

EKAM SAT

5

K.R.Paramahansa

Rudra-Gita
Brahma-Gita
Rama-Gita
Vyasa-Gita
Siddha-Gita
Hamsa-Gita

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Preface

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

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

We bring out a series of volumes titled Ekam Sat containing free translation in English of each verse of all the available Gitas other than the Bhagavad-Gita, with brief commentary wherever necessary. The idea is that the translation is true reflection of the spirit of the verse (sloka) in Sanskrit as far as practicable, and the commentary is consistent with the central thought of the Gita. The division of each Gita into chapters may be arbitrary, but indicative of the subject handled therein. Ekam Sat 1, 2, 3 & 4 have already been published.

Ekam Sat 5, the fifth volume of the series, contains a detailed exposition of the Rudra-Gita, Brahma-Gita, Rama-Gita, Vyasa-Gita, Siddha-Gita & Hamsa-Gita. The translation into English of each sloka (verse) of the five Gitas is rendered corresponding to the idea of the verse in Sanskrit of the Gita concerned. Explanatory paragraphs are added, wherever considered necessary, to elaborate the essence of the content of the verse from the point of view of Monism.

Rudra-Gita

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Introduction

The Rudra-Gita is contained in Slokas 16-79 of chapter 24 of Skandha IV of Srimad Bhagavata, and chapters 70-72 of Varahapurana. They belong to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

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

The Puranas are distinguished as *Maha*-puranas and *Upa*-puranas, both being eighteen in number. Srimad Bhagavata and Varahapurana are considered the *Maha*-puranas. The topics that form the subject matter of a *Maha*-purana are primary creation, secondary creation, means of sustenance, protection including Incarnations, epoch of *Manus*, genealogy of royal and priestly lines from Bhahma down, dynastic history of distinguished emperors, dissolution, purpose of all creative activity and ultimate support or the substratum.

Of the ten subjects, the last one, the Supreme Being Who is the final stay of all, and to which man's devotion is to be unconditional and total, forms the one theme with which the *Bhagavata* is primarily concerned. All other subjects are subordinated to it. The object is to bring man into an adequate conception of His excellences and to generate in him unconditioned devotion to the Lord. As for Varahapurana, it deals mainly with primary creation and secondary creation. It is full of religious and theological matters and glorification of the gods, mainly Visnu.

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

In this regard, it may be said that history, as such, has no spiritual value as events are only at the moment and are not in the next. Events become history to the extent they are remembered and become a tradition. Historical facts become spiritual reality to the extent they stimulate a myth and become a psychic verity. For example, the historicity of Christ as such gives no spiritual significance to Christianity, but its Christ Myth does. The events of the historical life of Christ as such have had no significance to posterity. But when it is accepted that he was the expression of the Second Person of the Trinity, that he was immaculately conceived, that he was the Redeemer of men, that his suffering

on the Cross was in atonement for man's sins, that he rose from the dead, and that all who take refuge in him will be saved by his blood – then Christ transcends history and becomes a Myth and a Psychic Verity of universal significance. The above cited statements are not open to historical proof; but they have been accepted by the psychic being of the community. As such they have a value far transcending the events of the so called history. The same is the case with the Incarnations in the Hindu tradition. Their validity lies in the fusion their traditions have achieved with the supra-historical foundations of life.

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

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

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

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

Srimad Bhagavata is also known as Visnu Bhagavata. Its excellences are of such a transcending nature that it has practically eliminated all the other Puranas from the minds of men. It is the one book that is widely studied by all devotees and commented upon by scholars of all schools of thought. Though it is a Vaishnava-related Purana, and therefore sectarian in a way, its sectarianism is not one of narrowness and exclusion, but only its way of eliciting the undivided attention and devotion of men to the Deity in focus. In the sublimity, fervour and comprehensiveness of the pattern of devotion it inculcates, in the dignity, elevation and terseness of its Sanskrit diction, in the lyrical beauty and wealth of its imagery, Srimad Bhagavata is unparalleled among the Puranas.

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

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

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

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

The Rudra-Gita is in the nature of exposition of the hymn of praise of Lord Visnu by Rudra for liberation, in so far as it is from Srimad Bhagavata. As for the content from Varahapurana, it speaks of the identity of Visnu, Siva and Brahma as given by Rudra and a hymn on Visnu. Though the Rudra-Gita, drawn from the two *Maha*-puranas, is primarily meant to extol Visnu glorifying his achievements and inculcating steadfast devotion for him, it is not biased. Devotion for Visnu is only preferential, but not exclusive. It emphasizes the identity and oneness of all divinities.

The Gitas that find place in *Maha*-puranas such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Hymn to Liberation

Vidura said:

Oh holy one! How did the Prachetas happen to meet with Sri Rudra on the way, and what was the precious instruction he imparted to them?

Embodied beings cannot contact Sri Rudra. Even *rishis* practising renunciation can commune with him only in meditation but not physically.

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. God is, therefore, Spirit and one can commune and be one with God only in spirit – in consciousness.

Even though Sri Rudra is immersed in the bliss of the Self, he, for the proper functioning of the world order, often goes about in a mood and form that strike terror in all.

The pure Infinite Consciousness appears to become whatever forms It takes whenever It manifests Itself. 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, hands, legs, etc.

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 human being, it becomes so.

Maitreya said:

The noble-minded Prachetas, in obedience to their father's command, set their mind on practising austerity and, for this, travelled in a westerly direction.

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

On nearing the sea coast, they found an extensive lake with water as pure and limpid as the minds of *mahatmas*.

Blue lotuses, red lotuses, white lotuses, *kalhara*, blue water-lilies, etc were blooming on the surface of the lake. Birds like swans, storks, *chakravakas* and *karandavas* filled the air with their varied warblings. There were trees and creepers which looked as if they were covered with horripilations on hearing the buzzing of honey-beetles maddened with flower-nectar. The whole atmosphere there was fragrant with the pollen of flowers, with which the place abounded.

The Prachetas were astonished to hear notes of heavenly music to the accompaniment of many musical instruments like *mridanga* and *panava*.

They saw coming out of that lake the blue-throated, three-eyed Lord Siva of the complexion of burnished gold, accompanied by his retinue and a host of singing *gandharvas* and *Devas*. Seeing him, the thrilled Prachetas made prostrations before him.

Lord Siva, who always relieves the sufferings of those who seek his protection and who is fond of those who follow the *dharma*, was highly pleased with the Prachetas for their virtues and their knowledge of the ways of righteous living. He spoke to them as follows:

(Prayer is the most important medium of spiritual practices. Prayer is the petition asking of something for ourselves; and intercession for others.

To acquire his petition answered, a man need not have to know or to love God or even His image. All that he requires is a burning sense of fulfillment of his desires, coupled with firm conviction that there exists, out in the universe, something not himself, which can be dragooned into satisfying these desires. With the necessary degree of faith and persistence, the chances are that, sooner or later, somehow or other, he gets what he wants. It is the experience of human beings through ages that whatever is sought with firm faith and conviction that God delivers. Whether what he gets, in response to his petition, is morally or materially good or not, only time can say. It may, however, be legitimate for us to pray for anything, which is legitimate for us to desire.)

Rudra said:

You are the sons of Prachinabarhis. I understand what you are after. May good fortune attend on you! It is only to bless you that I have made myself visible to you.

Dear to me is that fortunate devotee who has taken shelter whole-heartedly at the feet of Vasudeva, who is subtler than, and transcends, both *Prakrti* and *Purusa*.

Vasudeva is the *Brahman*, 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* – the highest Being is the Absolute, Transcendental Self. The three distinctions - Being (Existence), Reality and Truth become one in the Absolute Reality.

Those, who have lived adhering to their *svadharma* for a hundred lives, go to the sphere of Brahma; those, who have done so for a still longer period, come to my sphere. But the greatest devotees of Mahavisnu go directly to His transcendent sphere immediately after the death of the physical body, just as Indra, I and other *Kalas* (specially commissioned souls) do at the end of our mission.

The Bhagavad-Gita teaches, 'It is better to perform one's own *svadharma* (obligations) poorly than to do another's well'. *Svadharma* does not refer to one's individual or chosen personal obligations. Indeed it connotes an impersonal generic ethical category, which impels one to discharge one's duties determined by one's place in society. *Svadharma* embodies the same ethical values, as does *varna-asramadharmā*.

You, the devotees of Bhagawan Visnu, are as dear to me as the Bhagawan Himself. And to the devotees of Bhagawan, there is none as dear as I am.

I shall teach you a hymn of praise which takes man to the highest goal of liberation. You have to repeat this holy and auspicious hymn in clear accents. Now listen to it.

Liberation is entering the realm of Freedom – *Moksa* or salvation. The ways to enter the said realm 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 main way to liberation.

Maitreya said:

Saying so with a very loving heart, Siva, who was wholly devoted to Narayana, spoke thus to those Prachetas standing before him with hands joined in salutation.

Sri Rudra said:

Oh Lord! Victory unto Thee! Thy supremacy is for the exaltation of the great knowers of the *Atman*! May good befall me! Thou art the ever Self-fulfilled. Salutations to Thee who bears the cosmic Lotus in Thy navel, to Thee who art the controller of all the evolutes of *Prakrti* latent in that Lotus. Salutations to Thee manifest as Vasudeva, the peaceful, the unperturbed, the self-effulgent, and the Lord of *chitta* (mental stuff).

The self-conscious *atman* in a human being 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*.

Salutations to Thee as Sankarshana – the master of the category of *ahamkara* or the ego-sense, whose nature is subtle and infinite and who consumes the worlds. Salutations to Thee as Pradyumna – the controller of the intellect, the bestower of consciousness on all beings, and the inner ruler.

Salutations to Thee manifest as Aniruddha, the controller of *manas* (mind), which regulates the senses. Salutations also to Thee manifest as the sun, whose glorious light spreads everywhere and who is ever the same.

Salutations to Thee, the gateway to heaven and to salvation, the eternal resident of the pure heart. Salutations to Thee in the form of fire – the accomplisher of the rite of *Chaturhotra* and the support of all *yajnas*.

Salutations to Thee who assume the form of the food of the *pitris* and the *Devas*, who protects the *Devas*, and who are the *soma* juice which forms the essence of *yajnas*. Thou art the essence of water which satisfies the thirst of creatures and keeps them happy and contented.

Salutations to Thee who are of the nature of Earth, who are the bodies of all beings, and who abide as the Cosmic Body. Salutations again to Thee who are the ether that holds sway over the whole universe and who are the vitality that supports the minds, the senses and the bodies of all.

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 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.

Salutations to Thee who are the support of the conceptions of within and without, and who, as the ether, manifest sound by which objects have come to be denoted. Salutations, again, to Thee who are unlimited brilliance and the heavenly region that is attained through great merit.

(Space (*dik*) and ether (*akasa*) are interrelated. 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* 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* (ether) is what makes the appearance possible on all sides of the object facing one. 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 oneself as the subject, but an object for one. 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 one’s personality. We have to identify and equate the two. They constitute the basis of one’s personality – one’s I-am.)

Salutations to Thee who are the meritorious deeds that take one to the worlds of enjoyment, and the holy living that leads one to the realms of spiritual glory – to Thee who are also Death and the inflictor of the suffering which accrues as the result of evil deeds.

(*Dharma* is, on one count, the ethical potency or the force or the power of merit and demerit that controls the universe. It is the governing ethical force of the universe.

The Mimamsa says that merit and demerit are not qualities (*gunas*); they constitute the potential force, which are the Extraordinary and the Unseen. This force resides in the *atman* in the agent and controls and determines the future life of the atman here, hereafter and in the future lives, which it takes through transmigration. Enjoyment or suffering physically arises as a result of the merit or demerit of the actions performed. On the other hand, austerity coupled with holiness leads to liberation.)

Salutations to Thee who are the fulfiller of all prayers and the omniscient First Cause. Salutations again to Thee, Krishna, who are infinite intelligence and the teacher of the Universal Gospel – to Thee who are also the ancient Being who revealed the *Sankhya* and the *Yoga*.

(*Sankhya* is the science of the spirit. *Yoga* is the art of spiritual communion.)

Salutations to Thee who are Rudra, the embodiment of the I-sense and the seat of the triune efficiency of action, instrument of action, and action itself. Salutations to Thee, who are also Brahma, the source of all scriptures and endowed with the power of knowledge and action.

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

The ego is 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.

Shankara says, “Talk as much philosophy as you please, worship as many gods as you like, observe all ceremonies, sing devoted praises to any number of divine beings – liberation never comes, even at the end of a hundred aeons, without realization of the Self. This realization of the Self is within and yet transcendently other than the individual ego. The realization of the Self is enlightenment of the ignorance and deliverance from the mortal consequences of that ignorance”.

Thou who are the Light of Consciousness that reveals all perceptions! Grant unto us, who are praying for it, the vision of that form of Thine which is dear to all devotees and which is worshipped by all *bhagavatas*.

(Shankara says, ‘If you do not have a consciousness, then everything is dark and nothing in the universe exists’. This corresponds to the view of the modern quantum mechanics that unless you can observe a thing, it just does not exist. This is for the reason that there must be an interaction between the observer and the observed to complete a measurement. It is consciousness that fills the bill in the material world in the sense that it determines its existence and makes possible its perception.)

Grant unto us the vision of Thee, who have the blue complexion of a fresh water-laden rain-cloud and who are endowed with four well-proportioned arms, and a handsome face; who have eyes like lotus petals, attractive eyebrows, nose, teeth, cheeks, face and ears; whose side long-glances overflow with joy; who have handsome locks of

hair, ear-ornaments and a wearing-cloth yellow in colour like the inside of a lotus flower; who are bedecked with a shining diadem, bracelets, pearl necklaces, anklets, girdles, etc and rendered attractive with hands holding the conch, discus, mace and lotus, besides jewel-chain and the like; who have shoulders powerful like those of a lion and lustrous with various ornaments, a neck beautified with the gem *kaustubha*, and a chest with *Sri* clinging to it, which thereby eclipses the beauty of a polished stone edged with gold; who have an abdomen broad and indrawn like a banyan leaf and beautified by its three creases, and the slight movement caused by breathing; who wear on Thy comely waist of bluish tinge a bright yellow cloth encircled by a golden waist-band; who have handsome flanks, thighs, knees and feet; and whose feet resemble an autumnal lotus in beauty and remove the darkness of sin overcasting the mind with the spiritual radiance of its nails. Oh Teacher of all! Thou are verily the revealer of the path to be trodden by all spiritual aspirants, groping in the darkness of ignorance.

To those who aspire for self-purification, meditation on this form offers the means. For those who discharge their duties as offerings unto Thee, their devotion provides them with protection.

Only men endowed with supreme devotion can attain Thee - the rarest of all attainments for men, the object of the quest even of inhabitants of heavenly regions, and the supreme goal of all endowed with self-knowledge.

After having worshipped Thee with single-minded devotion, which is very difficult of attainment and rare even among holy men, who would desire any blessings other than the shelter provided by Thy holy feet!

Even Yama, who destroys the whole world with a slight but energetic and threatening movement of his brows, considers devotees who have taken shelter at Thy feet as beyond his sway.

I consider not the attainment of heaven, or even of liberation, not to speak of worldly attainments, as comparable with the blessing of contacting a real devotee of the Lord even for a moment.

(The highest devotion to God transcends the three qualities – *tamasic*, *rajasic* and *sattvic*. It is a spontaneous and uninterrupted inclination of the soul towards God. Such devotion springs up spontaneously in the heart of a true devotee, as soon as he hears the mention of God or His attributes. A devotee possessing love of God of this nature desires nothing even if he is offered the happiness of Heaven in whatever way it is conceived. The devotee's desire is only to love God under all conditions – in pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, prosperity and privation.)

Therefore, may we have the company of holy men who have attained to purification of their minds and bodies by Thy holy communion – of the mind by hearing about the sin-destroying accounts of Thy excellences and of the body by bathing in the holy Ganga, which is the ablution of Thy feet. Such holy men are full of love,

benevolence and straightforwardness, and there is no place in their heart for any low passion.

By the practice of devotion of Thee, the sages attain to a state where the mind is neither drawn to, nor agitated by, external objects; nor is it overcome by dullness and sleep but stays in itself perfectly still and awake. In such a state of mind, the sage intuitively perceives the Truth.

(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.)

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 transcendence 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 where the sage intuitively perceives the Truth.)

Thou art that Light of lights, expansive and all-pervading like the sky, the *Brahman* whose consciousness is the revealer and sustainer of the universe, and whose glory everything in it proclaims.

(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.)

Thou, Oh Lord, art the free and unaffected Being, although Thy power Maya, giving rise to myriad forms (the multiplicity), creates, preserves and destroys this universe, and leads one to wrongly feel that this multiplicity has an existence apart from Thee.

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

With various rituals and kindred supports, the *yogis* worship Thee in several forms of spiritual glory, with faith in the rituals and hope in their success. Only those who understand all these forms to be Thyself can be considered knower of the Veda and other scriptures.

Prior to creation, Thou alone did exist, with *Maya*, Thy creative power, abiding in Thee latent. Then *Maya* manifested itself as *Prakrti*, with its constituents of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and out of these have come all the categories, and the worlds formed out of them and all beings such as the celestials, *rishis* and men inhabiting them.

(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 the 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.

Prakrti (Unmanifest) is the world of change in its unmanifest state. For this reason it is called the Unmanifest (*Avyakta*). It is also called the Primary (*Pradhana*) as it is the source, the origin of everything therein.

Prakrti has three attributes – *Sattva* (serenity, tendency to manifestation), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (inertia, obstruction to manifestation). Everything in the world is the product of these three attributes.)

Into the four kinds of bodies created by Thy *sakti*, Thou do enter with an aspect of Thine. A reflection of Thyself in the body is the *Jiva*, who enjoys the world of objects with the senses as the bee does the nectar in flowers.

(The Upanisads proclaim that the living beings on earth are born in four ways – born from the womb (*garbhaja*), born from an egg (*andaja*), generated from sweat or warm vapour (*svedaja*) and sprouted out of seeds (*udbhijja*). These four ways of creation cover all living beings on earth from the Creator to a blade of grass.

The Infinite Consciousness abandons, as it were, its supreme state, to limit itself as the *Jiva*. This happens merely by the creative thought inherent in the Cosmic Being, not as real transformation of the Infinite Brahman.

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

Thy presence behind Nature cannot be seen but can be inferred. It is Thou as Time, imperceptible but irresistibly fast in movement that drives, with terrific speed, all manifested beings along their course like a terrific wind blowing away the massed clouds, and ultimately brings them to their destruction by the interaction of elements.

(The true ontological Being – the Supreme I-AM is the God (*aham asmi*) of the Upanisads. 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 cosmos itself.

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 permanency 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.)

All the creatures of the world, steeped in lust and greed, and engrossed in thoughts on the ways and means of securing their worldly ambitions, are quickly consumed by Thee, the un-winking and watchful spirit of Time, as a hungry serpent might swallow a rat that it comes upon.

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

The 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.)

Even Brahma, the supreme teacher of us all, worships Thee, conscious of the limits of his own existence. All the fourteen *Manus*, the Lords of the world, adore Thee in absolute faith without any intrusion by the questioning of the intellect. Under the circumstances, which intelligent man would forsake Thy feet, knowing that his life has no meaning and is spent in vain if it has not been utilized for Thy worship?

Oh Supreme Lord! The whole world is gripped with the fear of death; but to us who know Thee, Thou are a haven free of fear.

(Renunciation of everything puts an end to all sorrow. By renunciation, everything is gained. Renunciation of the ego-sense leads to realization of the Absolute. There is total renunciation when the mind – *citta* with the ego-sense is abandoned. When one abandons the mind, one is no more afflicted by fear of old age, death and such other events in life. That alone is supreme bliss. All else is terrible sorrow.)

Oh princes! Pure in life and performing your *svadharma*, you should repeat this prayer hymn.

Ever meditating on Him and praising Him, adore Him who pervades everything and resides in you as the *Atman*.

Hear and repeat this hymn known as ‘*Yoga-adesa*’ again and again with concentration, to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

In days of yore, Brahma imparted this hymn to Bhrigu and the other offspring of His who were desirous of multiplying the species.

All those *Prajapatis*, so commissioned, are engaged in bringing forth various beings, with their ignorance dispelled by the repetition of this *stotra*.

Those devotees who study this hymn everyday with faith and concentration will surely attain to the highest goal.

Of all the blessings a man can receive, the highest is what is got by spiritual enlightenment. With spiritual enlightenment as the boat, man crosses the limitless ocean of *samsara*.

(The ocean of the world is the cycle of birth-death-rebirth syndrome, without end, known as *samsara*. He who falls into an ocean is tossed about hither and thither by the waves and the currents of the ocean. He finds it very hard to reach the shore. He suffers in the process. Similarly, in *samsara*, in the cycle of birth and death, desires and sensual actions toss us about hither and thither. We suffer in the process and cannot attain the goal of Self Knowledge. A seeker is able to overcome the *samsara* only if he has no attachment to or aversion from any objects of the world. This arises when he realizes the Self and is free from ignorance and the resultant desires, and *karma*.)

Whoever recites, with faith and devotion, this hymn imparted by me is able to please Sri Hari, whom it is difficult to please with other forms of worship.

Man attains, whatever he seeks, from Him when He is propitiated with the steady repetition of the hymn imparted by me.

Whoever, getting up early in the morning, hears or recites this hymn with faith and devotion, will be able to break the bonds of all *karma*.

Oh princes! Perform *tapas* by way of concentrated repetition of this hymn addressed to the *Paramatman*. In the end, you will obtain the highest that can be achieved by man.

2. Moha Sastra

Bhadrasva said:

Oh sage, what *vrata*, *tapas* or *dharma* was done by you to get at that world again?

Agastya said:

No one can think of getting at those worlds without worshipping Visnu with devotion. When once He is worshipped, all of them are easily attainable.

Thinking, thus, oh king, I worshipped the eternal Visnu with sacrifices in which *daksina* was liberally given.

Daksina is an offering to the *brahmanas* for participation in the *vaidika karmakanda* strictly according to the scriptures.

As I was worshipping Him in His form as Sacrifice for a long time, *Devas* who were invoked in the sacrifice came there together with Indra.

When Indra and the other gods were remaining in their positions in the sky, the great god Rudra arrived there. He, too, stood in his position.

Seeing all the gods, sages and great serpents arrive there, the sage Sanatkumar, son of Brahma, came there in a very minute aerial car resembling the sun and he, a great *yogi* who could know the past, present and future, prostrated before Rudra.

At the sight of these *Devas*, sages like Narada, and Sanatkumar and Rudra, I asked who among them was the greatest to whom sacrifices could be offered. Then, in the presence of gods, Rudra told me thus:

Rudra said:

Listen to me, all of you, *Devas*, *devarishis*, *brahmarishis*, and you intelligent Agastya in particular.

He for whom sacrifices are to be performed is the great and omnipresent Lord Narayana from whom the entire universe has arisen and in whom it is dissolved along with *Devas*.

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.

That great Lord put himself to a three-fold transformation. With *sattva* predominating in Him, He associated Himself with *rajas* and *tamas*, and created out of His navel Brahma seated in the lotus. Brahma, associated himself with *rajas* and *tamas*, created me.

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.

Lord Hari is *sattva* and He is the ultimate. Brahma, the four-faced god who arose from the lotus, is *sattva* and *rajas*. That, which is both *rajas* and *tamas* is, no doubt, me.

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

There is the trio constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is of the nature of Narayana and all living beings are liberated by it.

By *rajas* associated with *sattva* arises this creation which has got *rajas* predominating. This is well known as the creation of Brahma.

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, 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.

The actions not laid down in the Veda but are, however, based on Sastras are called Raudra (pertaining to Rudra) and it is not commended to people.

Actions not out of *rajas*, but purely out of *tamas*, lead people to ruin both in the present world and in the world beyond.

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.

Sattva pertains to Narayana, and living beings have *sattva* as the means of liberation. And Narayana is considered as of the nature of sacrifice.

In the *Krtayuga*, Narayana is worshipped in His pure and minute form. In the *Tretayuga*, He is worshipped in the form of sacrifice and in the *Dvaparayuga*, according to *pancaratra*.

Three things prevent man from knowing that God is Spirit. The first is time, the second is corporeality and the third is multiplicity. These things must go out that God may come in. As long as God is thought of as being wholly in time, there is a tendency to regard Him as a numinous Being rather than a moral Being. The tendency is to treat Him as mere unmitigated Power rather than the Being of Power, Wisdom and Love. This leads to propitiating Him by sacrifices for temporal power rather than worshiping Him as Spirit in spirit.

Pancaratra is a system of worship of the Vaisnavas mainly practised for attaining various things like health, wealth, progeny, peace, regaining lost possessions, etc. The *pancaratra* system is claimed by the Vaisnavas as equal to the *vaidika*, and eulogized. The Vaisnavas claim that the follower of the *pancaratra* system is superior to all others.

In the *Kaliyuga*, Narayana is worshipped in the manner laid down by me in various *tamasic* forms, and with the motive of gain and animosity.

The Isvara form of God, which Arjuna witnesses in Bhagavad-Gita, which Krishna makes him, behold, is the terrible form of God of Time. God in time is normally worshipped by material means. The objective is to achieve temporal ends. God in time is manifestly the destroyer as well as the creator. Because of this nature, it has seemed proper to man to worship God by methods, which are as terrible as the destructions he himself inflicts. This accounts for the offer of sacrifices in the worship of deities for temporal gains. In all such cases, the divinity addressed is always a god in time or a personification of Nature. The deity is nothing but Time itself, the devourer of its own offspring. In all these cases, the purpose of the rite is to obtain a future benefit or to avoid an evil, which Time and Nature hold in store forever. History is replete with instances that where religions and philosophies take Time too seriously are correlated with political theories that inculcate and justify the use of large-scale violence.

There is no god above Him in the past, present or future. He who is Visnu is Brahma and he who is Brahma is Maheswara, too.

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.

Men who are learned in the three Vedas and adept in sacrifices have declared that he, who draws a distinction among us three, is sinful and wicked, and faces downfall.

Oh Agastya! Listen. I shall tell you about the early times when people were not having devotion to Hari.

In olden times, the people of the *Bhuloka* (earth) performed sacrifice to Janardana, and went to the *Bhuvarloka*. There they worshipped Him and attained heaven, being liberated gradually.

Even after liberation, everyone began to meditate on Hari, and He, being present everywhere, appeared before them.

The *Brahman* – the highest Being is the Absolute, Transcendental Self. The three distinctions - Being (Existence), Reality and Truth become one in the Absolute Reality.

He asked them all as to what He might do for them. They then bowed to Him and said:

'Oh great God! All people have now been liberated. How then will creation proceed and who will go to hell?'

Thus asked by *Devas*, Lord Janardana told them: 'During the first three *yugas*, most people reach Me.

But in the last *yuga* (Kali), those who attain me will be a few. I then create the force of stupefaction which deludes people.

Oh you Rudra! You produce the *Mohasastra* (the science of stupefaction). With a little effort, you produce delusion'.

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

The delusion that veils self-knowledge is seven-fold – seed state of wakefulness, wakefulness, great wakefulness, wakeful dream, dream, dream wakefulness and sleep. These seven states have their own innumerable subdivisions according to Yogavasistha.

One is wise not to desire those experiences, which one does not effortlessly obtain, and to experience those that have already arrived. One who has realized one's oneness with the entire universe, and has thus arisen above both desire 'for' and desire 'against', is never deluded.

So saying, the great Lord concealed Himself, and I was made very manifest.

From then onwards people became more interested in the Sastras which I promulgated.

Following the Vedic path, worshipping Lord Narayana and finding unity in all the three gods, people get liberation.

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.

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

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.

Those who consider me as different from Visnu or Brahma are driven to do sinful deeds and reach hell.

It is for the delusion of those who are outside the Vedic fold that I introduced the Sastras called Naya, Siddhanta, etc.

This is the rope (*pasa*) that binds men (*pasu*), and that should be snapped. Therefore, it is the *Pasupata*-sastra which is *Vaidic*.

Oh sage! My body is of the Veda. This truth is not known by those who propound other Sastras.

I am to be known through the Veda and particularly by the *brahmanas*. I am the three *yugas* and also Brahma and Visnu.

The *Brahman* is the Supreme Being, permeating and pervading everything in the world. IT is the Supreme Consciousness. IT is also considered the Supreme Spirit or the *Atman*. By Its very nature, IT is all-encompassing and all-pervading.

I am the three *gunas* - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three Vedas, the three fires, the three worlds, the three *sandhyas* and the three *varnas*.

I am the three *savannas*, the three bonds in the world.

He, who knows this and also knows me as Narayana, the lotus-born Brahma and myself as one made different by the qualities, has right knowledge. We are essentially One; it is ignorance that produces the sense of difference.

3. Pasupata Samhita

Agastya said:

Said thus by Rudra, all the gods and sages bowed to him; I too did the same.

After bowing thus, when I looked at him, I saw in his body Brahma.

I also saw in his heart Lord Narayana in an extremely minute form glowing like the sun.

Seeing this, all the sacrificing sages were wonder-struck and hailed him uttering the *Sama*, *Rig* and *Yajur* Vedas.

Then they asked Paramesvara (Rudra) how in one and the same god all the three gods are seen.

Rudra said:

Oh learned men! Whatever is offered in the sacrifice for me is shared by all the three of us.

Oh great sages! There is no diversity among us, and discerning people do not find any such thing.

Thus said by Rudra, Oh king! All the sages asked him about the purpose of *Mohasastra* (which deludes people).

The sages said:

You have produced a separate Sastra to stupefy the world. Be pleased to tell us why you have done this.

Rudra said:

There is in Bharatavarsa a forest called Dandaka. There a *brahmana* named Gautama was performing severe penance.

Brahma was very much pleased at this, and he asked the ascetic to seek a boon for him.

Thus asked by Brahma, the creator of the worlds, Gautama requested, 'Give me abundance of crops and grain'. And Brahma granted it.

Getting this boon, the ascetic built a large hermitage at Satasrnga, and there he used to reap every morning the ripe grain and cook it at noon and offer sumptuous food to *brahmanas*.

He was doing this for a long time. Once a severe drought occurred which lasted twelve years.

Distressed at this drought and very much famished, all the sages in the forest went to Gautama.

Seeing them all in his hermitage, Gautama bowed to them and asked them to stay there.

They remained there eating a variety of food till the drought was over.

Then those sages felt a desire to undertake a pilgrimage.

Knowing this, a great sage Marica spoke to the sage Sandilya.

Marica said:

‘Oh Sandilya! Sage Gautama is like our father. Without telling him, we should not leave this place, for penance (elsewhere)’.

When told thus, the sages laughed and said, ‘Have we sold ourselves to him by taking his food’?

Again they discussed of leaving the place and decided to do so. They also created a magical cow and left it at the hermitage.

Seeing that cow wandering in the hermitage, Gautama took some water in his hand and splashed it on its body.

Then that magical cow fell down like a drop of water.

Seeing it thus hurt, he turned to the sages starting to leave and asked them with reverence:

‘Oh *brahmanas*! Please tell me why you are going to leave me, your devotee’.

The sages said:

‘Oh sage! So long as the sin of killing the cow remains in you, we shall not eat your food’.

Told thus, Gautama, who knew what was righteous, asked them to tell him what the atonement was for the sin of having killed the cow.

The sages said:

‘This cow is not dead but has only become unconscious. Bathed in the water of Ganga, it will doubtless rise up.

The atonement is only with regard to one that is killed. For this sin, only penance may be performed. Please do not be angry’. So saying they all left.

When they were gone, Gautama went to the great mountain Himalaya to perform severe penance.

For one hundred and one years I was worshipped, and, being pleased by that, I asked him to seek a boon.

He sought that the river Ganga in my matted hair be made to follow him.

I then let off the river from one part of my head and Gautama let it to the place where the cow was lying.

Washed by that water the cow rose up, and the river became great with holy water, and passing through sacred places.

Seeing that great wonder, the seven sages came there in aerial cars saying ‘Well done, well done.

Blessed are you, oh Gautama! Who is there equal to you in that you have brought this Ganga to this Dandaka forest?’

Then Gautama wondered as to how he had become the cause of hurting the animal.

He realized that it was all the result of the magic adopted by the sages (who had lived in his hermitage), and cursed them who were sages only in appearance.

‘You will all be outside the three Vedas and ineligible to perform Vedic rites’.

Hearing the curse of Gautama thus pronounced on those sages, the seven sages told him, ‘although your words will have due effect, you should not mean it for all time.

In the *Kali* age, let the *brahmanas* become such as to be ungrateful to those who do them good.

Burnt by the fire of your curse, let them, in the *Kali* age, become devotees of the Lord.

Let them be outside the fold of Vedic rites. Let this river also have the second name as Godavari.

In *Kaliyuga*, those, who come to this river and give gifts of cows and other materials according to their capacity, will delight themselves with the gods.

If, at the time when Jupiter is in Leo, one takes bath there and propitiates the manes according to the scriptures, they (the manes) will go to heaven even if they have fallen in hell, and those who are already in heaven will attain liberation.

You will attain great fame, and gain eternal liberation’.

Then the seven sages came to Kailasa where I was with Parvati, and told me:

‘In the *Kali* age, many will have your form with crown of matted hair, assuming ghostly forms and wearing *lingas*.

For their sake, give a Sastra to redeem them from the influence of *Kali*’.

Requested by them thus, I produced a *Samhita* which contained rules for Vedic rites as well.

This *Samhita* is named *Nissvasa*; and Babhravya and Sandila are absorbed in it.

Deluded by me, people, out of selfish motives, will promulgate their own Sastras in *Kaliyuga*.

The *Nissavasasamhita* with a lakh of verses alone is authoritative, and that gives the discipline regarding *Pasupata*.

This follows the path of the Veda, and whatever is outside its scope should be considered as impure.

The *Vedantins* in *Kaliyuga* resort to Rudra. Fickle-minded people frame their own Sastras, but I do not remain with them.

In yore, I assumed the fierce Bhairava form for the sake of the gods and for the annihilation of the wicked demons, and laughed terribly.

Out of my tears, which fell then on the earth, raised innumerable terrible beings.

They were fond of flesh, wine and physical pleasure, and were out to create terror in the world.

The *brahmanas* cursed by Gautama will be born in their clan. Among them, those, who follow the rules I have laid down and are of good conduct, will attain heaven and get liberation.

Those, who doubt the doctrine I have laid down, ridicule my followers and go to hell.

Formerly burnt by the curse of Gautama and now by my words, they go to hell and we need not doubt this.

Rudra continued:

Told thus by me, the sons of Brahma (the seven sages) went away. Gautama too returned to his abode.

I have thus told you what *dharma* is. He, who is averse to this naturally, is prone to do only wicked things.

4. Determination of Prakrti and Purusa

Varaha said:

Agastya asked the omniscient Rudra, ‘Who is the most ancient one and the creator of everything?’

