please Her as a man pleases his wife.

In the northwest India, the bride holds a knife in her hand at the time of marriage; in Bengal, a nut cutter. This is symbolic that the bridegroom, with the help of the bride who is the embodiment of the Divine Power, will sever the bondage of illusion. This is the heroic attitude. Women are, all of them, the veritable images of *Sakti*.

As the love of God intensifies, the glories are forgotten gradually. The devotee realizes more and more intimacy with the Divine. Finally he regards himself as the mistress of his Beloved. No artificial barrier separates him from his ideal. Nothing binds his spirit. He experiences perfect union with the Godhead. The devotee retains the duality of his self and the Self of the Divine, and still becomes one with Him.

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*.

When *prema* is awakened, a devotee completely forgets the world and also his body. An ordinary person does not experience *mahabhava* or *prema*. He goes only as far as *bhava*.

Madame Guyon portrays unconditional love in her *Acquiescence of Pure Love*, an expression of total surrender to the Divine will.

‘To me it is equal whether Love ordain
My life or death, anoint me pain or ease.
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees;
One good she covets, and that good alone
To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free,
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee’.

Stages of Devotion

There are two stages of devotion (*bhakti*). The first one is *Vaidhi-bhakti*. It is qualified by scriptural injunctions. At this stage, the devotee worships God following the tradition. His worship is by way of repeating God's name, chanting His glories, hymns, prayers, etc. This is the lower stage of devotion.

But it matures into the higher stage - *Para-bhakti* or supreme devotion. It is in the nature of ecstatic love - *Urjita-bhakti* of God. It overflows, as it were. When it is awakened, the devotee "laughs and weeps and dances and sings". It is the manifestation of an inexplicable, ineffable experience of the natural perfection of the soul, not the result of any spiritual practice.

Where there is manifestation of the ecstatic love, it is for certain that God dwells there. It is pure love, in its intensity, for God. It is Divine Love. It is an end in itself. It exists potentially in all souls.

Srimad-Bhagvatha refers to nine kinds of devotion. They are listening, praise, remembrance or mental recollection, respectful service, ceremonial worship, salutation, servitude, intimate friendship and self-surrender. Listening refers to listening to the sport of the divine Incarnations. Praise refers to praising their glory. Remembrance refers to keeping their name and spirit ever in mind and soul. Respectful service refers to visiting the temples of the deities and to be ever involved in service to mankind. Ceremonial worship refers to worshipping the deities with heart and soul. Salutation refers to surrendering to the Divine with all parts of the body. Servitude refers to rendering service considering that everyone and everything around is the embodiment of the Divine and the service is only to the Divine. Intimate friendship refers to true faith that the Divine alone is the true friend, philosopher and guide. Self-surrender refers to surrendering oneself totally with body, mind and spirit to the Divine while in meditation.

Innumerable examples are available in Indian mythology as to the devotees that have attained Godhead following the above ways of devotion. Among them are King Parikshit who attained salvation by listening to the sport of divine Incarnations, Brahmaṛshi Suka by divine praise, Lakshmana by respectful service, Emperor Pruthu by ceremonial worship, Akrura by salutation, Garuda and Hanuman by servitude, Arjuna by intimate friendship, Emperor Bali by self-surrender and sacrifice. Kabir, Ramadas, Tukaram, etc are other examples of devotees having attained salvation.

Narada Bhakti Sutras enumerate eleven modes of devotion. They are love for listening to the sport and qualities of divine Incarnations, love for visit to the temples of the deities, love for worship of the deities, love for mental recollection and remembrance of the Divine, love for intimate friendship with the spirit of the Divine, love for pouring affection to the Divine, love for the Divine treating Him as his hero considering himself as His handmaid, love for total surrender to the Divine, love for meditation to merge into the Divine and love for looking ever for every opportunity to join the Divine spiritually.

Through devotion, the seeker experiences *kumbhakam* spontaneously. The nerve currents and breathing are calmed when the mind is concentrated. Also, the mind is concentrated when the nerve currents and breathing calm down. It is a two-way path. Then the discriminating power - intellect (*buddhi*) becomes steady. When the seeker achieves this state, he himself will not be aware of it.

The aspirants may be divided into different groups. They are the *pravartaka*, the *sadhaka*, the *siddha* and the *siddha* of the *siddha*. The one who has just set foot on the path of God realization is called a *pravartaka*. The one who has for sometime been practising spiritual disciplines such as worship, *japam*, meditation and the chanting of God's name may be called a *sadhaka*. The one who has known from his inner experience that God exists is a *siddha*. The one who has realized God very intimately is the *siddha* of the *siddha*.

Devotion to God is to adore Him with body, mind and words. "With body" means to serve and worship God with one's hands, go to holy places with one's feet, hear the chanting of the name and glories of God with one's ears and behold the Divine image with one's eyes. "With mind" means to contemplate and meditate on God constantly and to remember and think of His *lila*. 'With words' means to sing hymns to Him and chant His name and glories.

Sometimes God totally effaces the ego of his devotee as in the state of *samadhi*. But in many cases, the devotee keeps a trace of ego. That does not injure anybody. It is like the ego of a child. The ego helps the devotee to enjoy the bliss of the company of God. It also helps serve fellow human beings to realize Godhead

All trouble and botheration come to an end when the 'I' - ego dies. One may indulge in thousand ways of reasoning. But still the 'I' does not disappear. A devotee keeps the ego as in 'I am a lover of God'. It does no harm.

Sri Ramakrishna says: 'The best path for this age is *bhakti-yoga*, the path of *bhakti* prescribed by Narada - to sing the name and glories of God and pray to Him with a longing heart, 'O God, give me knowledge, give me devotion, and reveal Thyself to me'! The path of *karma* is extremely difficult. Therefore one should pray, 'O God, make my duties fewer and fewer; and may I, through Thy grace, do the few duties that Thou givest me without any attachment to their results! May I have no desire to be involved in many activities....The aim of life is the attainment of God. Work is only a preliminary step...It is not possible to give up 'work' altogether...Even unselfish work is only a means: It is not the end...The singing of the name and glory of God destroys the effect of past action'.

Divine Incarnation

Mythological epics refer to Divine Incarnations. They represent the actual descent of the Brahman in various mundane forms into the world, when evil prevails and good is about to be destroyed. 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.

The *Saguna* Brahman is meant for the devotees. In other words, a devotee believes that God has attributes and reveals Himself to the devotee as a Person assuming the form he believes in. It is He who listens to the prayers of the devotee. The prayers are directed to Him alone.

A devotee, therefore, accepts Divine Incarnation in human form for worship. It provides an object of meditation and prayer resulting in *mahabhava* and *prema*.

Those who follow the path of devotion seek an Incarnation of God, to enjoy the sweetness of devotion.

Ordinary people do not recognize the advent of an Incarnation of God. He comes in secret. Only a few of his intimate disciples can recognize him.

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.

As long as I-consciousness exists, God reveals Himself as a Person to a devotee.

The formless God is real. Equally real is God with form. Formless God is the water of the Great Cause, motionless. Waves spring up when it becomes active. Its activities are creation, preservation and destruction.

God is born on earth as man in every age, to teach people ecstatic love and devotion. There is a great accumulation of divinity in an Incarnation like the accumulation of fish in a deep hollow in a lake. God can be directly perceived in man with a tangible form. Seeing an Incarnation of God is the same as seeing God Himself.

What is God's form like? Like bubbles rising on an expanse of water, various Divine forms are seen to rise out of the great *Akasa* of Consciousness. The Incarnation of God is one of these forms. The Primal Energy sports, as it were, through the activities of a Divine Incarnation.

When God is born as an Incarnation in man, holding in His hand the key to the liberation of others, then, for the welfare of the humanity, the Incarnation joins the stream of the consciousness of the world.

God becomes man, an Avatar, and comes to earth with his devotees. And the devotees leave the world with Him. A band of minstrels suddenly appears, dances, sings, and departs in the same sudden manner. They come and they return, but none recognizes them.

Even the Incarnation of God is conscious of the body. Embodiment is due to *maya*. The Incarnation is bound to the relative by His own free will. But *maya* binds man to the relative in eight fetters - shame, hatred, fear, caste, lineage, good conduct, grief and secretiveness. The fetters cannot be unfastened without the help of a guru.

Assuming a human body, the Incarnation becomes a victim to disease, grief, hunger, thirst and all such things, like ordinary mortals. Rama wept for Sita. 'The Brahman weeps entrapped in the snare of the five elements'. God, incarnating Himself as man, behaves exactly like a man. That is why it is difficult to recognize an Incarnation unless the mind is totally free from the worldly desires.

God exists in all beings. But the manifestations of His Power are different in different beings. The greatest manifestation is through an Incarnation. Again, in some Incarnations, there is complete manifestation of God's Power, while in some others it is partial.

In an Incarnation of God, one sees the sun of knowledge and the moon of love. The greatest manifestation of God is in man. If one seeks God, one must seek Him in the Incarnations.

It is *Sakti*, the power of God that is born as an Incarnation. If one sees a man endowed with ecstatic love, overflowing with *prema*, mad after God, intoxicated with His love, then one is to know for certain that God has incarnated Himself through that man.

An Incarnation has a 'thin' ego through which he will have an uninterrupted vision of God. Though he remains in the human body he is always united with God. Though established in *samadhi*, he can descend to the worldly plane. He who liberates others is an Incarnation of God.

The knowledge of an Incarnation of God is like the light of the sun. Through that light, the Incarnation sees everything, inside and outside, big and small.

Sat-Chit-Ananda alone is the guru. If someone in the form of a guru awakens spiritual consciousness in one, then one is to know for certain that it is God the Absolute that has assumed that human form for one's sake. The guru is like a companion that leads one by hand. After the realization of God, one loses the distinction between God and oneself. The distinction between the teacher and the disciple ceases to exist after the disciple attains the Brahman.

When God creates all forms of the world, can He not have a form for His Self if He so wills? The Divine Incarnation is necessary and arises to make the Divine

Truth human truth to enable us to appreciate it. One cannot look at the sun directly; but one can look at the reflected rays of the sun, to appreciate its glory and splendor. Real knowledge of the Divine is only faith.

In a Divine Incarnation perfect Divinity and perfect humanity coexist as in Krishna, Christ or Sri Sathya Sai. In any Divine Incarnation, formulates the Council of Chalcedon, exists “the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man.... the difference of the two natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved”.

A Divine Incarnation is thus a divine-human amalgam. According to the doctrine of Ditheletism, the Divine Incarnation has two wills – one divine and the other human. When the Incarnation wills in its identification with the Divine, it surely materializes. When It wills in identification with the human, it may or may not materialize or fructify. The attributes such as the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of the Divine are latent in any Divine Incarnation. They become patent whenever the Incarnation wills any of them to arise. This explains the adage “in an Avatar, the Supreme Godhead is not ‘on duty’ all the time”.

Thus the concept of the Avatar - whether Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna or Sri Sathya Sai - refers to a Divine Consciousness in an instrumental personality ‘according to the rules of the game - though also sometimes to change the rules of the game’. So the Avatar comes into existence not as “a mere superfluous freak of nature,” but as a “coherent part of the arrangement of the omnipotent Divine in nature”.

In the eternity of Becoming, each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect future realization.

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.

Some say that there are ten Divine Incarnations, some twenty-four, while others say that there are innumerable Incarnations. Both God and the human beings have the same properties ontologically. ‘Man is born in the image of God’, is the adage. All human beings are incarnations of the Divine, though the manifestation of the divinity varies from human being to human being.

However great and infinite God may be, His essence can and does manifest itself, through man by way of Incarnation. It cannot be explained by analogy. One must feel it for oneself and realize it by direct perception. By touching different parts of a cow, we touch the cow herself. But for us the essential thing about a cow is her milk, which comes through the udder. The Divine Incarnation is like the udder, to teach people from time to time devotion and divine love. Man’s longing is not satisfied without the Divine Incarnation, unless he sees God in a human form.

As long as the aspirant has no means of seeing the real sun except through its reflection, so long is the reflected sun real to him. As long as the 'I' is real, so long is the reflected sun real. That reflected sun is the primal energy. But if the aspirant seeks the knowledge of the attribute-less Brahman, he is then to proceed to the real sun through its reflection. He is to pray to the Brahman with attributes. The Brahman listens to his prayers and He Himself will give the devotee full Knowledge of the Brahman. For that which is the Brahman with attributes is verily the Brahman without attributes; that the Brahman is verily *Sakti*. The aspirant realizes the non-duality after the attainment of perfect knowledge.

A devotee may think of the Brahman as a shore-less ocean. Through the cooling influence of the devotee's love, as it were, the water gets frozen at places into blocks of ice. In other words, God, now and then, assumes various forms for His devotees and reveals Himself to them as a person. But with the rising of the sun of knowledge, the block of ice melts. Then one does not feel any more that God is a person, nor does one see God's forms. Who will describe what He is? The aspirant cannot find his 'I' anymore.

Faith

One develops faith by living in the company of holy men, by meditating on God, by practicing discrimination and praying to God, to bestow faith and devotion on oneself. Once one has faith, one achieves anything. There is nothing greater than faith. One cannot have such faith unless one is guileless and broad-minded.

There are innumerable examples in mythology about the tremendous power of faith. If one has faith in God, then even if one commits any type of crime, one will certainly be saved.

Worthless people do not have any faith. They always doubt. And doubts do not disappear completely till one realizes the Self.

One must have childlike faith and the intense yearning that a child feels to see its mother. That yearning is like the red sky in the east at dawn. After such sky, the sun must rise. Immediately after that yearning, one sees God.

A devotee is to have faith that he can attain the knowledge of the Brahman by following the path of devotion. God is all-powerful. He may give His devotee *brahmajnana* if He so wills it. A true devotee may not seek *brahmajnana* - the knowledge of the Absolute. He would rather seek the consciousness that God is the master and he the servant, or that God is the Divine Mother and he the child.

God cannot be realized by means of mere scholarship. One must have faith and love. If one has real faith in one's guru's words, one need not practise *sadhana* hard to realize God. One's faith leads one to God. Reasoning pushes one far away. 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. One must first hear, then reason and find out all that reason can make out about the *Atman* - the Brahman. Let the flood of reason flow over it; then one is to take what remains. If nothing remains, one has escaped a superstition. When one has determined that nothing can take away the *Atman*, then it stands every test. One is to hold fast to it. Truth cannot be partial; it is for the good of all. Finally, in perfect rest and peace, one is to meditate upon it, concentrate one's mind upon it and make oneself one with it. Silence will then carry the Truth. One shall not let the outside world disturb one. When one's mind is in the highest state, one is not conscious of it; one's mind is transcended. One is to accumulate power in silence and become a dynamo of spirituality.

21. The Path of Yoga

General

Another way of realization is through practices of *yoga*. Several sages propound several practices of *yoga*. The principal *yoga* propounded by Pathanjali is called *Raja-yoga*.

Mainly, the practice of *yoga* is through the control of body and mind. *Yoga* is essentially inward looking. It is both meta-physics and meta-psychology. The inward is as real as the outward and the approach is from the outward to the inward depths and vice-versa, all forming continuity.

Since mind and senses are by nature outward looking, special discipline is needed to look inward. To look inward is not introspection. For the inward look, the object is the mind itself, but not what passes in the mind. Mind is never self-conscious according to Pathanjali, and is always the object of some consciousness. The ultimate consciousness, which is the seer, the on-looker, the witness of everything that happens in me and outside me, is myself. By realizing it, I accomplish two things – my own spiritual uplift when I realize the deeper level of my being and an explanation of the intelligibility for the world. *Yoga* seeks to realize these two objectives.

The word *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *yuj*, meaning to yoke - to join. Thus *yoga* is the method that joins, that unites. What is joined is the finite spirit with the Supreme Spirit, or an individual to his ethical ideal. *Yoga* means not only this joining, but also the methods or practices leading to the joining.

The object of *yoga* is self-perfection, not self-annulment. The yogi is to seek perfection in the universe. It is attained when the yogi fulfills existence in God. The world is the Brahman; the world is God; the world is Truth; the world is Bliss. It is our misreading of the world through mental egoism that is a falsehood, and our wrong relation with God in the world that is a misery. There is no other falsity and no other cause of sorrow.

By *yoga* we can rise out of falsehood into truth, out of weakness into force, out of pain and grief into bliss, out of bondage into freedom, out of death into immortality, out of darkness into light, out of confusion into purity, out of imperfection into perfection, out of self-division into unity, out of *maya* into God. Only that which aims at possessing the fullness of God is *purna-yoga*. The seeker of the divine perfection is the *purna-yogi*.

The aim of a yogi must be to be perfect, as God in His being and bliss is perfect, pure as He is pure, blissful as He is blissful. God in His perfection embraces everything; we also must become all-embracing.

Sri Aurobindo says: ‘The aim of the *yoga* is to open the consciousness to the Divine and to live in the inner consciousness more and more while acting from it on the external life, to bring the inmost psychic into the front and by the power of the psychic to purify and change the being so that it may become ready for transformation

and be in union with the Divine Knowledge, Will and Love. Secondly, to develop the yogic consciousness, that is, to universalize the being in all the planes, become aware of the cosmic being and cosmic forces and be in union with the Divine on all the planes up to the over-mind. Thirdly, to come into contact with the transcendent Divine beyond the over-mind through the supra-mental consciousness, supra-mentalize the consciousness and the nature, and make oneself an instrument for the realization of the dynamic Divine Truth and its transforming descent into the earth-nature’.

Yoga may be used for many purposes. Many of its physical practices keep the body healthy and active. It helps even in controlling the involuntary functions of the body including the functions of the life principle. The mental practices purify the mind, clear it of all dross and enable it to receive the reflection of the Spirit in its purity. Physical control is subservient to the vital, and control of the vital principle is subservient to the spiritual.

The methods of control of voluntary and involuntary functions of the body are considered together *Hatayoga*, a means to mental and body control. In *hatayoga* the instrument is the body and life. All the power of the body is stilled, collected, purified, heightened and concentrated to its utmost limits or beyond any limits by *asana* and other physical processes. The power of life is similarly purified, heightened and concentrated by *asana* and *pranayama*. This concentration of powers is then directed towards that physical centre in which the divine consciousness sits concealed in the human body. *Hatayoga* is not, however, recommended for self-realization.

Each type of *yoga* in its process has the character of the instrument it uses. Thus, the process of *hatayoga* is psychophysical. The process of *raja-yoga* is mental and physical. The way of knowledge is spiritual and cognitive. The way of devotion or *bhakti-yoga* is spiritual, emotional and aesthetic. The way of works or *karma-yoga* is spiritual and dynamic by action. Each is guided in the ways of its own characteristic power. But all power, in the end, is really soul-power.

The significant truth is that the yogi, if he is intent on final liberation, is not to be tempted by the powers generated by the practices of *yoga*. Several kinds of powers arise in the course of practices, which, for ordinary people, look supernatural. To be tempted by them is to be attached to them. To be attached to them is to be lost in them, without achieving the goal of ultimate *samadhi* for realization. To be lost in them at any stage is to forget the truth about oneself.

The practice of *yoga* involves at every stage genuine, not fanciful and artificial, self-analysis. The self-analysis leads to genuine phenomenological and existential self-analysis. It results in reaching the core of the self - the *atman*. The different levels of *samadhi* are the different levels of the *atman* itself leading ultimately to its pure, essential being.

The ways of obtaining ultimate spiritual realization are based on an analytical understanding of the levels of our psychophysical being. True understanding of man and his universe enables him to chalk out the right conduct he has to follow. But “true views” (*samyak-darsanas*) implies a true analysis of man’s self-conscious being until the greatest possible depths are reached. *Samadhi* is not merely concentration of

mind transcended, on an object or idea. Its essence is the concentration of man's diversified being as such, ultimately resulting in self-realization.

An aspirant attains *yoga* when he has freed his mind from the worldly desires. The Supreme Self is the magnet. The individual self is the needle. The individual self experiences the state of *yoga* when the Supreme Self attracts it to Itself. But the magnet cannot attract the needle, if the needle is covered with clay. It can draw the needle when the clay is removed. The clay of worldly desires must be removed from the aspirant.

Raja-yoga

Pathanjali is the architect of the philosophy of *Yoga* and Self-realization through Psychophysical practices. He defines *yoga* as the stopping of the five functions of Reason - the sources of valid knowledge, false knowledge, empty concepts, sleep and memory.

The stopping of the functions is a difficult task as the nature of Reason is to be active ever. When it does not perform any function, it tends to sleep, which is also its function. If it is to function, the concept is that it meditates on God which leads to salvation.

According to him, God is omniscient and is untouched by the five afflictions - ignorance, egoity, desire (want), hate and fear of death. Meditation on God involves repeating His name, thinking its meaning. Then mind becomes inward looking. All hindrances to meditation – disease, lethargy, doubt, inattention, heaviness of body and mind, attachment to object, error, inexplicable failure to obtain trance (*samadhi*) and unsteadiness of mind - are removed.

Meditation is to lead to *samadhi*. It means the settling down of Reason (*chitta, buddhi*) on something. Settling down implies peace and steadiness. It is the settling down of Reason in Itself.

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.

Whether 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.

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.

To obtain the steadiness of mind, the seeker may follow any method he considers suitable to himself. One easy method is to meditate on God he loves. Another method is to meditate on the 'I-am' consciousness, the ontological Reason itself.

When one is able to fix one's mind, it passes through five stages. Here, mind means Reason (*chitta, buddhi*). Its nature is to change every instant. The five stages through which the Reason passes are as follows.

First, the Reason becomes agitated and restless. Second, it becomes torpid when greater effort is made to fix it. It tends to fall asleep. Third, it becomes distracted when still greater effort is made. Fourth, it becomes concentrated on the object of meditation if the effort is not given up. Fifth, it becomes restrained and its functions stop when the mind is steady at that level. The last two levels are conducive to *samadhi*.

The practice of *samadhi* is really very difficult. To be able to practise *samadhi* is to go against the very nature of *prakrti*, which is ever in change. So Pathanjali recommends eight steps to be practised, generally one after the other. The earlier has to be started before the latter, and the latter makes the earlier perfect. The eight steps are: self-control (*yama*), regulation of life by rules (*niyama*), bodily postures (*asanas*), breath-control (*pranayama*), withdrawal of senses from objects (*pratyahara*), fixing the mind on an object (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*) and *samadhi*.

These steps need elucidation for appreciation.

Self-control is of five kinds - non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-acceptance of gifts. All these relate to refusal to accept instruments of pleasure.

Regulation of life by rules is of five kinds- a) purification of the body through bathing, taking only pure food and keeping the mind pure through kindness, compassion, cheerfulness and friendliness, b) contentment, c) penance, d) study of sacred books and e) meditation on God.

Bodily postures are to keep the body comfortably steady while in meditation. One may choose the postures that suit one.

Breath control is the regulation of inhaling and exhaling. It is of several kinds. Perfection in the practice may give one control over one's involuntary functions. Mental agitation results in irregular breathing. Breathing is a function of life. By controlling breath, one may control one's involuntary activities. As life is a

spontaneous activity of the inner sense, by controlling breath, the inner sense is also controlled.

While breathing consists of inhaling and exhaling, retention of the inhaled air in the lungs and keeping the lungs empty for a time by not inhaling immediately after exhaling can be added as additional activities. One can regulate these four parts of breathing according to some measure of time. By proper practice, inhaling can be stopped for great lengths of time without dying. Thereby one can gain control over the life principle. However, it is dangerous to practise them in the absence of guidance by an expert.

Sense withdrawal from the objects is a difficult task to accomplish. Through careful effort, the senses can be turned inward and away from their objects. This does not result in destruction of the senses, but their union with their source. As objects issue out of the inner sense, they are also withdrawn when the senses are withdrawn. At this stage, the senses assume the form of Reason itself. Then they are no longer functional.

Concentration is the fixing of the inner sense upon a desired object. It is the process of concentrating the mind on the object chosen.

Meditation is the unbroken continuity of concentration. In this state of Reason, the cognition of the object meditated upon becomes continuous like the flow of oil. It is the stage where the Reason knows itself as knowing the object. The distinction between the object and cognition persists.

Samadhi is the stage where Reason is completely absorbed in the object; that the object alone stands and cognition disappears. There is no sense, no awareness of being aware of the object. At this stage, the inner structure of the object reveals itself completely. It may be a physical object, one's own mind with its layers of the Unconscious or another's mind. It may be anything.

Of the above eight steps of *yoga*, the last three are said to be inner and the first five external to *yoga*. The ultimate (final stage of) *samadhi* may be that in which the potencies of the world are totally destroyed. The last three steps are, in their turn, external to the ultimate *samadhi*. This is to say that the practice of the first five steps leads to the next three steps ending in that state of *samadhi* that retains the seeds of worldliness. But this *samadhi* leads, in its turn, to the ultimate *samadhi* where the potencies of the world are totally lost and the Self realized.

Pathanjali divides *samadhi* - the absolutely original state, as it is the reflection of the pure state of the *Purusa* - into two primary kinds. The first is the *samadhi* in the known or with the known as being known as an object. The second is the *samadhi* in the unknown or without the known as an object. The former has the consciousness of the object as an object. The latter is without such consciousness. He divides again the former into four kinds each of which is again of two kinds. He divides the latter into two kinds.

The former is based on the constitution of the empirical personality, which consists of the inner sense (*antahkarana*), the subtle elements and the gross elements. In this division, there is no mention of concentration on each of the three factors of

the inner sense, namely mind, ego and reason (*buddhi*). There is mention of concentration only on mind and 'am-ness' (*asmita*). This is to say that the ego (*ahankara*) the nature of which is to appropriate objects and experiences as mine is transcended or submerged or transformed into the pure 'am-ness'. It is still first personal, but not egoistic.

Pathanjali says that the ego, which is also a pattern of similar pulsations of *prakrti*, is stopped, checked and merged in rational consciousness – 'am-ness' in its pure state. Ontologically and basically, Reason in which the 'I', as the ego, is absorbed is the pure 'I-am' or 'am-ness'. It is 'am-ness', but not merely 'is-ness' which is third personal and may not have the significance of the self-conscious being.

Pathanjali also makes the distinction between the 'determinate' and the 'indeterminate' *samadhi*. The determinate is the one, which has a shape, a form, a formation. The indeterminate is the one in which no shapes are perceived as objects. According to him, the '*savitarka*' and '*savicara*' *samadhis* are determinate and the '*nirvitarka*' and '*nirvicara*' *samadhis* are indeterminate.

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 control 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 these psychic powers 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.

Some obtain these powers simply at birth, as *samskaras* of the previous births. Some obtain them through incantations, some through penance and some others through *samadhi*.

By concentrating on the three moments of change - past, present and future, one can obtain knowledge of the past and the future. By concentrating on the relation of the word, the object and the cognition of the object, one can obtain the power of knowing the meaning of words and sounds made by any living creature.

By concentrating on the *samskaras* of one's own Reason, one can know one's past births. By concentrating on the relation between the expression on the face of another and his mind, one can have knowledge of what transpires in the mind of that

man. By concentrating on the form of one's own or another's body, the body can be made invisible.