Agastya said:

You, Brahma and Visnu constitute the Trio and the three Vedas. Like the flame of the lamp, you illumine everything and permeate all Sastras.

Oh God! Tell me at which time you are Rudra, at which time Brahma and at which time Visnu.

Rudra said:

Visnu is the Supreme *Brahman* in Veda and Sastras. He is spoken of as having three forms. But this is not known to the ignorant.

From the root *vis* meaning ‘to enter’, with the nominative singular suffix we get the word ‘Visnu’. He is the eternal and the supreme among all gods.

This Visnu who is spoken of as having a ten-fold form as well as of a single form is the Aditya with all *yogic* powers.

The ten-fold form refers to the generally held view of ten incarnations of Mahavisnu.

The great God, for the sake of *Devas*, assumes human form in every *yuga* and praises me.

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 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.

For the sake of the world as well as gods, I worship these two forms of the Lord (divine as well as human) in the *Swetadvipa* (White Island) in *Krtayuga*.

At the time of creation, I extol the four-faced Brahma and become Time. And in *Krtayuga*, Brahma, *Devas* and *asuras* extol me always.

People who seek pleasures sacrifice to me in my form as *linga (phallus)*; and those who seek liberation sacrifice to me mentally in my form as the thousand-headed. It is to this form that the universal God Narayana Himself offers sacrifices.

Those that perform *Brahma-yajna* daily propitiate Brahma, because the Veda is Brahma.

The Supreme *Brahman* is enshrined in the names Narayana, Siva, Visnu, Sankara and Purusottama.

For those who perform Vedic rites, we, Brahma, Visnu and Maheshwara are the spirits of the *mantras*. There need be no doubt in this matter.

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.

I am Visnu as well as Brahma with the eternal Veda. The three gods are really one, and wise men should not consider them as different.

He who considers otherwise is a sinner and he goes to the terrible hell.

I am Brahma and Visnu, and the Veda - *Rig, Yajur* and *Sama*. The difference is only in name.

Brahma-Gita

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Introduction

The Brahma-Gita is contained in chapter 35, slokas 96 & 97 of Chapter 37, and Chapter 38 of Brahmapurana (Part I). It belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Brahmapurana is classified as *Rajasa* and is assigned to Brahma, the god of *rajas* characteristic. The Purana takes the name after Brahma, for it is Brahma that narrates this Purana to the sages on the mount Meru. That version with certain modifications was repeated by Vyasa to the sages at Kurukshetra, and by his disciple Romaharsana to the sages at Naimisa. The Purana derives its name merely because it has come out of the mouth of Brahma.

The Brahmapurana is predominantly Visnuite. It glorifies Visnu, incarnated in various forms and worshipped in different forms and different continents. It also portrays the legends of Siva, immolation of Sati, the Sun-god, etc. For this Purana, Visnu and Siva are paramount Lords, while Brahma occupies the third position. Brahma himself speaks highly of Visnu and Siva.

In spite of the presence of a multitude of gods, the central theme of the Purana is towards monotheism. It is a strong advocate of non-sectarian religion where all gods stand on equal footing.

The Gitas that find place in *Maha*-puranas such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Brahma-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, etc propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Hymn in Praise of Siva

Brahma said:

When the marital ceremony of Lord Siva of unmeasured splendour was performed, Indra and other deities were highly pleased. They eulogized the Lord in glorious words and paid obeisance in reverence, in the following way.

The deities said:

Obeisance to the Lord whose symbol is the mountain!
Obeisance to the Lord who is the wind in velocity!
Obeisance to the Lord, the destroyer of pain and the bestower of splendid riches!
Obeisance to the Lord who has the blue tuft!
Obeisance to the Lord, the lord of Uma!
Obeisance to the Lord in the form of the wind!
Obeisance to the Lord of one hundred forms!

(The Veda declares emphatically that there is only one Rudra. At the same time, it declares of numerous Rudras on earth. In other words, the Supreme Spirit is One; Its manifestations are innumerable.)

Obeisance to the Deity of terrible form, deformed eyes, one thousand eyes and one thousand feet!

(The primeval Being-Purusa is referred to as the thousand-eyed and the thousand-footed.)

Obeisance to the Lord in the form of deities!
Obeisance to the Lord, the ancillary of the Veda!
Obeisance to the Deity who stunned the arms of Indra!

Indra lifted up his arm to strike Siva in the form of an infant lying in the lap of Parvathi. But his right hand remained stunned, and he could not hurl his thunderbolt.

Obeisance to the germinating sprout of the Veda!
Obeisance to the Overlord of mobile and immobile beings! Obeisance to the One who suppresses sinners!
Obeisance to the Deity whose symbol is a water-reservoir! Obeisance to the One who annihilates the yugas!
Obeisance to the Deity who has skulls for garlands!
Obeisance to the Deity who wears skulls for the sacred thread! Obeisance to the Deity with a skull in his hand!
Obeisance to the Deity holding a staff!
Obeisance to the Deity holding the iron-club!
Obeisance to the Lord of the three worlds!
Obeisance to the Deity interested in the world of mortals!

Obeisance to the Deity with the iron club in the hand!
Obeisance to the Lord who dispels the agony of those who bow down to him!
Obeisance to the Destroyer of the head of sacrifice!
Obeisance to the Lord who removed Krisna's tresses!
Obeisance to Him who plucked the eyes of Bhaga!

(Bhaga is one of the twelve Aadityas. According to mythology, the deities once assembled and decided upon the share of sacrifices due to each one of them. While so doing, they left out Rudra. Enraged at this neglect, Rudra made a bow and fought against the deities. During the fight, He extracted the eyes of Bhaga and the teeth of Pusan. Ultimately, the deities satisfied Rudra. Pleased with them, He returned the eyes and the teeth to Bhaga and Pusan respectively.)

Obeisance to the Deity who removed the teeth of Pusan!

(Pusan is one of the twelve Aadityas born to Kasyapa and Aditi. It is stated in Sauptika parva of Mahabharata – chapter 18, that there was a fight between Siva and the deities in a sacrifice which Siva attended un-invited. In this fight against Siva, Pusan lost his teeth.)

Obeisance to the Wielder of Pinaka, trident, sword, dagger and iron-club!
(Pinaka is the name of the bow of Siva.)

Obeisance to the Destroyer of the god of Death!
Obeisance to the Deity with the third eye!
Obeisance to the One who annihilated the god of Death!

(Siva gave a boon to Markandu that a pious son would be born to him, but would live only for sixteen years. The child was born and named Markandeya. He was educated in the Veda and the Sastras. When the hour of his death arrived, the boy embraced the linga idol of Siva. When Yama, the god of Death, came to take him, Siva arose furiously out of the idol and killed Yama. At the request of gods, Siva revived Yama to life, and granted Markandeya youth forever.)

Obeisance to the Deity who resides on the mountain!
(The mountain is Kailash in the Himalayas.)

Obeisance to the Deity with the necklace of gold!
Obeisance to the One wearing ear-rings!
Obeisance to the Destroyer of yogic power of demons!
Obeisance to the Yogin!
(The reference is to Sakti, the power of Siva.)

Obeisance to the preceptor!

Obeisance to the Deity with the moon and the sun for eyes! Obeisance to the Deity with an eye in the forehead!

(The two eyes of Siva represent the sun and the moon. The third eye in the forehead is the eye of wisdom. But it emits fire when it opens at the time of dissolution of the universe, or even earlier when Siva is angry.)

Obeisance to the One taking delight in the cremation-ground!
Obeisance to the Bestower of boons in the cremation-ground!
Obeisance to the Destroyer of the rude and the impolite!
Obeisance to the Deity devoid of garments!
Obeisance to the Deity who laughs as boisterously as hundred thunderbolts!
Obeisance to the Deity who laughs as boisterously as hundred thunderbolts!
Obeisance to the Lord of mountain!
Obeisance to the householder Saint!
Obeisance to the perpetual Wearer of matted hair!
Obeisance to the celibate One!
Obeisance to the One with partially shaven head!
Obeisance to the Lord of *pasus*!
(*Pasus* are the individual souls or the *Jivas*.)

Obeisance to the One who performs penance in water!
Obeisance to the One who bestows yogic powers and prosperity!
Obeisance to the One who is calm and tranquil!
Obeisance to the One who has controlled His sense-organs!
Obeisance to the One who causes dissolution!
Obeisance to the One who causes blessings!
Obeisance to the One who sustains the world!
Obeisance to Rudra!
Obeisance to Vasu!
Obeisance to Aditya!
Obeisance to Aswin!
Obeisance to the father of all!
Obeisance to the Supreme Being of perfect knowledge!
Obeisance to Visvedevas!
Obeisance to Sarva, Ugra, Siva, the bestower of boons!
Obeisance to the Terrible One!
Obeisance to the Commander-in-chief!
Obeisance to the Lord of *pasus*!
Obeisance to the Pure!
Obeisance to the Destroyer of enemies!
Obeisance to Sadyojata!
Obeisance to Mahadeva!
Obeisance to the Wonderful!
Obeisance to the Deity that bears the trident!
Obeisance to Pradhana!
Obeisance to the Incomprehensible!
Obeisance to the Effect!
Obeisance to the Cause!
Obeisance to You – Purusa!
Obeisance to the One who causes the wish of Purusa!
Obeisance to the One who causes the *gunas* of Pradhana to get into contact with
Purusa!

Obeisance to the One who makes *Prakrti* and *Purusa* function!
Obeisance to the One who is the doer of what is done and what is not done!
Obeisance to the One who bestows union on the act and its fruit!
Obeisance to the Knower of the time of all!
Obeisance to the One who restrains all!
Obeisance to the One who disturbs the equilibrium of *gunas*!
Obeisance to the One who bestows means of subsistence!
Obeisance to You, the lord of the chiefs of deities!
Obeisance to You, the creator of living beings!
O Siva! Be gentle in face to be looked at!
O Lord! Be gentle to us!

Brahma continued:

On being eulogized thus by all deities, the Lord of the universe, the Lord of Uma spoke thus to the immortal beings.

Lord Rudra said:

O Deities! I am both harsh and gentle to you. Tell me the boons you wish to choose. I shall grant them undoubtedly.

Brahma said:

Thereafter, the deities bowed down to the three-eyed Lord and said to Him.

‘O Lord! Let this boon be retained by You alone. When there is any need, You may grant the boon desired by us.’

Brahma said:

After saying ‘let it be so’, the Lord bade farewell to the deities and others. Thereafter He entered His abode together with the Pramathas.

(Pramathas are the attendants of Siva, known as *ganas*.)

2. Prayer to Siva

Brahma said:

The Lord Siva who removed the eyes of Bhaga said.

‘So be it!’

The Patriarch Daksha bowed to the three-eyed Lord Siva, the presiding Deity of virtue. After securing the boon from the Lord Siva, Daksha knelt on the ground and eulogized the bull-bannered Lord by His thousand and eight names.

O excellent Brahmins! On seeing the virility of Siva thus, Daksha joined his palms in reverence and bowed down. Then he began to eulogize.

Obeisance to You, o Lord of the chiefs of deities!
Obeisance to You, o slayer of Bala!
O Lord of deities! You are the most excellent one in strength; You are
 worshipped by deities and demons!
O thousand-eyed One!
O One of deformed eyes!
O Three-eyed-one!
O One fond of the overlord of Akshas!
O You have hands and feet all round!
O You have eyes, heads and mouths all round!
O You have ears all round!
O You stand enveloping everything in the world!
O You are Sanku-karna (pike-eared)!
O You are Maha-karna (long-eared)!
O You are Kumbha-karna (pot-eared)!
O You are Arna-valaya (ocean-dweller)!
O You are Gajendra-karna (elephant-eared)!
O You are Go-karna (cow-eared)!
O You are Sata-karna (hundred-eared)!
Obeisance to You, Sata-udara (hundred-bellied)!
O You are Sata-avarta (having hundred curly locks of hairs)!
O You are Sata-jihva (having hundred tongues)!
O You are Sanata (eternal)!
O One who is worshipped by the *gayatrins*, singing songs of praise! O One who is
 worshipped by those who have stopped performing any acts!
O You are Devadanavagopta (protector of deities and demons)!
O You are Brahma and Satakratu (Indra)!
O You are Murtiman, (embodied)!
O You are Mahamurti (having physical form)!
O You are Samudra (ocean)!

O You are Sarasam Nidhi (storehouse of lakes)!
 O You in whom deities abide as cows in the cowshed!
 I see in Your body the moon, fire, lord of waters, sun, Visnu, Brahma and
 Brhaspati (Jupiter)!
 You are the cause, action and effect, the maker and the instrument! You are Sat
 and Asat (existent as well as non-existent)!
 You are the source of origin and the seat of dissolution!
 Obeisance to Bhava!
 Obeisance to Sarva!
 Obeisance to Rudra!
 Obeisance to the Bestower of boons (Varada)!
 Obeisance to Pasupati (Lord of pasus)!
 Obeisance to Andhakaghatin (one who hit Andhaka)!
 Obeisance to Trijata (having three locks of matted hair)!
 Obeisance to Trisirsa (having three heads)!
 Obeisance to Trisulavaradharin (one who holds excellent trident)!
 Obeisance to Tryambaka (three-eyed)!
 Obeisance to Trinetra (tree-eyed)!
 Obeisance to Tripuraghna (one who destroyed the three cities)!
 Obeisance to Chanda (the fierce)!
 Obeisance to Munda (one with shaven head)!
 Obeisance to Visvachandadhara (one who holds the universe fiercely)!
 Obeisance to Dandin (one who holds a staff)!
 Obeisance to Sanku-karna (one having pike-ears)!
 Obeisance to Chandi-chanda (fierce lord of the fierce goddess)!
 Obeisance to Urdhva Dandi-kesa (one who holds the staff pointed upwards and
 one who has hair growing up)!
 Obeisance to Suska (dried, skeleton-like)!
 Obeisance to Vikrta (the deformed)!
 Obeisance to Vilohita (one who is particularly red)!
 Obeisance to Dhumra (smoke-coloured)!
 Obeisance to Nilagriva (the blue-necked)!
 Obeisance to Apratirupa (one who is beyond replication)!
 Obeisance to Virupa (the deformed)!
 Obeisance to Siva!
 Obeisance to Surya (the sun)!
 Obeisance to Suryapati (the lord of the sun)!
 Obeisance to Surya-dhvajapatakin (one having the sun as flagstaff
 and emblem)!
 Obeisance to the Lord of *Pramathas*!
 Obeisance to Vrsa-skandha (bull-shouldered)!
 Obeisance to Hirnyavarna (golden coloured)!
 Obeisance to Hiranya-varchas (gorgeous appearance)!
 Obeisance to Hiranya-krtachuda (one with golden tufts)!
 Obeisance to Hiranya-pati (lord of gold)!
 Obeisance to Satru-ghata (one who kills enemies)!

Obeisance to Chanda (the fierce one)!
 Obeisance to Parna-sanghasaya (one who lies amidst clusters of leaves)!
 Obeisance to Stuta (the eulogized one)!
 Obeisance to Stuti (the eulogy)!
 Obeisance to Stuyamana (one who is being eulogized)!
 Obeisance to Sarva (all)!
 Obeisance to Sarva-bhaksha (one who eats everything)!
 Obeisance to Sarva-bhuta-antaratman (the immanent soul or spirit in all living beings)!
 Obeisance to Homa!
 Obeisance to Mantra!
 Obeisance to Sukla-dhvajapatakin (one whose flag-staff and banner are white)!
 Obeisance to Anaamya (one who cannot be bent)!
 Obeisance to Naamya (one who should be bowed to)!
 Obeisance to Kilakila (tumultuous noise)!
 Obeisance to Sayamana (lying down)!
 Obeisance to Sayita (one who has already lain down)!
 Obeisance to Utthita (one who has got up)!
 Obeisance to Sthita (one who is immobile)!
 Obeisance to Dhavamana (one who is mobile)!
 Obeisance to Bhuuta (one who has become)!
 Obeisance to Kutila (the crooked)!
 Obeisance to Nartanaseela (one habituated to dancing)!
 Obeisance to Mukha-vaaditrakaarin (one who plays with his mouth, as with a musical instrument)!
 Obeisance to Baadhaphaha (one who dispels (overcomes) obstacles)!
 Obeisance to Lubdha (one who is greedy and miserly)!
 Obeisance to Gita-vaaditrakaarin (one who sings and plays on musical instruments)!
 Obeisance to Jyestha (the eldest)!
 Obeisance to Srestha (the excellent)!
 Obeisance to Balapramathana (one who suppresses Bala)!
 Obeisance to Kalpana (conception)!
 Obeisance to Kalpya (one who is to be conceived)!
 Obeisance to Kshama (the competent)!
 Obeisance to Upakshama (very nearly efficient)!
 Obeisance to Ugra (the fierce one)!
 Obeisance to Dasabahu (ten-armed)!
 Obeisance to Kapaalahasta (having the skull in hand)!
 Obeisance to Chitabhasmapriya (one fond of white burnt ashes)!
 Obeisance to Vibhiisana (the terrifying one)!
 Obeisance to Bhiima (the terrible)!
 Obeisance to Bhiimavratadhara (one who observes terrible holy rites)!
 Obeisance to Naanaavikrtavaktra (one who has many deformed faces)!

Obeisance to Khadgajihvogradamstrin (one with sword-like tongue and fierce curved fangs)!
 Obeisance to Pakshamaamsaalavadya (one who has huge musical instruments on his sides)!
 Obeisance to Tumbiveenaapriya (one fond of Tumbiveena, a kind of lute)!
 Obeisance to Aghoraghorarupa (one who has the terrible form of Aghora, a terrible form)!
 Obeisance to Ghoraghoratara (one who is more terrible than the most terrible)!
 Obeisance to Siva!
 Obeisance to Santa (calmness)!
 Obeisance to Saantatara (more calmness)!
 Obeisance to Buddha (enlightened)!
 Obeisance to Suddha (pure one)!
 Obeisance to Samvibhaagapriya (one fond of classification)!
 Obeisance to Prapancha (extensive universe)!
 Obeisance to Ugra (fierce)!
 Obeisance to Samkhyapara (one devoted to Samkhya philosophy)!
 Obeisance to Chandaikaghanta (one having a fierce bell)!
 Obeisance to Ghantanada (sound of the bell)!
 Obeisance to Ghantin (one with a bell)!
 Obeisance to Sahasrasataghanta (one who has thousands of thousands of bells)!
 Obeisance to Ghantaamaalaapriya (one fond of a garland of bells)!
 Obeisance to Pranadanda (one awarding life sentence)!
 Obeisance to Nitya (the permanent)!
 Obeisance to You, Lohita (red in colour)!
 Obeisance to Humhumkaara (one shouting humhum)!
 Obeisance to Rudra!
 Obeisance to Humhumkaarapriya (one fond of the sound humhum)!
 Obeisance to Apaaravaan (endless, limitless)!
 Obeisance to Nityam-girivrkshapriya (one who is always fond of trees on the mountain)!
 Obeisance to Marga-maamsasrgala (the jackal at the way-side with a piece of meat)!
 Obeisance to Taaraka (one who redeems)!
 Obeisance to Taara (one who crosses)!
 Obeisance to Yajnaadhipati (the over-lord)!
 Obeisance to Krta (what is done)!
 Obeisance to Prakrta (what is perfectly done)!
 Obeisance to Yajnavaaha (one whose vehicle is Yajna)!
 Obeisance to Daanta (one who has controlled sense-organs)! Obeisance to Tathya (truth)!
 Obeisance to Vitatha (untrue)!
 Obeisance to Tata (shore)!
 Obeisance to Tatya (one favourable to the shore)!
 Obeisance to Tatineepati (lord of rivers)!
 Obeisance to Annada (bestower of cooked rice)!

Obeisance to Annapati (lord of cooked rice)!
 Obeisance to Annabhujā (one who eats cooked rice)!
 Obeisance to Sahasraseersha (the thousand-headed)!
 Obeisance to Sahasraacharana (the one having thousand-feet)!
 Obeisance to Sahasrodyatasoola (one who has lifted up a thousand tridents)!
 Obeisance to Sahasranayana (thousand-eyed)!
 Obeisance to Baalaarkavarna (one having the form of the rising sun)!
 Obeisance to Baalaroopadhara (one having the form of a child)!
 Obeisance to Baalakreedanaka (one who plays like children)!
 Obeisance to Suddha (the pure one)!
 Obeisance to Buddha (enlightened)!
 Obeisance to Kshobhana (one who causes agitation)!
 Obeisance to Kshaya (one who causes decline)!
 Obeisance to Tarangaankitakesa (one whose hair floats like waves)!
 Obeisance to Muktakesa (one whose tresses are released)!
 Obeisance to Satkarmatushta (one who is pleased with six types of holy rites)!
 Obeisance to Trikarmanirata (one is engaged in the three holy rites)!
 Obeisance to Varnaasramadharmā-pravartaka (one who makes castes and stages
 of life function duly and severally)!
 Obeisance to Srestha (the most excellent)!
 Obeisance to Jyestha (the eldest)!
 Obeisance to Kalakala (indistinct but sweet sound)!
 Obeisance to Svetapingalanetra (one who has white and tawny coloured eyes)!
 Obeisance to Krsnaraktekshana (one who has black and red eyes)!
 Obeisance to Dharmakaamaarthamoksha (embodiment of virtue, love, wealth and
 salvation)!
 Obeisance to Kratha (one who injures)!
 Obeisance to Krathana (one who slaughters)!
 Obeisance to Samkhya!
 Obeisance to Samkhyamukhya (chief of the Samkhyas)!
 Obeisance to Yogaadhipati (overlord of Yoga)!
 Obeisance to Rathyaadhirathya (charioteer on the street)!
 Obeisance to Chatuspaathapatha (having the pathway in the four cross-roads)!
 Obeisance to Krsnajinottareeya (one having the hide of a black deer as the upper
 garment)!
 O Isana Rudrasanghata (group of Rudras), obeisance to You!
 O Harikesa (one having green hair), obeisance to You!
 O Trayambaka (three-eyed), obeisance to You!
 O Ambikaanaatha (lord of Ambika), obeisance to You!
 O Manifest and Un-manifest, obeisance to You!
 O Kaala, obeisance to You!
 O Kaamada (bestower of desires), obeisance to You!
 O Kaamaghna (destroyer of desires), obeisance to You!
 O Dustaduritanivaarana (destroyer of the wicked and the violators of good
 conduct), obeisance to You!
 O Sarvagarhita (despised by everyone), obeisance to You!

O Sarvaghna (destroyer of everyone), obeisance to You!
O Sadyojata, obeisance to You!
O Unmadana (one who causes madness), obeisance to You!
O Sataavartagangaa-toyaardramoordhaja (one whose hair on the head is wet due to the waters of Ganga that has hundreds of whirlpools), obeisance to You!
O Chandraardhasamyugaavarta (one who has war-like eddies by means of crescent moon), obeisance to You!
O Meghaavarta (having eddies with clouds), obeisance to You!

You alone are

Naanaarthadaanakarta (the bestower of different sorts of riches);
Arthada (bestower of riches);
Annasrashtaa (creator of cooked rice);
Bhoktaa (eater of cooked rice);
Yajnabhuk (partaker of sacrifice);
Anala (fire);
The Four types of creatures, Jaraayuja etc;
The Lord of the deities;
The Creator of the mobile and immobile beings;
The Pratikartaa (one who withdraws, that is, annihilates);
The Lord of the universe;
The Brahman;
The Source of everything;
Svadhaa;
The Storehouse of luminaries!

Expounders of the Brahman call You *Rk*, *Saaman* and *Omkaara*.
The excellent deities and the expounders of the Brahman who sing *Saaman* say frequently ‘Hari, Hari, etc’ or ‘Hara, Hara, etc.’

You are full of *Yajur Mantras*, *Rk Mantras*, *Saaman* and *Atharva Mantras*.

You are served by those who know the Brahman, the *Kalpas* and the *Upanisads*.

The *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*, *sudra* and other castes, and the stages of life are identical with You.

You are *Asramas*!

You are *Vidyut Stanitam* (lightning and thunder)!

You are the *Year*, *Seasons*, *Month*, *Fortnight*, and *Kaala*, *Kastha*, *Nimesas*, *Stars* and *Yugas*!

You are *Vrsanam Kakudam* (the chief of bulls)!

You are the *Peak* of mountains!

You are the *Lion*, the chief among animals!

You are *Takshaka* among *Nagas*!

You are the *Milk-ocean* among seas!

You are *Yajus* among *Mantras*!

You are the *Thunderbolt* among weapons!

You are the Truth among holy rites!
 You are all the Attributes, namely, Wish, Hatred, Lust, Delusion,
 Calmness, Forbearance, Industry, Courage, Greed, Love, Anger, Victory and
 Defeat.
 You are the wielder of Arrow, Bow, Iron-club (Khatvaanga), Banner
 and Chariot.
 You cut, pierce, strike and lead!
 You are considered a Thinker!
 You are Dharma with its ten characteristics!
 You are Artha (wealth)!
 You are Kaama (love)!
 You are Indra!
 You are Samudra (ocean)!
 You are Sarits (rivers)!
 You are Palvalas (puddles)!
 You are Sarasi (lakes)!
 You are Lataavallis (creepers and winding plants)!
 You are Trnausadhayah (grasses and medicinal herbs)!
 You are Patus (animals)!
 You are Birds!
 You are the Source of dravyas (objects), karma (actions) and gunas (attributes)!
 You are Kaalapushpa-phalapada (bestower of flowers that grow into fruits of
 time)!
 You are Aadi (origin), Anta (end) and Madhyama (middle)!
 You are Gaayatri and Omkaara!
 You are Harita (green)!
 You are Lohita (red)!
 You are Krsna (black)!
 You are Neela (blue)!
 You are Peeta (yellow)!
 You are Aruna (pink)!
 You are Kadru (tawny)!
 You are Kapila (palebrown)!
 You are Babhru (deep-brown)!
 You are Kapota (dove-coloured)!
 You are Mechaka (dark-coloured)!
 You are well-known as Suvarnaretas (one having golden semen)!
 You are considered Suvarna (gold in colour)!
 You are Suvarna-naaman (golden named)!
 You are Suvarnapriya (fond of gold)!
 You are Indu (moon)!
 You are Yama!
 You are Varuna!
 You are Dhanada (bestower of wealth, that is, Kubera)!
 You are Anala (fire)!
 You are Utphulla-Chitrabhaanu (full-fledged sun)!

You are Svarbhaanu (Rahu)!
You are Bhaanu (sun)!
You are Hotra (sacrifice)!
You are Hotaa (sacrificer)!
You are Homya (paraphernalia of oblation)!
You are Hutam (oblation)!

O Lord!

You are the Trisauparna mantra!
You are the Satarudriya mantra of Yajurveda!
You are the most sacred of all sacred things!
You are the most auspicious of all auspicious things!
You are the mountain that destroys sins!
You are Vrksa (tree)!
You are the *Jiva* (individual soul)!
You are Pralaya (dissolution)!
You are Prana (vital airs)!
You are Tamoguna, Rajoguna and Sattvaguna!
You are Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana!
You are Unmesa (opening of the eye)!
You are Nimesa (closing of the eye)!
You are Kaala (time)!
You are Kalpa!
You are Lohitanga (red-limbed)!
You are Damstrin (having curved fangs)!
You are Mahaavaktra (having huge mouth)!
You are Mahodara (one having huge belly)!
You are Suchiroman (having clean hair)!
You are Haricchmasru (having green moustache and beard)!
You are Vurdhvakesa (one with hair standing up)!
You are Chala-achala (moving and stationary)!
You are Geetaavaaditranrtyaga (interested in singing, playing on instruments and dancing)!
You are Geetavaadanaka-priya (fond of singing and playing on instruments)!
You are Matsya (fish)!
You are Jaala (net)!
You are Jala (water)!
You are Ajeya (unconquerable)!
You are Jalavyala (water-python)!
You are Kuticharya (porpoise)!
You are Vikaala (having adverse time)!
You are Sukaala (having good time)!
You are Dushkaala (having bad time)!
You are Kaalanaasana (destroyer of Kaala or god of death)!
You are Mrtyu (death)!

You are Akshaya (Everlasting)!
 You are Anta (end)!
 You are Kshamaamaayaa-karotkara (one who offers and carries out
 forbearance and deception)!
 You are Samvarta (dissolution)!
 You are Vartaka (one who causes whirling)!
 You are Samvartaka and Balahaka (the clouds at the time of
 dissolution)!
 You are Ghantaakin, Ghantakin and Ghantin (having bells of
 different types)!
 You are Chudaala (having tufts)!
 You are Lavanodaadhi (the briny sea or the sea of salt)!
 You are Brahma!
 You are Kaalaagnivaktra (having black fire in the mouth)!
 You are Dandin (having staff)!
 You are Munda (having shaven head)!
 You are Tridandaadhrk (one holding three staffs)!
 You are Chaturyuga (of four Yugas)!
 You are Chaturveda (of four Vedas)!
 You are Chaturhotra (set of four sacrifices)!
 You are Chatuspatha (set of four paths)!
 You are Chaturaasramyaneta (leader of the people of four stages of life)!
 You are Chaturvarnyakara (cause of division into four castes)!
 You are Kshara-akshara (perishable and imperishable)!
 You are Priya (Beloved)!
 You are Dhurta (wicked)!
 You are Ganaikaganya (worthy of being considered by the Ganas)!
 You are Ganadhipa (the overlord of Ganas)!
 You are Raktamaalyaambaradhara (one who wears red garments and garlands)!
 You are Girisha (lord of the mountain)!
 You are Girijaapriya (fond of the daughter of the Mountain Lord)!
 You are Silpeesa (chief of artisans)!
 You are Silpi-srestha (the most excellent among artisans)
 You are Sarvasilpapravartaka (he who makes arts and crafts function)!
 You are Bhaganetraantaka (the destroyer of the eyes of Bhaga)!
 You are Chanda (fierce)!
 You are Poonah Danta vinaasanaha (the destroyer of the teeth of Poonah)!
 You are Svaahaa Svadhaa Vasatkaara Namaskaara (obeisance)!
 You are Goodhavrata (one who performs holy rites in isolation)!
 You are Goodha (well-hidden)!
 You are Goodhaavratanivesita (one sought by those who perform holy
 rites in secret)!
 You are Tirna (one who crosses)!
 You are Tarana (one who redeems)!
 You are Sarvanusyuta-charana (one who has his charanas (feet or
 informants or spies) spread in every place)!

You are Dhaataa (creator)!
 You are Vidhaataa (dispenser of destiny)!
 You are Sandhaataa (one who joins together)!
 You are Nidhaataa (one who deposits)!
 You are Dharanidhaara (sustainer of the earth)!
 You are Tapas (penance)!
 You are the Brahman (the Supreme Being)!
 You are Satyam (truth)!
 You are Brahmacharyam (the soul of every living being)!
 You are Bhuutaakrt (the creator of living beings)!
 You are Bhuuta (one who has become a being)!
 You are Bhavya Bhavodbhava (the source or origin of every thing
 past, present and the future)!
 You are Bhuurbhuvah-svar (one who has gone to the worlds Bhuh,
 Bhuvah and Svah)!
 You are Vrta (surrounded)!
 You are Agni (fire)!
 You are Mahesvara (great lord)!
 You are Rekshana (having fiery vision)!
 You are Dveekshanakaanta (lover of one with two eyes)!
 You are Daanta (one who has self control)!
 You are Adaanta-vinaasana (destroyer of those who have not
 conquered their sense organs)!
 You are Brahmaavarta (one that has emerged out of the Brahman)!
 You are Suraavarta (one who makes deities revolve)!
 You are Kaamaavarta (one who makes the deity of desire revolve),
 obeisance to You!
 You are Kaamabimba-avinirhanta (one who destroys the idol of the
 lord of desire)!
 You are Karnikaarasrajapriya (one fond of the garland of karnikaara
 flowers)!
 You are Goneta (leader of cows)!
 You are Goprachara (one who makes rays spread, or one who
 makes cows graze)!
 You are Govrsesvaravahana (one who has, as vehicle, a cow and a
 leading bull)!
 You are Trailokyagopta (the protector of the three worlds)!
 You are Govinda!
 You are Gopta (protector)!
 You are Gogarga!
 You are Akhandachandraabhimukha (one who is face to face with
 the full moon)!
 You are Sumukha (having good face)!
 You are Durmukha (having bad face)!
 You are Amukha (having no face)!
 You are Chaturmukha (four-faced)!

You are Bahumukha (many-faced)!
You are Ranesvabhimukhah sadah (Always willing to be in the battle field)!
You are Hiranyagarbha!
You are Sakuni!
You are Dhanada (bestower of wealth)!
You are Annapati (Lord of cooked rice)!
You are Virat (Universal Being)!
You are Adharmaha (destroyer of evil)!
You are Mahaadaksha (very efficient)!
You are Dandadhaari (holder of staff)!
You are Ranapriya (fond of war)!
You are Tisthan (standing)!
You are Sthira (steady)!
You are Sthanu (stump)!
You are Nishkampa (unmoving)!
You are Sunischala (very still)!
You are Durvaarana (one who cannot be checked)!
You are Durvisaha (who cannot be borne)!
You are Durdarpa (having whisked arrogance)!
You are Duratikrama (one who cannot be made submissive)!
You are Nitya (permanent)!
You are Durdama (one who cannot be suppressed)!
You are Vijaya (victory)!
You are Jaya (conquerer)!
You are Sasa (hare)!
You are Sasaankanayana (having the moon as an eye)!
You are Sitoshna (bearing climatic variations)!
You are Kshut (hunger)!
You are Trsaa (thirst)!
You are Jaraa (old age)!
You are Aadhis (agonies)!
You are Vyaadhis (ailments)!
You are Vyaadhihaa (destroyer of ailments)!
You are Vyaadhipa (the lord of sickness)!
You are Sahya (bearable)!
You are Yajnamrgavyadha (hunter of Yajna in the form of a deer)!
You are Vyaadhinam-aakara (mine of ailments)!
You are Akara (handless)!
You are Sikhandi (tufted)!
You are Pundareeka (lotus)!
You are Pundareekavalokana (one who looks at lotuses)!
You are Dandadhrk (holding staff)!
You are Chakradanda (holding wheel and staff)!
You are Raudrabhaaga-vinaasana (destroyer of terrible share)!
You are Visapaa (one who drinks poison)!
You are Amrtapaa (one who drinks nectar)!

You are Suraapaa (one who drinks wine)!
 You are Kshira-somapaa (one who drink milk and soma juice)!
 You are Madhupaa (one who drinks honey)!
 You are Apapaa (one who drinks water)!
 You are Sarvapaa (one who drinks everything)!
 You are Balaabala (one who is strong and weak)!
 You are Vrsangavaahya (one who is to be carried over the body of the bull)!
 You are Vrshabha (bull-leading deity)!
 You are Vrshabhalochana (bull-eyed)!
 You are Leader of all worlds!
 You are Lokasamskrta (consecrated in the world)!
 The moon and the sun constitute Your eyes!
 Brahma is Your heart!
 Agnistoma sacrifice is Your body, embellished by virtuous holy rites!
 O Siva! Neither Brahma nor Visnu, nor the ancient sages are competent to know
 Your greatness precisely like a father protecting his son.
 O Siva! Always protect one with the help of Your physical subtle forms. Let
 them come into my vow.
 O Sinless one! Protect me. I am worthy of Your protection. Obeisance to You!
 You are sympathetic to the devotees, and I am always your devotee.

May He be my continuous protector, He who stands alone on the shore of the sea after encompassing the miserable state of many thousands of men?

Those who have conquered sleep, those who have mastered their breath, those who abide by their *sattva-guna*, those who have similarity of vision and those who perform yoga see That Brilliance! Obeisance to that yogic Atman!

As each *yuga* is about to end, He devours all living beings, and He lies down in the middle of waters. I resort to Him who lies down in the said waters.

It is the fire of the soma-juice that enters the mouth of Rahu, and drinks the nectar of the moon at night. As Rahu, It devours the sun.

Purusas (souls of individuals) of the size of a thumb are stationed in the bodies of embodied souls. Let them protect me always. Let them always nourish me.

Deities are procreated by *Svaahaas* and *Svadhaas*. To those who attain death, *Svaahaas* and *Svadhaas* are offered. *Svaahaa*, *Svadhaa* and *Ahaar* eulogize you!

Where the embodied persons ascend to and where the living beings descend from, obeisance be to those who delight but do not drag one!

Obeisance to those who are in the ocean, to those who are on mountains, to those who are in the impassable rivers, to those who are in caves, at the roots of trees, in cowpens, in dense forests, in the four cross-roads, in streets, in jungles, in assemblies, in the chambers of elephants, horses and chariots, in old and dilapidated parks and temples!

Obeisance to those who are in five elements, in quarters and intermediary junctions, to those who are in between Indra and the sun, to those who are in the rays of the moon and the sun, to those who are present in the nether worlds and who have gone beyond them!

You are identical with all. You are the omnipresent Lord, the Lord of all living beings, and the immanent Soul in all living beings. Hence you have not been invited.

O Lord! You alone are worshipped in sacrifices with various sorts of gifts. You alone are the doer of everything. Hence you have not been invited.

Or, O Lord, I have been deluded by Your subtle *Maya*. For that reason, too, You have not been invited by me.

O Lord of deities! Be pleased with me. You alone are my refuge! You are the goal and the foundation. It is my opinion that no one else is so.

Brahma said:

After eulogizing the great Lord thus, the highly intelligent Daksha stopped. The delighted Lord spoke to Daksha once again.

The Lord said:

O Daksha of good holy rites! I am delighted with this hymn of Yours. Of what avail is much talk? You will come to My presence.

After uttering the words of consolation, the omniscient Lord of the three worlds spoke the following words, succinctly put in good sentences.

Lord Siva said:

O Daksha! You should not feel sad by this destruction of the sacrifice. O sinless one! I am the destroyer of sacrifices, and you have seen this before.

O one of good holy rites! Accept this boon from me. Put on a happy and pleasant face and listen to me attentively.

O Patriarch! By virtue of my favour, you will derive the fruit of a thousand-horse and a hundred-Vaajapeya sacrifice.

The holy rite of Paasupata has been prescribed by me. The Veda and its six ancillaries are to be appreciated in the context of the schools of philosophy such as Samkhya, Yoga, etc. A penance too difficult to be performed even by deities and demons should also be undertaken. Thus, during the course of twelve years, this holy rite has been prepared. It is subtle, and no intelligent man shall censure it.

In some respects, it may conform to the disciplined life of the four castes and the four stages; and, in some respects, it may not. But its aim is the liberation of the individual soul from bondage.

This holy rite of Pasupata has been prescribed by me, O Daksha, for people of all stages of life. It releases one from all sins. If this holy rite is performed well, the benefit is splendid. O highly blessed one, may it befall you! May this mental ailment be eschewed?

Brahma said:

After saying so to Daksha of unmeasured splendour, the Lord of deities vanished along with his wife and attendants.

O sages conversant with holy rites! After acquiring His share as mentioned before, the Lord classified (ailments, fever etc) into various divisions, in the company of Uma.

It is for peace among all living beings that He classified thus. O Brahmins! Listen. For Naagas (elephants), it is the scorching of the tuft; for the mountains, it is bitumen.

It is Neelikaa (for water). For the serpents, it is slough. For the cow, it is *khoraka* (limping); for earth, it is the barren soil.

O sages conversant with virtue! For dogs, it is the obstruction of the vision; for horses, it is the entanglement with the cavity. For peacocks, it is the splitting of their tuft-like flower on the head.

Redness in the eye is the affliction of a cuckoo. Split is the affliction among noble persons.

Hikkikaa (coughing) is the affliction of a parrot. O Brahmins! For lions, fatigue is the affliction.

O sages conversant with virtue! Such are the afflictions among living beings. They occur at the time of birth, death and in the intervening period.

What is called affliction is the refulgence of the great Lord; it is very terrible. The Supreme Lord should be bowed to, and honoured by all living beings.

He who reads this narrative about the origin of affliction with great attention and without any wretchedness of mind shall be liberated from ailments. He will be gay and joyous. He will get the benefit of his wishes.

He who repeats the hymn of Daksha or he who listens to it will never have any thing inauspicious. He will have a long life.

Just as Lord Siva is the most excellent among deities, so also this hymn of Daksha is the most excellent among all hymns.

With great devotion this hymn should be repeated assiduously by those who seek fame, heavenly pleasures, divine riches, glory, victory, knowledge and other things of a similar nature.

He who is sick, he who is miserable, he who is in a wretched state, or who is employed in a dangerous task by the ruler is liberated from danger and fear. From the Supreme Lord he derives happiness, and with this body itself he becomes the lord of the *Ganas*.

In the abode where the Lord is eulogized, neither *Yakshas* nor *Pisachas*, nor *Nagas* nor *Vinayakas* will create any obstacle.

A woman who listens to this hymn with devotion and is sanctified by the Lord shall be honoured in her parental abode as well as in the abode of her husband.

The holy rites of that person, who listens to this or narrates this frequently, shall fructify without any hindrance.

By repeating this hymn, whatever one desires mentally or utters orally shall be realized.

The devotee of the Lord shall maintain holy observances with complete control of his sense-organs. According to his capacity, he shall offer oblations to the Lord, to His consort Parvati and their son Karttikeya, and Nandisvara. Thereafter, he shall repeat the names in due order. Such a devotee will attain his desired objects. He shall enjoy his cherished pleasures.

After death, he will go to heaven where he will be surrounded by thousands of beautiful women (angels).

If a person though endowed with all desires or defiled by all sins reads this hymn of Daksha, he will be liberated from sins. On death, he will attain identity with the *Ganas*. He will be honoured by deities and demons. He enjoys a trip in an aerial chariot yoked to a bull. He will be a follower of Rudra and stay in the region of Siva till the dissolution of the universe.

This has been mentioned by lord Vyasa, the son of Parasara. No one knows this, nor should it be narrated to any one or every one. By listening to this secret, *vaisyas*, *sudras* and women who are of sinful origin will attain to the world of Rudra.

There is no doubt that the Brahmin who narrates this on auspicious days attains to the world of Rudra.

Rama-Gita

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Introduction

The Rama-Gita is contained in chapter 5 of the Uttara-Kanda of the Adhyatma Ramayana forming part of the Brahmanda Purana.

The Adhyatma Ramayana is very highly respected by all classes of Hindus for its clear statement of the doctrines of Vedanta, though it is considered part of the Vaishnava literature. Like the Bhagavad-Gita, it combines the path of devotion with that of knowledge, though it stresses that the path of knowledge is the only ultimate way to realization of the self.

The Adhyatma Ramayana is a replication, in spirit, of the Vedanta which looks upon the world as due to the action of nescience. Rama, Krisna or Siva is merely a name for the Supreme Self. It will not entertain the idea of any human failing or error marring the absolute nature of the Supreme.

The value of the Adhyatma Ramayana is, therefore, to be sought not for the life story of Rama and his cohorts, but for its statements of the doctrines of the paths of knowledge or devotion. This work represents that school of thinkers in India which has adopted the theory of *anadi-avidya* to explain away the world process.

It is the parent of the Ramayana of Tulasidas which exercises an extra-ordinary influence for good on the lives and characters of millions of people in India. Tulasidas also adopts the theory of *avidya* and resorts to it wherever it suits his purpose. For instance, as in the Adhyatma Ramayana, before her abduction by Ravana, Tulasidas makes the real Sita enter the fire and the illusionary Sita play the entire subsequent role in what follows until she is accepted by Rama.

The theory of *Maya* (nescience) being the cause of the world process, the basic thought of the Upanisads, and now associated in the popular mind with the energy of the Lord, is the cornerstone of the Adhyatma Ramayana. Rama-Gita is the essence of the philosophy of the work sought to be projected by its author.

In the Adhyatma Ramayana, as in the Vedanta, the *saguna-upasana* leads to meditation on the *nirguna* Brahman. The worship of the personal Incarnation gives way to contemplation of the impersonal Brahman till the self is realized as the Supreme Self. All duality disappears, and the *Jiva* ceases to be a *Jiva* and merges into the Brahman.

However, the *saguna-upasana* is more popular with ordinary masses. The Rama-mantra or, simply, the name of Rama is implicitly believed by millions of Hindus as the only means of release from the troubles and sorrows of the worldly life – the *samsara*. It is believed that at the time of death, if a person chants or even remembers the name of Rama, there is no re-birth to him. This is due to the way in which Rama has been presented as a god to love, and an ideal to approach, to the Hindu psyche by the author of the Adhyatma Ramayana, and Tulasidas.

The Adhyatma Ramayana is read as a sacred book with all the reverence due to the highest work of religion, in the implicit belief that it will secure great religious merit. Every sloka is recited and repeated as a sacred mantra, especially in the month of Chaitra during the week of the anniversary of Rama's birth. Rama-Gita and Rama-Hridaya are the most popular parts of the Adhyatma Ramayana for recitation and repetition by the devout and spiritually oriented.

Self-Realization

Then that best of Raghus who was the embodiment of all worldly bliss, having established the very sacred fame of the Ramayana, followed the path trodden by the royal sages of old.

Questioned by the son of Sumitra, Rama recited to him the ancient stories relating to *dharma*, of how Raja Nriga was, through heedlessness, transformed into a creature of the lower order by the curse of *brahmanas*.

The story of Nriga, as given by the sage Valmiki, is that the King once gave a million cows to the *brahmanas* in *Pushkara*. One of these cows strayed from the herd, and was again given by the King to another *brahmana*. The *brahmana*, to whom it had formerly been given, searched for her for many years, but could not find her.

While passing through the town of Kankhal, he found her in the house of another *brahmana*, with a lean calf, but herself healthy. He called out to her by name and she followed him.

The *brahmana*, to who she had been given a second time, also claiming her, went after her. The two *brahmanas*, fighting over her, went to the giver of the cow. But they were not allowed to enter the palace. They stood at the gate. Getting angry, they cursed the King saying, 'you do not show yourself for the good of suppliants. Therefore, you shall become a chameleon. In this way, you shall live in a well till released by the Lord incarnating as Vasudeva'. (Uttarakanda, chapter 53)

Once, the son of Sumitra whose mind had been purified by devotion, approached, with reverence, Lord Rama sitting in solitude, with Rama (Lakshmi) pressing His lotus feet, and, prostrating himself, said:

You are Pure Knowledge; You are the Self of all embodied beings; You are the Lord in truth; and You are without form. O You of great wisdom! You are known to those who have knowledge for their vision, and whose minds are ever attached to Your lotus feet, like a black bee to the lotus flower.

O Lord! I take refuge at Your lotus feet which secure emancipation from the course of worldly life, and are cherished by yogis. Do You teach me that knowledge whereby I may speedily and, with ease, cross this impassible ocean of (nescience)?

On hearing the prayer of the son of Sumitra, Rama, the ornament of kings and destroyer of the sorrow of his devotees, with a joyful heart, communicated to him that knowledge which is declared by the *Vedas*, for the purpose of removing the whole of nescience.

Rama said:

Having, in the beginning accomplished all the duties which are enjoined for one's own caste and order, and having thereby purified one's mind, and acquired the necessary qualifications for knowledge, let one approach a wise preceptor for the purpose of acquiring *Brahma-vidya* (Knowledge of the Self).

The aspirant after liberation is first enjoined to perform the duties of his order in a spirit of disinterestedness, without caring for reward. He is to do duty for duty's sake. Thereby, his intellect becomes purified, and he will be fit for cultivation of the virtues of *sama* (control of the mind), *dama* (control of the senses), *uparati* (cessation from worldly work), *titiksha* (fortitude in suffering), *sradha* (faith) and *samadhana* (heedfulness).

The seeker is to have a preceptor, as *Brahma-vidya* cannot be acquired without him. He is to distinguish between a guru and an ordinary teacher. A guru is in the nature of an inner being sent to the seeker (disciple) by the Divine at the appropriate stage of his *sadhana* (spiritual practice) to attain realization. Age, caste, creed, gender, vocation, etc of the guru is of no relevance to the seeker. The seeker is to feel the guru in his soul and accept him as such.

All work results in incarnation. For one, who is attached to it, come *dharma* and its contrary, leading to happiness and misery. Thence, arises the body, and from it again work. In this way, like a wheel, the course of worldly life revolves without an end.

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.

Action thus leads to birth in a sphere, high or low, pleasurable or painful. There, again, action is performed with its resultant merit or demerit, leading to further birth,

further action, etc without end. In this way, the wheel of the *samsara* rolls on ceaselessly. Some times one goes up, some times down, some times happy, some times miserable, but always doing work reaping its fruit here or hereafter. This is the course of worldly life.

The root cause of it is ignorance (*ajnana*). For the purpose of warding off this course of worldly life, removal of ignorance or nescience is the only means. Knowledge alone is capable of destroying this nescience. Action cannot destroy it as it is born of nescience, and is not its contrary.

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.

Destruction of nescience or of attachment follows performance of action. On the contrary, it leads to further action with its commitment to perishable and transient results, leading to the round of birth and re-birth without end. Let the sage, therefore, avoid action, and devote himself to knowledge and meditation on the truths of the Vedanta.

One who objects to this approach says: Action is also enjoined by the Vedas as conducive to the highest end of man like knowledge. For one who has a body, performance of action is enjoined, and it becomes ultimately the helpmate of *Vidya* (Knowledge).

The Veda has declared cessation from action to be sinful. Let the aspirant after emancipation, therefore, always engage in action. But, replies the sage: *Vidya* is certain in its results, and independent. It does not stand in need of any helping agent even in thought.

The advocate of Vedic rites rejoins: Even though (knowledge) is true in its results, yet Vedic sacrifice also requires other helping agents like time, place, etc for its accomplishment. In the same manner does *Vidya*, illuminated by work duly performed, lead to emancipation in a special manner.

Some, who are disputants in logic, maintain this combination of knowledge and action as conducive to emancipation. This is an untruth because it involves a patent contradiction. Work flourishes through the notion of 'I' in the body. On the contrary, knowledge arises from the sublation of the notion of 'I' in the body and the like.

The final condition of the *manas* (mind) which follows the realization of the truths of the Vedanta, leading to pure knowledge, is called *Vidya* by the wise. Work arises from its adjuncts in the shape of actors, instruments, time, place and the rest. On the contrary, *Vidya* destroys all actors, instruments and the like.

Let the man of wisdom, therefore, renounce all work. On account of its being opposed to knowledge, there can be no combination of knowledge and work. Having withdrawn his senses from all objects let the sage be ever engaged in realization of his own self (*atman*).

The doctrine refuted in the above seven verses is the doctrine of *Samuchaya*. This doctrine postulates that the *karma-kanda*, the sacrificial and the ceremonial portion of the Veda, conducts man to the highest end, namely, emancipation from trans-migratory existence, either alone or in combination with knowledge or wisdom (*jnana-kanda*).

The *karma-kanda* and the *jnana-kanda* are opposed to each other in their nature. The former is based upon the notion of the 'I' in the body, and the reality of things of the world. The latter, on the other hand, is based upon the sublation of these, and complete destruction of all sense of 'I' in the body.

The Vendanta, however, enjoins avoidance of only worldly or ceremonial work, not all work. If it did so, there will be no room left for study, meditation and self-realization all of which are work in different ways. There will, moreover, be no approaching a preceptor, neither service to him, in order to secure from him the knowledge of the Vedanta, nor reflection upon what has been learnt, nor realization thereof.

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.

In all these ways, the mind and the senses will have to be kept engaged in various degrees of activity. In the final stage of *samadhi* where the full significance of 'I am the Brahman' is realized, all action of the mind and senses ceases gradually till the senses do not cognize objects, the mind becomes no-mind and is transcended, and the sage is one with his self having absorbed all the seen and unseen into his own *atman*.

A disregard of this truth has led several aspirants into error, and has been the cause of either unbridled action or aimless existence.

As long as, under the influence of *Maya*, there is any sense of 'I' in the body and the like, so long is there the binding force of injunctions of the Veda regarding action. Having sublated the whole of it through the saying of *not this, not this*, and knowing the Supreme-Self, let him renounce all action.

What is *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.

As long as there is a sense of 'I' in the body, the sense organs and the mind, the intellect and the *pranas* (life-breaths) cognize the external world vividly. Therefore, no complete cessation from work, suited to the course of life one has adopted for emancipation, becomes possible. The notion of 'I' in the body and the like can only be completely sublated in the state known as *nirvikalpa samadhi* (seedless meditation).

The saying of the Vedanta '*neti, neti*' (not this, not this) declares the final truth of the Self through negation of all finite existence. The final truth is not within the range of speech, touch, form, decay, taste, etc. It is only eternal, and without any beginning and end. All that can be predicated of it is that IT IS.

When *nirvikalpa samadhi* is attained, no injunction or prohibition can have any force. It is the transcendence of the mind, intellect and senses. It is total absorption in the Infinite Consciousness.

When that knowledge which destroys the notion of separation of the Supreme Self from the embodied self arises in the purified internal organ, then *Maya* together with its off-shoots, which give rise to birth, rebirth and action (*karma*), forthwith disappears.

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*.

Having once been destroyed by knowledge, how shall it be capable of showing its activity, leading to further incarnation? When it has been destroyed by realized knowledge which is pure and without duality, how shall it (nescience) ever again arise?

Freedom from *Maya* at the highest level 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 significance of the Vedic saying *Thou art That* is realized only through *samadhi* (state of Supreme Consciousness). In that state, there is no room for nescience. For the aspirant that is realized through *samadhi*, there is no further re-birth. The Upanisads declare that the aspirant reaches his goal (of liberation) as soon as his body consciousness is transcended. In other words, it is delayed so long as there is the body consciousness.

When nescience (*avidya*), once destroyed, cannot spring forth anew, how can then there be any notion of ‘I am the doer’? Therefore, independent of everything else, knowledge (*vidya*) requires nothing for its fructification. It alone is sufficient for the purpose of securing emancipation.

Avidya (Unconscious) 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 him as it were, and limits his capabilities of knowing and acting. It becomes the force veiling his original infinity. Unless his original infinity is veiled, he cannot find himself 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*. The transcendence of *avidya* (*karma*) results in emancipation.

The Sruti of the Taitiriyā-Upanisad has reverently declared this renunciation of all action. ‘This alone is moksha’ is also the declaration of the Sruti of the Vajasaneyi-Upanisad. Therefore, knowledge alone, and not action, is the means of emancipation.

The reference to the Taitiriyā-Upanisad in the verse is, in fact, to the Kaivalya-Upanisad which states thus: ‘Not by action, not by off-spring, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone did they attain to immortality’. There is another similar reference in the Brihadaranyaka-Upanisad wherein the Rishi Yajnavalkya tells his wife Maitreyi thus: ‘This (merging into the Brahman) alone is immortality’. So saying, the Rishi retired from family life.

The Vedantin questions, ‘you have shown the equality of sacrificial action with knowledge, but without giving any illustration thereof. The fruits of the two are distinct. Sacrificial action is accomplished through various instruments like actor, instruments and the like; but knowledge is not accomplished by these but by other means’.

It is only the intellect of one who superimposes the Self upon the Not-self that cherishes the notion of sin in the non-performance of action. The intellect of the sage has no such notion. Therefore, by the wise, action which is enjoined as obligatory should be renounced, as it is for those whose minds are attached to the fruit of action.

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.

For one who treads the path that transcends the three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, what prohibition or injunction can be there? These prohibitions are for the man of the world, not for one who is beyond it. This is, however, not the lot of everyone. As pointed out by Lord Krisna in the Bhagavad-Gita, ‘he who finds his happiness in his own self, who is satisfied in his own self, and who is content in his own self, for him there is nothing to do. There is no object to be gained by his doing, nor by his not doing anything here, nor does he depend up on anyone for anything’.

Let one, who is endowed with faith, through a purified mind and the grace of his preceptor, know the unity of the supreme with the embodied self through the great saying *Thou art That*, and be happy and unmoved like the Meru Mountain.

The identity of the Supreme with the individual self as taught in the Vedanta is enjoined to be realized through the grace of the *guru*, as it is not mere verbal teaching, but the passing of personal benediction, which has a great bearing on the seeker of self-realization. *Gurus* that are capable of leading the seekers after Truth to self-realization are not easily to be met, except on Divine will. Only such a guru can lead the seeker to the knowledge of the identity of the Supreme Self with the individual self.

In the beginning, one is to realize the significance of the saying *Tat Twam Asi*, (That art Thou) free from all doubt and uncertainty, and also the meaning of each of the three words *tat twam* and *asi* which it consists of. The word *tat* signifies the Supreme Self with Its attributes of omniscience and the like, the word *twam* the embodied self and the word *asi* (is) connects the two.

Having sublated the adjuncts of the embodied self as the internal-ever-present self with the notion of ‘I’ attached, and of the Supreme Self as the not-present self with the notion of the (unseen) attached, and retaining the intelligent nature of the two and their

final significance as illustrated in the indirect application (*lakshana*) described below, let one abide in the unity of one's own self.

The *jahat lakshana* is not possible here on account of the unity of the two 'selves'. The *ajahat lakshana* is also not possible on account of contradiction. On the contrary, just as in the saying 'he is the same person whom I saw', both kinds of *lakshana* enter, in the same manner as both kinds of *lakshana* enter in the unity of the two, the *Tat* and the *Twam* as free from all faults.

What is sought to be explained is the method of indirect application, through elimination, of the principle of identity between *Tat*, the Supreme Self and *Twam*, the embodied self as explained in the Vedanta. The attributes of the Supreme Self such as omniscience, omnipotence, creation, preservation, destruction, etc are the result of association of the Self with *Maya*. When *Maya* is dissociated from the Supreme Self, what remains is the pure, limitless and absolute Supreme Self alone.

On the other hand, the limitations of *Twam* (Thou) are the notion of 'I' in the body, the organs of sense, the mind, the intellect, the vital airs, the sense of mine in all that is seen in the world. By sublating these and realizing the Self as free from all limitations and adjuncts, what remains is the pure, unlimited Self. This is the method of identification or unification of *Tat* and *Twam*, through elimination.

The two kinds of *lakshana* indicated here are *jahat lakshana* and *ajahat lakshana*. *Jahat lakshana* is that where a word loses its primary meaning, but is used in a sense which is, in some way, connected with its primary sense. For example, when we say of a house in the Ganges, we do not mean a house actually in the waters of the Ganges, but on its banks. In the *ajahat lakshana*, on the other hand, the words do not lose their original meaning completely, but only to some extent. For example, when we say 'locks enter', we mean that persons wearing locks enter, and not just 'locks' enter.

In the saying *Tat Twam Asi*, the former *lakshana* is not indicated as the final sense remains the same. The *ajahat lakshana* is also not indicated, for we do not use any word elliptically. On the other hand, we mean to eliminate that which is adjoined and, therefore, we must have recourse to processes of elimination in both. For instance, when we say 'this is the person whom I saw', we imply that it is he whom I saw some time ago. The object here is the identity of the person seen and not of the time, place or other circumstance under which he was seen. In the same way, in the saying *Tat Twam Asi*, the objective is the establishment of the identity of the two 'selves' and not the time, place or circumstances relating to their existence.

The *Tat* is the Supreme Self while the *Twam* is the embodied self with its limitation of knowledge. Through the process of elimination, we contemplate the embodied self without its limitations of time, space and causality, and the Supreme Self without Its attributes of creation, sustenance, destruction, etc of the universe, but in Its true character of *Sat. Cit* and *Ananda*.

In other words, through the contemplation of and meditation on the saying *Tat Twam Asi*, the limitations of the embodied self such as the sense of 'I' in the body, organs of sense, mind, etc are renounced, with the embodied self identified itself with the Supreme Self.

This is best illustrated in what Hanuman told Rama: 'Looked at from the point of view of the body, I am your slave; from the point of view of the embodied self, a portion of your energy; from the point of view of the *Atman*, your own Self. This is my settled belief.'

The objective of self-realization is to realize the embodied self, as free from all adjuncts, whether individual or cosmic, as the absolute un-differentiated Self, beyond all specific cognition and the world process.

The gross adjunct of the *atman* is the body composed of the five elements of the earth, water, fire, air and space, in their combination with each other. It is the place of enjoyment of the fruit of action as well as of happiness, misery and the like, having a beginning and an end, and born of *Maya*.

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 the doctrine of Quintuplication. It is doubtful whether this doctrine has a scientific basis.

The gross elements are symbolic of solid matter, liquid matter, energy matter, gaseous matter in relation to the first four elements, space remaining as such. They are the transformations of the subtle elements. Otherwise, the correlativities like that between hearing and sound cannot be explained.

The wise know the subtle body as consisting of the mind, the intellect, the five organs of perception, the five of action, and the vital airs born of the five elements in their original state of purity, and to be other than the gross body. It is the vehicle of enjoyment of the enjoyer, when he is associated with a gross body. This body is also other than the self.

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.

The gross, the subtle and the causal are the three bodies of the self. The subtle body is what trans-migrates from birth to birth, and enters the gross body in each life span. Without the subtle body, the gross body is just without life.

The beginning-less incomprehensible *Maya* is the chief body of the Lord. Through superimposition, He appears to be differentiated as the Supreme Self and the embodied self. Let one, therefore, gradually realize one's self through sublation of all adjuncts.

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 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 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.

Like a piece of crystal appearing to be red on account of its proximity to a red flower, this self (embodied) appears to be of the form of the five sheaths because of proximity to them. When the great saying ‘This Purusa Is Unattached’ is fully reflected upon, It (the *Purusa*) is known to be unattached, unborn, and without a second.

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.

The self is other than these *koshas*, and is realized, as such, through contemplation and meditation.

The states of the intellect (*buddhi*), also seen here as three- fold, namely, waking, dream and deep sleep states of consciousness, are such on account of its combination with the attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. They are not the true states of the Supreme Self, for one category does not abide when the other is present. Therefore they are all unreal, and cannot be of the nature of the Supreme Self, which is unity and bliss itself.

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”.

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.

The sayings of the Upanisads *Asanghoyam Purusa* and *Dhyayativa Lelayativa* are relevant. ‘The *Purusa*, the Supreme Self, is unattached. HE looks, as if contemplating, as if moving.’ The meaning of these two sayings is that the Self is neither an actor, not a thinker. All that is perceived as action or thought is that of the mind and the *prana*. The Supreme Self is unattached, the attributes being *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ananda*.

So long as the intellect (*buddhi*), having for its root the attributes of darkness and activity (*rajas* and *tamas*), partakes of the nature of ignorance, and functions as ‘I’ in this conglomeration of the body, the organs of senses, the vital airs, the intelligent principle (*cit*) and the *atman*, so long does the *samsara* flourish.

The thoughts such as ‘I am the body; I am the sense organs; I am happy; I am miserable’, etc are due to identification of the *atman* (self) with the action of the intellect. In fact, all these notions are in the intellect, not in the self. But, because of nescience or ignorance, they are taken to be in the self. So long as this ignorance continues, the course of worldly life, *samsara*, runs on.

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

Let one, having sublated the whole of the phenomenal world through *not this, not this*, and having, by a mind residing in pure *sattva* (goodness), tasted the nectar of the intelligent *atman*, renounce the world, like one leaving a fruit after having sucked off the juice.

One is to discriminate, by way of elimination, ‘not this, not this, to arrive at the stage of realization of his self as the Supreme Self. When it happens, the phenomenal world ceases to assert itself, and one becomes perfectly indifferent to its joys and sorrows. This is, however, the condition of the *jivanmukta*, the emaciate in life, not every

one. By discrimination following the principle of elimination is meant that the *Atman* – the *Brahman* is beyond all that is within the range of word, thought and perception.

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*).

The *self* never dies nor is born, nor is it subject to increase or decrease. It is never new (or old), beyond all additions to its greatness, of the nature of bliss itself, self-illuminated, all pervading and without a second.

The embodied self that is considered, in ignorance, subject to birth, death and the like is, in fact, not subject to any of these states or conditions. Free of all these, the self is without limit, unborn, un-decaying and the all-pervading Brahman. 'This self is the Brahman' is the saying of the Upanisad – *Ayam Atma Brahman*.

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".

When such is the nature of the self, which is all intelligence, all bliss, how can the *samsara*, which is full of sorrow, appear to exist in it, or for it? It appears to exist from nescience and superimposition of the attributes of the Not-self upon the Self. On the arising of knowledge, this world disappears instantly; being its contrary, it cannot live (stay) in the same place.

The self is bliss itself; the world is all sorrow and misery. The world is not the self; it appears to be so, because of nescience. When nescience is destroyed, like darkness disappearing on the advent of light, nescience ceases to exist when knowledge dawns.

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 wise call it superimposed which, although different from one thing, is yet imposed upon another, through illusion. Just as the rope is not the snake, yet it is mistaken for it; in the same way, the world that is superimposed upon the Supreme Self is taken to be the Supreme Self, though it is not, that is happy, miserable, born, dying, etc.

In the *atman* (self) which is the cause of all, which is free from imperfection, which is the one supreme Brahman, which is without contradictions, which is free from

all modifications to the basic principle, and which is above *Maya*, the superimposition of the notion of 'I' is the first superimposition.

The *atman* (self) is beyond the notion of 'I'. The notion 'I am' (*ahamsmi*) is the first superimposition on the self like the first wave in the unruffled and still ocean. In the Upanisads, it is called the *tapas* of the Supreme Self, 'I am one; may I be many'.

The functions of the intellect, in the shape of desire and the like, attachment and happiness and the like, are the causes of the world process in its epitome; for in the condition of deep sleep, when all these functions of the waking consciousness cease, the Supreme Self is cognized by us as of the nature of Bliss itself.

'Desire and the rest' mean desire and aversion. 'Attachment and the rest, and happiness and the rest' mean attachment and non-attachment, and happiness and misery. All these are the conditions or the states of intellect, not of the self, for they all disappear in deep sleep when the intellect ceases to function, and the self is cognized in all its blissful glory.

The Self, which is pure consciousness, exists as the supreme Self of all, everywhere, in all bodies at all times.

In *buddhi* (conditioned intelligence) created through beginning-less reflection of nescience, the *chit* is called the embodied self (*Jiva*). In truth, the *atman* is separate from the being, its witness. Unconditioned by *buddhi*, the *jiva* is *Tat* (the Brahman).

The reflection of *chit* (intelligent self) in *buddhi* is the embodied self. When the reflection is transcended as in *samadhi* or in deep sleep, then the *buddhi* is also transcended. What causes this reflection is not the subject of enquiry in the Vedanta. This reflection is only considered nescience without beginning.

The Vedanta takes this fact and considers that the condition of everyday life is due to the limitation of the self by the *buddhi*. Without an intelligent self on one hand, and without the instrument of cognition on the other, there will be no cognizance of the world, nothing to sublimate, no emancipation to achieve and no knowledge to acquire. All these are figments of nescience, and disappear when knowledge is attained.

The *atman* (*chit*) and the *buddhi* (intellect) appear each to partake of the attributes of the other through mutual connection. The intelligent nature of the self appears in the *buddhi* and the non-intelligent nature of the *buddhi* in the self. The cause of this connection is the combined reflection of the embodied self and the sense organs in the *buddhi*, like the contact of fire with iron which makes the iron reflect and radiate heat.

The *atman* (self) is all intelligence. The *buddhi* (the intellect) is not intelligent on its own, but because of its association with the self. Like a piece of heated iron, the *buddhi* comes to be looked upon as itself intelligent, throwing the self into the background.

As reflected in *buddhi*, the *atman* becomes the embodied self (*Jiva*) and takes itself to be happy or miserable, born or dying. On the other hand, the *buddhi* comes to be looked up on as intelligent (*chit*). This is the mutual superimposition

Having, in the company of the preceptor and the declaration of the Veda, realized the nature of supreme knowledge, let the sage see the Supreme Self as free from all adjuncts and renounce all that is non-intelligent and the cause of this worldly life.

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.

'I am of the nature of light; I am unborn; I am without a second; highly effulgent am I; very pure am I, the embodiment of absolute knowledge; free from all defect, I am full; I am bliss itself; and I am no doer of action.

Ever-free am I; of incomprehensible power am I; my knowledge transcends the senses; free from modification am I; unlimited, unfathomable am I; I am He who is ever realized, in their own selves by the wise devoted to the study of the Veda'.

In this manner, with intellect directed to no other object, always contemplating upon one's own *atman*, one acquires purity of thought whereby, in a short time, one renounces all actions which cause rebirth, together with nescience, the root cause thereof, like a sick person overcoming disease by taking the elixir of life.

Sitting in a lonely place, with all senses withdrawn from their objects, with a mind brought under control, with the internal organ purified, rising above all means of knowledge except realization of self through introspection, having one's eye directed towards *jnana* (supreme knowledge) and wisdom alone, and abiding in one's own self, let one think only of the Self (*Atman*).

The path to salvation herein propounded is akin to Buddha's Eightfold Path that sums up the means to salvation. Complete deliverance, according to Buddha's Path, is conditional, on the following. First is the Right Belief in the truth that the cause of pain and evil is craving for separative, ego-centred existence and that there can be no deliverance from evil either personal or collective, except by getting rid of such craving and the obsession of "I", "me" and "mine". Second is the Right Will, the will to deliver one and others. Third is the Right Speech directed by compassion and charity towards all sentient beings. Fourth is the Right Action with the aim of creating and maintaining peace and goodwill. Fifth is the Right Means of Livelihood or the choice only of such professions as are not harmful, in their exercise, to any human being or, if possible, any living creature. Sixth is the Right Effort towards self-control. Seventh is the Right Attention or Re-collectedness to be practised in all the circumstances of life so that we may never do evil by mere thoughtlessness. Eighth is the Right Contemplation, the unitive knowledge of the divine Ground. The above are the means, which it is within the power of man to employ in order to achieve his final end and be "saved". One is to work out one's salvation with diligence. Personal effort is what counts for realization.