By concentrating on objects as they appear, as they are in themselves, on the subtle elements that constitute them, on their qualities, etc. one conquers all the elements and obtains the powers such as becoming infinitesimally small (*anami*), becoming infinitely large (*mahima*), becoming infinitesimally light (*laghima*), becoming infinitesimally heavy (*gurutvam*), the power of touching anything at any distance (*prapti*), obtaining anything desired (*prakamyā*), lordship over everything (*isitva*) and control over everything (*vasitva*). These powers are called the *Ashta - siddhis*, the most important ones. There are other less important powers realized, called *Riddhis*.

Recent studies in parapsychology accept such phenomena as tele-kinesis - producing motion in a body without the application of material force; clairvoyance - the power of seeing objects or actions removed from natural sight; clairaudience - the power of hearing sounds at a distance; telepathy - communication between minds by means other than sensory perception; apport - producing at a place an object which is at a far distant place; development of extra sensory perceptions and the like. These studies also admit the possibility of a person dematerializing, re-assembling himself elsewhere and reappearing there. They also accept 'thought therapy' as a way of healing diseases by intense well-wishing, positive thinking and faith cure. Some practitioners in parapsychology organize inter-communication between the living and the spirits. Some hypnotize the living persons and take them into their past lives by way of regression to know the details thereof very vividly. They similarly organize progression to know the future lives of the souls. Indeed, parapsychologists such as Micheal Newton recall, in their studies, the journey of souls in between their lives on earth or elsewhere.

Parapsychologists also accept the miraculous phenomena as a science in the name of 'Thaumaturgy'. They consider this science to be susceptible to rational and logical experimentation.

The phenomena stated above are in the nature of *siddhis* acquired by *sadhana* - practicing the exercises prescribed there for. They are similar to the *siddhis* acquired by the seekers following the practices of *yoga*.

Pathanjali mentions many other kinds of powers and methods of obtaining them. There are several yogis in all ages that have these powers. They do not care to exhibit them if proof is sought. But several seekers experience these powers as the yogis spontaneously display them.

Tantra - Kundalini

Tantra is a system of theistic philosophy in which the Divine Mother or the Supreme Power is the ultimate Reality. It also considers that the ultimate Reality is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. It considers man identical with this Reality, but under the influence of *prakrti* (*maya*). Because of this influence, he is not aware of his true nature. He takes the merely apparent world of forms and names as true. This error in his approach is the cause of his bondage and suffering. The spiritual disciplines it promotes are for discovery of his true identity with the Divine Reality.

Tantra takes into consideration the natural weakness of human beings, their lower urges and their love for the physical. It combines philosophy with rituals, meditation with ceremonies, and renunciation with enjoyment. The underlying purpose is gradually to train the seeker to meditate on his identity with the Ultimate, leading to his realization.

Tantra bids the seeker to enjoy the objective world but discover therein the presence of God. Mystical rites are prescribed, which spiritualize sense attractions gradually into love of God. The very 'bonds' of man are turned into releasers. *Tantra* aims to sublimate enjoyment (*bhoga*) into *yoga* - union with the Divine. For it, the world with all its manifestations is no more than the sport of Siva and *Sakti*.

Tantric discipline is, in its nature, a synthesis. It seizes on the universal truth that there are two poles of Being whose essential unity is the secret of existence such as the Brahman and *Sakti*, Spirit and Nature, etc. To raise nature in man into manifest power of spirit is its method. It is the whole nature that it gathers up for the spiritual conversion. It lays its hands firmly on many of the main springs of human quality, desire and action. It subjects them to an intensive discipline with the soul's mastery of its motives as the first aim and their elevation to a diviner spiritual level as its final utility.

Tantra considers that *Sakti* is the active creative force of the world. Siva is the Absolute and is inseparable from *Sakti*. *Sakti* as the creator of the world is the Divine Mother. Ontologically, it is one with the *Vedanta*. Its practices are different, though the ultimate *samadhi* realized through its practices aims at the same goals as in *raja-yoga*.

As it considers *Sakti* as the Supreme Power, meditation on *Sakti* or the Divine Mother is the central discipline of this system. While meditating, the seeker regards himself as one with the Absolute. Then he thinks that out of the Absolute emerge two entities – one, his self and the other, the living form of the Divine Mother. He then projects the Divine Mother into a tangible image before him and worships it.

The disciplines of *Tantra* are graded to suit aspirants of different levels. Exercises are prescribed for people with animal, heroic or divine outlooks. Some rites require the presence of members of the opposite sex. Here the male seeker looks on woman as the embodiment of the Divine Mother. Every part of woman's body is to be regarded as Divinity incarnate.

The rites are often dangerous. The help of a qualified preceptor is necessary. Otherwise, the seeker may lose his foothold. Different practices, if held exactly as prescribed, produce results as stated in the texts.

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.

Deep within the body there is a *nadi* known as the *antravestika*. It rests in the vitals and is the source of a hundred other *nadi*. It exists in all beings. It is coiled at its source. It is in contact with all the avenues in the body, from the waist up to the crown of the head. Within this *nadi* dwells the supreme power. It is known as *kundalini*. It is the supreme power in all beings, and it is the prime mover of all power. When the *prana* or the life force, which is in the heart, reaches the abode of the *kundalini*, there arises within oneself an awareness of the elements of nature. When the *kundalini* unfolds and begins to move, there is awareness within oneself. All the other *nadi* radiating flow of energy are tied to the *kundalini*, as it were. Hence the *kundalini* is considered the very seed of consciousness and knowledge.

This philosophy elucidates that there are seven centers in the body designated as *Muladhara*, *Svadhista*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddha*, *Ajna* and *Sahasrara*. These are considered to be the dynamic centers where the spiritual energy becomes vitalized.

These centers 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 centers, also called the six *charkas*, before it gets vitalized in the *sahasrara* center. This is known as *shatchakrabheda*-penetration of the six *chakras*.

The *muladhara chakra* situated between the base of the organ of generation and the anus is regarded as the seat of the *kundalini*. The centers (*chakras*) are metaphorically described as lotuses. The *muladhara chakra* is said to be a four-petalled lotus. The *svadhista chakra* situated at the base of the organ of generation is a six-petalled lotus. The *manipura chakra* situated in the region of the navel is said to be a ten-petalled lotus. The *anahata chakra* placed in the region of heart is said to be a twelve-petalled lotus. The *visuddha chakra* at the lower end of the throat is said to be the sixteen-petalled lotus. The *ajna chakra* situated in the space between the eyebrows is said to be a two-petalled lotus. In the cerebrum, the *sahasrara chakra* is said to be the thousand-petalled lotus.

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 splendor. The lotuses of these centers 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* (centers) 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.

Kundalini is like an inner energy rose up along the inner column of one's being until it reaches the area in the cerebrum. As one raises the energy, one causes it to course all through one's body. It is like an inner orgasm.

One is literally to think it up the inner pathway of the centers. Once the life energy is raised up repeatedly, one acquires a taste for this experience.

The experience of the energy being raised is very sublime. It quickly becomes the experience most desired. Yet one never completely loses the urge for lowering of the energy. This is for the reason that the higher level cannot exist in one's experience without the lower level. Once one gets to the higher level, one is to revert to the lower level so that one experiences again the pleasure of moving to the higher level. This moving of the energy up and down is the sacred rhythm of all life.

One's being is the universe in microcosm. One's physical body is composed of raw energy clustered around these seven centers or *chakras*. What is pleasurable to or stimulates one's lower *chakras* is not the same as what is pleasurable to one's higher *chakras*. The higher one raises the energy of life through one's physical being, the more elevated will be one's consciousness. Those who are elevated in their consciousness do not come from their root *chakras* in their interactions with fellow beings.

For ordinary people, the mind - the base spiritual energy - dwells at the three centers from the lower end - at the organs of evacuation and generation and at the naval. When the mind ascends to the fourth centre, it sees the individual soul as a flame. It sees light. When the mind rises to the fifth centre, the seeker wants to hear only about God. When it rises to the sixth centre, the seeker sees God. Still there is a barrier between God and the seeker. When the mind rises to the *sahasrara*, the mind transcended merges in the Brahman. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul become one. The seeker goes into *samadhi*. He loses his consciousness of the body and the outer world. He is beyond mind and senses.

There have been several seers that have experienced the *kundalini sakti* - the serpent power in their *yoga*. Sri Ramakrishna explains graphically the manner of rising of the *kundalini sakti*. "There are certain signs of God-vision. When a man sees God, he goes into *samadhi*. There are five kinds of *samadhi*. First he feels the *mahavayu* (the great nerve current whose rising is felt in the spinal column) rise like an ant crawling up. Second, he feels it rise like a fish swimming in the water. Third, he feels it rise like a snake wriggling along. Fourth, he feels it rise like a bird flying - flying from one branch to another. Fifth, he feels it rise like a monkey making a big

jump; the *mahavayu* reaches the head (cerebrum) with a jump, as it were and *samadhi* follows. There are two other kinds of *samadhi*. First is the *sthita samadhi* when the aspirant totally loses outer consciousness: he remains in that state a long time; it may be for days. Second is the *unmana samadhi*: it is to withdraw the mind suddenly from all sense objects and unite it with God”.

Aum

Aum is a spontaneous sound constantly going on by itself. It is the sound of *Pranava*. It originates in the Supreme Brahman. Yogis hear it. People immersed in worldliness will not hear it. A yogi alone knows that this sound originates both from his navel and the Supreme Brahman. The yogi, following in the trail of the sound Aum, gradually merges himself in the Supreme Brahman. His *sandhya* and other ritualistic duties disappear in *samadhi*.

The sound Aum is the Brahman. The *rishis* and the sages practised austerity to realize that Sound-Brahman. After attaining perfection, one hears the sound of this eternal Word, rising spontaneously from the navel. Let us suppose one hears the roar of the ocean from a distance. By following the roar, one can reach the ocean. As long as there is a roar, there must also be the ocean. By following the trail of Aum, one attains the Brahman of which the word is the symbol. Aum is described in the scriptures as the unceasing flow of oil, like the long peal of a bell.

The letters a, u and m stand for creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe.

Other Types of Yoga

Several great sages have conceived of different *yoga* practices. Their ultimate aim is only realization of the Self. They are modifications to the practice of *raja-yoga* propounded by Pathanjali. In their own way, they have conceived of the modifications to suit the psycho-physiological needs of different aspirants.

Aurobindo has propounded integral *yoga*. It is moving the life energy from the cerebrum down the inner orgasm, emanating from silence. Paramahansa Yogananda has propounded *kriya-yoga*. So are other sages.

In every practice of *yoga* seeking spiritual realization, the emphasis is on discrimination at every level. It is in the nature of self-analysis to discriminate the real self from the apparent self in the several identifications. This self-analysis is not in the psychoanalytic sense but in the sense of discriminating whether the Self-*Purusa* is really *That* with which It identifies Itself.

Each practice of *yoga* may not attempt to give an intellectual or phenomenological analysis for the different levels of *samadhi*. But it helps the seeker to rise to higher and higher stages of *samadhi*, which is truly catching, grasping and staying in one's own self. This is like catching the transcendental ego as it seeks the aspirant to remain and stay at the highest transcendental level. It is also an existential analysis and goes beyond it, as it seeks the aspirant to stay at the level of being itself. The being or existence of everything in the world is a reflection of the Supreme Being.

22. The Path of Discrimination and Knowledge

General

Another way of self-realization is by way of discrimination and knowledge, also called *jnana-yoga*. This is the core of the *Vedantic* philosophy that has engaged the greatest sages and seers in India.

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*.

One is to discriminate about objects. One is to consider what is there in a beautiful body. On discrimination, one finds that the body of a beautiful woman consists of bones, flesh, fat and other disagreeable things. Should one give up God and direct one's attention to such things? Why should one forget God for the sake of money, worldly objects and sensuous pleasures?

"One may enter the world after attaining discrimination and dispassion. In the ocean of the world, there are six alligators - lust, anger, avarice, delusion, pride and envy. One need not fear the alligators, if one smears one's body with turmeric before one goes into the water. Discrimination and dispassion are the turmeric. 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".

By turning the mind within oneself, one acquires discrimination and through discrimination, one thinks of Truth. Then the mind feels the desire to go the way of God. Going the way of God, one can, without effort, gather the fruits of *artha* (prosperity), *kama* (enjoyment), *dharma* (ethical merit) and *moksha* (salvation). After realizing God, one can also get, if one so desires *artha*, *kama* and *dharma*, which are necessary for leading the worldly life.

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.

Men may be divided into four classes - those bound by the fetters of the world, the seekers after liberation, the liberated and the ever free. Those in bondage to the world are sunk in worldliness and forgetful of God. Not even once do they think of God. The bound souls may have realized that there is no substance to the world. But still they cannot give it up and turn their mind toward God. The seekers after liberation want to free themselves from attachment to the world. Some of them succeed and others do not.

The liberated souls are not entangled in the world, not attached to lust and greed. Their minds are free from worldliness. They always meditate on God. The ever free live in the world for the good of others, to teach men spiritual truths. They are realized souls. Among them are sages like Prahlada and Narada.

The path of discrimination and knowledge is very difficult. The Brahman cannot be described in words. It has only been indirectly hinted at in the scriptures. The aspirant is to live in the company of holy men as a prerequisite, if he sets out on the path of knowledge. It is the path by which an aspirant can realize the true nature of his own self. It is the awareness that the Brahman alone is his true nature, and real.

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.

Sometimes it happens that, discriminating between the real and the unreal, an aspirant loses faith in the existence of God. It is the company of holy men that helps him stand his ground in that event.

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 thinks of God without form. He does not accept the Divine Incarnation. The aspirant seeks to realize the Supreme Soul. His ideal is the union of the embodied soul with the Supreme Being. He withdraws his mind from sense objects and tries to concentrate it on the Supreme Being. Therefore, during the first stage of his spiritual discipline, he retires into solitude. He practises meditation with undivided attention.