All this universe is in truth the Supreme Self. Let the sage therefore merge it in the Self, the cause of all causes. He who has done so abides in his own self which is full and bliss itself. For him, the Brahman alone is within and without.

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 sayings of the Upanisads such as ‘All this shines by His light, All this is verily the Brahman, There is no diversity here, Only he who goes from death to death sees the semblance of diversity here’, are revealing. All these declarations embody truths to be realized by introspection. For the sage who does so, the Brahman alone is in and out, everywhere.

Before the attainment of *samadhi* (transcendence of the three states of human consciousness), let the seeker contemplate this entire universe, mobile and immobile, as nothing but *Aum*. *Aum* is the expression, and the universe is the thing expressed. This meditation is also possible in the condition of nescience, not on the arising of true knowledge.

Mandukya-Upanisad declares thus: ‘*Aum!* This word is all this. ‘All that was, all that is and all that will be’ is verily *Aum*. All that transcends the three states of the past, the present and the future is *Aum*’.

The world is nothing but *Aum*, the expression no other than the thing expressed. This is to be realized through introspection and meditation till the condition, when the word and the significance thereof are both merged in that which is beyond word and thought, is reached. Even the state of contemplation where the three-fold relation of ‘knower, the thing known and the act of knowing’ is present, is not outside the pale of ignorance. It is only when all specific cognition is completely transcended that knowledge arises. All else is ignorance.

The letter *A* in *AUM* expresses the *Viswa*, the letter *U* expresses the *Taijas*, and the letter *M* expresses the *Prajna*. All the Vedas know Him as *A U M*.

The first letter of *AUM* is *A*. It is to be taken as representing gross cosmic body (universe) of the Brahman, known as the *Virata*. It is the waking state of the Self with its seven organs (*angas*) and twenty mouths, and its enjoyment of the gross. The seven *angas* or organs are the heavens, the sun, the wind, the space (ether), the water, the earth and the fire. The nineteen mouths are the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five *pranas* and the four states of the mind, namely, mind, intellect, ratiocination and egoism. The *Virata* form is also called *Vaiswanara*, as all beings are contained in Him.

The second letter *U* represents the subtle body of the Supreme Self known as *Hiranyagarbha* or *Taijas*. It has the same seven *angas* and nineteen mouths like the above, and cognizes the subtle. *Prajna* is made up of desire. It is the cosmic desire-body of the universe.

The third letter M represents the state of *Iswara*, the *Antaryamin* or the *Sutratman* wherein nothing is cognized in or out, but is the condition of deep bliss. The *Viswa* is so called because it covers all, the *Taijas*, because it illumines all and the *prajna*, because it knows all.

Let the sage merge the *Viswa* represented by A in the *Taijas* represented by U, into which it often abides. Then let him merge the *Taijas* into *Prajna* represented by M, the last letter of the *Pranava*. Let him then merge *Prajna* in the Supreme *Chitghana*, the Intelligence Absolute, for the *Prajna* is the cause of the other two, *Viswa* and *Taijas*, leading to it. Let him, then, ever realize as 'I am the Supreme Self, ever free of all adjuncts, and ever pure'.

This is the process of realization through absorption of the gross into the subtle, the subtle into the causal and the causal into the Absolute represented by A, U & M, and the *Pranava*. The final stage is the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* where all specific cognition is transcended.

Having in this way reached the state of realization of the Supreme Self, having found his happiness in his own self, and having forgotten all, the sage sits, ever abiding in his own effulgent nature, in the bliss of his own *atman*, free from all limitation, unfathomable as the ocean without a wave to ruffle its surface.

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.

This is the state of the sage where, all impurities having been washed off, his mind is merged in the *atman* or the self. In this state, the sage attains to *Tat* which is indescribable and yet experienced by him. It is not a state of void or nothingness, but something very real before which, all that is taken at the physical level as real, vanishes as unreal. This is the goal of true spirituality and the ultimate endeavour of human effort.

To the yogi, who has practised *samadhi* in this manner, who has completely withdrawn all his senses from their objects, who has conquered all enemies in the shape of desire, anger, avarice, delusion, fear and lassitude, and who has subdued (as it were, by his devotion) the Lord of six attributes Himself, (to such yogi) I become visible.

The six attributes of the Lord referred to are omniscience, ever abiding in bliss, self-illumination, freedom from and absence of limitation, and eternity. These attributes are considered of those of a Divine Incarnation such as Rama Himself.

The attributes of a Divine Incarnation are, in a way, cognized as such till there is complete merging of the seen and the unseen in the self. When that takes place, nothing is cognized. The sage who practises *samadhi* is beyond such cognition and attains to self-realization, merging into the God-head, in the state of Supreme Consciousness.

Thus meditating upon his own self, day and night, let the sage abide free from all bonds, till the exhaustion of the karma which gave him this present incarnation. On the dissolution of the body, he is absorbed into Me.

The *prarabdha karma* of one who has realized one's own self is not completely destroyed; only that which has not yet borne fruit (*agami*) and which one has accumulated (*sanchita*) is destroyed. The *karma* which has given one this incarnation (*prarabdha*) remains till it is exhausted by fruition. Then one becomes a *videha-mukta*. If the *prarabdha karma* were destroyed on the arising of self-realization, then no preceptors will be left in the world. The experience of those who know, however, is that communication of knowledge through *guru* to disciple (seeker) is possible just before the attainment of the final stage. In the state of *samadhi*, where the visible disappears completely from view, it is said that the body does not last more than three weeks.

Knowing the course of worldly life to be the cause of fear and sorrow in the beginning, middle and end, and having renounced all that appertains to the *karma-kanda* (the component of rites) of the Sastras, let the sage devote himself to the contemplation of Me who is the Self of all beings.

On the realization of the unity of his own self with the Self of all, he becomes one with my own Self, like the water of the ocean, when poured into the ocean, becoming the ocean, the milk poured into milk, becoming milk, the ether transferred into ether, becoming ether, the air passed into air, becoming air.

The state described is that of total unification of embodied self with the Self of all, the *Jiva* with *Iswara*. On attainment of that state, like a pinch of salt dropping into the ocean, from where it came, merging into it, the sage becomes *Tat* from where he came. Like rivers losing all name and form when merged into the ocean, the sage, freed from name and form, absorbs into his own self.

In this manner, even though living in the world for the exhaustion of his karma, the sage realizes, through the declaration of the Vedas and the process of reasoning, the world as a thing to be got rid of, and false, like the appearance of two moons in the sky or the turning of the quarters through defect of sight. If it does so, it will disappear from view, on the disappearance of ignorance, the cause thereof.

Even while living in the world, the sage realizes the illusory character of the world like two moons in the sky. When he does so, it will no longer affect him.

So long as one does not see all as one's own self, let one be ever devoted to My worship. Ever do I abide in the heart of one who is endowed with deep faith, and has great devotion to Me.

Rama declares that the secret of knowledge lies in un-interrupted devotion to the Lord. Those who wish to reach the goal through *jnana* (knowledge) alone find the way beset with difficulties. For the man of devotion, the Lord removes the difficulties from his path, without his being aware of it.

This essence of all the Vedas, this great mystery, has, my dear, been declared by me to you after great consideration. The sage, who meditates upon it, is freed from his load of impurities that very moment.

My brother! This entire seen universe is nothing but *Maya* (nescience). Having withdrawn your mind from it, and purified it through contemplation upon Me alone, will you be happy, free from all sorrow, and full of bliss!

The Vedanta 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*.

He, who through a purified mind, meditates on Me, thinking of Me sometimes as above all attributes, as possessing no attributes or as possessed of attributes such as omniscience, becomes my own Self and sanctifies, by the dust of his feet, all the three worlds, like the sun which purifies the world by its light.

The contemplation of the Supreme Self, both with attributes as well as without attributes, is enjoined as leading to the same goal. The one leads to the other. The devotee merges into the sage of *jnana*.

In the initial stages, the devotee contemplates the Lord with the attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc as the cause of His having the world for His body, or even as an embodied being like Rama. This leads to the state of contemplation of Him as the Self of all. This state is also merged into the state in which all distinctions disappear. The devotee and the object of devotion become one.

Having no other thought but He, ever abiding in Him as his own self, ever seeing Him as his sole refuge, the yogi becomes that which he meditates upon.

This wisdom which is the one essence of all the Vedas has been thus sung by Me, whose glory all the Upanisads (Vedanta) declare. He, who reads them with devotion and faith in his guru (preceptor), gets emancipation, and attains to my own Form if he believes in My saying.

The quintessence of the teaching of Rama to Lakshmana is four-fold. First is to perform one's worldly duty in a spirit of disinterestedness for purification of internal self. Second is study and contemplation of the significance of the great sayings of Upanisads such as 'Thou art That' under a divinely ordained preceptor. Third is realization of full significance thereof through constant contemplation and meditation. Fourth is withdrawal of the mind and senses from all worldly work till the visible disappears completely from view, and the mind is merged into the self, being transcended. So doing, the seeker realizes his self to be no other than the Supreme Self, in the state of Supreme Consciousness.

Vyasa-Gita

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Introduction

The Vyasa-Gita is contained in chapters 126 to 137 of Brahmapurana (Part III). The Brahmapurana belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Brahmapurana is classified as *Rajasa* and is assigned to Brahma, the god of *rajas* quality. The Purana takes the name after Brahma, for it is Brahma that narrates this Purana to the sages on the mount Meru. That version with certain modifications was repeated by Vyasa to the sages at Kurukshetra, and by his disciple Romaharsana to the sages at Naimisa. The Purana derives its name merely because it has come out of the mouth of Brahma.

The Brahmapurana is predominantly Visnuite. It glorifies Visnu, incarnated in various forms and worshipped in different forms and different continents. It also portrays the legends of Siva, immolation of Sati, the Sun-god, etc. For this Purana, Visnu and Siva are paramount Lords, while Brahma occupies the third position. Brahma himself speaks highly of Visnu and Siva.

In spite of the presence of a multitude of gods, the central theme of the Purana is towards monotheism. It is a strong advocate of non-sectarian religion where all gods stand on equal footing.

The Vyasa-Gita is an elucidation of the Philosophy of Non-dualism emphasizing on the unity of faiths of the Philosophies of *Saamkhya* and the *Yoga* leading to Advaita-darsanam. It emphasizes that the ultimate Knowledge leads to realization or salvation.

The Gitas that find place in *Maha*-puranas such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, the Brahma-Gita, the Vyasa-Gita, etc propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. The Ultimate Re-absorption

Vyasa said:

After understanding the three types of suffering, O Brahmins, beginning with the *Aadhyaatmika* (the organic), a learned man realizes perfect knowledge and has *Vairagya* (detachment). He then attains to the ultimate re-absorption.

The organic (suffering) is of two types, the physical and the mental. The physical suffering is of various types. You may listen.

The physical suffering and ailment is of various types such as headache, cold, fever, fistula, enlargement of the spleen, piles, intumescence, asthma, nausea, ailment of the eyes, diarrhea, leprosy, ailment of the limbs, and many others.

It behooves you to listen to the mental (suffering). The suffering arising from love, anger, fear, hatred, greed, delusion and despondency, misery, jealousy, insult, envious impatience and spiteful malice is related to mind. O excellent Brahmins! The mental suffering, too, is of various kinds.

The *Aadhibhautika* (extraneous and material) suffering occurs to men from animals, birds, men, evil spirits, serpents, ogres, reptiles and other beings.

O excellent Brahmins! The sufferings arising from coldness, heat, winds, water, lighting, etc is called *Aadhidaivika*.

O excellent sages! Misery is of thousands of ways arising from birth in the womb, old age, ignorance, death and (falling into) hell.

The creature in the womb is enveloped by fasces in plenty. Its back, neck and clusters of bones are broken.

It is excessively tormented by the scorching foodstuffs of its mother, of extremely pungent, sour, hot, bitter and saline taste. It suffers excessive pain.

It is unable to stretch or bend its limbs. It lies in the slough of fasces and urine. It is afflicted everywhere.

It gets suffocated. It is conscious. It remembers hundreds of births it has had. It stays in the womb in great misery as a result of its own actions.

At the time of delivery, the child in the womb whose face is defiled by fasces, blood, urine and semen is excessively tormented by the wind *Praajaapatya*. Its bones and joints are crushed. It is made to face down the powerful organic winds at the time of delivery. The child that is harassed, thus, manages to come out with difficulty from the womb of the mother.

On being touched by the external wind, it attains to a totally different state of ignorance. On being born (on earth), O excellent sages, it attains to the total loss of its special knowledge (of the previous births).

Its limbs are afflicted as if they were by thorns. It is pierced and split as if they were by saws. It is just like a worm that has fallen on the ground from a pus-discharging foul ulcer.

It is unable to scratch itself. It is unable to turn on its sides. It is at the desire of others that it gets its food such as milk from the mother's breasts.

It is dirty. While it sleeps or lies on its bed, it is bitten by flies and worms till it is unable to remove them.

(Thus) the miseries at the time of birth are many. Similarly, those *Aadhibhautika* (extraneous and material) miseries that the new-born child undergoes as it grows up are many.

As the child grows into a man, he is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. His mind is deluded. He does not know, 'where have I come from?' 'Who am I?' 'Where will I go?' 'Of what nature am I?'

'By what bonds am I fettered?' 'What is the cause of my bondage?' 'Is it without any cause?' 'What should be done?' 'What should not be done?' 'What should be spoken?' 'What should not be spoken?'

'What is good?' 'What is evil?' 'Of what does it (good or evil) consist and how?' 'What is our duty?' 'What is it that we should refrain from?' 'What is it that is meritorious?' 'What is it that is faulty?'

Foolish men who, like animals, are given to sex and eating suffer great pain resulting from ignorance.

Ignorance is a trait of *Tamas*. In the case of ignorant persons, although there is a predilection for doing what should be done, yet there is the omission of duty, O Brahmins!

Sages say that the result of omission of duty is (falling into) hell. Hence ignorant people experience excessive misery both here and hereafter.

Then, during old age, man undergoes many miseries. His body is shattered. His limbs are enfeebled and flaccid. His teeth are broken and get loose. He is covered by wrinkles, protruding sinews, nerves and veins.

His eyes are incapable of seeing objects at a distance. His pupils are fixed to the sky. Clusters of hair come out of his nostrils. The whole of his body shakes and shivers.

His bones are laid bare. The bones at his back are bent. Since his gastric fire does not function, he takes but little food. He is capable of only a few movements.

He experiences difficulties in rising up, moving about, lying down, sitting and other movements. His eyes and ears become less functional. Saliva exudes from his mouth and defiles his face.

With his sense organs intractable, he looks forward to his early demise. He does not remember what he experiences.

He has to put in great effort even to utter a few words. He spends sleepless nights owing to the strain of ailments such as asthma, bronchitis (cough), etc.

The old man has to be lifted up or laid to rest with the help of another man. He is disdained and insulted by his servants, sons and wife.

He is slack in maintaining cleanliness. He continues to have great zeal in eating and sporting to the derisive merriment of even servants. All his relatives get disgusted with him.

Remembering the activities of his own youth as though they were experienced in another birth, he is all the more distressed. He then heaves deep sighs. An old man experiences these and similar miseries.

Now listen to those miseries which he experiences at the time of death.

His neck, legs and hands become loose. He is overwhelmed by (physical) trembling. Again and again he becomes despondent. Again and again he remembers his past life.

He is distressed owing to his excessive fondness for gold, grain, sons, wife, servants, houses, etc. He becomes worried with the thought, 'what will be-fall to these?'

His bones and joints are torn and shorn, as it were, by great and terrible ailments like the saws that appear to be the arrows of the god of death. They pierce the vulnerable spots of his body.

The pupils of his eyes roll. He begins to beat and kick with his hands and feet. His palate, lips and throat become parched and he begins to snort and grumble.

The organic *Udaana* wind afflicts him by choking his throat. An excessive heat spreads over him. He becomes distressed owing to thirst and hunger.

It is with great distress that the soul leaves his body. He is then afflicted by the servants of *Yama*. Thereafter, with great distress and pain, he adopts a *Yaataanaadeha*

(the body for suffering the torture). These and other similar ones are the miseries of men at the time of death.

Now listen to those miseries which are experienced in hell by the persons who die.

The dead man undergoes tortures in various ways. The servants of *Yama* catch him by means of noose, etc. They strike him with sticks. The very sight of *Yama* is terrible. It is terrible to behold even the path (leading to *Yama*'s place).

O excellent Brahmins! The tortures in different hells are different. They are terrible, and the means employed are mud, sand, fire, mechanical devices, weapons, etc.

The tortures of men in hell are varied. They are tormented by saws. They are flung in the crucible. They are split by daggers. They are buried under the ground. They are impaled on pikes. They are cast into the jaws of a tiger. They are devoured by vultures and eaten by panthers. They are boiled in oil. They are drenched in slushy corrosive acid. They are cast down from a great height. They are thrown obliquely by mechanical discharging devices. The tortures experienced by sinners in hell are numerous, O Brahmins!

It is not in hell alone, O excellent Brahmins, that there is a range of miseries. Even in heaven one has no peace of mind because one is afraid of a fall there-from owing to the exhaustion of the impact of the meritorious deeds.

Again he becomes a fetus in the womb. The man is born again. Growth and decay follow. He then perishes. (The cycle of *samsara* rotates).

Sometimes the child is still-born; sometimes the child dies (later) in childhood (or) in youth.

O Brahmins! Whatever is pleasing to a man, that alone becomes the seed of the tree of his misery.

The pleasure brought about by wives, sons, friends, houses, fields, wealth, etc is not so much as the unhappiness that they bring unto men.

Thus, men are mentally distressed by the fiery heat of the sun of worldly miseries. Excepting the shade of the tree of liberation, where else can those men get happiness?

The mass of misery is thus threefold, and it afflicts one during conception, in the womb, birth, old age, etc. Learned men consider the ultimate attainment of the Lord alone as the cure for these ills. This attainment of the Lord is characterized by the feeling of happiness. There is no source of delight higher than this.

Hence learned men should make every effort to attain it.

O excellent Brahmins! The means of attaining the same (the Lord) is said to be Knowledge as well as holy rites. Knowledge is considered to be twofold. The first arises from scriptural texts, and the second from discrimination.

The knowledge of the *Sabda*-Brahman (Brahman exemplified in words) is that arising from scriptural texts. The knowledge of the Para- Brahman (Supreme Brahman) is that arising from discrimination.

Ignorance is like the pitch-darkness. Knowledge arising from sense organs is like a lamp. Knowledge arising from discrimination, O Brahmins, is like the sun.

O excellent Sages! Listen what Manu, too, has said after remembering the meaning of the Vedic texts, as I recount in this context.

Two 'Brahmans' are to be comprehended, that is, *Sabda*-Brahman and *Para*-Brahman.

One who is well-conversant with the *Sabda*-Brahman attains to the Para-Brahman. The Atharva Veda says: 'Two types of learning are to be understood.'

The attainment of the *Akshara* (Imperishable) is by means of *Paraa- Vidya* (superior knowledge). The *Aparaa-Vidya* (the subsidiary or secondary type of learning) is the mastery of Veda, etc.

Know you all that Omnipresent Eternal Material Cause of all beings, which is unmanifest, which is beyond time, which is difficult to ponder over, which is unborn, which is devoid of change, which cannot be pointed out, which has no form, which does not possess limbs or organs, and which has no other cause.

Every thing worthy of being pervaded is pervaded by IT and sages see (realize) IT. That is the Brahman. That is the greatest abode. That should be meditated upon by those who desire liberation.

IT is mentioned in the statements of the Veda. IT is subtle. IT is the greatest region of Visnu. Visnu is called Bhagavan (Lord), who knows the origin and dissolution, and the advent and departure of all living beings and inanimate objects as well as *Vidya* (Learning) and *Avidya* (Ignorance).

(The word Bhagavan connotes knowledge, power, potentiality, ability to rule, vigour and all types of splendour except those qualities that are to be despised and discarded.)

All the living beings reside in the Supreme Soul.

Hence Vaasudeva is named Sarvatman, the Soul of all. Prajapati (Brahma) mentioned this formerly to the sages when he was asked to comment upon the names of

Vaasudeva, the endless, truthfully. As the Lord abides in the living beings and the living beings abide in Him, He, Vaasudeva, is the creator and dispenser of the worlds. He is the Supreme Lord.

He is *Saguna* (having attributes) and yet transcends all beings, *Prakrti*, *gunas* and *doshas* (merits and demerits). As the entire universe is enveloped by Him, He is Akhilaatman (Soul of all). He transcends all physicality.

He is possessed of all splendid qualities. With a small portion of His infinite power, He maintains the creation and annihilation of all living beings. Voluntarily He assumes a large physical body of His choice. He accomplishes everything that is conducive to the welfare of the world.

He is the sole receptacle of His power, vigour and other qualities. He is greater than the greatest. There is no obstacle unto His splendour, power and ability to rule. In the great Lord, than whom there is no greater Lord, there are no pains, etc.’

He is the Lord named Paramesvara. He has both the individual and cosmic collective forms. His form is both manifest and un-manifest. He is the Lord of all. He is the Eye of all. He knows everything. He has all powers.

That, whereby this Pure, Supreme One (free from impurity and devoid of all defects) is comprehended, perceived or attained, is *Jnana* (Knowledge). That which is other than this is *ajnana* (ignorance).

2. The Practice of Yoga

The sages said:

Now tell us the yoga which is an antidote to the contact with miseries. On understanding it, we shall come in unison with the unchanging Purushottama (the Eternal Supreme Soul).

Suta said:

On hearing their words, the highly delighted Krisna-Dvaipayana, the Yogi, the most excellent among those who understand yoga, said thus:

Vyasa said:

O Brahmins! Listen. I shall recount yoga that destroys worldly existence. By practising it, a yogi shall attain to liberation which is extremely difficult to access.

At the outset, the devotee (seeker) shall propitiate the preceptor devoutly and listen to the yogic scriptural texts. He must then efficiently master Itihasa, Purana and Veda.

The intelligent one shall fully understand the diet (of a yogi), the pitfalls during the practice of yoga, and the proper time and place for the same. He shall be free of the influence of the pairs of opposites. He shall desist from hoarding possessions, and then practise *yoga*.

Flour of fried grains, rice gruel, butter-milk, roots, fruits, milk, barley food, ears of corn and oil cakes are conducive to the steady practice of yoga.

One shall never practise yoga when the mind is unhappy, when one is (excited), weary or hungry, when the mutually conflicting pairs of opposites are present, when it is very cold, when it is very hot, and when there is too much of wind.

One shall not practise yoga in a place which is very noisy, close to water or near fire. One shall not practise it in a dilapidated cow-pen, a cross-road, a place infested by reptiles, a cremation ground, or on the banks of a river. One shall not practise in a monastery, an anthill, a dangerous place or near a well. One shall not practise it on a heap of dry leaves.

If, out of foolishness, anyone were to practise yoga without taking into consideration the above restrictions as to places, certain defects arise causing obstacles. I shall describe them.

Deafness, sluggishness, loss of memory, dumbness, blindness and fever are produced immediately. Similarly ignorance is caused.

Hence (arrangement for) safety should always be made in every possible way by a person conversant with yoga, since the physical body is the means to achievement of virtue, wealth, love and liberation.

A lonely hermitage, a secret place (one with privacy), a place free from noise, fear and (unnecessary) movements, a clean vacant house and a beautiful secluded temple are the suitable places for the practice of yoga.

The first or the last *yama* (a period of three hours) of the night or in the forenoon or at midday is the right time for practice of yoga.

A devotee shall keep his mind pure and well-concentrated. His diet shall be proper. He shall control his sense-organs.

He shall be seated facing east on a beautiful seat that is comfortable and steady. It shall be neither too raised up, nor too much depressed.

The devotee shall be pure, truthful in speech and devoid of desire. He shall observe moderate periods of sleep. He shall subdue anger. He shall be engaged in what is conducive to the welfare of living beings. He shall put up with the inconvenience of suffering the pairs of opposites (such as excessive heat and severe cold). He shall be self-possessed. He shall keep his body, legs and head in a steady posture.

He shall place both the hands on the navel. He shall be calm. He shall be seated in the lotus posture. The eyes should be fixed on the tip of the nose. He shall control his vital airs and speech. All the sense organs with the mind shall be withdrawn into the heart (soul or spirit). Otherwise silent, he shall utter the *Pranava* (Aum) continuously with the mouth well-covered. He shall be steady.

He shall subdue the activities of *tamas* by means of *rajas* and those of *rajas* by means of *sattva*. He shall maintain a pure and quiet posture with the eyes closed. (Thus) the practitioner of yoga shall always be in unison with Purushottama, the bestower of salvation, who dwells in the cavity of his lotus-like heart, who is Omnipresent and who is Unsullied.

At the outset, he shall fix the sense organs, the organs of action and the elements in his soul. He shall unite his soul with the Supreme Soul. It is then that the devotee (seeker) performs yoga.

The supreme region is characterized by the hundredth part of the tip of a hair (that is, it is very subtle). The yogi devoted to meditation sees it by the lamp of his mind. The practitioner of yoga becomes capable of withdrawing the sense organs like a turtle that withdraws its limbs under its back.

If the mind of a person is able to find its ultimate end in the Supreme Soul after abandoning all sensuous objects, his success in yoga is assured.

When the mind is free from sensuous objects as the yogi is in communion with the Supreme Brahman in the course of his ecstatic experience, and the mind gets dissolved in the Supreme Brahman, he attains to the highest state of bliss.

When the mind of the yogi is disengaged from every sort of activity after attaining to the highest state of bliss, he attains to salvation.

By the power of yoga, the yogi attains to the Pure Purushottama who is termed the fourth state of consciousness that transcends the three preceding states (awake, dream and deep-sleep states). There is no doubt that the yogi is liberated.

A yogi who is free of desires for any object of lust, who is pleasing to look at in any posture whatsoever (or who sees pleasant things every where), and who is aware of transience of everything shall be liberated and not otherwise.

He who is conversant with yoga shall not indulge in the objects of senses. With absence of attachment to any objects and regular practice of yoga, he shall get undoubtedly liberated.

Yoga is not achieved merely by resorting to the lotus posture or by concentrating on the tip of the nose. The unison (sublation) of the mind and the sense-organs with the soul is called yoga.

O excellent sages! I have thus recounted to you the yoga that bestows liberation, the cause of release from worldly bondage. What else do you wish to hear?

Lomaharsana said:

On hearing his words they said: 'Well done, well done'. After praising and honouring Vyasa, they began to ask him once again.

3. Review of Saamkhya and Yoga - I

The sages said:

O Sage! O excellent Brahmin! We are not satiated imbibing the verbal nectar coming out of the ocean of your mouth.

Hence, O Sage! Describe in detail the yoga that bestows salvation. O Most-excellent one among the bipeds! We wish to hear about Saamkhya, too.

O Sage! How does an intelligent Brahmin, well versed in the Veda, the performer of sacrifices, an intelligent devotee devoid of jealousy, and one whose mind dwells on truth and virtue attain to the Brahman?

Does he attain it by performing austerities, by living a celibate life, by renouncing everything, by means of his intellect, or by resorting to thought propounded by Saamkhya or Yoga? Please tell us.

By what means does a man attain concentration of mind and control over senses? It behooves you to explain to us.

Vyasa said:

No one achieves (spiritual attainment) without Knowledge and austerity, without subduing the sense organs or without renouncing everything.

All the major elements are the earlier creation of the Self-born Lord. They are fixed into the bodies of all living beings.

The physical body is from the Earth element. The viscosity is due to the Water element. The eyes are from the Fire element. The Air element is the support of *Prana* and *Apana* (that is, the organic gases). The Space (Ether) element is the inner cavity of the embodied beings such as the bowels, etc.

The deities presiding over the various parts of the body are Visnu at the time of departure, Indra over the physical strength, the Fire-god in the bowels and the interstices of quarters over the ears, Sarasvati, the goddess of speech over the ears and the tongue, etc.

Ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose together with the five organs of action are the ten sense-organs (*indriyas*). They are the means of food in-take and for apprehending sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. One shall always know the sense-objects as separate from the sense-organs.

The mind is in unison with the sense-organs just as the non-poisonous snake is in company with (animals) beyond its control. The individual soul stationed in the heart is always in unison with the mind.

The ten sense-organs, objects of senses, intrinsic nature, consciousness, mind, vital airs namely *Prana* and *Apana*, and the *Jiva* (the individual soul) are eternally present in the physical bodies of the embodied beings.

There is no support unto the *sattva*. What are termed by the word *guna* are not the conscious ones. The splendour creates *sattva*, and by no means the *gunas*.

Thus the physical body consists of seventeen entities, and it is enveloped by sixteen qualities (*gunas*). O Brahmins! The wise sage sees by means of his mind the Soul within the soul.

It cannot be perceived by the eye or by the sense-organs. It is by means of the illuminated mind that the higher Soul is revealed.

The *atman* (soul) is devoid of sound, touch and colour; it is free of taste and smell; it has neither form nor sense-organs. One shall feel it in one's own body.

One can feel that which is un-manifest in all the physical bodies and that which is excessively honoured among mortals is capable of becoming the Brahman after one's demise.

Wise sages view the *Atman* equally in a Brahmin richly endowed with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog or in an outcaste.

The One Soul abides in all living beings, mobile and immobile. The visible worlds are pervaded by IT.

When one sees the Soul in all living beings and all living beings in the Soul, the individual soul becomes identical with the Brahman.

The individual soul is the Supreme Soul to the extent to which the individual soul sees and understands the Supreme Soul. He who knows this is capable of immortality.

The Soul has no region, as IT is all-pervasive. Even deities seeking the region of the Inner Soul of all living beings and devoted to the welfare of all living beings are deluded.

Just as is the movement of birds in the sky or that of the fishes in the water imperceptible, so also is the movement of those who have achieved Knowledge.

Kala (Time, god of death) cooks all living beings in their soul by means of the Soul. But nobody knows wherein *Kala* itself is cooked.

The Soul is neither above, nor on the sides, nor below, nor in front, nor in the middle. No one ever seizes IT.

The worlds are stationed in IT. There is nothing extraneous to IT. Even if one has the speed of the wind and one goes forth ahead like an arrow discharged from the bowstring, one shall never reach the end of the Ultimate Cause.

There is nothing subtler than IT; there is nothing that is grosser than IT.

IT has hands and feet all around; IT has eyes, heads and face all around; IT has ears all around; IT stands up enveloping everything in the world.

IT is minuter than the minutest fundamental particle; IT is greater than the greatest. Though IT abides steadfastly in all living beings, yet IT is beyond perception.

There are two states of the Atman, that is, the imperishable and the perishable. The perishable one is attached to all living beings; the imperishable is Divine and Immortal.

The *Hamsa* (swan, here the individual soul) builds for itself a city with nine gates (the outlets of every human being). The individual soul controls the body invariably. It is so in regard to all living beings, whether mobile or immobile.

Super-seers say that the swan-like property of the unborn soul comes from the fact that it discards doubtful alternatives and decides upon one.

What is termed by the word *Hamsa* is the perishable individual body with its attributes. What is imperishable is the unchangeable one. He who knows this attains to the Imperishable, and discards vital airs, and with that his very birth.

Vyasa said:

O Brahmins! You had asked me, and so *Saamkhya*, which is combined with perfect Knowledge, has been duly and truthfully recounted by me.

Henceforth, O Brahmins, I shall recount yoga. The unity of intellect and mind as well as of all the sense-organs (is to be understood). This knowledge is the highest one. It is the knowledge of the all-pervading Soul.

It can be understood only after eradicating the defects of yoga which (seers) know to be five in number. It can be understood by one who is tranquil, one who has controlled one's senses, one who practices spiritual exercises, one who takes delight in the soul, one who is enlightened and one whose activities are pure.

The five defects are lust, anger, greed, fear and slumber.

One conquers anger by practising mental tranquility and lust by avoiding lustful thoughts.

A self-possessed one is fit to eradicate slumber by resorting to *sattva* (activities).

By the practice of mental fortitude, one shall guard oneself against sexual lust and gluttony.

One shall guard hands and feet by means of the eye.

One shall guard eyes and ears by means of the mind.

One shall guard one's mind and speech by means of good activity.

One shall eschew fear by means of vigilance and attention.

One shall eradicate arrogance by resorting to intelligent men.

One shall be watchfully alert and conquer the defects of yoga.

One shall bow down to the sacred fires, Brahmins and deities.

One shall avoid arrogant speech coupled with violence.

One shall speak words pleasing to the ear and the mind.

One who has the Knowledge of the Brahman perceives oneself as the entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings. He becomes identical with all living beings.

Meditation, self-study of the Veda, charitable gifts, truthfulness, shyness, straightforwardness, forgiveness, cleanliness, purity of the soul and the control of senses are the means by which one's merit increases and sin decreases.

The devotee practising yoga shall be impartial to all living beings. He shall sustain himself with things available; he shall shed his sins; he shall conquer the sense-organs; and he shall take limited diet. He shall then become brilliant. After subduing lust and anger, he shall resort to the region of the Brahman. He shall maintain purity of the body and mind. Early in the night as well as early in the morning, he shall fix his mind on the soul.

A man has five sense organs. Even if one of them is moistened, his intellect begins to flow out like water from the foot of a mountain.

Just as the killer of fish takes turtles, so the seeker shall take the essence of the mind at the outset. The devotee who is conversant with yoga shall then control ear, eye, tongue and nose. Thereafter if he controls them and fixes them in the mind, he discharges all conceptions (mental fancies) and retains the mind in the soul.

If and when he fixes the five sense-organs in the mind and the heart, when these sense-organs, with the mind as the sixth, abide in the *atman*, he attains to the Brahman. He sees his *atman* in the *Atman*. It is like the flame that shines free of smoke; it is like the brilliant sun; it is like the fire of lightning in the sky.

Everything is perceived there. Since IT is all-pervading, IT is seen everywhere. Noble-souled Brahmins who are wise, bold, have great intelligence, and who are engaged in the welfare of all living beings see IT.

The devotee shall practise thus for a limited period. Keen in the practice of the holy rites, he shall seat himself in a secluded spot and attain to similarity with the Imperishable One.

There are some pitfalls in the achievement of yogic power. The devotee shall avoid them. They are delusion, error, deliberation; miraculous results in regard to smelling, hearing, seeing and touching; ability to bear cold and heat, gaseous shape; presence of mind and obstacles. By yogic practice, he should control all these. The devotee who understands Reality shall ignore the pitfalls. By means of his equanimity, he shall cause them to recede. The devotee, like a sage practising silence, shall practise yoga with perfect mental purity.

He shall practise it on the top of a mountain, in a monastery or under a tree.

Just as a merchant who is worried over his articles of trade puts them into a safe, so the aspirant after yoga shall restrain his sense-organs and concentrate his mind. His mind shall never get fed up with the yogic practice.

He shall adopt means whereby the unsteady mind can be put under control. He shall never swerve there-from. He shall steadily resort to the yogic practice. He shall take up vacant rooms for residence, and maintain concentration. Neither mentally nor verbally nor physically shall he proceed out of bounds. He shall be indifferent to everything worldly. He shall maintain restrictions on his diet. He shall be impartial to everything, whether obtained or not obtained.

Whether anyone congratulates him and wishes him or not, he shall be impartial to one and all. He shall not wish for either welfare or disaster of anyone.

He shall not be delighted with a gain nor worried for a loss. He shall be impartial to all living beings. He shall thus be one having properties similar to those of the wind.

Within six months, the Brahman approaches that devotee whose soul has become healthy and normal, who views everything impartially, who has become virtuous and perfect, and who is perpetually engaged in yogic practice.

(Thus), the yogi is in a position to view a clod of earth, a piece of rock and an ingot of gold impartially. On seeing others distressed owing to pain, he shall not be deluded, nor shall he swerve from his path.

Even a man of very low caste or a woman desirous of virtue shall attain to the supreme goal through this path.

On realizing this Unborn, Ancient, Un-ageing, Eternal (Lord) who is Imperceptible and who is beyond the ken of sense-organs, O Brahmins, intelligent men attain to equality with the Brahman, a goal from which there is no return.

4. Review of Saamkhya and Yoga - II

The sages said:

Should the Vedic injunction be ‘Perform rites and renounce them’? Whither do they go by means of *Vidya* (learning), and what do they (the performers) attain to by means of holy rites?

We wish to hear this. Your Holiness may be pleased to explain it to us. There is a mutual inconsistency in this (injunction) because both are opposed to each other.

Vyasa said:

Listen, O leading Sages! I shall briefly explain the *Kshara* (perishable) and *Akshara* (imperishable) in the form of holy rites and Knowledge about which you have asked me.

Listen now, O Brahmins, to the question whither they go by means of learning and what they attain by means of holy rites. The reply to this (question) is intricate and complex.

It is but proper to say that Dharma (virtuous action) exists. In the same context, if anyone were to say that it does not exist, then this shall be tantamount to saying that this resembles a *Yaksha* and that there is no *Yaksha*.

There are the two paths wherein the Veda is well founded. Dharma is characterized by *Pravrtti* (activity taking active part in worldly life). The other part is *Nivrtti* (the mode of action leading the soul from the world for salvation).

A man is ordinarily bound by activity. But he is liberated only by means of *Vidya* (Knowledge - *Nivrtti*). Hence ascetics, the wise ones, do not engage themselves in worldly activity.

On account of activity (by performing various rites), one is reborn after death into an embodied form consisting of sixteen constituents, that is, sense-organs, etc. On account of Knowledge, one is transformed into the Eternal Un-manifest Brahman, the *Akshara* or Imperishable One.

Those possessed of inferior intellect praise karma (performance of holy rites). Thereby they attain to a series of bodies to indulge themselves in. They perform worship.

Those who have acquired the highest intellect, those who perceive the efficiency of *Dharma* do not praise karma, like one who drinks the river water and so does not praise the well.

One attains to happiness and misery, birth and non-birth, as a result of karma. By Knowledge, one attains to that after reaching which one never feels sorry and is ever in bliss.

On attainment of Knowledge, the region of the Brahman, one does not die, one is not reborn, one does not become old and one does not decay.

It is where the Supreme Brahman is. IT is Un-manifest, Unmoving and Fixed. IT is not split and analyzed. IT has no extension. IT is Immortal. The devotee, who understands the esoteric doctrine of yoga, (attains to IT).

Those who are impartial to all, those who are friendly to all, those who are engaged in everything conducive to the welfare of all living beings are not affected by pairs of opposites or by mental activities.

The Purusa possessed of Knowledge is different from the Purusa possessed of karma. O Brahmins! The moon that stands with its full complement of subtle digits is different from the sense of touch it has.

This has been mentioned by the sage, and it is sung in detail. It cannot be seen or recounted like a spoke in a revolving wheel in the sky.

The embodied form has the full complement of all digits. It has eleven created things within itself. O Brahmins! Understand it to be of the nature of *karma* and *gunas* (qualities).

The splendid *atman* that has resorted to the physical body like the moon in the sky should be known as *Kshetrajna*. It is eternal. It has realized the Brahman by means of yoga.

Tamas, *Rajas* and *Sattva* should be known as the qualities of the *Jiva* (individual soul). The *Jiva* has all the qualities of the Supreme Soul.

They (the wise sages) say that consciousness is innate in the *Jiva*. It activates the qualities of the *Jiva*. Thereafter, those who allow importance to the physical body say that they (the qualities of the *Jiva*) can create seven worlds.

Vyasa said:

The creatures (living beings) of *Prakriti* are known as (individual souls). They do not, however, comprehend their souls.

The individual soul performs the activities of the living being through the sense organs, with the mind as the sixth among them, just as the sober charioteer manages his chariot by means of superb well-controlled horses.

The sense-objects are greater than the sense-organs; the mind is greater than the sense-objects; the intellect is greater than the mind; the great principle known as *atman* is greater than the intellect; the Un-manifest One is greater than all these. The Immortal One is greater than the Un-manifest. There is nothing greater than the Immortal. That is the climax. That is the supreme goal.

Thus the *atman* that is hidden in all living beings is not easily revealed. It is perceived by persons of subtle vision by means of perfect, subtle intellect.

The yogi shall cause his sense-organs including the mind to dissolve in the inner soul by means of his intellect. He shall not ponder over the sense-objects through (the activities of) the sense-organs. He shall not think at all by means of his mind. He shall merge it with the soul by means of Knowledge and make it perfect in meditation. He shall thereby attain to tranquility of the soul. He shall not have anyone else to rule over him. He shall go to the supreme region.

One who slavishly submits to one's sense organs or one whose faculty of memory is shaken becomes a victim of death by yielding oneself. But if one subdues all (wishful) thoughts and directs the mind towards *sattva*, after stabilizing the mind in *sattva*, one shall become victorious over death.

By means of clarity of thought (vision), the ascetic eschews the auspicious and inauspicious. One whose soul is pleased abides in the *Atman*, and attains to everlasting bliss.

The clearness (clarity) of the mind has varied characteristics. It is like happiness during slumber. It is like a lamp that shines without flickering, in a place not affected by wind. Similarly, one who practices yoga early in the night or early in the morning by uniting the *atman* (individual soul) with the *Atman* (Supreme Soul) sees the *Atman* in the *atman*. Such a seeker shall have to limit his diet and purify his senses.

This is the secret of the Veda. It is unparalleled; it is free from ailments; it convinces one about the existence of the *Atman*. One shall impart this sacred doctrine to one's son. This is the nectar that has resulted by churning for ten thousand years the wealth of all virtuous discourses and truthful narratives.

Just as butter is produced out of curd and as fire is produced from the sacrificial twig, so also this Knowledge is acquired for the salvation of wise scholars.

This Knowledge should be imparted to those who have completed the stage of *Brahma-charya*. This should never be mentioned to one who is not tranquil, who has no control over one's sense-organs, who does not perform austerities, who has not mastered the Veda, who is not obedient, who is not straightforward, who is jealous, who does not act according to directions, who is given to argumentation or who is a backbiter.

This secret Knowledge should be imparted to one who is praiseworthy, who is tranquil, who is austere and who is obedient. It should by no means be imparted to anyone else.

Even if the whole of the earth filled with all jewels were offered against this, a seeker who knows Reality shall prefer this (Knowledge) to that.

The *Aadhyaatma* (spiritual) doctrine that is super-human contains greater secrets than the Yogic-knowledge. It has been perceived by great sages. It is sung about in the Vedanta.

O good and noble Ones! I have given unto you what you asked me. What else shall I tell you?

The sages said:

Describe once again to us the *Aadhyaatma* doctrine in detail, O holy One, the most excellent of all sages, so that we can fully understand it.

Vyasa said:

I shall explain to you all what is recounted as *Aadhyaatma* in regard to a person. Understand it properly.

The great elements are the Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space (Ether). He who is the Creator of these elements is within all the living beings.

The sages said:

The Ether, etc have no shape. No one sees anybody or anything in them. How can one then explain their presence in the physical bodies? There are certain qualities in the sense-organs. How can one comprehend them?

Vyasa said:

I shall explain this precisely in accordance with what is seen (in the scriptures). Listen attentively and comprehend them according to reality.

Sound, ear (hearing) and void space are the traits of Ether. Vital airs, movement and touch are the qualities of *Vayu* (air).

Colour, eye (vision) and gastric action (digestion) are the qualities of Fire. Taste (such as sweet), tongue, etc are the qualities of Water.

What is smelt, nose and the physical body are the qualities of Earth.

The group of sense organs has thus evolved out of the five elements.

The quality of touch belongs to Air (Wind), the quality of taste to Water, the quality of colour to Fire, the quality of sound to Ether, and the quality of smell to Earth.

The mind, intellect and intrinsic nature are born of their origins. They transcend *gunas*; they are greater than *gunas*.

Just as the turtle stretches and withdraws its limbs under its back, so he who has excellent intellect controls his set of sense-organs.

The fact that one sees upwards, sideways as well as below the soles of one's feet indicates that the excellent intellect abides by one's duty alone.

The intellect is led by the *gunas*. It is the intellect that leads the sense-organs. Should the intellect be absent, whence can there be the *gunas*?

There are five sense-organs in man; the sixth is mind; the seventh is intellect; the soul is the eighth.

The eye perceives; the mind entertains doubt; the intellect determines; the soul is the witness.

Rajas, *tamas* and *sattva* are born of their respective causes. They are common to all beings. They are *gunas* (qualities).

That which one sees within the soul, something which is pleasant and delightful, is *sattva*. It is something quiescent and calm.

That predilection which is attended by distress either in the body or in the mind is *rajas*. One sees that *rajas* is always active.

That predilection which is attended by delusion is *tamas*. It is vague, incomprehensible and incapable of being explained.

Extreme delight, pleasure, bliss, and mastery over oneself and normal restful nature of the mind with or without reasons thereof are considered the qualities of *sattva*.

Conceit, untruthfulness, covetousness, delusion and impatience are the symptoms of *rajas*.

Deluded state, blunders, languor, slumber, and inability to be awake are the qualities of *tamas*. (The people under their influence) live somehow. They do not live a full useful life.

The external prompting for action is threefold. The mind indulges in fanciful creation of conceptions. The intellect is the factor of energetic determination. The heart dwells only on what is endearing.

The objects are indeed greater than the sense-organs; the mind is greater than the objects; the intellect is greater than the mind; and the soul is greater than the intellect.

The intellect is the leader of the soul; the intellect is indeed the soul. When the intellect undergoes aberration and change in regard to emotion, it becomes the mind.

Inasmuch as the sense-organs are separate, it is the intellect that undergoes aberration. In the act of hearing, it becomes the ear, and in the act of touch, it becomes the sense of touch.

In the act of seeing, it is the eye; in the act of tasting, it is the tongue; and in the act of smelling, it is the nose. It is the intellect that undergoes all the changes.

They (the wise men) call them the sense-organs. The intellect becomes diffused in those forms. When it remains steady, it is called intellect.

Sometimes it gets pleasure: sometimes it bewails; and sometimes it loses sense. (But really it is) not affected by pleasure and pain. Just as the ocean, lord of the rivers, surges towards the great shore with its billows, so also the intellect that is intrinsically emotional surges towards the three emotions (pleasure, pain and delusion).

When the intellect yearns for and seeks something, it becomes the mind. One can see the two, intellectually, separate in their basis.

The sense-organs are based on the intellect. They must be considered entirely in the order in which each is evolved.

When the mind is free of *gunas* and emotions, it is the intellect. Emotion makes it the mind. When *rajas* begins to function, it transcends *sattva*.

Those that abide emotionally in all the three *gunas* run after the objects of senses like the spokes in the rim.

One shall make use of the mind for the purpose of illumination even as the sense-organs are perfected by the intellect (either) handling them befittingly or remaining indifferent.

If only one understands this as natural, one does not become deluded. One does not bewail; and one is delighted. One is always free from hostility.

Indeed, the soul cannot be perceived by the sense-organs that are subject to lust, that function in diverse ways, that cannot be controlled and that are ignorant and foolish.

When one holds their reins firmly by means of the mind and controls them, the soul reveals itself like a figure illumined by a lamp.

When darkness is repelled, the living beings (or objects) are brought to light. This should also be considered in the same manner.

Just as an aquatic bird is not affected by water even as it moves through it, so also is the *yogi* of liberated soul not affected by the faults of *gunas*.

Similarly, one who has realized the soul is not affected by the defects (of worldly existence) even when one continues to live in the world; one does not cling to anything. One is by no means contaminated.

As one abandons the *karma* done previously, one is not affected by it. If one has love towards the great *Atman* but yet gets stuck due to the contact with *gunas*, the soul of such a one takes re-birth. One gets entangled in the *gunas*. The *gunas* do not understand the soul. But the soul knows the *gunas*.

One shall contemplate the *gunas*. One is the seer of everything in the manner it exists. One shall be able to perceive the difference between *sattva* (*guna*) and *Kshetrajna* (Individual Soul).

One of the two creates the *guna(s)* and the other does not create. The two are naturally separate, and yet are joined together. Just as gold and pebbles are found existing together (though separate), just as the mosquito and *udumbara* are found together though separate, just as the *isika* (shoot of a grass) and the *munja* grass are found together though separate, so also the two remain together though they are separate from each other.

5. Review of Saamkhya and Yoga - III

Vyasa said:

Sattva creates *gunas* and the *Kshetrajna* presides over them.

It is all but natural that *Sattva* creates these *gunas*. Just as the spider weaves its web, so also *Sattva* creates *gunas*.

Some are of the opinion that those who have started functioning do not cease to function though the functioning is not perceptible. But others accept cessation of activity.

One should ponder over these two (theses), and come to a conclusion in accordance with one's intellect. Of course, there is a possibility of a great doubt arising in one's mind.

Indeed the *Atman* has neither birth nor death. One shall sport about, after realizing It. One shall neither be angry, nor be delighted. One shall be free of enmity and jealousy.

Thus, everyone shall reflect on (the Supreme Being) by means of intellect and heart. One shall consider that the worldly pleasures are evanescent. One shall be free of doubt. One shall cross the *samsara* in the same manner as a scholarly man crosses a swollen river by swimming across it.

O Brahmins! This (earthly existence) is fickle and unsteady. A scholar does not feel distressed. Knowing this reality, he walks on firm ground pondering over the *Atman*, and the knowledge of the *Atman*.

After understanding the creation (and cessation) of living beings, their advent as well as departure, and observing (everything) well, a seeker obtains excellent quiescence and tranquility.

This is the whole (aim) of the twice-born, and especially of the Brahmin. It is the knowledge of the *Atman*. It is the ultimate resort. It is possible through impartiality and love towards all. One shall become enlightened, after understanding this reality. What else is the characteristic of an enlightened one? After comprehending this, a learned man becomes liberated.

The enlightened ones do not have the fear that the unenlightened ones have as to what happens after death in the other world. No one has a greater status than the eternal one which the enlightened one has.

Man is detracted from the inner world. On not seeing the Lord there, he bewails. Those who have proper understanding of the Lord do not bewail.

If one performs *karma* without yearning for benefit, it burns away sins. If actions are performed with pleasure or hatred as motives, the same results of one's actions.

The sages said:

May Your Holiness be pleased to tell us that most excellent virtue, than which there is no greater virtue and that which is greater than all valuable things.

Vyasa said:

I shall recount the ancient virtue eulogized by the sages, which is the most excellent of all virtues. Listen to it, O excellent Sages!

The sense-organs agitate us. One shall intelligently control them like a father who controls his sons during their formative childhood years. The concentration of mind and the control of sense-organs are the greatest austerity. That is the most excellent of all virtues. It is mentioned as the greatest virtue.

By means of perfect Knowledge, one shall control those (sense-organs) including the mind as the sixth, and shall be self-contented. One shall not ponder over the multifarious objects of thought.

When these (sense-organs) refrain from their respective objects and remain in their abodes, you will all see the Supreme *Atman*, the Eternal One, by means of the self.

The intelligent brahmins see the great *Atman*, the Soul of all like the smokeless fire.

Just as a great tree with many branches having flowers and fruits does not know specifically, 'where is my flower? Where is my fruit?', so also the (individual) soul does not know, 'whence have I come? Whither will I go?' It has another inner Soul that sees everything.

One realizes *Atman* by *atman* through the mind that is illumined by perfect Knowledge. O Brahmins! You all shall be free from passionate attachment on realizing *Atman*.

Even in this world you will attain great intellect and become liberated from all sins like serpents that shed off their slough. You will be devoid of anxieties and free of ailments.

The river of worldly existence is terrible. It has currents everywhere. The five sense-organs are its crocodiles. The conceptions of the mind are its banks. Greed and delusion are the grasses that cover them up. Lust and anger are the reptiles that are there.

Truthfulness constitutes holy waters, and falsehood the turbulent eddies. That excellent river of worldly existence has anger for its marshy bed. Its source is the Un-manifest one. It is a rapid river agitated by lust and anger. Those who are not self-possessed cannot cross it.

O Brahmins! Cross that river by means of your intellect. It flows into the ocean of worldly existence. It is impassable as it falls into the nether regions of the vaginal passage. It starts with one's own birth. It is difficult of access due to the whirlpool of tongues. Intelligent persons of great courage and steadfast intellect cross it. One who has crossed it is liberated. One's soul is purified. One is pure and self-possessed.

One is capable of becoming the Brahman by adopting excellent intellect. One overcomes great distress. One is devoid of sins and one's soul is clean and pleasant. From all places, one sees all living beings. One becomes neither angry nor elated. One is not wicked in one's mind.

Thereafter, you see the birth and annihilation of all living beings (with equipoise). Wise men have considered this as the most excellent of all virtues.

O most excellent Ones! Among persons upholding virtue, the wise sages of truthful speech consider this as the most excellent virtue. O Brahmins! The (individual) souls are all-pervading. This principle should be imparted to one's sons.

This great secret doctrine of the soul is the highest of all esoteric doctrines. This should be imparted to a pure and devoted follower.

What I have recounted is a highly secret doctrine with 'the soul as witness thereof'. The *atman* is neither a female nor a male, nor is it a neuter one. The Brahman is devoid of misery and happiness. IT is identical with the past, present and future. After realizing this, no man or woman shall have to undergo rebirth.

All these facts have been described, O Brahmins, by me.

A person of delighted mind, whose son possesses good qualities and who is compassionate towards good sons will think about the welfare of those sons.

The sages said:

It has been said by Brahma that liberation is to be acquired through a certain means and not without means. O Sage! We wish to hear that means.

Vyasa said:

In regard to this, O extremely intelligent Ones, close scrutiny is necessary. O sinless Ones! Always seek all objects through that means.

The intellect is the means of finding a pot. But it is not the cause of the pot. The same formula applies to the means of virtue. Virtue is not the cause of *Dharma* (virtuous conduct).

The path that leads to the eastern sea does not go to the western sea. Indeed there is only one path unto liberation. O sinless Ones! Listen to that.

One shall dispel anger by patience and forbearance, and lust by avoiding mental conceptions. A bold man (a self-possessed one) deserves to dispel slumber by resorting to *sattva*.

One shall guard against fear by avoiding mistakes. One shall protect (one's soul) and one's Knowledge. One shall courageously cause wish, hatred and lust to recede.

One who knows Reality shall win over slumber and intellect by means of Knowledge.

The *yogi* subdues ailments by taking wholesome food in limited quantities after the previous intake has been digested.

One shall conquer greed and delusion by contentment, sensual objects by means of the vision of the Reality, evil by tenderness and compassion, and virtue by indifference.

The learned man shall conquer hope and ambition by restraining his mind, competitiveness by avoiding close contact, affection by the thought of temporality, and hunger by *yogic* practice.

One shall conquer selfishness by merciful compassion, greed by means of contentment, and languor by early rise. One shall conquer fanciful doubt by means of decisiveness.

One shall conquer verbose talkativeness by means of silence, fear by heroism, speech and mind by intellect, and intellect by Knowledge.

The great *atman* shall control knowledge. The tranquility of the *atman* shall lead to the *Atman*. A tranquil person of pure activities is aware of these truths.

The seers know that the defects of *yogic* practice are lust, anger, greed, fear and slumber. The devotee shall dispel these defects and resort duly to the *yogic* means. (They are) meditation, self-study of the Veda, charitable gifts, truthfulness, shyness,

straight-forwardness, forbearance, cleanliness, pious conduct and control over the sense-organs. One's splendour increases by adoption of these means. One dispels sin.

Everything that one wishes for is achieved. One's perfect Knowledge begins to function. One shakes off one's sins and becomes brilliant. One shall have limited diet. One shall conquer sense-organs. One shall keep lust and anger under one's control. One shall thus enter the region of the Brahman.

This is the clean, pure and vivid path of liberation (salvation). It is the state of no-delusion, the state of non-attachment, the state of avoidance of lust and anger, the state of not being puffed up, the state of absence of excited anxiety, and the state of being steady.

6. Review of Injunctions regarding Yogic Practices

The sages said:

O Brahmin! O excellent Sage! It behooves you to relate to us the respective peculiarities of *Saamkhya* and *Yoga*. O Sage! Conversant with virtue, everything is known to you!

Vyasa said:

The followers of *Saamkhya* praise *Saamkhya*. The followers of *Yoga* praise *Yoga*. In order to exalt their own side, they give cogent reasons.

O excellent Sages! ‘How can one who is not competent be liberated?’ Thus saying, with good reasons, learned men mention *Yoga* to be more excellent.

Other learned Brahmins give reasons to justify *Saamkhya*. ‘He who is unattached to the sensual objects shall be liberated from his body, after understanding all movements and goals, and not otherwise. Thus men of great intellect state that *Saamkhya* is the Philosophy of liberation.

Reasons capable of justifying one’s own side, words conducive to justifying one’s point of view shall be honoured and accepted by learned men.

Yogic austerities result in spiritual attainment. The *Saamkhyas* adhere to what is stated in the scriptural texts. O excellent Brahmins! *Saamkhya* and *Yoga* are based on reality. Both these systems are known to the sages as systems approved by good men. If they are practised in accordance with the scriptural texts, they are sure to lead to the supreme goal.

O sinless Ones! Proper means of cleanliness have been mentioned in both of them equally. Compassionate mercy to all living beings is common to both. The observance of holy rites is also common. But spiritual vision is not the same for both.

The sages said:

If the observance of holy rites, purity and mercifulness are common, O great Sage, how is it that the spiritual vision is not the same. Tell us, kindly, O excellent Brahmin!

Vyasa said:

Defaulters in *yogic* practice attain to passion, delusion, affection, lust and anger, the five defects mentioned in the *yogic* path.

Just as the big fish cut off the net and escape into water, so also the seekers, devoid of sins, attain to the region of the Brahman by taking recourse to yoga.

Similarly, just as the strong deer breaks loose, cuts the net and attains to freedom being liberated from all bondage, so also the Brahmins, equipped with strength, break their bonds of covetousness, and attain to the auspicious path devoid of impurities.

The persons equipped with strength are firm and steadfast. On the other hand, those without the strength of *yoga* perish, just as the birds devoid of strength, O leading Brahmins, fall into net. Sinless ones do not get involved in bondage. Such are the powers of *Yoga*.

Just as, on getting entangled in a fine net, weaker birds fall into misfortune while stronger ones free themselves, so those who are possessed of strength are liberated, while the feeble ones perish. Similarly, the Brahmins who are devoted to yoga are bound by the fetters arising out of their past *karma*. The weaker ones perish and the strong ones get free.

O Brahmins! The fire of very little magnitude is very weak, and it calms down on being overwhelmed by huge (quantities of) fuel. The *yogic* power, too, is similar.

O Brahmins! The same fire becomes stronger once again on being accompanied by the wind. It may then burn the entire fuel instantly.

The extremely powerful *yogi* whose strength is the perfect Knowledge of Reality and whose splendour is illumined is capable of drying up the entire universe like the sun at the time of dissolution.

O Brahmins! Just as a weak man is taken away by the force of a current, so also the *yogi*, if devoid of strength, is carried away by the force of sensuous objects.

A powerful elephant is capable of obstructing the same water current. Similarly, after attaining the *yogic* strength, no man is led astray by sensuous objects.

Those who are endowed with the power of *yoga* become masters of everything, and enter the region of *Prajapatis*, *Manus* and *Bhutas*.

Neither *Yama*, nor the infuriated *Antaka* (The annihilator), nor *Mrtyu* (god of death) of terrible exploits enter, O Brahmins, the path of *yoga* of unlimited splendour.

O excellent Brahmins! There are thousands of *atmans* (souls). By means of them one shall practise *yoga* and, after attaining to the *yogic* power, wander over the earth.

One may indulge in enjoying worldly pleasures and do severe penance thereafter. Again, O Brahmins, one shall subdue them (worldly pleasures) like the sun that subdues the qualities of brilliance.

O excellent Sages! For infusing more strength into the *yoga* that is based on strength, one shall undoubtedly resort to Visnu, the source or origin of liberation.

These powers of *yoga* have been mentioned by me, O excellent Brahmins, by way of illustration. Again, O Brahmins, I shall mention the subtle ones.

Listen to the illustration, O excellent sages, in regard to meditation upon the soul or in regard to concentration of mind.

Just as an archer, who does not err and who has full concentration, hits his target, so also the *yogi* of perfect unison attains to salvation undoubtedly.

A person of good concentration can steadily fix up his mind to a pot filled with oil and climb a flight of stairs. In the same manner, the seeker can make use of steady *yoga*. The *yogi* makes the soul free from impurities like a mirror in which the sun reflects.

Just as, O leading Brahmins, the helmsmen who have perfect concentration row the ships in the high seas and take them to the port, so also the knower of *yoga* who has concentration on the soul attains to the inaccessible region of bliss (after leaving off this body).

Just as the charioteer, O Brahmins, who has good concentration and capable horses, takes the excellent man (rider) wielding the bow to the desired place immediately, so also, O Brahmins, the *yogi*, with full concentration and *dhaarana*, quickly attains to the greatest region, like an arrow discharged at the target.

The navel, head, stomach, heart, chest, sides, eye, ear and nose are the spots in the body where the *yogi* should concentrate and meditate. The *yogi* of unlimited exploits, who practises great sacred rites with mental purity and concentration, meditates on these spots. O excellent Brahmins! He unites his soul to the subtle *Atman* (Supreme Soul). Adopting the excellent *yoga*, he burns, in a trice, all the *karma*, both auspicious and inauspicious, and, should he wish so, he is liberated.

The sages said:

It behooves you, O excellent one, to explain the diet of the *yogi*. What things does he conquer and subdue? How does he gain in strength?

Vyasa said:

The *yogi* who consumes coarse barley for a long time, O excellent Brahmins, becomes a purified soul. With this single diet, the *yogi* attains to great strength.

O Brahmins! The *yogi* who is accustomed to eat bits of grain as well as *pinyaka* (oil cake), and who avoids oily substances shall attain to great strength.

Wandering through (and residing) in the caves for many fortnights, months and seasons of diverse incidents, and drinking water with milk added (now and then), the *yogi* shall attain to great strength.

After fasting incessantly for an unbroken period of a month, the *yogi* becomes purified in soul and attains to great strength.

Yogis of great intellect and devoid of passions illumine the great and subtle Soul by themselves, O excellent sages, by conquering and subduing lust, anger, cold, heat, rain, fear, sorrow, slumber, objects of sensuous pleasure, terrible allergies very difficult to be overcome, the sense of touch, drowsiness and the unconquerable lethargy. Meditation and studious habits are their assets.

This path of learned Brahmins is very difficult to tread. Only a few pass happily through this path and quickly as well, O excellent sages!

Only a very few persons can comfortably pass through such a forest-like path as is terrible, and abounds in serpents and reptiles. It contains many deep fissures and crevasses. It is devoid of water. It is impassable. It is full of thorns. It is dense with thickly grown jungle trees. (In some places in a forest) the trees are burnt down by the forest fire. The whole path is infested by thieves and robbers. (Only a very few can pass through such a path.)

In the same manner, only a few Brahmins can pass through the path of *yoga*. It is admitted that a person of many faults shall desist from that path.

One treading the path of *yoga*, one should closely adhere to it as though it were the edge of a razor. This close adherence is called *dharana*. It is difficult for persons devoid of self-possession to tread this path.

Dharana, O Brahmins, is complex and complicated. Just as the boats of men devoid of helmsmen do not reach their destination, so also men devoid of *dharana* do not attain to their ends.

He, who practises *yoga* by adhering to *dharana* duly, conquers death and the misery of frequent births. He excels others in happiness.

This great path of *yoga* has been resorted to by a number of sages. This has been precisely (explained) in various scriptures. This is decisively (nurtured) by the twice-born.

The path of *yoga*, O leading Sages, is in consonance with the path of the Veda. It is approved of by Brahma, Siva and Visnu, the bestower of boons. *Bhava* and *Dharma* (god of death) have attained to dignity (owing to the path of *yoga*). The sons of Brahma (Sanaka, Sanandana, etc) have also attained to dignity (owing to the path of *yoga*). The *yogi* passes through the various stages of *Prakrti*, namely, the pure *sattva*, the grand *rajas*

and *tamas* full of pain. He attains to divine power, and the goddess, who is *Varuna*'s consort. He achieves splendour and great courage. He attains to the status of or identity with the moon in the sky who is pure by nature, *Visvedevas*, serpents, *Pitris* (Manes), mountains, terrible oceans, rivers, elephants, *Saadhyas*, *Yakshas*, quarters, *Gandharvas*, men & women. The noble-souled *yogi* then becomes liberated before long.

After attaining and experiencing any kind of *yoga*, one attains to *Narayana* quickly. The story thereof, O excellent Brahmins, is relevant in regard to divine beings as well as a splendid person of great virility and intellect.

7. Review of the Principles of Saamkhya

The sages said:

This practice of *yoga*, the path of yoga, that has been approved of by dignified persons, O leading Brahmin, has been well narrated to us.

Now, please expound, in essence, the practice of virtue according to *Saamkhya* for, whatever can be known in the three worlds has been known to you.

Vyasa said:

Listen, you, O Sages, to the principles of *Saamkhya*! These principles have been laid down by the old sages of yore, *Kapila* and others, who were not inferior to lords.

In that system, O excellent sages, a few complexities are seen. In it there are many good qualities and no defects.

That system is practised following the rites mentioned therein. By means of Knowledge, O Brahmins, all things are realized. All unconquerable human objects of pleasure and all the objects of evil are also realized.

The objects of pleasure of *Nagas*, *Gandharvas*, the *Pitris* and lower creatures are known.

The objects of pleasure of *Asuras*, *Visvedevas* and divine sages are known. The great objects of *yoga* are also known.

The objects of pleasure of whatever is being eaten as well as the objects of pleasure of Brahma are known. The essence of the maximum period of life is known to the people.

The maximum duration of happiness is clearly known, O excellent sages. The misery of persons indulging in worldly pleasures, coming at the appropriate time, is known.

The misery, O Brahmins, of those individual souls that take birth among low creatures or fall into hell is known. The merits and demerits of heaven, O Brahmins, are clearly understood.

The merits and demerits of the Vedic system of rites are to be understood. The defects and merits of the path of Knowledge are to be understood. The merits and the demerits, Brahmins, of the *Saamkhya* philosophy are to be understood. The seeker shall clearly understand *sattva* of ten qualities, *rajas* of nine qualities, *tamas* of eight qualities, *buddhi* of seven qualities, and *nabhas* of six qualities.

Rajas of two qualities and *sattva* of a single quality are also to be understood. By knowing the path and seeing annihilation, the seeker, richly endowed with perfect knowledge and wisdom, attains to salvation even as the subtle ones attain to oneness with the Brahman. Salvation is attained by pure souls.

The organ of vision is to be understood as combined with the quality of colour; the organ of smell is to be understood as combined with the quality of smell; the organ of hearing is to be understood as combined with the quality of sound; and the tongue is to be understood as combined with the quality of taste. The quality of touch pertains to the skin. The wind that is dependent upon it can be felt and known.

(Delusion) is to be understood as combined with *tamas*; and covetousness is to be understood as combined with delusion. Visnu is to be understood as combined with *Kraanta* (that has taken three steps); and Indra is to be understood as combined with power.

Fire-god is to be understood as attached to the belly. The goddess is to be understood as combined with water. Water is to be understood as dependent on fire element. The fire element is to be understood as combined with gaseous element. The gaseous element is to be understood as dependent on ether. The ether is to be understood as combined with the principle of *Mahat*.

The *tamas* is stationed in *mahas* (splendour); *rajas* is attached to *sattva*; and *sattva* is attached to the *atman* (soul); the *atman* is attached to *Isa* as well as Lord Narayana. The Lord is attached to liberation and liberation is not attached to any.

The physical body with *sattva* should be known as surrounded by sixteen qualities; and the nature and imagination should be known as dependent on the physical body. The soul though appears to be stationed in the middle is tainted with no sin.

The *karma* of the persons indulging in worldly pleasures, O leading Brahmins, should be known as sinful; sense-organs and the objects of senses should be known as stationed in the *atman*.

The rarity of attaining to salvation should be known by means of the Vedic literature. The (vital airs such as) *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *vyana* and *udana* should be known duly.

The primordial wind element should be known, and then the resultant wind also should be known. They should be known as divided into seven. The remaining ones should also be known as sevenfold

Prajapathis, sages, excellent creations, seven sages, royal sages who scorch the enemies, divine sages, *Maruts*, brahminical sages resplendent like the sun, and persons who have slipped down from their gorgeous splendour over a long period of time should be thought over.

The destruction of the groups of elements, O Brahmins, should be learnt. The splendid movement of words should be known. Those who deserve the worship of persons of sinful actions should be seen.

The misery of those who have fallen into the abode of *Yama*, (the river) *Vaitarani* should be realized. The inauspicious movements of creatures in the variegated wombs should be observed.

Their residence in the inauspicious belly should be seen and understood. The belly in the city of nine entrances (the body with nine orifices, namely, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, urethra and anus) is the receptacle of blood and water, is filled with phlegm, urine and faecal matter, has a strong obnoxious odour, is a mass of semen and blood, is fixed up by means of marrow and sinews and has a tangled web and woof of hundreds of nerves.

One shall thoroughly understand that the *atman* is conducive to one's own welfare. O Brahmins! One shall completely comprehend the different kinds of *yoga*.