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.

Though the aspirant reasons continuously, he cannot go beyond the stage of *Sakti* unless he is established in *samadhi*. Even when he says that he is meditating, he is in the realm of *Sakti*, within Its power. The aspirant ultimately realizes that the Brahman and *Sakti* are identical. If he accepts the one, he must accept the other. It is like fire and its power to burn. It is like the sun with its rays. Thus, the aspirant cannot think of the Brahman without *Sakti* or of *Sakti* without the Brahman. One cannot think of the Absolute without the Relative, or of the Relative without the Absolute. When he gets into *samadhi*, thus discriminating, what he realizes is the Brahman, beyond mind and speech.

The aspirant gives up his identification with worldly things, discriminating 'not this, not this'. Only then can he realize the Brahman. It is like reaching the roof of a house by leaving the steps behind, one by one. But the realized who is more intimately acquainted with the Brahman realizes that which is realized intuitively as the Brahman is then found to have become the universe and all its living things. The realized sees that the Reality, which is *nirguna*, without attributes, is also *saguna*, with attributes.

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. Everything 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.

‘I’, Conscious Ego and the Brahman

As already stated, the Brahman has three constitutive characteristics: Being (*satta*), Consciousness (*chit*) and Bliss (*ananda*). Being and Consciousness are relevant to epistemology and metaphysics. Bliss is relevant to aesthetics and the life of salvation.

There are four levels of Being in the empirical world, the highest being the Supreme Being. The fourth is presupposed by the third, the third by the second and so on. This presupposition is based on the epistemological principle that every falsity presupposes a truth. We may say that even the imaginary like the son of a barren woman, which we consider to be impossibility, is called imaginary, because it is possible to have experience of such object in imagination.

In the case of a rope being mistaken as a snake, if the snake is false and yet appears as a being, its appearance, as independent of our mind, is due to the fact that it has the borrowed being of the rope. Similarly, the forms of the world in spite of their being self-contradictory and, therefore, false, appear as being, because the Being of the Brahman or the Supreme Being shines through the said forms of the world. When we say ‘that is an apple’, it means the ‘being shines through the form of apple’. It is important to note that my I-am belongs to all the levels of being. It can understand itself only when it realizes that it belongs to all of them and that all of them are related to one another through it.

Without ‘being’ shining through the form before us, there can be no perception, but only imagination. In perception, being reveals itself and, through itself, reveals the object. If and when ‘being’ does not shine through that form, the form is called a mere idea or a mental image. So the appearance of the forms of the world as existing presupposes the truth of being.

This being is consciousness itself. Consciousness accompanies all our cognitions. When I see a star at a distance, my consciousness is there where the star exists and it is also there where my ‘I’ stands. It is present in imagination, in perception and in inference. It is present wherever being is present. Further, being that is present to consciousness at the highest level cannot be different from that consciousness. Otherwise, being becomes an object.

But, objectivity, as in the case of the world, is vitiated by self-contradiction. Nor consciousness at that level is the epistemological subject. It is for the reason that the subject, as set against the object, also becomes another object with the same self-contradictions. So, the being, which my consciousness at my level considers it to be the root of the being of my consciousness, is the same as the Being that shines through the forms of the world. The consciousness that knows the world has as much falsity as the world itself has. So, through both my subjective consciousness and the objective world, the same being shines. I, therefore, consider that I, as this finite being, exist and that the object also exists. The ultimate Being that is consciousness, is the Brahman Itself.

The above analysis establishes the distinction between my 'I', my conscious ego and the Brahman. My 'I' is being and consciousness and the root of the being of myself. The Brahman is Being and Consciousness and the root of the being of the world. I can say that 'I am', only because it is my 'I am' rooted in the Brahman which is the ground of all forms of the world. When I assert my existence, I say that 'I am'. When I want to say something about me, I say that 'I am so and so'. But the Brahman can only be said as 'I Am'. The Brahman shines through me as the witness of myself, my actions, my cognitions, and my states.

In cognition, I can say that 'I know that I know X'. It is cognition of cognition, owing to the presence of consciousness that accompanies my activities and me, which is continuous with my particular I-consciousness, and yet higher and deeper than it. It is the witness consciousness.

The aspirant discriminates that the world is illusory like a dream; it is *maya*. When the world vanishes for him, only the *jiva*, that is to say, so many egos remain. Each ego may be likened to a pot. Let one suppose that there are ten pots filled with water, and the sun is reflected in them. There are ten reflections of the sun. If the pots are broken one after the other, the reflections of the sun get correspondingly reduced. When there is only one pot, there is only one reflection. When this pot is also broken what remains? What remains cannot be described. It can only be inferred that the reflection of the sun dissolves into the sun. 'What Is' remains. We do not know there is a real sun unless there is a reflected sun.

'I-consciousness' is destroyed in *samadhi*. A man climbing down from *samadhi* to the lower plane cannot describe what he has experienced there. That is the Brahman.

Those who realize the Brahman in *samadhi* come down and find that it is the Brahman that has become the universe and its living beings. When one comes down from the *samadhi*, one retains one's ego - the knowledge ego. One realizes that it is the Brahman that has become the ego, too.

Levels between the 'I' and the Brahman

The witness-consciousness witnesses, in an undisturbed and unaffected way, all that I do and know including all that I dream. If this witness-consciousness is the same as the Brahman, then it must be the witness-consciousness of all the egos also as the same Brahman is present in all egos. Then, as my ego is continuous with my witness consciousness, the other egos also must be continuous with it and be able to know all that I do and know. But they do not.

It may, therefore, be appropriate to identify the witness consciousness with the I-consciousness in deep sleep. It may be lower than the Brahman - may be one form of the Brahman as the personal God - *Isvara*. This personal God witnesses everything I do and know. For every ego, there will be a separate witness-consciousness, which will be one of the forms of the personal God. Then, there will be the Brahman, the single personal God and his different forms as witness-consciousness.

We, therefore, find that there are two levels between the Brahman and I. The levels are those of the *Isvara*-consciousness and the witness-consciousness. The ego consciousness is continuous with the three higher levels, including the Brahman. But one does not cognize such continuity because of the veiling power of the Unconscious (*avidya, maya*). The realization of such continuity is itself an ideal for the seeker.

As my ego (*ahankara*) is continuous with the Brahman, the personal God (*Isvara*) is also continuous with It. Sankara calls both of them the Brahman - the Brahman the Higher-Brahman (*Para-Brahman*), and the personal God the Lower-Brahman (*Apara-Brahman*). The Lower-Brahman is the same as the Higher-Brahman as facing the world of objectivity, that is, with reference to *prakrti*. The Lower-Brahman is not ultimately real. Nor is It over-whelmed by *prakrti*, as the witness who witnesses others at work is not over-whelmed by what he witnesses. It is not, therefore, in bondage. It is not within the power of *prakrti*. Only finite souls are overpowered by the power of *prakrti* (*maya*).

Two ideas of the Divine, therefore, emerge - the Brahman and the personal God (*Isvara*). The question is how can the Brahman, the Perfect, become the personal God, the less perfect. If God is the final truth and is the creator of the world that is full of evil and misery, the question is how such a perfect, omnipotent, omniscient and all merciful God can be the creator of evil and misery. Different seers have different conceptions in regard to these issues.

Our concern is with the ontological status of the personal God. He is the Brahman with reference to the world. We are aware that the Brahman is the pure and indeterminate Being. Yet we are prone to relate this Being to the empirical world.

We are prone to think of this Being as perfect, as having all the best qualities, which, as human beings, we consider to be the possession of that Being. Being, as indeterminate, is without qualities (*nirguna*). But we are prone to attribute all the best qualities to God. While the Brahman is beyond mind and word, God, thus, becomes a product of our thought. The idea of God is valid in the world; it lasts as long as the world lasts.

Both God and the individual thus belong to the phenomenal world. They have no ultimate reality. But God, unlike finite individual, is not bound, nor subject to the laws of the world.

Ontologically, the finite individual is to be considered as the finite soul - the *jiva*. The 'I-consciousness' of the individual is the *atman*. It may also be called the spirit. The soul is the same as the *atman* and so the same as the Brahman, according to Sankara. There can be no difference between the soul and the *atman* according to him, for the reason that difference is not a valid category.

Once it is considered that the Supreme Consciousness - the 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 the *jiva* is no other than *antahkarana* which is translucent and is the purest (*nirmala*) of all the non-sentient objects (*achetana padarthas*) capable of reflecting and radiating the *chicchakti* 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. The *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* (the *jiva* is the Brahman only, not different from It) - the essence of the philosophy of *Advaita* (Non-dualism).

The realized sees that the Brahman is Bhagavan, the personal God. He who is beyond the three *gunas* - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, is Bhagavan. His six attributes are stated to be infinite treasures, strength, glory, splendor, knowledge and renunciation. Living beings, the universe, mind, intelligence, love, renunciation, knowledge are all the manifestations of His power.

S. Radhakrishnan holds the view that the distinction between the personal God and the Absolute continues to exist as long as the whole of humanity does not have salvation. His concept is that an individual, as part of the world, may be enlightened. But he cannot become one with the Absolute, so long as God exists as God. This is for the reason that the world stays, as the rest of humanity is not enlightened. So long as the world remains, God also has to remain as God and cannot become the Absolute. The individual soul has, therefore, to remain with God until the latter becomes the Absolute. Such souls remaining with God are the great souls (*mahatmas*) who, remaining with God, work for the uplift of the humanity life after life, until the whole of humanity gets salvation. Thus the distinction between God and the Absolute - the Brahman becomes an ontological distinction.

Cosmic Person, Personal God and the Brahman

There are said to be three levels before reaching the Brahman. They are the *Virat* (Cosmic Person), *Hiranyagarbha* (the soul of the Cosmic Person) and *Isvara* (the personal God). All the three are higher forms than the finite 'I' consciousness, but are continuous with it and the Supreme Brahman. These three are the three levels of the Cosmic Person or the Logos. All may be considered cosmic personalities. The Logos is a kind of unity in Trinity.

The *Virat* corresponds to *natura-naturata*, which cannot really exist apart from *natura-naturans* that corresponds to the *Hiranyagarbha*. The Logos comprehends all that stands between the beginning of the finitization of the Supreme Being for forming the finite person, and the finite person. The *Virat* is generally considered the gross form of the Logos. He is the Logos manifest in the world. The *Hiranyagarbha* is the soul of the *Virat*, his Reason – the *Mahan Atman*, also called *Mahat*, the Great. As the soul of the *Virat*, the *Hiranyagarbha* is attached to him and enmeshed in him.

But *Isvara* - the personal God or the lower the Brahman is continuous with the *Virat* and the *Hiranyagarbha*, though related to them. *Isvara* is able to detach Himself from the objectifying and limitation producing *prakrti* completely, though not unconcerned with it. This is to say that the consciousness of *Isvara* is directed towards *prakrti*, but not affected by it. He is the truly unaffected witness. The other two are also witnesses, but not so completely unaffected. For example, I am the witness of my dreams, illusions and cognitions. But my being a witness is realized after I have been involved.

But this involvement becomes less and less until it ceases completely in the case of *Isvara*. At the stage of the Supreme Brahman, the 'I' consciousness is completely unconcerned with *prakrti*, which is part of the Brahman's self-transparent "I-consciousness."

We have observed earlier the absolute identity of the *atman* - the spirit in man and the Brahman - the Supreme Spirit. But this identification is not a coinciding like that of two equal triangles. It is not even merging, as there is no separate *atman* to be merged in the Brahman. It is the realization that I, as the consciousness asserting itself in the world, am a finitized appearance of the Brahman. This realization becomes possible only through the realization of my unity with the Cosmic Person or God, that I am essentially the same as He, the Cosmic Person.

The above analysis gives us an idea to regard the universe as a system of forces, a plurality of patterns of activity controlled somehow by a supervising pattern of activity. The controlling force is something running through and binding together the members of the planetary system. The universe must be a pattern of patterns, an active force controlling innumerable active forces. This corresponds to the *advaitic* idea of the '*Sutratman*' which is said to be the thread, self-running through everything in the universe and holding all together. This is equated to the life force of the universe, its *prana - consciousness*.

Manduka Upanisad illustrates three levels of the Cosmic Person corresponding to the three states of the individual - waking state, dream and deep sleep. The three cosmic stages are called the *Virat* for the waking state, the *Hiranyagarbha* or *Sutratman* for the dream state and *Isvara* (God) for the state of deep sleep. In the fourth state, beyond deep sleep, there is no distinction between the individual person and the Cosmic Person.

The three stages of the Cosmic Person are indeed related to the three states of the individual, but in three successive stages. The Brahman as related to *prakrti* in Its undifferentiated and un-manifest state is *Isvara* (God). This relation may be reflection, appearance (*abhasa*) or condition. *Isvara* is the Brahman about to create the world and with all the potential forces necessary for such creation and without being overwhelmed by them. He is the causal state of the world. This causal state then becomes a subtle manifest state and is the *Hiranyagarbha*. The *Hiranyagarbha* is the lord of all the subtle elements and preserves the inter-relationship of all dreaming persons to their physical bodies through the life principle. Cosmically, the *Hiranyagarbha* is the lord of life enabling every individual to use his subtle elements and produce the dream objects in his own way. The third stage is the *Virat* who is the lord of all the gross objects of the waking state. He lords over the totality of the world of forms of the waking state.

Apperception – Time, Space and *Akasa*

Our ignorance of all objectivity in deep sleep is without bounds. But when we wake up, we realize that the totality is an object in our assertion as in ‘I am aware that I was absolutely unconscious of everything in my deep sleep’. It is this self-consciousness - for I was aware that I was present in my totality in deep sleep - that is working in my knowledge. Because of its infinitude, it makes stream consciousness, memory, re-cognition and all the so-called varied forms of cognition possible. It makes possible the cognition of time by its ability both to identify itself with every instant and transcending a succession of them - thereby transcending its own successive momentary pulsations of existence - and recollecting them into hours, days, etc.