O excellent sages! One shall observe the despicable activities of creatures of *tamasika* quality and those of the creatures of *saattvika* quality with handsome but false *atmans*. (In the same manner), one shall observe the despicable activities of some *Saamkhyas* despite the fact that the *Saamkhyas*, in general, are persons who have comprehended the soul. One shall observe the terrible harassment of the moon (and other) luminaries, the fall of stars and revolutions of other heavenly bodies. One shall observe the miserable separation of couples, O Brahmins.

One shall observe the inauspicious tendency of various living beings to devour one another. One shall realize (people's) delusion during childhood. In some places, even the *saattvika* quality depends on passion and delusion. By all these means, one among thousands resorts to salvation-consciousness. The rarity of liberation this way should be realized.

Respect for things not yet received, neutrality in regard to what has been acquired and the viciousness of objects of worldly pleasures shall be fully comprehended, O Brahmins.

One shall comprehend the nature of stay in the families of creatures intending to die as well as the emergence of creatures that are dead breaking through their splendid bodies.

The misery of even the *saattvika* creatures, O Brahmins, must be comprehended. The fate of those who had killed Brahmins and hence had a downfall must be comprehended.

The evil fate of vicious Brahmins addicted to the drinking of liquor as well as those who indulge in illegitimate union with the wife of the preceptor shall be comprehended.

By means of perfect knowledge, O excellent Brahmins, men behave well towards their mothers. They behave in the same manner towards the people of the world including gods. With the same knowledge, one shall comprehend the fate of persons of inauspicious activities. The fate of those beings born in the wombs of lower creatures shall be comprehended separately.

One shall comprehend the glorious arguments in the Veda, the successive orderly changes of the seasons, and the passing of the years, months, fortnights and days. One shall comprehend the waxing and waning of the moon, the ebbing of the tides in the seas, the increase and decline of wealth, etc. One shall comprehend the coming of unions to an end, an era replacing another, etc. One shall comprehend the feebleness and bewilderment that one experiences owing to egotism. And one shall comprehend all the defects stationed in the soul and all the inauspicious defects arising out of one's own body.

The sages said:

What defects arising out of *Utpaatas* (dangerous portents) do you see O most excellent One among the knowers of the Brahman? It behooves you to clarify this doubt of ours completely.

Vyasa said:

O Brahmins! Intelligent scholars, the followers of *Kapila* and his *Saamkhya* system, speak of five defects in the body. They are conversant with the path. Listen, O excellent sages!

Lust, anger, fear, slumber and breath are the defects seen in the bodies of all embodied beings.

By means of patience, they cut off anger; by avoiding close intimacy, they remove lust; by resorting to *saattvika* substances, they remove slumber; and they remove fear by means of avoidance of errors. They cut off and remove breath, O Brahmins, by means of reduced diet.

Good qualities are known by means of hundreds of good qualities, and defects by means of hundreds of defects. Reasons must be known by means of hundreds of reasons. Wonderful things should be known by means of hundreds of wonderful things.

The world is like the foam of waters. It is created by means of hundreds of *Maya* by Visnu.

It resembles the wall painted in a picture. It has as much strength as grass. (It is flimsy and feeble.) It is conducive to great harm. It wanders about in darkness. It must be seen as one resembling bubbles (of water) during rain.

It is almost ruinous though it appears to be pleasant. It instills fear even after its destruction. Just as an elephant that has got stuck in mud becomes helpless, so also the world gets stuck in the slough of *rajas* and *tamas*.

The *Saamkhyas*, O Brahmins, are highly intelligent. They abandon all attachment towards their progeny by means of Knowledge and the object of Knowledge that is all-pervasive and great, O Brahmins. With the weapon of Knowledge of the Atman, O excellent Ones, and with the rod of penance, they sever off the inauspicious *rajasic* odours, *tamasic* odours, meritorious *saattvic* odours, and those odours related to the body arising owing to the physical touch. Thereafter they cross the terrible watery expanse of misery wherein anxiety and grief are great eddies, sickness and death are extremely terrible, great fear acts like great serpents, *tamas* is like a tortoise and *rajas* is like fish. They cross this terrible expanse by means of their intellect.

By the path of Knowledge, the sinless persons, the sages of great achievement, cross the ocean of worldly existence wherein affectionate attachment is mud, old age is the fort, and the sensation of touch is like an island.

O excellent Brahmins! *Karma* is the great depth; truth is the bank; holy rites are the places to stand by. O intelligent ones! Violence is the quickness and rapidity of the current; it is turbid due to different *rasas*.

Different gestures of love are great jewels; misery and fever are the winds; grief and thirst are the great whirlpools; it has great pain due to sickness.

O excellent Brahmins! The set of bones is the flight of steps with phlegm for joining them; liberal charity is the mine of pearls; the terrible outpourings of blood are the coral beads; laughter and lamentation are the loud reports.

It is very difficult to cross on account of various acts of ignorance. The dirt accumulated by the tears of lamentation is the brine; contact and union are the goals; this world of birth is one that deceives with sons and relatives for their towns; this (worldly existence) is an ocean unto all living beings with nonviolence and truthfulness for its line of boundary; it is full of surging waves due to the (incessant) contacts of vital airs; milk flows in successive waves; the territory here is the rare salvation; and it is an ocean with the submarine fire at its mouth. Sinless ascetics cross this ocean (of existence).

After crossing (the ocean of) births which is difficult to cross, they enter the pure sky and, thereafter, on seeing them come, the sun carries them with its rays.

The rays enter them like fibres of lotus, O Brahmins, as they blow over the territories. O sinless Ones! The wind *Pravaha* takes them up there.

O Brahmins! The subtle, sweet smelling, cool wind *Pravaha* with gentle touch receives those ascetics who are devoid of passion, and the *siddhas* whose asset is penance, and who are endowed with virility.

That wind which is the most excellent of all the seven winds, and which goes to the splendid worlds, leads them, O great Brahmins, to the most excellent goal from the firmament.

The firmament carries the lords of the worlds to the greatest goal from the *rajas*. It carries, O great Brahmins, to the greatest goal of *sattva*.

The pure soul carries the *sattva* to the great and splendid Lord Narayana. The Lord of Pure Soul carries them to the Supreme Soul by Himself.

After attaining to the Supreme Soul, they become rid of all defects. They are always free of dirt. They become capable of immortality. O Brahmins! they do not come back.

That is the greatest goal, O Brahmins, of those noble souls who are free from the mutually conflicting pairs of opposites, who are devotedly engaged in truthfulness and straight-forwardness, and who have kindness and sympathy for all living beings.

The sages said:

After attaining to the most excellent region of the Lord, do those persons of steady holy rites sport about there till their death and rebirth?

It behooves you to describe accurately what exactly the truth is therein. Except you, we cannot, O excellent One, afford to ask any other mortal.

This would be a great defect in salvation if other ascetics would also stay in the same place, perfect knowledge leading them to salvation, along with the sages who have attained to spiritual achievement.

Hence, O Brahmin, we consider *Dharma* characterized by *Pravrtti* (life of pious activities as opposed to life of pursuit of Knowledge) as the most supreme one. On the other hand, there is likelihood of misery for a person completely engaged in the (pursuit of) great Knowledge.

Vyasa said:

The question has been put most relevantly, O excellent Sages! Your dilemma has been well enunciated. There is confusion and delusion even amongst scholars in regard to this problem.

Even here, listen to my words in regard to the perfect truth where the great intellect of those noble souls, the followers of *Kapila*, finds a place.

The sense-organs, too, of the embodied beings, O Brahmins, are aware of the body. They are *atman's karanas* (organs of activity and knowledge). The soul perceives all types of subtle entities through them.

(The sense-organs) devoid of *atman* as a result of sinful actions perish like the waves in a great ocean.

While the embodied soul is asleep or agitated, the subtle Soul wanders about along with the sense-organs like the wind that blows everywhere.

It sees duly. O sinless Ones! It touches after remembering. It becomes aware of all as before, O Brahmins.

Since they are not masters, the sense-organs merge into their respective places (objects) like serpents which are killed.

The subtle Soul encompasses the movements of sense-organs in their respective places, and moves about.

The individual soul pervades different qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the qualities of intellect, O excellent Ones, the qualities of mind, the qualities of firmament, the qualities of wind, O omniscient Ones, the qualities arising from affection, the qualities of waters, O Brahmins, and all the qualities of earth. The *Kshetrajna* pervades, O excellent Brahmins, the qualities in these individual souls, and moves about owing to auspicious and inauspicious *karma*.

Sense-organs move along with the soul just as disciples go along with a great saint (preceptor). After going beyond *Prakrti*, they attain to the Subtle Narayana of great Soul, the Great ultimate Resort, greater than the greatest, and devoid of all aberrations.

He is free from all sins. He has entered a state of freedom from all ailments. That Supreme Soul is devoid of all qualities. IT is blissful, excellent one.

There, O Brahmins, the excellent mind and the sense-organs come at the proper time taking up the message of the preceptor. It is possible to attain tranquility and good qualities in the span of a brief period by means of the above mentioned *Saamkhya* and Yoga. The highly intelligent *Saamkhyas* attain to the highest goal. O great Brahmins! There is no other knowledge equal to this one that brings about salvation.

May you be in no doubt in this matter? It is Knowledge that is the great *Saamkhya*. The Primordial and the Eternal Brahman is Imperishable and Dhruva (everlasting).

Persons of tranquility and calmness speak of IT as that which has no beginning, middle or end, that which is free from the pairs of opposites, that which has no agent, the Eternal One, and the *Kuutastha* (firm and steady like the peak of a mountain).

It is from this that all the processes of creation and annihilation issue forth. So say the eloquent great sages in the sacred scriptures.

The Brahmins, the Veda and persons who are conversant with the Sama-veda hymns call Him the greatest Lord, the Endless One, the greatest Achyuta (one who does not slip or swerve) and Brahmanya (favourable to the Brahman). Brahmins, with their intellect turned towards *gunas*, the followers of yoga who are united with the great One, and the *Saamkhyas* with their vision directed towards the unmeasured One (praise Him). He has no manifest form, O great Brahmins! The Veda says that Knowledge is (His form). O excellent sages! They speak of many ways of recognizing IT (the Brahman).

There are two types of living beings on the earth, O excellent Brahmins, the stationary and the *gamyas* (the mobile ones). Of these two, the mobile ones are better.

Jnana (Knowledge) is greater than all great things, O Brahmins. O great sages! Whatever is seen in the Veda, in *Saamkhya*, in Yoga and in *Purana* has come from *Saamkhya*.

Whatever is seen in the great *Itihasas* (epics), what is particularly seen in truthful scriptures and whatever knowledge is there is the world, O great Sages, has come from *Saamkhya*.

Everything that is seen in the world, the great strength, knowledge, salvation, penance and all these subtle things have been duly laid down in *Saamkhya*, O Brahmins!

Saamkhyas attain to their welfare easily even from the things opposed to their thought. After realizing them, they become content.

After giving up their bodies, they enter salvation. The followers of *Yoga* and *Saamkhya* reside in heaven. Hence they are more interested in *Saamkhya* that is very valuable, and resorted to by dignified persons, O Brahmins!

O Sages! In the case of those Brahmins who are not devoted to this Knowledge, their oblique movement (their birth among lower creatures) is seen. But it does not amount to downfall into the abode of those who commit sins. Those Brahmins are not important at all.

The *Saamkhya* system is vast, great, ancient and free from impurities. It is as vast as the great ocean. It is dignified and splendid. The followers of *Saamkhya* dedicate everything unto Narayana.

This great truth that the ancient universe originates from Narayana has been spoken by me. At the time of creation, He creates and at the time of annihilation, He annihilates it.

8. The Perishable and the Imperishable

The sages said:

What is it that is called Imperishable, from which that does not return again? O great Sage! We ask you about the distinction between the Perishable and the Imperishable in order to understand it correctly.

O excellent Sage! O leader of Sages! Indeed, you are mentioned as the most excellent among those who are endowed with Knowledge, by sages of great fortune and ascetics of noble souls who have mastered the Veda.

We wish to hear everything regarding this, from you, O Sage of great intellect! We are never satiated hearing the excellent nectar-like words of yours.

Vyasa said:

In this connection, I shall recount unto you the legend of yore, the dialogue between Vasistha and Karala-Janaka.

Vasistha, the most excellent one among the sages, having the features of the sun, was sitting in his hermitage when king Janaka asked him about the perfect Knowledge leading to salvation.

Formerly king Karala-Janaka asked the excellent sage Vasistha who was seated, after paying him obeisance with joined palms. He asked him about those topics with particular relevance to the Supreme Soul, and the ways and means of spiritual pursuit. He asked the sage who moved about as he pleased, who performed excellent deeds, who was sweet-tempered and who was never puffed up.

Janaka said:

O holy One! I wish to hear about the great Eternal Brahman from whom men of intellect never return. What is it that is called *Kshara* since this universe dissolves therein (in the Brahman)? What is it that is spoken of as *Akshara* which is auspicious, conducive to happiness and free from ailment?

Vasistha said:

O Ruler of the earth! Let it be heard how this universe dissolves and perishes, where it dissolves at first, and how long it takes.

A *Yuga* consists of twelve thousand years. Know that a *Kalpa* is made up of four *Yugas*. A cycle of four hundred *Kalp*s is called a day of Brahma.

O King! The night is also of the same duration at the end of which he wakes up and creates the great element firmament and other creations without end. The self-born lord, devoid of form, and benefactor of the world, creates the universe that has form. It is in the lord that the universe is rooted and has its origin, O excellent King!

(The Supreme Soul) is *Isaana*, the never-diminishing flame, with the powers of *Anima* (minuteness), *Laghima* (lightness) and *Prapti* (accessibility). It has legs and hands all around. It has eyes, heads and mouths all around. It has ears all around. It stands enveloping everything in the world. He is Lord Hiranyagarbha and is known as *Buddhi* (Cosmic Intellect).

It is called by various names in *Saamkhya*. In the *Yoga* system, it is called *Mahat* and *Virinchi*.

It has various forms. It is the Soul of the universe. It is known as One and Imperishable. All the three worlds have been held by It as though they form one unit.

In the same manner, It is known as Omni-formed because of its multifarious forms undergoing some physical changes It creates in Itself.

Pradhana is a very great city called so because it is the abode of elements, etc. *Ahamkara* (Great Ego) has great splendour and it is subdued by Prajapati.

They call the manifestation from the Un-manifest *Vidyasarga*. *Mahat* and *Ahamkara* constitute *Avidyasarga*.

So also from the *Eka* (Only One) the *Achara* (immobile) and *Chara* (mobile) are born. They are known as *Vidya* and *Avidya*, and proclaimed so by persons who ponder over Vedic passages and scriptures. Know that there is a third type of creation, O King, from *Ahamkaara*, that is, the creation of elements (*Bhutasarga*), namely, wind, fire, firmament, water and earth. In *Ahamkaara* itself, O King, know the fourth creation as *Vaikrta* (diverse manifestation). The five elements and their particular qualities, namely, sound, touch, colour, taste and smell are produced simultaneously.

Know the fifth type of creation, O great King, to be *Bhautika-sarga* (the creation of the evolutes of the five elements). They are the organs of sense and action as well as the mind. Ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose are the five sense-organs. Speech, hands, feet, anus and the regenerative organ are the five *karmendriyas* (organs of action). These organs arise simultaneously with the mind. Thus there are twenty-four principles in action in the Creation. By knowing this set of twenty-four principles, the Brahmins cease to be worried. They see the Reality.

Thus the excellent set of the three worlds is produced. It should be known, O excellent One among men! In the whole world, in all the creations, the *Atman* that pervades is the same whether it is the ocean of hell, the abode of *Yakshas*, *Bhutas*, *Gandharvas*, *Kinnaras*, *Nagas*, *Charanas*, *Pisachas*, deities, sages and demons; or

whether it is the creation of flies, worms, mosquitoes, worms in the putrid matter, mice, dogs, low caste people who cook dogs, *chandalas*, *pulkasas*, *eneyas*, hunters of deer, horses, elephants, donkeys, tigers, wolves and cows. We have already heard that there is the abode of embodied beings in water, land and air. Certainly, nowhere else!

It is the Soul of all living beings that is known as Imperishable (*Akshara*). Everyday, the entire universe drops off and perishes. It moves off from the *Avyakta* (the un-manifest one). Since the universe perishes, it is called (perishable). They say that the universe is conducive to delusion. It is called *Vyakta* (manifest), and it arises from *Avyakta*. The *Akshara* is great and eternal. It avoids *Kshara* (the perishable). From this no one returns. Thus, O great King, the *Akshara* has been explained unto you.

The twenty-fifth-principle is Formless. It is eternal and it is real. Intelligent scholars call it *Tattva* because it depends on *sattva*.

That which is devoid of form creates the (manifest) and presides thereupon. The manifest is the twenty-fourth principle and the formless is the twenty-fifth one.

It alone abides in the heart of all forms. It is equipped with soul. It is conscious, and it instills consciousness in all objects. It has no form, but it identifies itself with all forms.

It assumes forms of creation and annihilation through the peculiar characteristics of creation and annihilation. Although It is devoid of attributes, It remains within the view.

Although this great Soul undergoes changes continuously owing to trillions of creations and annihilations, It does not absolutely identify Itself with them all.

Owing to Its resorting to unenlightened *Jiva*, It becomes enveloped with *tamas*, *sattva* and *rajas* and is born in different wombs.

Owing to the residence It takes in the *Jiva*, It thinks, 'I am not the other one', I am this one, and hence not the other one'. Thus, It follows the attributes.

Owing to *tamas*, It takes up the forms of *taamasic* nature; owing to *rajas* It takes up the forms of *rajasic* nature; and owing to *sattva*, It takes up the forms of *saattvic* nature.

The colours are three, namely, white, red and black. Know that all these colours belong to *Prakrti*.

The persons of *taamasic* nature fall into hell; persons of *raajasic* nature become human beings. Persons of *saattvic* nature go to the heavenly world and enjoy happiness.

Owing to the sins committed in this world, one falls into the womb of the lower animals; if sins and merits are both earned, one takes birth among men; and if merits alone are earned, one takes birth among gods.

Thus the wise persons say that salvation is based on *Avyakta*. It is the twenty-fifth principle which functions owing to Knowledge.

9. The Dialogue between Vasistha and Janaka - I

Vasistha said:

Thus, owing to the state of being unenlightened, the soul, devoid of Knowledge and enlightenment, proceeds from one physical body to thousands of bodies. Therefore, it does not differ in the course of its transmigration.

On account of its acquisition of penance or decrease of good qualities, the soul sometimes takes up bodies among gods or among lower creatures.

From human birth, it proceeds to heaven, and from god, it becomes a human being. From the state of man, it proceeds to hell, too.

Just as the silk worm wraps itself by its thread-like fibres, so also this soul, though devoid of *gunas*, wraps itself by means of *gunas*.

Though the soul is devoid of mutually conflicting pairs of opposites, it is affected by them in different births. At the time when a person suffers from ailments such as headache, eye-pain, tooth-ache, sore throat, dropsy, diarrhea, *gandamaalaa*, *vicharchikaa*, leukoderma, burns, scalds, epileptic fits, etc, the characteristic symptoms of diverse types appear in the bodies of these souls. The individual soul identifies itself in such cases with the body concerned. Similarly, the soul identifies itself with meritorious deeds, too.

Men perform meritorious deeds of various kinds with a desire for welfare. The types of meritorious rites are varied. Some wear fur-clothes; some lie down on the ground; and some are seated in the *Veeraasana*. After *Veeraasana*, some do levitation (lying in the firmament); some lie on bricks and rocks; some lie on spherical rocks; some lie on ash rocks; and some have the ground for their bed as well as unguent. Some do drinking and cooking in peculiar ways. Some lie down on planks or on beds equipped with fruits and articles of domestic use. Some lie down in gardens attached to barns. Some wear leather pieces or silken clothes along with the hide of black deer. Some wear fur-garments studded with jewels or tiger-skin garments.

Some may wear lion-hides or silken garments; some put on a mat or a plank as a robe; and some wear bark-garments. People take pride in wearing different types of clothes.

Some have diverse types of food and jewels. Some take food once a day, or on different nights with intervals of one or more nights in between.

Some may take meals once in two, three or four days.

Some may fast for a month; their diet may be confined to roots; a person may eat fruits or air alone or oil cake, curd and cow-dung.

Some may take cow's urine; some the *kaasa* flower. Some may take only water-moss. Some may sustain themselves by other things. Some live upon scattered old leaves or scattered fruits.

A devotee resorts to different kinds of very difficult austerities with a desire for spiritual achievement. He may perform different kinds of *Chaandraayana* rites. There may be symbols pertaining to the four stages of life, or to virtue and evil.

He may resort to various shelters. He may indulge in different heresies. He may resort to isolated shadows of rocky cliffs or to mountain streams.

He may resort to lonely river banks, different forests, or lonely mountain caves.

He may adopt different types of holy rites and observances, and various kinds of austerities, sacrifices of various types and different kinds of scholarly arts.

He may resort to the path of merchants or to the four castes, namely, Brahmins, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras*. He may distribute charitable gifts of various kinds among the wretched, the blind, and the miserable ones. He may identify himself with different attributes such as *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*.

The *Atman* divides itself into various types of embodied souls. The various items in the holy rites are *Svaahaakaara*, *Vasatkaara*, *Svadhakaara*, *Namaskaara* (obeisance), sacrifice, study, presiding over sacrifices, teaching of Veda and *Sastras*, etc. They (the learned) say that this (the holy rites) is both auspicious and inauspicious due to birth and death (destruction).

Divine *Prakrti* causes fear and annihilations. At the end of the day, the embodied soul (the *Jiva*) passes beyond *gunas* and remains alone.

Just as the sun controls at the proper time the cluster of its rays, so also the soul controls all these activities, and identifies itself with them for the sake of sport.

It (the soul) identifies itself with these various features and qualities pleasing to the heart. Carrying out the function of creation and annihilation, it identifies itself with these activities. It is the master of the attributes and the *gunas*. It is interested in the path of activities. It is equipped with the paths of activity, as well as inactivity.

O great King! This entire universe is blinded by *Prakrti*. Everything is pervaded in many ways by *rajas* and *tamas*.

The soul thinks like this: 'The *Dvandvas* (the pairs of opposites) afflict me continually and pass beyond. They are born of me and they resort to me at the time of

annihilation. All these are to be crossed'. So thinks the soul, O King, as the intellect is partial.

It also thinks as follows: 'I have to enjoy these merits when I go to the heavenly world. Here, too, I shall enjoy even as it (such enjoyment) gives rise to auspiciousness or inauspiciousness. If I earn merits, it must yield happiness to me in every birth. Let there not be misery at any time. Human birth is miserable unto all, and so is the fall into the hell. From the hell I shall again go to the mortal world. From human birth, I shall attain the status of gods, and from godliness I shall attain human status again.' And in due succession, he attains to hell from the status of human being. This is the type of soul of the twice-born as it is surrounded by *gunas*.

Therefore the attainment of hell by gods and human beings is relevant. Overwhelmed by the sense of 'I-ness', the *Jiva* always moves there around.

There are thousands of crores (billions) of creations in these forms that end in death.

He, who performs actions the fruit whereof is either auspicious or inauspicious, attains to the fruits related to the said actions, taking up forms in all the three worlds.

It is *Prakrti* that performs actions, the fruit whereof is either auspicious or inauspicious. And it is *Prakrti* that can go as it pleases anywhere in all the three worlds and attains to results.

One shall know that the birth as one of the low creatures, the birth as a human being and the birth in the heavenly world of gods are the three regions (worlds) pertaining to *Prakrti*.

Since *Prakrti* is un-manifest, it can be inferred by means of symbols, too.

One can consider the manly symbol only owing to inference. Mingling with other symbols, it becomes the unerring symbol of *Prakrti*.

After presiding over the pores of vital airs, the soul considers the actions to be in the *atman* itself.

All the sense-organs and the organs of action initiate passion, etc in the *gunas*.

The *atman* which is devoid of sense organs and organs of action thinks like this: 'I am doing this. These are my organs'.

One who is devoid of wounds thinks 'I am wounded'. One who is without a symbol thinks that one has a symbol. The *atman* has no *Kala* (Time) but one thinks it has *Kala*. *Atman* is devoid of *sattva* but one thinks that it has *sattva*. The *atman* is immortal

but one thinks that it dies. One thinks that the *atman* is mobile while in reality it is immobile.

Atman is really devoid of action, but one thinks that it does act.

Atman has no attachment but one thinks it has attachment. Atman is different from a principle but one thinks it has a principle. Atman is devoid of birth but one thinks that it has birth.

As one is not enlightened, one considers the *atman* that is imperishable, to be perishable.

Thus, owing to the state of not being enlightened and because unenlightened persons are resorted to, the soul attains to thousands of crores (billions) of births ending with its downfall. It takes up thousands of births among the lower species of creatures or in the region of gods.

Owing to the state of not being enlightened, the person of evil intellect is being carried away in a thousand ways like the image of the moon in the current of water. Do also know that the moon is eternally possessed of sixteen digits, but the ignorant one thinks it grows (or declines) day by day. He is born again and again for ever.

The sixteenth digit is subtle. Let it be considered as the real moon. This digit is not consumed by deities. It remains for ever.

After overcoming 'I-ness', O excellent King, an enlightened one joins the deities. As *Prakrti* has three *gunas*, he is also *Triguna* (endowed with three *gunas*), as he is one with *Prakrti*.

10. The Dialogue between Vasistha and Janaka - II

Janaka said:

The relationship between the two, the Imperishable and the Perishable, is to be wished for. It is essential that there should be a relationship between the two. The relationship between a woman and a man (is described here).

Without a man no woman conceives. Without a woman no man is able to evolve a form.

In all types of living beings, the couple (male and female) evolves a new form by means of mutual contact. The new form evolved will have the features of both the male and the female.

For the sake of pleasure, the two will have intimate contact during the prescribed period after menstruation, and a new form having the characteristics of those two will be evolved.

I shall explain what constitute the characteristic features of the man and what of the woman who becomes the mother. O Brahmin! We hear that the bone, sinews and the marrow are derived from the father, and the skin, flesh and blood from the mother. O excellent Brahmin! It is thus that the matter is explained in the Veda and the scriptures.

What is mentioned in the Veda is authoritative, so also is what is mentioned in the scriptures! The Veda and the scriptures are eternal authorities.

In the same manner (as in regard to a man and a woman), *Prakrti* and *Purusa* have perpetual contact and hence, O holy Sir, the function of salvation does not exist. Or, should salvation be explained as something arising later on? Do explain this to me. You are always sought after by me directly.

Desirous of salvation, we seek to attain to the soul (*atman*) that is free from ailment, that cannot be conquered that is free from old age, that is eternal, that is beyond the purview of sense-organs and that has no other overlord.

Vasistha said:

What your Highness said quoting the example from the Veda and the scriptures is quite apt. I shall add that you are a person who understands the true principle.

O King! You hold the texts of both the Veda and the other scriptures. Be the person who understands the essence of the texts correctly.

If a person is interested only in holding the texts of the Veda and the other scriptures but is not conversant with their real meaning and principles, it is in vain that he holds those texts.

He who does not understand the meaning of those texts is merely a carrier of a burden. The acquisition of the texts is not in vain in regard to a person who is conversant with the meaning and principles of the texts.

On being asked, only a person like me is competent to state the meaning of a text. Owing to true understanding, he alone grasps the correct meaning.

If a person of imperfect intellect is not eager to understand the true meaning of the texts, how can that person of imperfect knowledge explain the texts with confidence?

If a person who has not understood the basic principles of a scriptural text begins to explain it out of greed or arrogance, he is a sinner and he will fall into hell.

A person of loopholes (imperfect knowledge) will never explain the text truthfully and confidently as he is neither self-possessed nor conversant with the meaning and basic principles of the text.

O great King! Therefore, listen how this is viewed actually by the noble-souled followers of *Saamkhya* and *Yoga* systems.

Whatever the followers of the *Yoga* system see (and understand), the *Saamkhyas*, too, follow. He who sees the identity of the *Saamkhya* and the *Yoga* systems is wise.

Skin, flesh, blood, bile, marrow, bone and sinews, O dear One, can be perceived by the sense-organs, as Your Highness has already mentioned.

A substance is evolved out of another substance and a sense-organ is produced from another sense-organ. One attains to a body from another body and a seed from another seed.

How can there be *gunas* in the great *atman* because it is devoid of *gunas*? How can this embodied soul devoid of sense-organs have the *gunas*? How can there be *gunas* in a soul that is meta-physical?

Gunas are produced from *gunas* and they cease to exist there itself. In the same manner, the *gunas* arising out of *Prakrti* are produced from *Prakrti*, and they end therein.

Skin, flesh, blood, fat, bile, bone-marrow, sinew and semen are the eight (attributes of a woman). The symbol of a woman is *Prakrti*. But *Prakrti* is male as well as female. This is called *Vayu* (wind), *Puman* (man) and *Rasa* (Juice).

Prakrti is devoid of any symbols. It is perceived through the symbols born of itself in the same way as flowers and fruits, as the formless things are perceived among things with form. In the same manner, the symbol is perceived through inference. Among the principles (categories of the *Saamkhya* and the *Yoga* systems) the twenty-fifth principle, O dear One, is of fixed nature.

It has neither beginning nor end; it is infinite; it observes everything; but it is isolated. It is due to the identification through the *gunas* that it is called *Guna*.

The *gunas* co-exist with the *Guna* as One. How can there be *gunas* in One without *gunas*? Hence those people who look at *gunas* know thus.

When the soul identifies itself with the *gunas* belonging to *Prakrti*, it is one with *gunas*, and observes the different *gunas*.

The wise men that explain that *Saamkhya* and *Yoga* are beyond intellect are highly intelligent. They call that *Isvara* when it is manifest through its *gunas*. They call That *Isvara* without *guna*, the perpetual presiding deity.

Scholars who are expert in *Saamkhya* and *Yoga* and who seek the Supreme Soul understand the twenty-five principles (including *Purusa*) constituted by *Prakrti* and *gunas*.

The persons, who are unenlightened, do not understand the enlightened and the Un-manifest one. They think that the manifest is identical with the Un-manifest.

This principle is perfect, but their vision is imperfect. They do not understand the known as separate from the unknown.

This principle of the Perishable and the Imperishable has been mentioned to you. They call *Ekatva* (unity) as *Akshara* (imperishable), and *Naanaatva* (diversity) as *Kshara* (perishable).

This is stated in the twenty-five principles. They (the learned) say that it (the compilation of the principles) is perfect. Its unity is perceived; so also is its diversity.

There is a separate citation of the principles. But learned scholars are agreed that the principles are twenty-five in number.

The learned men say that the twenty-fifth principle is devoid of *Tattva*. It is eternal because of its reality.

Janaka said:

What has been stated by you, O excellent Brahmin, as to diversity and unity (is not understood by me) even as I try to understand. Their example is in doubt.

Undoubtedly, with the gross intellect, I do not see the reality, O sinless One, of that which is known through *Buddha* (that which is understood) and *Prabuddha* (the enlightened).

The explanation, too, of the Perishable and the Imperishable, given by you, O sinless One, has been missed by me owing to the unsteadiness of my intellect.

Therefore, I wish to hear once again the philosophy of diversity and unity as well as the conflicting pairs of opposites.

O holy One! I wish to know separately the distinction between Knowledge and Ignorance, the Imperishable and the Perishable, *Saamkhya* and *Yoga*, as well as the Enlightened and the Unenlightened.

Vasistha said:

Oh! I shall narrate unto you what you ask me. O great King! Listen, the function of *Yoga*!

To the followers of *Yoga*, meditation is a great instrument of power. The learned say that meditation is of two types. One is concentration of the mind and the other is control of the breath. Control of the breath is called *Pranayama*. It is again of two types called *Saguna* and *Nirguna*. The *Nirguna* type is mental.

One should not practise *Pranayama* for two units of time, O Ruler of men, after passing urine, evacuation of bowels and taking food. Beyond those spells of time, one shall do so with eagerness.

The devotee observing silence shall mentally turn the sense-organs away from the objects. (The control of breath) may last for ten or twelve (*matras*). The intelligent devotee shall not induce himself to retain breath for more than twenty-four *matras*. It is mentioned by scholars that breath control shall not be practised while standing. We have heard that the *Atman* should be known always. Indeed *yoga* can be practised by a person whose mind is steady and not shaky. The person who meditates should be free from all attachments. His diet should be light. He shall control and conquer his senses. He shall fix the mind to the heart (soul) either early in the night or in the later half of the night.

O King of Mithila! He shall steady the sense-organs by his mind. He shall steady his mind by his intellect. He shall be still like a stone. He shall not tremble. He shall be steady like a post and still like a tree. He shall control himself by means of intellect. He shall be conversant with the mode and process of breath control. Such a person is called *yukta*, one who is in the state of *yoga*.

He does not hear. He does not smell. He does not see anything. He is not aware of touch. His mind does not think or imagine anything. Like a log, he does not know

anything. The learned scholars call him *yukta*, one who has attained to *Prakrti* or the primordial state.

Just as even when the lamp is not seen, the light is seen, so also the soul (*atman*) without body shall have movements below, above and sideways.

Thus equipped, the soul is stationed in the heart. When it is thus, O dear One, it is called by people like me the immanent soul, That which should be known, the Knower.

Like fire without smoke, the sun with its rays and a lightning in the sky, he sees the *Atman* in the *atman*.

It has no source of origin and It is immortal. Only the learned scholars possessing courage and the Brahmins adhering to their *dharma* can see It.

They call It minuter than the atom (fundamental particle) and greater than the greatest. Though It stands firm everywhere and in all living beings, It is not perceived.

It is the creator of the universe by means of intellect that could be observed by the light of the mind. Beyond the great *tamas*, O dear One, It Is!

Persons who are conversant with Truth and who are masters of the Vedic lore declare that It is far off from darkness. It has various appellations such as *vimala* (devoid of impurities), *vimata* (particularly honoured), *nirlinga* (beyond symbols) and *alinga* (that which has no symbols).

Yoga alone is the substance of the worlds. What else can be the characteristic features of *Yoga*? One who sees thus perceives the un-ageing great *Atman*.

So far I have recounted to you the essence of the philosophy of *Yoga*. I shall now recount the essence of the philosophy of *Saamkhya*, which is of the nature of *parisamkhyaa* (enumeration).

They call the great *Prakrti* of the Soul *Avyakta* (Un-manifest) and *Prakhyana* (proclamation). From it originated the second principle *Mahat*, O most excellent King!

The principle originating from *Mahat* is *Ahamkara* (ego). The five elements originated from *Ahamkaara*.

These eight are *Praktis*. The *Vikaaras* (products) are sixteen in number. Five of them are *Visesas* and five are the sense-organs.

Those who are conversant with the arrangement of the followers of the *Saamkhya* philosophy, those who perpetually abide by the path of the *Saamkhyas*, and those who are learned scholars in the philosophy of *Saamkhya* say that the number of principles is only this much.