Apperception is always of the form that it collects (*cinoti*) the past and the future through memory and anticipation into the present. As a collecting instrument, it is a means in the hands of the Supreme I Am into which everything finally enters.

The questions like ‘Does the past exist?’ ‘Does the future exist?’, in which the past and the future are turned into the present, become relevant to us. In and through this apperception, the I-am is connected with the I-have-known and the I-shall-know. But the past is not merely retentive memory. Similarly the future is not merely wishful imagination.

In both processes, the laws of logic and empirical sciences hold their control. The logic of the laws also belongs to apperception. But such process becomes weak in dreaming, wishful thinking, etc. It becomes totally absent in absurd dreams. In dreams, memory works, but only as retentive memory. Logical memory is inactive. What makes us generally dream is some emotion within, prompted by some desires or some weak or strong traumata. These traumata generally get re-enacted for self-exhaustion and for becoming slowly merged and transformed into the general constitution of the self.

Logical memory or the forces of pure logic and empirical sciences operative in apperception are closer to the pure, undifferentiated being of the I-am than the forces of the retentive memory. Even the retentive memory is retentive only because of the stability and permanence of the base, the I-am, in which they are retained. The difference between the two kinds of memory is similar to that between *natura-naturata* and *natura-naturanas*.

In the case of the retentive memory, what we remember may not be mixed up in relation to the empirical logic. When we fail to remember something, it is possible to re-collect it with the help of the laws of logic together with those of psychological association.

In the case of pure logical memory that exists, the forces of pure logic remain distinct but transparently interrelated in the undiversified and undifferentiated light of the consciousness of the unitary I-am. That is why logic and mathematics are said to function beyond time and space. Though we cannot utter all the sounds and symbols simultaneously, but only in time, and we write them in extended space, what they represent exist near the I-am above time and space. Without the presence of the

undivided I-am, the unity of every inference containing different elements is not possible.

If I cannot question my existence when I am in my senses, the same indisputable element must be present in any inference, that is, its structure, in any observation of coherence and consistency, to confirm the truth of what is observed.

Let us make three propositions of inference separately, one after another. In all the three, the 'I' has a special relationship to its assertions. When there is consistency, the special relationship remains uniform and identical. When there is inconsistency, the 'I' realizes that its universality and identity are disturbed and there is a jar in its being. The 'I' as making an assertion inconsistent with the other or either of the two assertions feels dividedness in its being. What divides the I-am then cannot be logically true. One may say that this is a psychological explanation. But if ontology is to be traced to the I-am, none can dismiss the cogito psycho-logism. Otherwise, ontology will not be possible. The 'I-am' is central to '*being*' and is not opposed to it or even to the cosmological world.

Time and space are aspects of action, process and growth. Action is primary. They are part and parcel, ingredients, and constituents of the force (*sakti*) of becoming. The activities of analysis and synthesis are elements of the processes of time and space. Apperception contains, among other things, the unending process of becoming. We are, therefore, to realize that time and space exist within apperception, with no empirical existence outside it.

It, therefore, arises that apperception is the source of both time and space. But part of it is above time. It has cosmological, objective significance, which becomes greater in its higher levels. At its lower levels, it is merely mine and individualistic and is motivated by individual motives. At its higher level - its pure form - it is the function of cognitive and ethical decision, and also knowledge, merit and non-attachment. Pathanjali describes that it results in self-control or self-conquest and different kinds of extraordinary and supernatural powers. At the lower level, it has the opposite characteristics. The attribute Activity (*rajas*) activates both the levels. The lower levels belong to the finite individuals who are selfish, lazy, ignorant, etc. By possessing the higher levels, the enlightened souls partake of the Cosmic Person and get realized.

Time and space belong to action and to the world of action. Action belongs to man, a self-conscious being, but not to mere material objects. To material objects belongs process, which cannot be even becoming, apart from the observer.

The present is the experience of the aspect of I-am in apperception. Apperception is not something different and separate from the I-am. It has no being of its own, when not activated by the I-am. The present, then, of time is the presence of the aspect of I-am in apperception, which collects together the past and the future into the present. The memory and anticipation aspects of the I-am in apperception do this collecting.

It is said that time belongs to action the verb, but not to the noun. The 'I-am' is a pronoun. There is no action unless initiated by the I-am as in 'I am writing'. In the

experience of the I-am, part of the action of writing is past, part is being gone through and part is still to be completed. There is a point in the *I-am*'s action at which the action is completed and yet is not part of the past, which is actually the *I-am*'s presence of itself as in action or as acting. That is why the I-am is called the eternal present.

In the act of writing, the I-am and the I-know are together, one and the same. In the reflective consciousness, 'I have written' implies 'I know that I have written'. Then the I-am makes the experience of writing its past. The anticipated experience of, say, taking rest after the writing, will be the future of the I-am with reference to its present. The past is remembered and the future is anticipated, not as mere ideas, but as the I-am being involved in each. Memory and anticipation are interrelated through the I-am and so are the past and the future.

The experience of the involvement has always to be there in memory and anticipation, even though such experience may be weak sometimes. The nature of apperception is to be swaying between the I-am and the I-know. The 'I-know' has directedness towards objectivity, directly experienced, remembered, anticipated, inferred or imagined with a view to making the object concrete as a sense object. This is to say that mind does not rest until its directedness ends up in an object of sense stabilized for the time being.

Thus the source of time-consciousness and of time is apperception. Similarly the source of space-consciousness and space is apperception. Space is what makes the act of locating the objects possible. The objects may be physical or imagined entities, universals and class concepts, remembered, anticipated or even abstract entities. All objects need location. But the I-am is beyond space and time. Apperception is the source of space and time.

Time consciousness involves the element of recognition of the presence of one's self in the first and at every succeeding moment of any span of time. In the objectification of time, there is to be recognition of every previous moment in every succeeding moment. The recognition may not be explicit. Without the implicit recognition, we cannot get the idea of time as one and continuous. Without it, even objectively, time cannot be one. I have to be there at every moment as the witness of the moment. At every succeeding moment, my 'I' becomes a reflective consciousness. This is reflective self re-cognition in the nature of the witness consciousness. This enables me to collate all the moments and become the time consciousness, the objectification of which becomes time.

Whether it is the collating of events or moments within my consciousness or of the events taken to be outside my consciousness, the collation has to be done within and by my consciousness for the cognition of time. This involves re-cognition, which is impossible without presence of the same self throughout. This establishes that time is perceived by the witness consciousness.

There is a self-conscious identity throughout the succession of events in time and time consciousness. Time is a pattern of the relation of succession and is the act of correlating the events in succession, to the presence of the identity of my self-consciousness as the eternal present. According to Bhartrhari, time is a drive in my

being, a force, a power, which introduces the order of succession into the process of becoming. Every occurring event is correlated to my presence, and then turned in to my past and its past and so on. It is retained as such in me. Every anticipated event is considered to be future. It enters my presence and then enters my past and its past.

Time wears everything out in the cosmos. There is nothing in creation, which is beyond its reach. Time alone creates innumerable universes and destroys everything, too.

Time allows a glimpse of itself through its partial manifestation as the moment, the year, the age, the epoch, etc. There is essentially no difference between a moment and an epoch, both being measures of time. But its essential nature is inexorable. It overpowers everything. It cannot be analyzed. However much it is divided, it still survives, indestructible. It has an insatiable appetite for everything. It is indeed this Time that successively creates and dissolves the universe (s) again and again. As a mighty mountain is rooted in earth, the Time is established only in the Brahman - the Absolute Being may be identical with It. No one really knows what this Time is as no one really knows what the Brahman is.

There are two more aspects of time. One relates to the phenomenon of birth and death. In this aspect we refer to it as the deity presiding over death. The second aspect of time is *krtanta* - the end of action, its inevitable result or fruition. Every action in time has its own inevitable result. On account of this *krtanta*, everything in this world is ever in change. There is no permanence in the world. For this reason, this world is considered unreal, not non-existent. This is the mysterious power that governs the creation and is innate in all. Its individualized aspect is regarded as egotism. Egotism is what destroys creation. The entire universe is under its control; its will alone prevails.

The arrangement of the succession into the past, the present and the future is a condition for the generation of time and the idea of time. Time, then, is a primary pattern of force innate to the generally outwardly directed consciousness. It posits the events of succession as objective and independent of existential consciousness. Thus, time can be defined as the act of correlating a succession of events to my I-am as the eternal present. Looked another way, it can be defined as the act, or the force behind the act of the ordered projecting of the eternal present into what we call the moments of time. Thus, time is a patterned force of activity. Time is not really independent of the I-am at the transcendental depths.

So is the case with space. Space should not be conceived only as a physical space. There is the dream space as infinite for me as the physical space. There is the psychological space in which the objects of my imagination exist. There is logical and mathematical space in which logical and mathematical realities exist. Apperception is the source of time and space and is, therefore, both time and space. Physical space is a concretization of the apperceptive space. The process of concretization works through directedness into the space of sense objects. That is why the Upanisads speak of different levels of space. If the Brahman is to be regarded as space (*akasa*) for the reason that all things are located in It, then It has to be above time.

In relation to space, different questions arise. Is space something in which extended objects are located? Is it something, which is the extension itself of the objects and their intervals? Or is it the function itself of locating, which involves extension? In the case of space, as in the case of time, there is recognition of myself in every successive placing of the yardstick and also of every earlier placement of the yardstick in every succeeding one. Thus, time is involved in the conception of space.

Similarly, space is the pattern of force inherent to phenomenological consciousness for locating one event by the side of another simultaneously. This locating is the space function, which is an inherent function of apperception. 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.

But can any event occur without its being located? It may be located in the external world, in my mind or even in my imageless thought. But locating is a function of spacing, placing. If nothing occurs, there is no locating and so no space. Similarly there is no time then. So without action or activity, there can be neither space nor time. If locating is a space function, there can be no time also without space, ontologically.

Is space involved in the conception of time, too? This raises another question whether we can measure absolutely empty time and empty space. If no events are occurring anywhere, not even mental events or imageless thoughts, I may be in timelessness, without time and time experience. So some process, some succession of events is an absolute condition for the reality of time and for time consciousness.

This leads to the idea that time and space are not necessarily out there. They are the functions of apperception. The objective space and time may not be the voluntary functions of my finite apperception as I have it now, but the spontaneous functioning of my apperception in its transcendental aspect. They are necessary for me in that they belong to my transcendental depths.

If time and space are rooted in my transcendental apperception, then *prakṛti* also is covered by apperception as phenomenological or witness consciousness. Then time, space and *prakṛti* may be considered as the three different forms and functions of the same witness consciousness, though overlapping one another. This is for the reason that *prakṛti* is also a form of consciousness. Even the 'unknown' cannot be known as the 'unknown', unless it is a block of consciousness known as the 'unknown'. Only the conscious can be known as the object of consciousness. *Prakṛti* is, therefore, to be treated as inherently conscious. According to Rigveda, *prakṛti* is the personified will of the Supreme Spirit in creation; and is inherently consciousness.

When time and space are taken as patterns of the functions of apperception, it is not necessary to treat them as independent of *prakṛti*. Space is a patterned act of locating done by apperception, which is witness consciousness in the function of the form 'I-know that I-know X'. Locating is at the same time cognition; it is known. Now, I-know and the act of locating cannot be objectless. I do not perform the act

‘locating or knowing’ unless there is something to locate or know. So, the object, which is part of *prakṛti* has to be a part of the phenomenological consciousness and does not have its own existence at the ontological and the transcendental level. As this finite person, my problem, then, is to realize that the object I see, if real, is identical with the object which is part of the cosmos, the Cosmic Person who is my transcendental I.

Similarly, time is the apperceptive act of re-cognizing oneself, through change, causal or otherwise, or a series of cognized events. It is the act of turning what has happened and what is to happen into what is happening. My finite ego or I-am is divided into instants, as passing through the live cognition of the series of events. These instants are brought together by my witness consciousness, transcending the moments. This is the force of bringing these instants together into the present, which is correlated to the I-am – my existential consciousness.

Thus, time and space are the meeting points of the I-am and the I-know. But they dissolve into the I-am when the ‘I-know’ enters it. This is similar to the relation between Being and Becoming of the Self. There is no Becoming without Being. When Becoming dissolves into Being, there is only Being without Becoming. Transcendentally, they are the distinctions we draw within the processes of the Spirit.

How are space (*dik*) and ether (*akasa*) related? On the basis of the Upanisads, both *dik* and *akasa* are associated with the ear and sound. Often it is space that is associated with the ear (*srotra*). But *dik* here generally means direction. We know by experience that our ears recognize the directions from which sounds come.

Etymologically, *akasa* (ether) means that which shines in all directions or everywhere. Shining is primary, and ‘from or on all sides’ is secondary. The second meaning is that of scope, place, room, etc in the sense that there is no room enough for ten persons here. In the present context, *akasa* is what makes the appearance possible on all sides of the object facing me. This is not ether. Nor is it the scientific concept of space that does not have the connotation of appearing or shining. Then, ‘all round and everywhere’ turns out to be not myself as the subject, but an object for me. As in the case of time and space, we are to bear in mind that *dik* and *akasa* are not mere physical substances existing independently and in separation of my personality. We have to identify and equate the two. They constitute the basis of my personality – my I-am.