According to *Saamkhya* philosophy, everything gets dissolved in its respective source of origin wherefrom it has been evolved. These principles get dissolved in the reverse order, and they are apprehended by the Immanent Soul.

The *gunas* (all evolved things) get dissolved in *Guna* like the waves of the ocean dissolve into the ocean. They are evolved in the natural order and get dissolved in the reverse order.

The creation and annihilation of *Prakrti*, O excellent King, is this much. In the process of creation It has diversity, and unity in the process of annihilation (dissolution).

This is what, O great King, should be understood by the learned. The presiding deity is the Un-manifest.

It has unity and diversity in the same manner as in the case of *Prakrti*. It has unity at the time of annihilation, and multiplicity owing to activity.

The *Atman* evolves *Prakrti* at the time of creation in various ways. The great *Atman*, the twenty-fifth principle, presides over the entire group (of principles).

It is called the Presiding Deity by ascetics. It is so because It presides over the group.

It knows the *Kshetra* or the *Avyakta*. Hence It is called *Kshetrajna*. It lies in the *Pura* (city or abode) of *Avyakta*. Therefore It is called *Purusa*.

The *Kshetra* is separate (apart) from *Kshetrajna*. The *Kshetra* is called *Avyakta*, and the *Jnaatr* (Knower) is *Purusa*.

Jnaana (Knowledge) is separate from *Jneya* (that which should be known). *Jnaana* is *Avyakta*; *Jneya* is *Purusa*.

The *Avyakta* is *Kshetra*, *Sattva*, etc. *Purusa* is *Aneesvara* (having no other master) and *Atattva* (devoid of *tattva* or principle).

In the school of *Saamkhya* there is no fixed number (of principles). The *Saamkhyas* explain *Prakrti* only.

Some *Saamkhyas* say that the number (of principles) is forty; some say twenty-four. After enumerating factually, (the principles are to be understood). The *Saamkhya* has a thousand processes (of understanding them). The twenty-fifth principle is beyond the other principles.

The twenty-fifth principle is mentioned in the Veda as the Enlightened Soul and the All-knowing One. When a seeker realizes the *Atman*, he becomes *Kevala* (the single One, one with the *Atman*).

Thus the *Saamkhya* philosophy has been described to you briefly. Those who know this attain to liberation.

What is called perfect Knowledge is the perception of *Atman* (What is meant is that perfect Knowledge is perception of Non-dualism – *Advaita darsanam Jnanam*). It has been already explained how that which possesses *gunas* could be evolved out of *Nirguna* (that which is devoid of *gunas*).

There is no return to this world to those who realize this. Nor do they ever turn to the state of mortality. Those who are non-intelligent do not perceive the distinction between the changeable and the unchangeable. For them, the perception is not perfect. O King! They are born again and again.

The *Avyakta* is called ‘*Sarva*’ (the Whole). The twenty-fifth principle is the part thereof. People comprehend *Sarva* not by *Sarva*. They comprehend *Sarva* by following *Asarva*. Those who know thus have no fear.

11. The Dialogue between Vasistha and Janaka –III

Vasistha said:

O excellent King! I have so far recounted unto you the essence of the philosophy of *Saamkhya*. Now listen to me, and understand *Vidya* and *Avidya* in the proper order.

They say that *Avyakta* is non-differentiated during creation and annihilation. Twenty principles are called *Vidyaa* and *Avidyaa*, and they are characterized by creation and annihilation.

Some principles are *Vidyaa*s and some are *Avidyaa*s; understand them in their proper order. O dear One! Recapitulate and understand what the sages of *Saamkhya* philosophy have said.

The sense-organs are the *Vidyaa* of the organs of action. Similarly (*Tanmatras*) are the *Vidyaa* of the sense-organs.

Learned men say that the mind is *Vidyaa* of the objects of pleasure. They say that the five elements are the *Vidyaa* of the mind.

Ahmkara is the *Vidyaa* of the five elements. So, O Lord of men, *Ahamkaara* is *Vidyaa* and *Buddhi* is also *Vidyaa*.

Prakrti is the *Vidyaa* of *Buddhi*. *Avyakta*, the Un-manifest, is the *Vidyaa* of principles. O excellent One among men! *Vidhi* is also *Vidyaa*.

They say that *Avyakta* is *Apara* (having nothing greater than it). It is the twenty-fifth principle and it is *Vidyaa*. Everything is mentioned as the *Vidyaa* of *Jneya* (which should be known) and *Jnana* (Knowledge).

Avyakta is mentioned by the word *Jnana* while the *Jneya* is the twenty-fifth principle. Similarly, *Jnana* is *Avyakta* and the twenty-fifth principle is *Vijnaatr* (Knower).

Vidyaa and *Avidyaa* have been briefly mentioned to you. Also understand from me what is known as *Akshara* and *Kshara*.

Both of these are called *Kshara*. Both of these are *Anakshara*. I shall mention the reason thereof in relation to knowledge.

Both of them are without beginning and without end. Both of them are supreme. Both of them are known as *tattva* (principles) by persons who think about *Jnana*.

Owing to the function of creation and annihilation, they call *Avyakta* as unchanging. For the creation of *gunas*, It undergoes change again and again.

The origin of *gunas*, *Mahat*, etc is mutual. They call the *Kshetra* (field) *Adhistaana* (abode). This is the twenty-fifth principle.

One shall dissolve the *gunas* in the embodied *atman*. Therefore, the ego, too, gets dissolved in the twenty-fifth principle along with its *gunas*.

Gunas get dissolved in *Guna*. Therefore, *Purusa* and *Prakrti* shall be one. Even the *kshetrajna* (the individual soul) dissolves into *Kshetrajna* (the Supreme Soul).

When *Prakrti* characterized by *gunas* gets into the *Akshara*, there is *Nirgunatva* (devoid of *gunas*) because of cessation of *gunas*.

It is in the same way that *Kshetrajna* (gets dissolved) by the decrease of the knowledge of *Kshetra*. We have heard that It (*Kshetra*) is naturally devoid of *gunas*.

When It is considered *Kshara*, it means that *Prakrti* is possessed of *gunas*; when It is considered *Akshara*, it means that *Prakrti* is devoid of *gunas* and is the *Atman*.

Moreover, the seeker becomes pure avoiding *Prakrti* and realizing ‘I am different from *Prakrti*’.

Then he attains to freedom from pain. He does not get mixed with *Prakrti*, O great King! He is quite a different one that is seen by others.

When he treats with contempt the *gunas* pertaining to *Prakrti*, he sees the great One. He contemplates thus:

‘What have I done so far? I have been immersed in the ocean of time. Just as the fish in the sea identifies itself with water and adapts itself to it, so also I have identified myself with different persons owing to delusion. The fish does not understand its being different from water owing to ignorance. As I slight the *atman*, I do not understand it or anything else.

Fie upon me whose intellect has become vitiated, and who have become immersed in this (world). Owing to delusion, I have followed it up; I have followed different persons.

This fellow is my relative. He may experience my decline in strength. I have attained similarity and identity with this fellow. I am of the same type as this fellow. I perceive equality here. I am like him.

Indeed this (another) fellow is free from impurities. It is clear. I am also like him then. Owing to ignorance and delusion, I have acted like this (followed whoever is with me). I have remained ignorant all along owing to this contact. I have been captivated by it, and I have not become enlightened so far with regard to persons of different natures such as noble, middle or lowly ones. How can I overcome that?

Owing to the state of not being enlightened, I have been associated with *Maya*. With enlightenment, I shall become free.

Now I shall not associate with *Maya*. The fact is that I who am free from aberrations have been deceived by *Maya*, which is an aberration. It is not the fault of *Maya*. It is my fault, for I have been attached to it and I have been approached by it with (its) face turned away.

Therefore, I have been stationed in this (*samsara* – the cycle of birth and death) in multifarious forms. Though really I am devoid of form, I assume forms. Though devoid of form, though actually un-embodied, I have been overwhelmed by my-ness.

Therefore, aberrations have been created by that *Prakrti* in the course of different births. Though I am devoid of my-ness (actually), aberrations have been created by the same my-ness. I have been born in various wombs and, while remaining there, my mind has been devoid of consciousness. Equality has not been achieved by me owing to *Ahamkara* (ego). After splitting itself into many, it joins me once again.

Now I am enlightened. I am devoid of my-ness. I am devoid of egoism.

The evil quality of my-ness is always generated in the mind and caused by ego. After abandoning this, which has clung to me, I shall resort to the state free from ailment.

I shall identify myself with this (the soul) and not with *Prakrti* which often misleads. My welfare is with the soul and not with *Prakrti*’.

Thus, by addressing the greatest, the twenty-fifth principle is awakened. After abandoning the *Kshara*, one attains to the state of *Akshara* devoid of ailment.

One attains to the state of *Akshara* that is *Avyakta* (Un-manifest) and *Nirguna* (devoid of *gunas*) after abandoning the *Kshara* that is *Vyaktadharma* (whose attributes are manifest) and *Saguna* (possessed of *gunas*). After experiencing the *Nirguna* first, O King of Mithila, one becomes similar to It.

Thus the example of *Akshara* and *Kshara* has been explained to you by me as it has been expounded in the Veda, which is richly endowed with Knowledge.

It is free from doubts. It is subtle, pure and free from impurities. I shall explain it once again in the manner heard by me. Understand it.

The philosophy of the schools of *Saamkhya* and Yoga has been recounted by me with examples from the two systems. What is stated in the *Saamkhya* is the same as is stated in the Yoga system.

The *jnana* of the *Saamkhyas*, O Ruler of the earth, is conducive to the awakening (of the soul). It is clearly explained with a desire for the welfare of disciples.

Moreover, scholars say that this system is very comprehensive. In this system, O Lord of men, a principle other than the twenty-five, namely, re-birth is included.

The greatest principle of the *Saamkhyas* has been described to be three-fold. It is Buddha (enlightened), *Apratibuddha* (unenlightened) and *Budhyamaana* (that is being enlightened.).

They say that *Budhyamana Buddhatva* (the state of being enlightened that is being understood) is the *Yogic* principle.

12. The Dialogue between Vasistha and Janaka - IV

Vasistha said:

Prakrti creates and seizes the unenlightened un-manifest storehouse of *gunas* even as *gunas* hold the *tattvas*.

In a playful manner, O King, *Aja*, the Unborn, attains to the state of modification; splitting Itself into many, It is perceived as though It were really a multitude.

Budhyamaana that disturbs and stirs up like this is not comprehended. It creates, seizes and practises *gunas*.

They call this *Budhyamaana* because it enlightens *Avyakta*. *Avyakta* is not comprehended in any other manner such as *Saguna* or *Nirguna*.

Only sometimes It is comprehended; then It is called *Pratibuddhaka* (Enlightened). When the *Avyakta* is comprehended, It is the twenty-fifth principle.

The *Budhyamaana* certainly becomes one with I-consciousness because of its characteristic feature, so says the Veda. By becoming enlightened owing to mutual endeavour, It becomes *Avyakta* that never swerves, they say thus.

They call this (phenomenon) *Budhyamaana* because It enlightens *Avyakta*. It is the twenty-fifth principle. It is the great *Atman*. It does not comprehend the twenty-sixth principle; the *Buddha* (Enlightened), devoid of impurities, the Eternal, One that cannot be perceived. But the *Buddha* comprehends the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth principles always.

The perceptible and the imperceptible, O King of great lustre, follow their nature. The *Avyakta*, O dear One, comprehends that Brahman which is non-dual.

It comprehends the *Atman* the twenty-fifth, and the twenty-fourth principle. At the time of comprehending the *Atman*, when one considers 'I am another' one becomes one with the *Avyakta* as one's eyes, and so endowed with *Prakrti*. When one comprehends the pure *Buddhi* without impurities, O mighty King, one comprehends the twenty-sixth principle. Contented, one proceeds (ahead). Thereafter one abandons *Avyakta* with creation and annihilation as Its characteristic features.

It comprehends *Prakrti* which is devoid of consciousness and which is endowed with *gunas*. It becomes one with the features of lonely *Atman* by virtue of realizing the *Avyakta*.

After coming into contact with the *Kevala*, It shall attain to the liberated soul. They call this *Tattva* (principle), and (the soul) that is without old age and death,

Nistattva (one that is beyond the principles). (What is meant by *Tattva* is the real nature of the human soul (*atman*) in its relation with the Supreme Spirit; it is the science or philosophy that teaches the nature of the real and illusory; and it is the essence of each of the five primordial elements of the universe.)

Only by duly listening to the description of the *Tattvas* does the soul, O King, become conversant with the principles. Learned scholars speak about twenty-five principles.

Never does a person conversant with the *Tattva* get immersed in the ocean of worldly existence, O dear One! The *Tattva* approaches these persons quickly. Now understand their characteristics.

‘*Prajna* free from old age and death’ is understood as the twenty-sixth principle. This is called diversity, *Nanatva*, as explained in the *Saamkhya* scriptures.

When It is comprehended by the intellect the twenty-fifth principle, accompanied by consciousness, *Chetana*, shall have unity.

It attains equality, O King of Mithila, with (the enlightened one) that is being comprehended. Although the *Atman* is devoid of attachment, O Ruler of men, It has the features and characteristics of what is being attached.

They understand that the twenty-sixth principle is evolved out of *karma*, after attaining to the *Atman* that is free from attachment. When This is enlightened, the Omnipresent Soul abandons the *Avyakta*.

The twenty-fourth principle is very subtle owing to the enlightenment of the twenty-sixth principle. Thus, the *Apratibuddha* (non-enlightened), *Buddha* (the Enlightened) and the *Budhyamaana* have been briefly described to you, O sinless One, in the manner explained in the *sastras*.

The difference between these is the same as between *masaaka* (mosquito) and *udumbara* (the fruit of a particular tree). It is the same as between fish and water. The unity and diversity of the two should be thought of in this manner.

What is mentioned as Salvation is this much. It is termed *Jnana* and *Vijnana*. The desire that ‘this person should be liberated’ suddenly originates in the body of the twenty-fifth principle, they say, within the view of the *Avyakta*. It is certain that he will be liberated and not otherwise.

The soul acquires the characteristics of another object by associating with it. It becomes pure when associating with the pure one, and not with the impure one. It becomes free from attributes while associating with the Enlightened, O Bull among men!

While associating with one with the feeling of detachment, the soul becomes liberated. While associating with the liberated, it becomes liberated. One with unlimited intellect becomes pure, and of pure activities while associating with one of pure activities. While associating with another soul free from impurities, it becomes pure; and while associating with the independent, it becomes independent.

O great King! The Truth and the truthful Reality have been recounted so far. By grasping with your intellect the Eternal Brahman, the First Pure One, you have become *amatsara*, devoid of jealousy.

O King! This great truth should not be imparted to a person not abiding by the Veda. It imparts enlightenment to a person who is desirous of acting according to it. It admonishes one who bows down for enlightenment.

This truth should not be imparted to a liar, a rogue, an impotent person or a person of crooked intellect. It should not be imparted to a person who harasses scholars devoted to Knowledge. It should be imparted for enlightenment of the disciples.

This should be imparted to a disciple who is equipped with faith and good qualities, who refrains from slandering others, who possesses pure *yoga* and who is a learned one equipped with forbearance and sympathy.

This secret should be imparted to a person who has discrimination, who is fond of injunctions, who is devoid of quarrelsome nature, who is learned, who has humble dress and demeanour, and who has no selfish motive.

They say that knowledge of the Great Brahman should not be imparted to a person who is devoid of these qualities. The narration of virtue to such person is not conducive to the welfare of any because it is like charity accorded to a person who does not deserve it.

This should not be given to a person who does no sacred rites even if the entire earth full of jewels were given away. O Leader of men! This great knowledge should be imparted to a person who has conquered his sense-organs, who observes pure rites, and who knows the Reality.

O Karala! Let there be no fear at all in you. You have heard of the Great Brahman today. It has been duly recounted. It is extremely sacred. It relieves you of all grief. It has no beginning, middle or end.

It is unfathomable. It is free from old age and death. It is free from ailment. It is auspicious. It is free from fear. In view of the falsity of the arguments of others, the Eternal Brahman is propitiated with great effort. That Eternal Brahman is ever realized in the same manner as you have realized the Brahman.

O Leader of men! I have recounted to you all this exclusively as I heard from Brahma. It is the great knowledge, the last resort of those who are conversant with salvation.

Vyasa said:

This Great Brahman, the twenty-fifth principle, from which one does not return, has now been recounted in the same manner as it had been recounted, O excellent Sages, by Vasistha formerly.

He who does not completely and accurately understand the great unchanging Knowledge, free from death and old age, even after striving for comprehension, returns.

O Brahmins! This *Jnana* that is conducive to salvation has been truthfully described by me after listening to it (and understanding it) from the divine Sage.

This was derived by sage Vasistha from Brahma. Narada, the greatest among the sages, obtained this knowledge from Vasistha.

This eternal doctrine has been recounted to me by Narada. After hearing about this great doctrine, O excellent Sages, you will not feel sorry.

He who has understood that *Kshara* and *Akshara* are different has no fear. He who does not know this accurately does certainly have fear.

Owing to the absence of perfect Knowledge, a person of confounded soul undergoes hardships again and again and attains to thousands of births ending with death.

Or, he may go to the heavenly world or to the realm of low creatures or to the human world. Or, perhaps he is released from that ocean of ignorance.

In the terrible ocean of ignorance, the Un-manifest is called the unfathomable one. O Brahmins, it is here that the living beings become immersed day by day.

Hence, owing to overcoming the unfathomable *Avyakta*, the Eternal One, all of you, O Brahmins, have become free from *rajas* and *tamas*.

Thus, O excellent Sages, I have recounted to you the manner of securing the great liberation (salvation), the essence of all essences. On realizing it, one does not return.

It should not be imparted to an atheist or to a person who is not a devotee. O Brahmins, it should not be imparted to an evil-minded person or a person who has no faith and who is averse to everything good.

Siddha-Gita

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Introduction

The Siddha-Gita is contained in chapters 2 to 5 of *Skandha XI* of *Srimad Bhagavata* which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Siddha-Gita is in the nature of Narada teaching the *Bhagavata-dharma* to Vasudeva, by reporting to him the conversation between the King Nimi (the king of Videha) and the nine sages (Siddhas). It contains all the topics concerning the nine-fold *bhakti*, its variations in different *yugas*, God's incarnations, Dravida-desa being a stronghold of *bhakti*, etc.

Bhagawan is described as one having *bhaga* or majesty. The *bhaga* or majesty is described as six-fold - omnipotence, virtue, glory, beauty, omniscience and non-affectedness. The full manifestation of all these six excellences is called *bhaga*. He who is distinguished by these excellences is the *Bhagawan*. For the Vaishnava Puranas - and the *Bhagavata* is one such - Mahavishnu, including all His emanations and incarnations, is the *Bhagawan*. Though He is the Absolute, He has an Archetypal Form, the source of all forms. The *Bhagavata* presents the form of the Lord which a devotee is to mediate upon. The *Bhagavata* also presents the all-inclusive, Absolute Being of the Lord as He presents Himself to the realized sages.

Thus the Lord manifests Himself for worship and meditation as the four Emanations (*Vyuhas*) - Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and corresponding in consciousness to *turiya (samadhi)*, *prajna* (deep-sleep), *taijasa* (dream-state) and *visva* (waking-state). Mahavishnu in His four-fold aspect with His physical features (*anga*), accessories (*upanga*), decorations (*akalpa*) and weapons (*ayudha*) presents Himself to be worshipped and meditated upon. To the realized sages, it is the same Mahavishnu that manifests Himself as the world of Becoming, sustains and withdraws it into Himself by virtue of His Divine Power - *Maya*, Himself remaining unchanged and unaffected in the process - the basic tenet of Monism.

The Gitas that find place in *Bhagavata* such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, the Sanatkumara-Gita, the Bharata-Gita, the Siddha-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Bhagavata Dharma

Vasudeva said:

O Sage of well-observed vows! Be pleased to instruct us to that course (in this life) whereby we shall directly and easily be liberated from the *samsara* teeming with various kinds of miseries and beset with fears and dangers on all sides.

Sri Suka said:

Solicited thus by the highly intelligent Vasudeva on this question, the divine sage Narada being reminded of the excellent qualities of Hari, became pleased with him and spoke to him thus:

Narada said:

‘O foremost Satvata! Your honour has wisely resolved on this course, wherein you enquired of me, as to what courses of behaviour and virtues delight the Lord and purify all (from sins, etc).

O Vasudeva! This righteous course of conduct (*Bhagavata Dharma*) if heard, recited, pondered over, accepted with reverence or appreciated approvingly (when followed by others) instantaneously purifies even those who are the enemies of gods or are hostile to all creatures.

The most auspicious and glorious Lord Narayana whose name, if heard or sung, is meritorious is brought to my mind and memory to-day by you.

On this issue, this ancient historical legend is told. It consists of a dialogue between the sons of Rishabha and the great-souled king Nimi of Videha.

Svayambhuva Manu had a son by name Priyavrata. His son was Agnidhra to whom was born Nabhi whose son was well known as Rishabha.

The learned say that he was a ray (an *amsa*) of Lord Vasudeva who had descended on the earth with the intention of propagating the righteous path leading to *Moksha* (liberation from *samsara*). He had a hundred sons all of whom were well-versed in the Veda.

Of them, Bharata, the eldest son, was exclusively devoted to Narayana (the Supreme Soul). It is reported that this wonderful continent is known after him as Bharata-varsha.

Having enjoyed the pleasures (of sovereignty) of this earth, he renounced it. He propitiated Hari by austere penance and it is reported that he attained to the Lord's abode after three births.

Out of those hundred sons, nine became the rulers of the nine continents all around, and eighty-one of them became *brahmanas*, authors of treatises on rites and rituals (and religious acts).

The remaining nine highly fortunate sons became sages, capable of propounding the highest truth. They exerted on the spiritual path, were sky-clad, but were highly expert in the spiritual lore.

The reference to their being sky-clad is to their being without clothes, but not naked. A spiritual explanation is that they were clad in *chidakasa*, that is, the sky in the form of the Brahman. They tied the knot of the threads of *prana* and *apana* (inhalation and exhalation in respiration) at the navel resulting in un-tying the knot of their state as the *Jiva*, and it became their sacred thread (*Brahma-sutra*).

(Their names were) Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabudha, Pippalayana, Avirhotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhajana.

They realized that this universe, both cause and effect or gross and subtle, is nothing but the glorious Lord Himself and not distinct from their self (*atman*), and ranged over the earth.

An idealistic interpretation is that though their bodies were different, they were spiritually one. They looked upon all people as their own self. They realized that there is nothing but the Brahman everywhere. The universe, beings or elements, owing to their identity with the Brahman, have no separate existence. To them, the triad, namely, the seer, the act of seeing and the thing seen was the Self Itself. They were so absorbed in the Brahman that they were not aware of movement, being, becoming, etc. In such a state, their wandering over the earth took place.

They were not attached to anything. They freely went about their way, as their paths were unobstructed. They wandered at will in the worlds of gods, siddhas, sadhyas, gandharvas, yakshas, human beings, kinnaras and serpents as well as in the spheres of sages, Charanas, the lord of goblins, vidyadharas, *brahmanas* and *Go-loka*.

On one occasion, by chance, they happened to attend the sacrificial session (*purnahuti*) of the noble-souled Nimi (the King of Videha) conducted by sages in the Bharata-varsha (known also as Aja-nabha).

On seeing those most ardent devotees of the Lord who were brilliant like the sun, the sacrificer (King Nimi), (the presiding deities of) the sacrificial fires (Garhapatya, Ahavaniya and Dakshina) and *brahmanas* (officiating as sacrificial priests), all of them, stood up to show respect.

The fire deities were visible only to these nine sages to whom they paid respect.

The Bhagavata-purana gives a special place of honour to the devotees of Lord Narayana. It states thus: 'Of crores of siddhas who are free from attachment and have realized the self, a person who is absolutely devoted to Narayana is very difficult to find.'

On coming to know that they were staunch devotees of Lord Narayana, Nimi, the King of Videha, was greatly delighted. When they were comfortably seated, he worshipped them with all the formalities, according to their seniority.

The king, who was highly pleased (with their visit), bowed low with great humility and submitted to them who were effulgent by their own personal lustre, like the spiritual sons of Brahma (like Sanaka, Sanandana).

King Nimi of Videha submitted:

I believe you are the direct attendants of the glorious Lord Visnu (the slayer of demon Madhu); for the people (devotees) of god Visnu are always on the move for purifying the people.

To the *Jiva* (embodied soul invested with a body in every birth) the attainment of human body (birth as a human being), ephemeral though it may be, is very difficult, and yet valuable (as it serves a means to liberation from *samsara*). Even in this rare (and transitory) form of existence, I consider that it is rarer still to meet persons beloved of Visnu.

O sinless ones! We, therefore, ask you about (the pathway to) the *summum bonum*. For, in this worldly existence, association with saints or the righteous, even for half a moment, is like the find of a valuable treasure.

Just as an ordinary person finds delight in obtaining a treasure, we get supreme delight in the company of saints.

If we are worthy to listen to, be pleased to expound to us those righteous duties and observances propitiatory to the Lord, so that the Eternal Lord may be so pleased as to confer even His Self on His suppliants (devotees).

Narada said:

Thus respectfully solicited by king Nimi, those worshipful sages complimented the King along with the priests (officiating over the sacrifice), and the members of the sacrificial assembly, and gladly spoke to the King one by one as follows, O Vasudeva.

What they spoke to the King related to Bhagavata-*dharma*, devotees of the Lord, *Maya*, means of dispelling *Maya*, the Brahman, the theory of karma, the theory of re-incarnation, *Jiva* and *vasanas*, *yuga-dharma*, etc.

Kavi said:

I believe that worshipping and meditating on the lotus-feet of Lord Visnu without interruption is the surest and the safest way of ensuring protection from fear from any quarter. In this *samsara*, a man's mind gets always bewildered by the fear (of three types of miseries) caused by mistaking this extremely worthless body, etc for the soul. But through the worship of the Lord, that fear is completely dispelled.

All fear disappears when the Lord is meditated upon as the Indweller (*Antaryamin*) of the entire universe consisting of the sentient and the insentient.

As for those means and courses of conduct which have been taught (prescribed) by the Lord, for easily attaining realization of the self even by ignorant persons, be sure that those are the duties which please Him the most, and lead easily to self-realization.

By taking to those paths, O King, no person will ever go astray. (This path is so safe and easy that) even if one runs with one's eyes closed (is ignorant of *Srutis* and *Smrtis* which are regarded as eyes) will not miss one's path (and take the wrong way). (And even if one hurries across the path of devotion, jumping in haste from one step of devotion to another of the nine steps), one would not stumble (into *samsara* again or miss the fruit of one's devotion).

Whatever a person does by his body, speech, mind, cognitive and co-native sense-organs, intellect and ego and by the force of nature (as formed by his previous *karma*), he should dedicate all such (voluntary and involuntary) acts to the Supreme Lord Narayana.

Although the soul is unconcerned with the body, unaffected by passions or untainted by external acts, owing to superimposition of the ignorance, a person forgets his essential blissful nature and regards himself as being his body. All acts which the ignorant *Jiva* performs should be dedicated to the Almighty Lord.

All acts relate to what are prescribed, non-prescribed or prohibited by *Sastras*.

The essence of the exposition is the enunciation of Bhagavata-*dharma*. It means that all acts – voluntary, involuntary, prescribed by the Veda, social duties or by force of nature as a consequence of one's acts in one's previous births – be dedicated to the Lord. The realization of the coalescence or oneness of the triad, the doer, the thing done and the act of doing, is the way of dedicating the act to the Lord.

For instance, motionless physical posture in a trance is not true *samadhi*. It may be that such a trance is equivalent to swooning. True *samadhi* is an uninterrupted dedication of one's self to the Brahman. The real propitiation to God is the natural,

automatic dedication of all our natural, voluntary and involuntary acts to the Supreme Brahman.

Owing to the force of the Lord's *Maya*, loss of memory (of the real nature of the Self) and misapprehension about one's real self (leading to the belief in the identification of one's physical body with the self such as 'I am a man') are caused in a person who has turned away from the Lord. When one identifies one's self with what is other than the self (one's body), it leads to fear (regarding other persons as enemies, friends, etc for one has lost the insight of seeing the Brahman – everywhere). Hence, a wise person should discern that his preceptor is the deity and his own self, and worship the Lord with unflinching and exclusive devotion till he is liberated from *samsara*.

For, this duality called *samsara* has no real existence, but appears to be so like dreams (in sleep), and day-dreams or hallucinations (during wakefulness), on account of the mind of the person who broods over it. A wise person should, therefore, control his mind which brings forth the ideations and doubts. It (devotion to God with controlled mind) will lead to fearlessness resulting in liberation from *samsara*

The identity of the body and the soul, and the independent existence of oneself from God are the two notions, though unreal, entertained in the mind like the dreams in sleep, or fancies or hallucinations in the waking state. It is the mind, under the influence of the *karma* of the past lives or of the past in the current life, weaves out *sankalpa*, self delusion about the identity of the body and the soul, and *vikalpa*, our independence from the Supreme Soul which is our true source.

Unless the mind is stilled and transcended, one will not get over the twin limitations of *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*. For such transcendence of mind, complete faith in the spiritual preceptor is essential.

The knowledge of the Brahman is impossible to dawn on one unless one dedicates everything including oneself to the Lord. One attains liberation only through the knowledge of the Brahman. Therefore, one should be exclusively and selflessly devoted to the Lord.

(As transcendence of mind is very difficult, an easier way to liberation is enunciated.)

One should (devoutly) listen to the highly auspicious (stories of) the incarnations and deeds of Lord Krisna, the wielder of the discus Sudarshana, in this world. (If that, too, is impossible due to their being innumerable), one should sing the names signifying the descent and sportive acts of the Lord, without feeling fear or shame of being mocked at, and lead a life without attachment.

A person who adopts the above-described course of devotion as a sacred vow (to be strictly and constantly observed), develops an ardent love for the Lord Hari, by singing the names of his beloved Lord. His heart is melted with love and devotion. He laughs

loudly (feeling elated at winning over the Lord by his devotion), cries (feeling that he has been neglected thus far by the Lord), (out of over-eagerness) screams out ('O Lord! Be pleased to be gracious unto me'), bursts out into songs (out of ecstasy) and dances like a mad person. Unconventional as he is, he transgresses the ways of the world.

Such a devotee would bow to every being with absolute devotion as unto Hari's Person whether it be one of the five elements such as the sky, the air, the fire, the water or the earth, or heavenly luminaries such as the stars, the planets, or living beings, the cardinal points, the plants and the herbs, the rivers and the seas, and the mountains (regarding them as part of Lord Hari's Body).

The devotee should regard himself as an integral part of the God's Person. By understanding the world as part of the God's Body, he becomes quiescent and transcends his mind.

Just as a person who eats food finds satisfaction, nourishment and relief from hunger simultaneously with each morsel of food, similarly to a person who has completely submitted himself to the Lord, (the triad, that is,) sincere devotion, realization of the Supreme Lord and aversion to other objects (of senses) appear and are found together simultaneously.

The triad is loving devotion to all beings, direct God-realization and non-attachment to one's body, wife, children, etc.

The devotee of the Lord who steadily and without any interruption worships the feet of Lord Achyuta, attains (simultaneously) the triad, devotion, renunciation of worldly objects and realization of the Lord, and through them he directly attains the supreme peace or liberation from *samsara*.

Supreme peace of a devotee relates to subsidence and disappearance of the six types of suffering such as hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death.

The King (Nimi) requested:

Be pleased to describe to me the devotee of Lord Hari (who attains the above-mentioned triad simultaneously). What are his characteristics (that distinguish him from) among fellow-men? How does he behave and how does he talk, and what are his distinguishing traits that endear him to the Lord?

King Nimi enquires after the gradations of the devotees.

Hari replied:

He who sees his own self (who is Hari Himself) existing in all beings as the Brahman, and realizes that all (mobile and immobile) creations are established in his own self which is the Brahman (or Hari Himself) is the foremost of all devotees.

Hari is identical with an individual soul (*atman*) owing to His all-pervasiveness and logically accurate knowledge. As such, He is the Inner Controller of all sentient and insentient objects with no diminution of His six excellences of infinite dimensions owing to His association with even insignificant objects. In essence, he who sees the immanence of the glorious Lord everywhere and in everything is the best votary of the Lord.

There is a great variety in the external appearance and behaviour of the votaries of God. But he who realizes the complete identity of his self with the Brahman and the Brahman in all is the best votary of the Lord.

The implication of the epithet 'Vasudeva' is that the Lord is in all, and all beings exist on the support of the Lord, or are a constituent part of the Lord. He who realizes this implication is the best votary of the Lord.

He that experiences Non-dualism is the best votary of the Lord.

One who cherishes affectionate devotion to the Lord, friendly feelings towards His votaries (who entirely depend on Him), compassion to the ignorant and indifference towards his enemies is a second-grade votary (as he entertains a different outlook toward them as contrasted with the 'fore-most' type described above).

(Believing that Lord Hari is present only in His image and not elsewhere), he who desires to worship, and worships, with faith, Lord Hari and does not respect His votaries and other creatures is an ordinary ignorant votary.

This observation does not condemn image-worship, but image-worship without devotion and respect to the votaries of the Lord is depreciated. For, such narrow concept of devotion does not lead to the desired goal.

Even though the sense-organs receive their objects of enjoyment, (if the devotee's heart is so much absorbed in Lord Visnu that) he feels neither repulsion nor joyous attraction toward them and looks upon this universe as the *Maya* of Visnu, such a devotee is of the highest order.

He is the foremost among the Lord's votaries who, by dint of his constant memory (meditation) of Hari, is not deluded by (and affected with) the conditions, that is, suffering in worldly existence such as birth and death affecting the body, hunger and thirst (harassing) the vital principle (*prana*), fear, (worrying) the mind, strong desire (exciting) the intellect (and senses), and fatigue exhausting the sense-organs.

The five 'places' or components of bondage are the physical body, sense organs, mind, intellect and the vital principle. They are affected by hunger, thirst, fear, suffering, and birth and death. The suffering undergone at these 'places' is what are called 'the properties or conditions of *samsara*'. A true votary is one who gains immunity from such suffering by absorption in the remembrance of the Lord.

He is verily the best among the Lord's devotees in whose heart the seeds of desires for enjoyment and passions and of actions do not germinate at all, and who has Lord Vasudeva as his only resort.

The best votary of the Lord is the one who is aware of his oneness with the Brahman, that all individual souls, the *Jiva*, are one with the Brahman and that the physical bodies are the products of the unintelligent *Prakrti*.

He who is not attached to his body, nor is affected by superiority complex on account of his birth (in a high family) or deeds (penance performed), nor by his position in a particular class in society, stage of life or his caste is verily beloved of the Lord Hari.