Maya as a Measure

The enquiry of Non-dualism 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 superimposed. 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 word *maya* does not mean absence of order. It is not magic. It is indicated by the use of the word “*pramana*” for the means of cognition. *Pramana* means the instrument for measuring. *Prameya*, a derivative of *pramana*, means that which is measurable or measured. Generally it is considered as the object of cognition. A significant point is that measuring is not possible without determinateness in the measured. Every object has its own structure and determinateness at the cosmological level. But at the ontological level, all is one. At this level, determinateness is transcended.

Pramana means also standard, rule, evidence. It is generally accepted that perception and inference are the common ways of knowing. The “means of knowing” and the “ways of knowing” are treated to be the same. The question is what is meant by “the means of knowing”. It is like “the means of measuring a pure undivided expanse by placing a transparent squared paper on it”, and then counting the squares.

It is like throwing the network of thought, mind and senses on pure objectivity as such. The structure of the network conveys to us the structure of objectivity, after actually determining it transcendently. There is no other way of knowing what objectivity is, except through the network. It is the instrument of cognition and is of different forms like perception and inference. *Pramana* is the way of not only measuring reality, but also the way of determining it.

It is significant that the three words - *pramana*, *prameya* and *maya* are derived etymologically from the same verbal root *ma*. The world of cosmology is what is measured and is called *maya* (*prakrti*) and also the product of *maya*. The Supreme Being - *Atman* - the Brahman is beyond thought, speech and the means of cognition and cannot, therefore, be measured. If what cannot be measured is the Being, what can be measured is *maya*. It is important to note that what is not 'being' is not 'non-being'.

The above analysis shows that the idea of *maya* means that the world is an ordered whole according to measure. The question arises as to what is the being of the objects obtained by this measure. The four levels of being is the answer. The Supreme Being (*paramarthasatta*) is not an object obtained through this measure. It is basically that which does the measuring and lies behind the act of measuring.

The others are the results of measuring. The highest of the other three, the world of action, or the being for action is determined by the accepted means of knowing. But this is the world primarily meant for action; the being of the objects of the world is meant for action and is determined by the past actions of the souls. The being of the objects of dreams and illusions is an imperfect reflection of the being of the world of action and is called the apparent being. The last is the insignificant being belonging to mental images like the son of a barren woman, or the objects of mere fantasy.

Of the four levels, all except the first belong to the realm of *maya* or the measure. The last two are the results of measure indirectly, not directly. The dream objects are permutations and combinations of the objects of the world of action and are produced by the *samskaras* left by the latter, which are the objects of measure. We do not do their permutation and combination voluntarily and knowingly.

If I can create the dreams I like, I always create the most pleasant. But quite often, the dreams are very unpleasant. So long as the dream objects last, I take the dream objects and their experiences to be real. The objects of the fourth level are known to be unreal even when they are imagined and thought of.

The four-fold classification of being given by the *Advaita* is from the point of view of ontology, while the classification of the valid means of knowledge is given from the point of view of logic and epistemology.

This freedom from *maya* at the highest level, again, is not the knowledge that we are determined, which is simply the consciousness of the consciousness that we are determined, but complete ontological transcendence of determinateness like our transcendence of dream and its horrors when we wake up.

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.

The ever-changing world is transitory. It is considered 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).

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.

Unconscious

Unconscious (*avidya*) is only *karma* (potency of past actions), according to Ramanuja. *Niyati* (limit, determinant and limiter) is a concept of the Svetasvatara Upanisad. It is explained as the potency of past actions. It forms the capital - the fixed environment of the individual or the individual's horizon of experience, his world. This potency forms part and parcel of the being and character of the person.

This potency cannot be made an object by a person, to be faced. Its existence can be known only by its results. It can, therefore, be said to constitute the individual's 'unconscious' (*avidya*). It acts from behind me as it were, and limits my capabilities of knowing and acting. It becomes the force veiling my original infinity. Unless my original infinity is veiled, I cannot find myself as a finite person in the world of forms and names. *Maya* becomes the principle of measure, the forms of measure being the valid means of knowing, and the means of acting and enjoying. This establishes that *avidya* is only *karma*. Incidentally it is observed that in the *Saiva* and *Pasupata* traditions, *niyati* is explicitly said to be an offshoot of *maya*.

Maya or *avidya* does not remain as the 'unconscious' forever for all. To be liberated is to overcome the 'unconscious' that determines, limits, measures one's being. When it is overcome by being made part of one's conscious being it loses its veiling and limiting power. For the liberated souls, *maya* and *avidya* do not exist. The souls realize their infinitude and reach the realm of the unlimited. Unconscious is both cosmic and individual. The cosmic Unconscious has also to be overcome for totally dispelling it.

When, veiled by nescience, consciousness views diversity in an agitated state and identifies objects as such, it is known as mind. When it is firmly established in the conviction of a certain perception, it is known as intellect or intelligence. When it ignorantly and foolishly identifies itself as an existent separate individual, it is known as egotism. When it abandons consistent enquiry, allowing itself to play with countless thoughts coming and going, it is known as individualized consciousness or mind-stuff. When it pursues the fruition of action, it is known as *karma*. When it entertains the notion 'I have known' in relation to something seen or unseen, known or unknown, it is known as memory. When the effects of past enjoyments continue to remain in the field of consciousness though the effects themselves are unseen, it is known as latent tendency or *samskara*. When it is conscious of the truth that the vision of division is the product of ignorance, it is known as knowledge. When it entertains the indweller with sensations, it is known as the senses (*indriya*). When it remains un-manifest in the Cosmic Being, it is known as Nature. When it creates confusion between reality and appearance, it is known as *maya* (illusion). When it dissolves in the Infinite, there is liberation. When it thinks 'I am bound', there is bondage. When it thinks 'I am free', there is freedom.

The absence of self-knowledge is ignorance or delusion. When consciousness objectifies itself and regards itself as its own object of observation, there is *avidya* or ignorance. The individual is no more than the personalized mind. Individuality ceases when the mind ceases. The mind remains as long as the notion of personality remains. When the notion of personality is abandoned, the mind dissolves into the Infinite

Consciousness. So long as there is a pot, there is the notion of the space enclosed within. When the pot is broken, the infinite space alone is even where the pot-space was imagined before.

The *jiva* (individual) is nothing but the embodiment of the Absolute, limited by the adjuncts (*upadhis*). Since *avidya* or ego creates various *upadhis*, the finite individual forgets his real self. Each *upadhi* changes the individual's nature.

God has covered all with *avidya*. He does not let us know anything. *Avidya* is worldly desires. He who puts *avidya* aside to see God can see Him.

Man dwells in the realm of *avidya*. *Avidya* does not permit him to see God. It has made him a victim of ignorance. If *avidya* is once recognized, it feels ashamed of itself and takes to flight.

We do not feel dispassion toward worldly objects, because of *avidya*. Through *avidya*, one feels the real to be unreal and the unreal to be real. The 'real' is that which is eternal - the Supreme Brahman. The 'unreal' means that which is non-eternal - the world.

As long as a man is under the spell of *avidya*, he is like a green-coconut. When one scoops out the soft kernel from a green coconut, one cannot help scraping a little of the shell at the same time. But in the case of a ripe and dry coconut, the shell and kernel are separated from each other. When one shakes the fruit, one can feel the kernel rattling inside. The man who is freed from *avidya* is like a ripe and dry coconut. He feels the soul separated from the body. They are no longer connected with each other.

The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is the result of ignorance and *avidya*. But to say 'O God, you are the Doer; all these belong to You' is the sign of knowledge. Ignorance leads to passions such as lust, greed and temptation. One is to turn the passions toward God. If one must feel desire and temptation, then one must desire to realize God, feel tempted by Him. One is to discriminate and turn the desires away from the worldly objects.

The bound soul (ego) may have realized that there is no substance to the world – only stone and skin. But still he cannot give it up and turn his mind toward God. If he is removed from the worldly surroundings to a spiritual environment, he will pine away. The worm that grows in filth thrives in filth in happiness. It will die if it is put in a pot of rice.

One may reason a thousand times, but one cannot get rid of the ego and *avidya*. The *avidya* is like a pitcher, and the Brahman is like the ocean - an infinite expanse of water on all sides. The pitcher is set in the ocean. The water is both inside and out; the water is everywhere; and the pitcher remains. Now this pitcher is the "ego and *avidya* of the seeker". But it is different if there is no pitcher.

Egotism is of the nature of *tamas*; it is begotten by *avidya*. The barrier of ego is what separates one from God.

The *avidya* seems to vanish this moment; but it reappears the next moment. Unless one gets completely rid of the *avidya*, one does not receive the grace of God.

There are eight fetters that bind an individual to the world, namely, hatred, shame, lineage, pride of good conduct, fear, secretiveness, caste and grief - the offshoots of *avidya*. By the grace of God, they may all fall off in a moment like darkness vanishing in a moment, when light is brought into a dark room.

A man's ego or *avidya* is destroyed if he gets into the fold of a real guru. If the guru is incompetent and not realized, the disciple does not get rid either of the ego or the shackles of the world.

After realization of God, what remains of the *avidya* is like the reflection of a face in a mirror. The reflection cannot call names. Or it is like a burnt rope, which appears to be a rope, but disappears at the slightest puff. The *avidya* that has been burnt in the fire of knowledge can no longer injure anyone.

Darkness

Darkness (*tamas*) is a positive reality. It is seen; it is not the absence of perception. The Upanisads say that as air is without color, but touch, darkness (*tamas*) is without touch, but has color. While we see darkness with our eyes, we cannot make it an object of the sense of touch.

There is darkness not only for the senses but also for the inner instrument (*antahkarana*), and also for the self. The senses are limited to the cognition of some specific qualities such as colors, smells, etc. Every sense cannot perceive every quality. Mind's specific quality is experience of pain and pleasure and its specific function is unification or differentiation of groups of qualities into groups of unitary objects. Ego's function is the appropriation of the experiences as mine and not thine. Reason's function is the organization of the totality of experience. The 'I' consciousness pervades and activates all functions. Now, darkness can veil any or all these functions.

Darkness does not refer only to physical darkness. The absence of speech in the human race deprives it of one of the important sources of cognition. There can be darkness in the case of the senses, speech, mind, reason and 'I-consciousness'.

In deep sleep and when a man faints, he does not know himself. When he regains the waking state, he is aware that he knew nothing in deep sleep and when he fainted. This is possible as his finite person is not there in those states but its transcendental being, as witness, is there. His being, transcendental or immanent, is self-conscious. This is the peculiar power of darkness that it results in complete or partial forgetfulness of all or part of my 'I' consciousness and its true identity. Similarly, it may withhold or impair partially or completely the functions of the inner instrument and the senses.

Darkness is not negative. It works as forgetfulness, as absence of light and as a condition of malfunctioning of the 'I' consciousness, ego, mind, senses and other objects. It is, therefore, a force (*sakti*); not a mere negation. This darkness constitutes my ego.

Without this darkness penetrating the essential being of my I-am, I will be infinite. When constituting my ego, it constitutes also the being or existence aspects of the manifold objects. In a sense, they are ripples of my ego and also ripples of the darkness constituting my ego. Yet their existence is impenetrable to the existence of my ego as this finite being. The fact that I am aware of the existence of the external objects is because inwardly their existence and my existence are one. But this oneness also is veiled by darkness in which my transcendental ego is split into my finite ego and the object. The existence of each is hidden in different ways. I know that the object exists. But there is no sense organ that reveals its existence. Similarly, I know that I exist. But I cannot make my existence an object like a book on the table.

However, darkness (*tamas*) is not entirely *maya* or *avidya*. It is an essential prerequisite for the bursting forth of the manifold of the objective world, the cognitive

instrumentalities like reason, mind and senses, and the instrumentalities of practical activity.

What is it that makes me forget my waking state when I pass into dreams? Dream is a new creation, which is not possible if I remember my waking state in it. We call it sleep, but it is really darkness that partially overcomes me in dreams. It completely overcomes me in deep sleep. The process of entering deep sleep through that of dream is the gradual thickening of darkness. One may call it spiritual darkness, or psychological darkness. As physical light can become physical darkness, that is, the light of the eye becomes the darkness of the eye, the light of my self-consciousness also becomes darker and darker when I enter the dream state and then the deep sleep state. As this darkness relates to the existential consciousness, it may be called Existential Darkness or unconsciousness.

When we close our eyelids, we still see a network of light, colors and darkness (*kesondraka*). Similarly, we see objects in dreams. In both cases, we are not fully overtaken by darkness. As the light of the eye and the field of sight are operative when the eyelids are closed in our waking state, apperception, mind, ego, the senses, their fields and objectifications are operative in dreams. But the cosmic forces of the Logos (*Virat*) are not fully operative and we are relatively free from their control. So what we see in dreams cannot be related to what we know in the waking state. But in deep sleep, all operations cease and are overcome by darkness in full. Only my transcendental ego, as my I-am, limited to my causal body (*karana-sarira*), remains awake, to tell me when I wake up, that I had deep sleep.

The darkness overtaking me in deep sleep is another aspect to it. It is complete forgetfulness of even my finite being along with my own experiences. When the experiences are forgotten, they do not become extant. They are absorbed into my apperception, my finite I-am. As they enter the so-called subject side, they are not available on the object side. This non-availability is the same as entering darkness (*tamas*).

The psychologists say that much of what is passed into my being and made part of it can be brought up, sometimes by me making the attempt, and other times with the help of some psychological techniques.

But everything in my finite being cannot be brought up to the surface of consciousness. My 'I-am' (my person) cannot be pulled inside out and be made a clear object. Something has to be in the background to know the object. The cosmic structure that is reflected in my being and appears as my finite I-am cannot be made an object so long as my finite person lasts. When the finite I-am realizes that it is a reflection, image of the Cosmic Person and identifies itself with it, all is revealed. The finitude is dispelled.

Darkness discharges important functions. It makes all my experiences enter my person and disappear behind a veil, but not become extant, in it. When the opportunity arises, it comes out with all the experiences and takes on the form of the world including myself. Darkness arises out as the phenomenological consciousness and appears as the subject-object scene of the world of forms. Performing this function at the cosmic level, it is *maya*.

Even in ordinary causation, it is said that the cause 'creates' the effect by itself entering darkness to acquire the necessary force. This creation is the cause becoming the effect. The entering of the cause into darkness is similar to our entering deep sleep for gaining freshness and new strength. To enter darkness is to become potency. This view may not agree with the scientific view of causation. But from the ontological and existential points of view, it can be justified.

Every occurring event is correlated to my presence and then turned into my past and its past and so on. It is retained as such in me. Every anticipated event is considered to be a future. It enters my present, and then enters my past and its past. It is not lost. My past is my darkness (*tamas*) and its past is also darkness. The future springs out of darkness. It is future to me as my projecting me into the not yet present and not the past, but a kind of surge, a drive to be something, which I am not now. This is an indication of a power, a force within my being. This force pushes my being into a becoming.

Thus, darkness has to be treated as being different from the negative non-being, for the reason that it is an experience. It is experience in the form of darkness in oneself, which is dependent on an object. It is a shadow of the transcendental I-am within itself and has no separate being of its own.

Bondage

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. 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.

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.

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. 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.

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 like infinite space and will have attained salvation.

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.

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.

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. 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 truth even while carrying on activities.

Differentiated consciousness is bondage; liberation is its absence. There is no difference between the two, for awareness is the same in both.

Desire for liberation interferes with the fullness of the self; absence of such desire promotes bondage. Hence constant awareness is the preferred goal.

Liberation

Conditioning of mind alone is responsible for the diversity in creatures. Latent conditioning produces insentient beings. Patent conditioning gives rise to human beings, etc. Dense conditioning is conducive to ignorance in some. In others, attenuated conditioning is conducive to liberation.

There are four ways to enter the realm of Freedom (*moksha* - salvation - liberation). They are self-control, spirit of enquiry, contentment and good company.

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.

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.

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.

Enquiry is the second 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 the *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 (*vichara*) is not reasoning or analysis. It is directly looking into oneself.

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.

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.

Liberation arises when ignorance ceases through self-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.

Contentment is the third 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.

Craving for heaven and even for liberation arises in one's heart as long as the 'I' is seen as an entity. As long as it remains, there is only unhappiness in one's life. The notion of the 'I' can be got rid of only through self-knowledge.

The company of holy and enlightened persons - *satsanga* is another 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. 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 states.

These four ways - self-control, spirit of enquiry, contentment and *satsanga* are the surest means for liberation. *Satsanga* is the best companion. The spirit of enquiry is the greatest wisdom. Contentment is the supreme gain. Self-control is supreme happiness. Any one or more than one or all-together will help the seeker to attain the supreme good - liberation.

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.

The mind is 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. The attainment of inner peace by total non-attachment to anything in the world is known as liberation.

Liberation is the Absolute Itself, which alone is. As one sees only gold in ornaments, water in waves, emptiness in space, heat in mirage and nothing else, the liberated yogi sees only the Brahman everywhere, not the world.

23. Non-Dualism

The considered view, philosophical in character, is, therefore, that there is no duality of the Brahman and *prakrti*. *Prakrti* is the constituent character of the Brahman. Similarly there is no plurality of spirits (*atmans*). No difference or negation is possible at the highest level of being between one *atman* and another and between the Brahman and *prakrti*. Besides, the Brahman, the *atmans* and *prakrti* are all infinite. How can there be many infinite beings, except in thought?

P. T. Raju explains the concept thus: 'Thought, which contains self-contradictions, may entertain whatever concepts it finds useful; but the same thought reveals their self-contradictions, and yet wants to attribute reality to them. Thought is able to realize its own self-contradictions because of its continuity with intuition or integral experience, in which it is rooted and which is aware constantly of the non self-contradictory Being. This Being is the Brahman and is alone ultimately true'.

The philosophy of Non-Dualism (*Advaita*) does not mean that the world does not exist or that any object in the world is the same as any other object. This philosophy is ontological, and ontology is spiritual. Spiritually speaking, man is free from determinateness such as the laws of cause and effect, birth and death, restrictions and limitations, etc only at the highest ontological level. To say that one is to get free from determinateness implies that there is a world of determinateness from which one has to get free. But when this world is man's cosmological being, he has to be free from his own cosmological being and realize his one-ness with the ontological. What happens then to his cosmological being? It does not exist for him. It disappears for him. But ontological Being is eternal and is support of the cosmological - the support of everything in the world of forms. From this point of view, one may deduce that the cosmological being has eternally not been there. This explains the famous *Vedantic* dictum 'the world is not real, and yet is not unreal; it is *maya*'. This is to say that determinateness is there, and yet is not there from the highest ontological point of view.

One can reach the goal of perfection and attain the truth in any of the ways discussed earlier. The attainment of the Truth is by knowledge of Reality (*jnana*), adoration and love (*bhakti*) of the Supreme Person, practice of *yoga* or by subjection of the will to the Divine purpose (*karma*). These are distinguished on account of the emphasis on the theoretical, emotional, spiritual and practical aspects.

The seekers are of different types - reflective, emotional, spiritual or active. But they are not exclusive in their approach. To those seeking knowledge, He is Eternal Light, clear and radiant as the sun at noon. There is no darkness whatsoever. To those struggling for virtue, He is Eternal Righteousness, Steadfast and Impartial. To those spiritually oriented, He is Eternal Bliss. To those emotionally inclined, He is Eternal Love and Beauty of Holiness.

Even as the Brahman combines all these attributes in Him, the seeker aims at the integral life of spirit. Cognition, will and feeling, though logically distinguishable, are not really separable in the concrete life and the unity of mind. They are different aspects of one movement of the *atman* - the soul.

The Eternal Religion embodying the above philosophy, the religion of the rishis - the great spiritual masters of the past, has been in existence from time out of mind, and will exist eternally, as long as man exists. There exist in this *Sanatana Dharma* all forms of worship - worship of God with form and worship of the Impersonal Brahman as well. It embraces all paths - the path of knowledge, the path of *yoga*, the path of devotion, the path of ethical action and so on, for realization, in this life itself, of the Highest Truth, for experiencing the Supreme Bliss of ALL THAT EXISTS.

TAT SAT

Appendix

Brief summary of the basic philosophical doctrines of the eleven most important Upanisads:

Isa Upanisad teaches the doctrine of the Infinite to which addition and subtraction make no difference. As to the Brahman, It is the One; It does not move and yet is faster than mind; It is far and yet near; It is outwards and yet inwards to us. The Upanisad teaches that the Lord pervades everything in the world.

Kena Upanisad raises the questions, ‘What is it that impels the senses and the mind to perceive and understand? What is it that sustains all, but which nothing sustains?’ He who says that he knows it does not really know it, and he who says that he does not know it verily knows it. That is the *Atman*, the Brahman. Without It, the senses, the mind and even the gods can do nothing.

Katha Upanisad teaches that the knowledge of what happens to man after death is more valuable than anything in the world, than even sovereignty of the whole world. Such knowledge is the knowledge of the *Atman*. *Atman* is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. The objects are higher than the senses, mind higher than the objects, the individual’s reason (*buddhi*) higher than mind, the Cosmic Reason (*Mahan Atman, Logos*) higher than the individual’s reason, the Unmanifest (*Avyakta*) higher than the Cosmic Reason and the *Purusa (Atman)* higher than the Unmanifest; there is nothing higher than the *Purusa*. The *Atman* cannot be understood by reason; it has to be grasped only as ‘Is’. It can be realized by withdrawing speech (*senses*) into mind, mind into reason (*jnana atman*), reason into the Cosmic Reason and that into the *Atman* of Peace (*Santa Atman*). Everything else is a branch of the *Atman* and the *Atman* is the root. The whole is like the *Asvattha* tree whose roots are above and branches below. It is symbolic that the *Atman* is above everything and yet is the main root of everything.

Prasna Upanisad relates the answers by the sage Pippilada to six questions put to him by different enquirers.

The first question relates to the creation of creatures. The answer is that the creator God created couples of polar opposites, which in turn created the world of beings. The couples were *Rayi (material)* and *Prana (the life principle)*. The life principle is the Cosmic Person and is one’s *atman*.

The second question enquires as to who the gods are and who among them is the greatest. The answer is that the gods are Ether (*akasa*), Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Speech, Mind, Eye and Ear. Greater than all of them is *Prana*. Here the *Prana* means not mere physical air or physiological bios, but the Cosmic Principle integrating the part of the universe and the psychophysical constituent of human beings. When the life principle exits the body, nothing remains and none of the other gods can perform their functions. This establishes that by the time this Upanisad was written, the gods of polytheism who were originally treated as natural forces were turned into cosmic entities and into man’s senses and organs.

The third question relates to the origin of *prana* itself and how it divides itself into senses, etc of man. The answer is that *prana* is born out of the *atman* like reflection and employs its divisions for performing different functions in the body.

The fourth question relates to what happens to the gods in sleep and who is it that sleeps. The answer is that in sleep all the senses become one with the god of mind. Only *prana* and its involuntary activities do not sleep and continue to work. In dream, the agent experiences whatever is experienced in the waking state, and even what is not then experienced. In dreamless sleep, he is overpowered by a psychic force (*tejas*) or its intense light and does not see dreams. Like birds resting on a tree, everything rests in the *atman*.

The fifth question is about the word *Aum*. The answer is that the word is the same as the Brahman, both the manifest and the unmanifest together.

The sixth question relates to the *Purusa (Atman)* and His sixteen phases. The answer is that the phases are *prana*, faith (*conviction of existence or being*), the five elements - ether, air, fire, water and earth, all the senses taken together - vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste, mind, food, semen (*the generative principle*), penance, sacred word, ethical action, the worlds and name. All of them are fixed in the *Atman* like spokes in the axle. This means that the *Atman* is the centre as well as the circumference of the universe. It is the source of functions and processes in It. It is the consciousness of everything - not empty consciousness.

Mundaka Upanisad differentiates the higher and the lower forms of knowledge. The higher is the knowledge of the Brahman and the lower is the knowledge of the empirical sciences and arts including the Veda and its subsidiaries. As the spider throws out its web and withdraws it into itself again, the *Atman* throws out the world out of It and withdraws the world again into It. The life of action and sacrifices is as unstable as an unsteady boat and is, therefore, not the highest, and belongs to the world of ignorance. In man dwell two spirits - the higher and the lower. The higher remains a pure witness of the lower and its experiences. The lower performs actions in this world and enjoys their fruit. Because of the rewards and punishments that follow the merit and demerit of actions, the lower is bound by them and feels not happy. But it overcomes its bondage when it realizes the higher spirit, merging with it. Study or intellect, penance or renunciation cannot attain the *Atman*. Nor do the weak or the deluded. Only those chosen for it can realize it.

Mandukya Upanisad contains a summary of all the other Upanisads. It teaches that the *jiva-atman* has four states - the waking state, the dream state, the state of dreamless sleep and its original pure state. In the waking state, the consciousness of the *atman* is directed towards external gross objects. It has then seven parts and nineteen gateways. The seven parts are the forehead, eye, the life principle, bodily centre, abdomen, feet and face. The nineteen gateways are the five senses - eye, ear, taste, touch and smell, the five organs of action - hands, feet, the generative organ, excretory organ and the organ of speech, the five vital principles - *prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *vyana* and *samana*, the four inner instruments - mind, ego, reason and apperception. (The five vital principles are said to control the involuntary functions of the body making life possible. It is difficult to identify them).

In this state the *atman* is considered the worldly person - *Vaisvanara*, meaning the gross aspect of the Logos or the Cosmic Person. In dream, it has the same seven parts and nineteen gates, but its consciousness is turned inwards, towards the dream objects. In this state, it is called the psyche, as it constitutes psychic force enjoying dream objects of subtle elements. In dreamless sleep, the *atman* desires nothing. Its consciousness is its only gate and all plurality becomes one in it. It is then called *prajna* as its being is pure, undifferentiated, solid, unified consciousness and into which everything enters. It pervades the other two states and always stays as their background. It is full of bliss. But it knows nothing, not even itself. The fourth state is the *atman* in Its purity and is beyond thought and speech. It knows itself and is not overwhelmed by the unconscious.

The word *Aum* consists of three parts-a, u and m. The letter 'a' is the *atman* in the waking state, 'u' the *atman* in the dream state and 'm' the *atman* in the deep sleep. The *Atman* in Its original pure state is without distinction. It is *Aum* - the All.

This Upanisad gives a new idea as to the study of the 'I' consciousness. It has to be studied in its own field, not in the field of objects. The four states of the *Atman* constitute the specific field of the 'I' consciousness at the level of the macro as well as the microcosmic personalities. The *Atman* is the Brahman. The names of the four states of the macro Cosmic Person are *Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* (*Sutratman*), *Iswara* and the Brahman. The macro Cosmic Person includes all the microcosmic persons and inter-relates them. The Cosmic Person works through the finite persons.

Taittiriya Upanisad mentions five forms of union - the union of physical elements, the union of shining beings, the union of knowledge, the union of creative beings and the union of physiological parts, incorporating the idea of union as the act of creation. It establishes that, by the time of this Upanisad, five forms of causal explanation of creation came to be accepted. They are the physical explanation of the creation of the universe, creation as due to the actions of the divine beings, as due to the potency of esoteric knowledge, as due to some cosmic sexes and as due to the *atman* or man as the centre.

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.

This Upanisad teaches that Reality in the beginning was absolutely indeterminate - Unmanifest. It points out that the Bliss of the *Atman* is infinitely greater than all the pleasures of men and gods put together. Even though several distinctions among the levels of spirit and body are made, every level is considered part and parcel of the Brahman.

This Upanisad defines *atman* as one that eats, swallows and absorbs the different elements constituting the objective world. The Sanskrit word for absorption

is *adyate*. This is symbolic of the *atman*, as everything is to dissolve into it ultimately, ontologically. This is not the only etymological meaning of the word '*atman*'. From the point of view of Indo-Germanic philology, the most reasonable seems to be from a word meaning "to breathe". The Sanskrit root will be '*an*' meaning to breathe.

Aitareya Upanisad gives a semi-mythological account of creation. According to it, the *Atman* correlates the microcosm and the macrocosm. The gods become the psychophysical principles. The mental functions are only the rays of our rational consciousness (*prajnanam*). Our rational consciousness is the constant integrated awareness (*prajnanam-brahma*).

Chandogya Upanisad states that, after salvation, man's spirit resides along with the gods and the Brahman in the highest world. This conception is theistic. It also states that everything is verily the Brahman. It is the innermost to man. It is the smallest and yet the largest. It is reached after death. In the beginning, all was Non-being out of which Being came and then the cosmic egg. The egg burst creating the cosmos. The Upanisad propounds that Being cannot come out of Non-Being, and so originally there was Being.

The person seeing through the eye is the *Atman* and is the Brahman. The eye is considered the most important of the senses.

Aruni teaches his son Svetaketu that in sleep, speech enters mind, mind the life principle (*prana*), the life principle the psychic force (*tejas*), the psychic force the Supreme Deity. All these belong to the *Atman*. "That art thou" (*tattvamasi*)! Everything enters the *Atman* and loses its identity. The Upanisad mentions *mahavakyas* such as "I am all this" (*ahameva idam sarvam*) and "The *Atman* is all this" (*atma eva idam sarvam*).

This Upanisad anticipates the doctrine of the Mandukya Upanisad pointing out the various stages by which the search for the *Atman* has to be carried out. It also delineates the field in which the enquiry has to be conducted.

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad contains detailed information about different kinds of meditation and several philosophical doctrines. Only when one sacrifices the cosmos, gives it up, does one realize the *Atman*. It mentions that the horse sacrificed in the *Asvametha-yajna* (sacrifice) is symbolic of the cosmos.

In the beginning, there was the *Atman* that asserted, "I Am" and became the 'I'. Then it felt lonely and was afraid, as fear would arise from loneliness. It wondered why It was afraid and wanted an 'other'. Then It became the two - man and woman. Men were born of them. The state of love is the Unmanifest (*avyakta*). The Unmanifest becomes the manifest world. The *Atman* is the same as the Brahman. He who realizes "I am the Brahman" becomes the Brahman.

The world consists of the three - name given by speech, form seen by the eye and action originating in the *atman*, and is full of the Brahman. All the three constitute the Being. It teaches the doctrine that the *atman* is found in deep sleep. Nobody wants an object of pleasure for the sake of the object, but for the sake of the *atman*. We are, therefore, to know what the *atman* is. By knowing it, everything becomes known. Everything is the *Atman* (*idam sarvam yadayam atma*). When it is

realized that everything is the *Atman*, one realizes that there is no difference between the knower and the known. This *Atman* is the Brahman (*ayam atma brahma*).

This Upanisad records the debate between Yajnavalkya and other enquirers after Truth. Yajnavalkya says that, after death, the senses and mind of man become one with their respective deities who are their sources. But his actions - *karma* (merit and demerit) accompany him to another life. The *atman* lives through the life principle and works through all the life functions. None can see the seer; none can hear the hearer and none can know the knower. It is not an object of any form of consciousness. The *atman* is present inwardly in everything (*antaryamin*) and knows everything, but nothing knows it. It is the ultimate seer, hearer, thinker and knower. The *atman* is neither subtle nor gross, neither the senses nor the life principle, neither inwards nor outwards. It is imperishable. It commands the sun and the moon, the elements and time to perform their functions. Everything is founded in it. It is the same as the Brahman. The Brahman is Knowledge and Bliss (*vijnanam anandam brahma*).

Yajnavalkya also teaches that the *atman* is the guiding light of man. What light guides man? By the light of the sun is the answer. What is the man's light when the sun sets? The answer is the light of the moon. What is the light when the moon sets? The answer is that it can then be the light of fire. What can be the light when the fire goes out? The answer is that another man's voice may then guide. What can be the light when there is no such voice? The answer is the light that guides in a dream. What is the light that guides in a dream? The answer is it is the light of the *atman*. It is through the light of the dream that one can transcend the forms of death or other perishable forms. That light is itself imperishable.

This Upanisad also teaches that when the 'I' is embraced by the *atman* as *prajna* in deep sleep, it becomes filled with bliss and knows nothing else.

Svetasvatara Upanisad is considered to be a theistic Upanisad as it speaks of the Brahman as a personal being. It enumerates some contemporary doctrines of the origin of the world, then in vogue. According to it, the origin was time, nature, necessity, chance, elements, cosmic womb, *Purusa*, the finite self (*atman*). There are two *atmans* - the perishable and the imperishable. Man is a combination of the two. The perishable is the manifest, meant to act and enjoy the fruit of actions. The imperishable is the *Atman* as the cosmos, the Lord. The perishable is the *pradhana* (*prakrti*). It is *maya*. The *pradhana* is the primary state of the whole world of becoming. *Prakrti* is the original state of the world of becoming. *Maya* is the appearance of something as being, although it is only becoming. It is neither being nor non-being and so becoming. As becoming appears as being, it is called *maya*. Everything that belongs to *maya* is perishable. Man overcomes *maya* by knowing the imperishable.

The *atman* is present in the body like oil in the oil-seed or butter in milk. The Brahman is the *Purusa* Himself. This Upanisad mentions the names of the Saiva religious sects. It treats Siva as the Brahman Itself. It repeats the Mundaka passage about the two *atmans* as the two birds, the lower one merging with the higher.

It compares the Lord to the magician and calls His power magic—*maya*. The *Atman* is neither male nor female. The Lord presides over our ethical conduct, but is accessible to men who have risen above action. This Upanisad carries the ideas of grace and devotion. It mentions the name of Svetasvatara who obtained divine knowledge through penance and the grace of God. One who is absolutely devoted to God and likewise to his teachers can only know the divine truths. Theism is clearly emphasized in this Upanisad.

Glossary of Important Sanskrit Words

A

adharma:	demerit; sin; crime
advaita:	non-dual, non-duality, non-dualism; one, monism
ahamdhi:	I-consciousness, to be differentiated from <i>ahankara</i> or ego.
ahankara:	ego as different from <i>ahamdhi</i> .
akasa:	space; sky; ether; room; the word does not mean necessarily physical space, but also mental, intellectual and spiritual space. Even <i>maya</i> is called <i>akasa</i> in the sense of <i>avyakta</i> , the unmanifest, for the manifest is that which has acquire a shape, a contour. The unmanifest is the opposite. The word has associations with both sound and room or space.
antahkarana:	inner instrument, inner sense consisting of reason (<i>buddhi</i>), ego (<i>ahankara</i>) and mind (<i>manas</i>). Even apperception is considered part of the inner instrument for its nature of universalizing the cognitions.
antaryamin:	inner controller, the higher spirit within.
anumana:	inference; syllogism; that which comes after the first perception.
anupalabdhi:	non-cognition, non-apprehension, non-perception; name of one of the of valid ways of cognition;
apurva:	the extra-ordinary; merit in the form or state of latency or potency;
artha:	meaning; object; wealth; purpose, aim.
arthapatti:	presumption, presupposition; one of the valid means of knowledge.
asat:	non-being, non-existence; the non-existent, the unreal; false, untrue.
asrama:	a stage of life such as that of a student, a house holder, a forest dweller or a <i>sanyasin</i> .
atman :	spirit; self; soul; if it is identical with the Brahman, it means the Brahman, also called the <i>Paramatman</i> , the Supreme Being, the Supreme spirit; <i>atman</i> and <i>jiva</i> are used as synonyms, but <i>jiva</i> means necessarily the soul as an ethical personality; <i>atman</i> is also used in the sense of mind.

avidya : *ajnana; karma* also according to Ramanuja; a veil or screen making the soul forget its relationship with the Brahman, according to Madhva.

avyakta: unmanifest; the Unmanifest; used as synonym for *prakrti* and *Maya* also; in the Bhagavad-Gita it is the name of God before He manifests the world.

B

bhakti: devotion; love (not sexual)

The Brahman: the ever - growing, the ever - expanding; the Absolute; the Supreme Spirit.

buddhi: reason; mind; knowledge, cognition, consciousness; concept, idea; in the *Vedanta* it has ontological significance, as in the philosophy of Plato.

C

chit: consciousness.

chitta: apperception, apperceptive reason; that which gathers and integrates all knowledge in man and constitutes his apperceptive mind; in the *Advaita*, it is the apperceptive function of the *antahkarana*; that which makes a thing conscious.

D

darsana: perception; view; vision; philosophy; system.

dharma : that which supports; nature; the law of nature; virtue; ethical law; the “ought”; merit; the potency of ethical actions; the right action; the law in, or the body of doctrines of any faith; quality; characteristic; the law of the universe; reality ; element; category;

dik: space; direction;

G

guna: quality; property; attribute.

H

hiranyagarbha: the golden womb; the fetus which is golden or conscious; the first appearance of the life of conscious. It is also called *Sutratman*, the *atman* cosmic in significance playing the role of the thread passing through all the beads of a necklace, that

is, interconnecting all the souls through their life-principle (*prana*)

I

indriya: sense; organ

J

jada: the insentient; the inorganic; matter.

jiva: soul as the ethical personality.

jnana: consciousness; knowledge; cognition.

K

kala: time

kama: desire, love; pleasure; enjoyment; passion.

karanam : instrument; the main instrument; the main cause; cause; reason; ground; support; occasion .

karma: action; activity; process; the result of potency created by ethical action; rite; past actions in their potential forms or states.

koshas: sheaths; collections.

M

manas: mind, to be distinguished from mind as understood in Anglo–American psychology; sometimes used in the very wide sense of *antahkarana*.

maya: illusion; a synonym for *prakrti*, *avyakta*, *pradhana*, *avidya*, *ajnana*; the measured; the determined.

mimamsa: discussion; debate; criticism; critical interpretation; name of the school of Jaimini based on the first two parts of the *Veda*.

moksa: liberation, salvation, emancipation.

N

nirguna: without qualities, without characteristics, without attributes.

nirvana: peace; salvation; the un-agitated

nirvikalpa: indeterminate, formless, absolutely direct cognition; according to *Vedanta*, it is absolutely true in the case of cognition of the Brahman.

nivrtti: withdrawal from outward activity; turning inwards.

P

paramatman:	the Supreme Spirit.
parinama:	change, transformation; transformation in which the being of the material cause is changed into something else and cannot be regained.
pradhana:	the primary, the important, the basic; a synonym for <i>prakrti</i> .
prajna:	a synonym for <i>buddhi</i> , intense knowledge, intense consciousness; intense self-consciousness; consciousness; knowledge.
prakrti:	synonym for <i>pradhana</i> , <i>maya</i> etc; literally means the original; personified will of the Supreme Spirit.
pramana:	means of valid cognition like perception and inference.
pramanya:	validity of knowledge.
prameya:	the knowable; object of cognition or knowledge.
prana:	life, vital principle;
pravrtti:	activity directed towards external objects; the life of action; opposed to <i>nivrtti</i> .
purusa:	<i>atman</i> ; person; man; man as distinct from woman; spirit; soul.

R

rajas:	one of the attributes of <i>prakrti</i> , called the active; the world of action, movement, process.
---------------	--

S

saguna:	with qualities or characteristics.
sakshi-chaitanya:	witness consciousness;
samadhi:	trance, ecstasy; intense concentration of one's being; the final stage in <i>yoga</i> .
sat:	being, existence, reality; a being, an existent, a real; virtuous.
satkaranavada:	the doctrine that only the material cause, but not the effect, is real; the doctrine that Being is real, but its forms and shapes are not real;
satta:	Being, Existence ; power, force.
sattva:	an attribute of <i>prakrti</i> and is called the Transparent; a being; a synonym for <i>buddhi</i> or <i>mahat</i> that makes the self- affirmation of I-am.

sabda:	sound; word.
sakti:	energy, power, force; potency; the energy aspect of the Godhead.
samskaras:	instinctive forces, impressions, urges, habit forming impressions, psychological archetypes. The word is also interpreted as <i>karma</i> , thus relating it to the <i>Mimamsa</i> doctrine of ethical potency. It has a very inclusive meaning encompassing cosmic, collective or individual categories, either separately or together at once.
spanda:	vibration, pulsation, activity, movement.
sutratman :	one of the stages of the Logos at which the Logos acts like the thread in a necklace of beads in tying or binding together all the souls in their dream states, although each soul has its own dreams.
T	
tamas:	one of the attributes of <i>prakrti</i> called the Darkness. In the <i>Advaita</i> it has greater significance as positive Non-being or Being as the unconscious (<i>avidya</i>)
tanmatras:	subtle elements; ultimately specific sense qualities as potential fields of sense cognition.
U	
upadhi:	condition; conditionality
upamana:	similarity; comparison; cognition of similarity.
V	
vairagya:	detachment ; withdrawal from the world.
vijnana:	consciousness; determinate consciousness; knowledge of empirical arts and sciences; a synonym for <i>buddhi</i> .
vivarta:	transformation; transformation in which the nature of the material cause is not affected; distinguished from <i>parinama</i> .
Y	
yoga:	etymologically, it means 'yoking' , 'binding', 'tying'; a way of realization of the Brahman.

The above are only indicative of what the Sanskrit words mean in the context of the present work