He, who does not entertain the notion of distinction between 'mine' and 'another's' in respect of his property or even his own body, and who is equal to all beings and serene-minded is the best among the votaries of the Lord.

He who will not allow the remembrance of the Lord to be interrupted even for half a winking time for gaining the sovereignty of the three worlds should be regarded as the leader of the followers and devotees of the Lord Visnu. Such a person does not waver even for half the twinkling of the eyelid from the lotus feet of the glorious Lord, the feet sought after by gods and others who have not subdued their self.

When (once) the fever (in the form) of afflictions in the heart of the devotees (who have submitted themselves absolutely to the will of the Lord) is completely subsided by the cool moon-light emanating from the gem-like (crescent-shaped) nails on the toes of the Lord with very long (universe-covering) strides (or possessing great prowess), how can it (the trouble) arise again? How could the solar heat affect when the moon has risen?

That person is said to be the chief of votaries whose heart the Lord does not vacate, as His feet are (tightly) fastened with bond of affection therein. Hari destroys all the accumulated mass of sins, even if His name is uttered unconsciously or under restraint.

2. *Maya*, the Brahman and the Path of Action

The King (Nimi) said:

We are anxious to know the (nature of the) *Maya* and (the Will Power) of the Supreme Lord Visnu which deludes those (gods like Brahma) who themselves are endowed with such deluding powers. May your worshipful sires be gracious enough to enlighten us (about *Maya*'s nature)?

I am a mortal being scorched by the fever (afflictions) of *samsara*. I do not feel satiated while listening to your words describing the nectar-like sweet stories of Hari, which are an antidote against the fever in the form of miseries in *samsara*.

Antariksha said:

The glorious Lord, wishing to become many through His *Maya*, created this universe. Though the *Jiva* is pure spiritual essence, free from the three *gunas*, *Maya* invests it with a body controlled by the *gunas*. The identification of the soul with one's body is the delusion of the *Jiva* (*Jiva-bhrama*).

This *Jiva-bhrama* (delusion of the *Jiva*) is explained with reference to the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping states of the *Jiva* (*tat-prayukta-jagrat-svapna-susupti-rupavasthathraya-sambandhan ca vadan bhramam prapanchayati*). The waking state is the misapprehension with reference to the external sense; the dreaming state is with relation to the mind; in the sleeping state, the memory is dormant, un-manifest like seeds; and the fourth state is the *Jiva*'s condition in relation to *Paramatman*. In this state, the *Jiva* is separate from the body which is the product of *Prakrti*, and that is the liberated state (*praktiparinamaka-sarira bhavah muktyavasthaiti*.)

The *Jiva* is Pure Consciousness untainted by passions, etc and free from states like dreaming, sleep, etc. It appears, through *Maya*, to be possessed of those states.

When the *Jiva* realizes the transitory nature and futility of the three forms of *Maya*, it desists from working for trivial pleasures, and becomes serene (*upa-samyati, bahih, kshudra-sukharthavyaparan nivrto bhavatiti*).

Antariskha explained:

It is for the sake of enjoyment of objects and liberation of the embodied soul, His own rays, that the most ancient Prime Person, the cause of all creation (or the indwelling Soul of all beings), evolved these great and small bodies, out of the five gross elements, O mighty-armed King!

In this way, having entered as the inner-dweller (for the well-being of all the *Jiva*) into beings which are created out of the five elements, God divides Himself and appears

as one (in the form of the mind) and ten (in the form of the five cognitive and the five co-cognitive senses), and enables them to enjoy the *gunas* or the objects of the senses.

The master of the body, the *Jiva* enjoys the objects of the senses by means of sense-organs illumined (by the knowledge of or activated) by the Inner Controller. The *Jiva* misapprehends this created body as itself and gets attached to it. (This is due to *Maya*).

The *Jiva* which is conditioned with a physical body performs with its sense-organs acts as motivated by the tendencies resulting from acts done in the previous birth or births. It experiences both the pleasant and unpleasant fruits of *karma*, and revolves in this *samsara*.

In this way, going through various corporeal existences (in consequence of its past *karma*) which carry with them innumerable evils and miseries, the *Jiva*, being helpless, experiences birth and death repeatedly up to the dissolution of the universe.

When the dissolution of the gross elements is impending, the beginning-less and endless eternal Time-Spirit forcibly withdraws this manifest universe consisting of gross substances and their subtle *gunas* into its un-manifest cause (the *Mulaprakrti*).

(When such dissolution is imminent), at that time a severe draught – absolutely rainless – will devastate the earth for one hundred years. And the scorching sun with its heat enhanced by the (destructive) Time-Spirit shall completely consume the three worlds by its heat.

Huge flames of fire, emanating from the (thousand) mouths of the (serpent god) Sesa and burning the nether-world from its bottom, soar up high, burning down every thing and, helped by the wind, they envelope the universe on all sides.

The clouds of deluge called *Samvartaka* will pour down waters, with each drop as thick as the trunk of an elephant, for one hundred years incessantly, and the whole universe is sub-emerged in cosmic waters.

God Brahma, the Person (Deity) presiding over the universe, leaves his conditioning universe (which has been now dissolved) and enters the subtle Un-manifest like the fire entering the un-manifested principle of fire when the fuel is completely consumed.

When once the universe is dissolved, Brahma should merge into *Mulaprakrti* like all the *Jiva*. But, Brahma, being a devotee of the Lord, merges into the Brahman. What is implied is that the office of Brahma as the presiding deity of the universe is not adequate to enable him merge into the Brahman on the dissolution of the universe. It is his devotion to the Lord that leads him to merge into the Brahman.

The earth is deprived of its distinguishing characteristics. Smell is transformed into water and water is divested of its special property, liquidity and is changed into fire.

Deprived of its property of colour by the *Samvartaka* (universe-ending) darkness, fire merges into air and air (*vayu*), deprived of its special characteristic touch, is lost into the ether (or the sky). The ether in its turn, divested of its characteristic property sound by the Supreme Soul in the form of Time-Spirit (*Kalatman*), gets merged into the *tamasic* Ego.

Sense-organs and Intellect enter the (*rajasika*) Ego while the mind along with the presiding deities of senses merges into the (*sattvika*) Ego. And this Ego, with all its (*sattvika*, *rajasika* and *tamasika*) characteristics, merges with the *Mahat* which in its turn enters the *Prakrti*.

We have now described to you the *Maya* of the glorious Lord, characterized by three colours (*gunas* such as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), and which brings about the creation and carries out the maintenance and destruction of the universe. What more do you wish to hear?

The King Nimi submitted:

O great sage! Be pleased to expound the way whereby persons who have identified their 'I-ness' (soul) with the gross (physical) body will easily cross over this Lord's *Maya* from which it is very difficult to get liberation by persons with uncontrolled minds. Is there any path other than *bhakti* (devotion) which has already been mentioned?

Prabuddha explained:

Persons leading a householder's life (living as husband and wife) and following the path of *karma* for the removal of miseries and attainment of happiness should observe and consider how contrary results are met by them.

(They should also consider :) What pleasure is derived from wealth which is so very difficult to obtain and which (when obtained) entails nothing but miseries – a veritable death of one's own? Or what happiness can one get after acquisition of houses (property), children, relatives and cattle which are so very transient?

One should know that, in the same way (as in this world), the other (celestial) world, attained by performance of *karma*, is transient (and full of miseries). There is rivalry with the equals, jealousy towards the superiors and the fear of destruction (and termination of the period of stay in celestial regions), as we find it among the dependent princes (under an emperor) here (on the earth).

A person desirous of knowing the highest good, therefore, should resort to a preceptor who is expert in logical exposition of the Brahman couched in words

(*Upanisads* and *Srutis*) and has realized the Supreme Brahman and (the sure index of which is that he) is well-established in the serenity of mind (and detachment).

Regarding his spiritual preceptor as his own self and his Deity (Hari), he should, by rendering sincere and devoted service to his preceptor, learn (and practise) the duties and ways of life of Lord's votaries, so that Lord Hari, who is the Soul of the universe and confers self-realization (on His devotees), becomes pleased with him.

In the initial stage, he should learn (and practise) to detach his mind from everything (such as wife, children, property) and attach his mind to the pious persons (devoted to the Lord), and also should cherish mercy (to subordinate and inferior beings), friendliness (with equals) and modesty (towards superiors).

He should further imbibe the virtues of (mental and physical) purity, practise penance or religious duties, cultivate forbearance, observe silence, study scriptures, practise straight-forwardness, celibacy, non-violence and balanced attitude of mind even under the stress of contradictory conditions (pleasure and pain, respect and insult, etc).

He should realize that the Soul, as an intelligent existence, has pervaded the world and is the (omnipresent) Lord, the controller of the universe. He should live in solitude, not cherish any attachment to his house (property, relatives, etc), wear washed rag-cloth or bark-garment (as dress) and remain contented with whatever he gets.

He should entertain firm faith in the scriptures glorifying the Lord, but should not denigrate the scriptures of others. He should control his mind (by breath-control – *pranayama*), speech (by silence) and deeds (by non-attachment), and should speak the truth and control his internal organ (the mind as well as the external senses).

He should always listen to, glorify and meditate on the incarnations, deeds and excellences of Lord Hari of miraculous deeds, and learn to dedicate all his acts (including performance of sacrifice and such other religious acts) to Him.

He should also learn to resign unto the Supreme Lord all his performances of sacrifice, worship, charitable gifts, penance performed, muttering of sacred syllables or names of God, his activities and whatever is dear to him such as (scents, flowers, etc) and dedicate to the service of the Lord wives, children, houses (property) and his very life itself.

Dedication implies non-attachment to wives, children, property, etc.

Thus he should entertain friendly relations to persons who have realized Lord Krisna as their very Soul and as their protector (or as the controller of all *Jiva*). He should adore the Lord as abiding in both the mobile and the immobile entities, especially in men, and chiefly in the righteous men who observe their religious duties, and out of them, especially in the devotees of the Lord.

What is implied is that the devotee should try to worship the Lord as abiding in the heart, but if the Lord cannot be visualized within, in spite of meditation, he should worship the images of the Lord, both mobile and immobile. The images at shrines like Tirumala, Dwaraka, etc are immobile while the images of worship at home are mobile.

As for the special devotees of the Lord to be served, the *guru* or the spiritual preceptor is the most important, as he introduces the devotee to the Brahman.

He should learn how to discuss with each other, and sing of the sanctifying glory of the Lord. And, in this way, in association with these, he should (forget rivalry, jealousy, etc and) find spiritual joy, happiness and complete freedom from all miseries.

Remembering themselves and reminding each other of Hari who annihilates the mass of sins instantly, their devotion is developed unto Love divine, and out of the thrill of ecstasy of this divine Love, the hair all over their bodies stand on their end.

The spiritual delight of the disciples gives the spiritual preceptor the highest delight.

Devotees (who have reached such a stage) behave in an unconventional manner. They sometimes weep (out of anxiety to visualize Him), sometimes burst into laughing and feel delighted (at His remembrance), sometimes they go on talking (about His sportive acts), sometimes they dance (in ecstasy), and sometimes they sing of Him and imitate His acts. In this way, coming to realize Him and attaining the Supreme bliss, they remain silent.

He who thus learns (and practices) the duties and the way of life of the devotees of the Lord, develops Love divine and thereby becomes absolutely devoted to (and absorbed in) Lord Narayana, and easily crosses the *Maya* which is otherwise very difficult to transcend.

What is meant by learning is that one should resort to a spiritual preceptor and under his guidance, learn and practise the duties and way of life of the Bhagavatas.

King Nimi asked:

As you are the foremost among those who have realized the Brahman, it behooves you to propound to me the nature of the Brahman or the Supreme Soul which is also designated as Narayana

The terms the Brahman, *Paramatman* and Narayana denote the same attribute-less entity.

Pippalayana replied:

O lord of kings! Please do understand that to be the Supreme Reality, which (as Narayana) is the cause of the creation, sustenance and dissolution (of the universe), but (being eternal and beginning-less) is Himself un-caused (and indulges in the above activity without any cause or motive); which (as the Brahman) exists persistently in three states, namely, those of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep as also in the fourth supra-conscious state, both during *samadhi* (trance) as well as outside in other states also, animated by which (as Paramatman) the body, senses, vital breath and the mind carry out their own functions

The three aspects, Narayana, the Brahman and Paramatman constitute one and the same Reality.

Even as sparks of fire can neither illumine nor burn the fire (their source), the mind, speech, the power of seeing, intellect, the vital breath or the sense-organs cannot enter (reach and comprehend) the Brahman. The Word (the Veda) which is (regarded as) authoritative in matters relating to Atman indirectly hints at it by inference, as it denies itself the power to describe it directly in positive terms. But in the absence of Reality, no negative description is possible.

Flames are attributes of fire. Just as fire cannot be the object of cognition of flames, the Brahman cannot be cognized by the mind, the senses or the *Jiva*. The Word (the Veda) conveys the Brahman by implication. If the Brahman were not-existent, the statement of inability of the senses or the mind to cognize It is meaningless. When one is to deny the power of cognition to realize the Brahman, it means that the Brahman does exist and that the Veda is the only means of knowing the Brahman.

At the beginning (before the creation of the universe) there was One (the Brahman) which came to be known as threefold *Pradhana* consisting of the attributes *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. By the predominance of *rajas* or Its active creative power, It is called *Sutratman* or Hiranyagarbha, and with the dominance of *sattva* or the power of knowledge It is termed as *Mahat*. When the condition of avidya is invested, it is called the *Jiva* (Individual soul) or *Ahamakara* (Ego). This one Brahman becomes many, and shines as deities (presiding over senses), the cognitive and co-native senses and objects of senses as well as the resulting fruit (the experience of pleasure and pain, etc) through His immensely powerful *Maya*. The gross (the effects) and the subtle (their causes) are both (caused and) illumined by the Brahman which is beyond the reach of both.

This Soul (*Atman*) was not born and shall not die; He neither grows nor does He decrease; He is the knower – the witness – of the times of the different states (such as youth, old age) of all bodies (just as the seer is different from the body). He is all-pervading, eternally unchanging pure Consciousness-cum-Existence. As in the case of *prana* (vital breath), this Consciousness-cum-Existence appears as many, under the influence of the senses.

In whatever category of body – whether born of egg, or from womb, seed or sweat – the *Jiva* is born, the vital force (*prana*) follows it, (the Soul remaining the same, unaffected by the category of the body); (similarly), when all the sense-organs (which are active in wakefulness) and the Ego (which functions in the dream state) remain oblivious (as in deep sleep), the Soul, devoid of conditioning states, alone persists in that stage as can be inferred from our remembrance (of having enjoyed sound sleep).

If with intense devotion generated through desire for seeking the feet of the lotus-navelled God, a person, by his own mental efforts, cleanses all the dirt and impurities clogged on his heart owing to the three *gunas* and acts (resulting in merit or sin), the Soul (which pre-exists there) directly reveals Itself in that extremely pure heart, like the light of the sun becomes visible to clear eyes.

The King requested:

Be pleased to describe to us that Path of Action (*Parama- yoga*) being purified by which a man quickly shakes off all *karma* and attains to the Supreme Knowledge attainable only through disassociation from all actions.

Formerly, I put this very question to sages (like Sanaka and others) in the presence of my father (Ikshvaku). But those (mind-born or spiritual) sons of god Brahma did not answer it. (Pray, be pleased to explain to me the reason of their silence).

Avirhotra replied:

The classification of *karma* into *karma* (duties enjoined by the Veda), *akarma* (acts prohibited by the Veda) and *vikarma* (omission of *karma* and commission of *akarma*) belongs to the sphere of the Veda, and not within the range of ordinary parlance of men. As the Veda are the revelations from God, even wise sages stand confounded in their interpretations. (The sages whom you questioned are omniscient. But, then you were of pre-mature age, and could not have understood their explanation. Hence their silence!).

The Veda implies something deeper and different from what appears to be the superficial interpretation of the text. Just as a child is tempted with something sweet to swallow (un-palatable) medicine, similarly the real object of the Veda is to liberate one from the bond of *karma* and its consequences for which different kinds of *karma* are apparently prescribed.

(One should not indulge in dereliction of the prescribed Vedic duties from the beginning, prematurely thinking that liberation from *karma* is the real object in life). If a person, being himself ignorant and having no control over his senses, does not perform the duties prescribed by the Veda, owing to *adharma* (the course of unrighteousness) in which he is involved by *vidharma* (non-performance of the prescribed acts and commission of the acts prohibited by the Veda), he goes from death to death (as he remains entangled in *samsara*).

He, who performs acts prescribed in the Veda but has no attachment to the fruits thereof, and dedicates them to the Supreme Ruler, attains to that state of accomplishment (*moksha*) in which *karma* or its fruit does not bind him. The promise of fruits of *karma* is meant to create interest in the *karma*.

Just as a child is tempted to gulp medicine by offering ‘the fruit’ of sweet-meats, the promise of heaven to a sacrificer is for persuading him to perform the Vedic *karma*. *Karma* is an accessory of spiritual knowledge. As the performer of *karma* gains spiritual knowledge, he loses the zest and attachment to *karma*. This non-attached pure state of mind leads, beyond the state of desire for heaven, to the realization of the Brahman, the final state of accomplishment, *Moksha*.

Whoever is desirous of instantaneously cutting as under the knot (of egotism) of the heart of his self which is the Brahman, should, in addition to the Vedic rites, perform the worship of Lord Kesava in the manner prescribed in the (*pancharatra*) *Tantra*.

After getting himself initiated (in the *Tantra* path) and shown the method of worship by his *guru*, he should worship the Supreme Person in the form of (whatever) image (of the Lord) that he likes the best.

The role of the *guru*, the spiritual preceptor, is crucial. In the absence of the divinely-willed *guru*, the seeker has no chance of success in accomplishing his objective.

In a thoroughly clean state of the body, he should sit in front of the idol of God. He should cleanse his body (internally) by means of breath-control and other practices. He should armour himself by assigning the protection of various parts of his body to different deities, and worship Lord Hari.

He should first purify the articles of worship (like flowers by removing insects, if any, and sprinkling water), the ground (by sweeping and washing), his own-self (by *nyasa* and concentration of the mind) and image of God (by removing the previous coating of sandal-paste and other articles). He should then purify, by sprinkling water, his own seat and keep ready at hand articles of worship (such as water for washing the feet of the deity, and other materials of worship). With his heart serene and concentrated, he should invoke the Lord (in the image, mentally). Performing the six *nyasas* from the heart onwards, he should chant the *mula-mantra* (the sacred syllables or names received by him from the preceptor) and worship the Lord with the available articles of worship as abiding both in the image and in his heart (wherein he should also install Him).

He should perform the worship of the image of the Lord including the various limbs of His Person, the arms and emblems He holds (such as the discus Sudarshana and others), and the attendant deities (like Sunanda, Garuda). He should worship each form of the Lord chanting the sacred *mantra* peculiar to It, offering water to wash His hands, feet and for *acamana* (rinsing the mouth), etc. He should bathe the deity and decorate it with cloth ornaments. According to the prescribed rites of worship, he should worship the Lord with sandal-paste, flowers, *akshatas* (unbroken grains of rice mixed with

turmeric paste to be applied to the deity's fore-head only) and garlands; he should burn scented incense and wave lights before Him and offer food. After eulogizing the Lord with appropriate hymns, he should prostrate himself before the Lord (Lord's image).

He should worship the image of Hari contemplating himself as being one with Hari. He should then place the relic of worship (such as flowers, etc) on his own head, and deposit the image of Hari in its proper place, and Lord Hari in his own heart.

He, who worships the Lord, the Supreme Soul, as present in the fire, the sun, water, in the guest (who arrives unexpectedly) and in his own heart, is liberated (from *samsara*) before long.

3. Lord's Incarnations

King Nimi said:

Be pleased to describe to us those various deeds performed by Lord Hari in his various Incarnations which He has taken at His own sweet will in the past and the present, and which He will take in the future.

Drumila replied:

He who seeks to count the innumerable excellences and attributes of the Infinite Lord is a person of childish (immature) understanding. It may be possible for him, in the course of a long period of time and with extreme difficulty, to count the particles of dust on the earth, but never the excellences of the Almighty Lord – the resort of all powers.

When, with the five elements evolved out of Himself, Narayana, the First Prime Deity, created this universe known as *Viraj*, like His own body, and entered it with a ray or part of His own (as Inner Controller), He came to acquire the epithet *Purusa* (the Indweller in the body).

The assemblage and arrangement of the three worlds rest on the support of the Lord's personality. Both the cognitive and co-native sense-organs of all embodied beings owe their functions to His sense-organs only. He is by Himself Knowledge or Consciousness. It is through Him that creatures derive their physical strength, the energy and strength of their senses and activity. Through *sattva* and other attributes (*rajas* and *tamas*), He became the Prime Agent of creation, subsistence and destruction of the universe.

At the beginning of creation (of the Universe), this Prime Deity, in association with the attribute *rajas*, appeared as Brahma for creation of the universe; (associated with the attribute *sattva*), He became Visnu, the dispenser of the fruit of sacrifice and the protector of the twice-born castes (*brahmana*, *kshatriya* and *vaisya*) and the religious order; and associated with the attribute *tamas*, He became Rudra for destruction of the universe. In this way, He from whom the creation, protection and dissolution of the universe ever continues through the instrumentality of Brahma, Visnu and Rudra is the First and Foremost Deity.

As Narayana and Nara, the foremost of the sages and of perfectly serene mind, He was born of Dharma, and His spouse Murti, the daughter of Daksha. He expounded to sages (like Narada) the path of action leading to realization of the Self (characterized by action-less-ness). He practised (an ideal type of) penance and His feet are still (ever served (and worshipped) by prominent sages.

Suspecting, with the apprehension, that this sage (Narayana-Nara) covets to the possession of his position (as the king of heaven), Indra deputed Kamadeva, the god of Love, along with his troupe. Being ignorant of His (Narayana's) spiritual greatness,

Kamadeva went with his paraphernalia – a bevy of celestial damsels, the vernal season and the gentle wind (from the sandal-forests of Malaya) to His hermitage at Badari, and hit him with shafts in the form of side-glances of heavenly damsels.

Knowing perfectly well that the indiscretion had been committed by Indra, He laughed loudly without any sense of pride (at His own moral strength). He assured the trembling visitors, ‘O (mighty) god of Love! Accept our hospitality (If no hospitality is offered, the hermitage would be as good as void)! May our hermitage be non-void (worthy of its existence)!’

When the sage Narayana removed their fear addressing them thus, the gods, who bent their head low in shame, submitted to Him, ‘O all-pervading Lord transcendental to Maya! This unperturbed-ness in you is not surprising. You are the Supreme Self subject to no modifications, and Your lotus-feet are respected with obeisance by sages who revel in the bliss of Self-realization.

(It is not surprising that we should behave according to our nature and create obstacles in your penance). A number of obstacles are created by gods in the path of your servants (devotees) who want to transcend the abode of gods (the heaven), and attain directly to Your highest region. No impediments obstruct the path of those who offer in sacrifices the respective shares of gods as oblations. But as You are the protector of Your devotees, Your votaries sets their feet on the obstacles (and trampling them down, attain to liberation).

(When Your non-devotees perform penance, they fall a victim to us – the erotic passion or the passion called anger). Those who cross the immeasurable oceans in the form of tempters like us overcome hunger, thirst, (extremes of climate in) the three seasons (the summer, rains and the winter), winds, and curb the palate and the sexual urge. Those that cannot overcome the passions succumb to futile anger and thereby waste their austerities. They are like ocean-crossers who get drowned in the cavity caused by a cow’s hoof.

While they were praising Him thus, the Almighty Lord (in order to humble the pride of beauty of celestial nymphs and others) created, by yogic power, and showed them women of marvellous beauty, all well adorned with costly ornaments, waiting upon Himself.

When those attendants of gods (Kama, the spring season, heavenly damsels) saw beautiful women like goddess Sri, (their pride of their own beauty was humbled, and) their own complexion faded before the excellence of the superior beauty of those women, and they were enraptured with fragrance of their bodies.

The Lord of gods (Narayana) laughingly told them who were bowing to him in humility, ‘choose any one of these women who is suitable, as an ornament of the celestial world.’

Saying ‘so be it’, the servants of gods complied with His command. They selected Urvasi, the most beautiful among heavenly damsels, and repaired to the celestial regions following her.

They paid their respects to Indra in the assembly of gods and, while all gods were eagerly listening, described to him the superior spiritual power of Narayana at which Indra was astonished, and became afraid (at his indiscretion in offending Narayana).

It is for the good of the world that Lord Visnu incarnated with a ray (part) of His own, in the form of a swan (to expound *Jnana yoga* to god Brahma when questioned by his sons), as Datta (the son of Atri), as the ever celibate Sanat-Kumara, and as our father Rishabha. Taking the form of Hayagriva (a horse-necked god), He killed the demon Madhu and recovered the Veda from him.

In his incarnation as Fish, at the time of deluge (at the end of Kalpa), He protected Manu, the earth, the sages and (seeds of all) plants and herbs. In His descent as a divine Boar, He killed demon Hiranyaksha, the son of Diti, while he was lifting up the earth from the bottom of the sea. Assuming the form of diving Tortoise, He supported the mount (Mandara) on His back at the time of churning the ocean for nectar. Descending as Hari, He rescued from the jaws of a crocodile the afflicted King of elephants who appealed to Him for succour.

He rescued the sages (called Valakhilyas) who were thumb-sized and who, while they went to fetch *samidha* for sage Kashyapa, fell into a hollow created by a cow’s hoof and were drowning as if in a sea (and were, therefore, ridiculed by Indra), on their prayer (for life). He absolved Indra who was involved in the darkness (of the sin of slaying) because of his killing Vrtra (who was a *brahmana*). He set free the heavenly ladies who lay helplessly imprisoned in the houses of *asuras*. For ensuring freedom from fear for the righteous, He incarnated as a Man-lion and killed Hiranyakasipu, the King of *asuras*.

In every Manvantara, during the wars between gods and *asuras*, He incarnated with His rays for the sake of gods, and killing the leaders of *asuras*, He protected the three worlds. Appearing as the divine Dwarf (Vamana), He, under the pretext of requesting for alms, took away this earth from Bali and gave it back to gods, the sons of Aditi.

Incarnating as Parasurama, the conflagration born in the Bhrgu clan for destroying the forest in the form of Haihaya family, He extirpated the kshatriyas from the surface of the earth twenty one times. As Rama, the consort of Sita, He constructed a bridge across the sea (to Lanka) and killed the ten-headed Ravana destroying his fort of Lanka. Victorious is Rama whose glory destroys the sins of the world.

The use of the verb in present tense in relation to Rama indicates that this dialogue took place while Rama was alive. The use of the future tense with reference to Krisna and others supports this view.

For the removal of the burden of earth, the eternal, birth-less Lord will take birth in the race of Yadus, and will accomplish feats which would be very difficult even for gods to perform. Then he would incarnate as Buddha and would delude by his disputations and dialectics those who, though ineligible, will try to perform sacrifices. And ultimately at the end of Kali Age, he will descend as Kalki and exterminate the Sudra rulers.

O mighty-armed Janaka (Nimi)! Innumerable are such incarnations and deeds of the Lord of the universe of immense glory (a few of which have been recounted to you)!

4. Worship of the Lord

The King (Nimi) enquired:

O sages, foremost among those who have realized the *Atman!* What is the condition and fate of those persons who do not mostly adore Lord Hari, whose desires are still un-satiated and whose minds and senses are uncontrolled?

Camasa replied:

From the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Person originated the four *varnas* (classes of society) along with the *asramas* (stages in life) severally. According to their predominant characteristic qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and their combinations), they were distinctly classified as *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra*.

Of these, they, who do not adore the Supreme Ruler, their direct Originator, either through ignorance or through negligence of that Great Person, lose their present status and fall into hell.

Women, persons from *sudra* and such other classes, (who are denied the opportunity and hence) are away from (the places or chances of) hearing the stories of Hari and also from listening to the songs of the excellent qualities of Hari, deserve compassion from sages like you. (It behooves you to guide them on the path of devotion.)

But *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas* and *vaisyas*, by virtue of their original birth, and second birth through their *upanayana* (investiture of the sacred thread) ceremony (become eligible for studies, performance of sacrifices, etc and) stand in the proximity of Lord's feet. But even they are deluded (to become attached to the fruit of their *karma*) by accepting the *arthavada* (apparent and superficial meaning) of the Veda.

These persons are ignorant of the method of performing *karma* (without getting themselves involved in the fruits of the acts); being conceited fools, they regard themselves as the learned ones (and hence do not seek guidance of others for the technique of performing *karma* without getting bound by it). These fools, fascinated by the sweet words of the Veda (promising happiness in heaven), indulge in sweet talk.

Owing to the influence of *rajas*, they are ruthless in their designs; and they are lustful and revengeful like serpents. These wicked, conceited hypocrites laugh at the real devotees who are beloved of Hari.

Addicted to sexual pleasures, they adore (and cajole) women. Living in houses dominated with craving for conjugal pleasures, they talk to each other of their (present and prospective) achievements (or they wish each other to be blessed with wives, children and prosperity). They perform sacrifices without observing the correct

procedure or distribution of (adequate) food or giving (the due) sacrificial fees. They kill animals for satiating personal appetite, unmindful of the consequences of such destruction of life.

Being elated with the pride of wealth, prosperity, lineage, learning, munificence, personal beauty, physical power and superior aptitude for action, these wicked people get blinded and despise not only righteous devotees beloved of Lord Hari, but also the Supreme Lord Himself.

Persons lacking in wisdom do not care to listen to what is explicitly sung in the Veda about the Supreme Lord – that He is the Eternal Principle permeating everything like the sky, and is the beloved-most indwelling Soul in all embodied beings. They interpret the Veda as sanctioning their desires (for women, wine, etc).

It is the natural tendency of worldly creatures to indulge in sexual intercourse, and enjoy non-vegetarian food and wine. No injunction for these is necessary from the Veda. The Veda provides a check over this by allowing sexual intercourse with one's married wife (at the proper time of the period), eat meat at the end of a sacrifice and drink wine during the Sautramani sacrifice (but never otherwise). The real intention of the Vedic injunctions (in these matters) is to make a person abstain from them.

The only object of wealth is to follow the course of *dharma*. It leads to spiritual knowledge and direct realization of the soul and supreme peace (*moksha*). But people utilize their wealth for the family or personal comfort and fail to take cognizance of the god of death, the formidable and inexorable enemy of their bodies.

The smelling of wine (in the Sautramani sacrifice) is laid down as its intake (and no drinking of liquor is permitted); a beast is to be (symbolically) offered to the deities (by touching it) in sacrifices, but no killing for meat-eating is allowed; similarly, sexual intercourse (with one's wife) is to be indulged in for procreation but not for sexual enjoyment. People do not understand this pure course of their own *dharma*.

But those wicked persons, who do not know the real nature of *dharma*, and being obstinate and haughty, consider themselves to be righteous, and kill beasts without any remorse, and are reciprocally eaten by those very beasts in the next world or in hell.

These godless people hate Lord Hari, their very indwelling self who abides in the bodies of others as well (as their soul); and fixing their attachment to their mortal body and its relatives (wives, sons, etc), they fall deep into hell.

Those who have not grasped the correct knowledge of Reality and have crossed the stage of total ignorance (by possessing imperfect knowledge) regard themselves as non-momentary (permanent), and pursue the three objectives of human life (*dharma*, *artha* and *kama*); such persons (who thus follow a suicidal path) ruin themselves.

Such people, shrouding their self in ignorance and with their desires unrequited, mistake ignorance (*avidya*) for knowledge. Thwarted in achieving their objects, and their hopes and wishes frustrated by the Time-Spirit, they ruin themselves (and suffer misery).

Persons, averse to Lord Vasudeva, are compelled against their will to abandon their household, children, friends and wealth (property) acquired by them with great efforts, and are forced to enter into the dark hell (ignorance).

The King Nimi said:

Be pleased to explain to us now, in which ages (*yugas*) of what complexion and form and by what names is the Lord known and with what rites He is worshipped by men.

Karabhajana replied:

In the yugas (ages) Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, Lord Kesava assumes different forms, complexions and names and He is worshipped in different ways.

In the Krita age, the Lord is of fair (white) complexion, has four arms, wears matted locks of hair, is clad in bark-garments and deer-skin. He puts on a sacred thread and carries in his hands a rosary of Rudraksha, a staff and a water-jar of gourd.

Men of that age are quiescent by nature; entertain no feeling of enmity, are friendly towards all and look upon all beings as equals. They worship the Deity with penance, meditation, control of mind and the senses.

The Lord is addressed in that age with the epithets Hamsa, Suparna, Vaikuntha, Dharma, Lord of Yoga, Amala, Isvara, Purusa, Avyakta (the un-manifest) and Paramatman (the Supreme Soul).

In the age called Treta, He, the Lord, is red in complexion, has four arms and wears a zone of three cords (round his waist indicating initiation). He has golden locks of hair. He, being the embodiment of sacrifice as described in the three Vedas, carries in His hand *sruk*, *sruva* (ladles and spoons for offering oblations in the fire and other accessories for performing sacrifices).

In that age, righteous men who are the expounders of the Veda worship Lord Hari, the embodiment of gods, through (rites prescribed in) the three Vedas.

He is then called Visnu, Yajna, Prsnigarbha (the son of Prsni, the wife of Prajapati Sutapas), Sarva-deva, Urukrama, Vrsakapi, Jayanta and Urugaya.

In the Dvapara age, the Lord is bluish (like the *atasi*-hemp-flower) in complexion. He wears yellow silken cloth and bears all His original arms (like Sudarshana discus,

Kaumodaki mace and others). He is distinguished by His characteristic marks like Srivatsa (on his bosom).

In that age, people desirous of knowing the Supreme Brahman worship that Supreme Man characterized by the emblem of a sovereign emperor (white umbrella, chouries, etc) with (the rites prescribed both in) the Veda and the *Tantra* texts.

Salutations to Vasudeva, bow to Sankarshana; obeisance to Pradyumna and Aniruddha, to You O glorious Lord (in the four manifestations or *vyuhas*)!

Hail to the (perfect) sage Narayana, the Supreme Person, the All-pervading Lord, the Ruler of the universe, the Indwelling Soul of all created beings!

It is in this manner, O Lord of the earth, that they extol the Ruler of the universe. Now listen to me how people worship Him with rites prescribed in various *Tantra* texts.

It is known to all that highly intelligent and discerning people, through sacrifices mostly consisting of chanting His name and extolling His glory, worship that Lord of dark complexion but brilliant (like Sapphire) in lustre. The Lord is perfect in every limb, beautified with ornaments (like Kaustubha gem and others), equipped with His weapons and missiles (like discus Sudarshana) and accompanied with His attendants (like Sunanda and others).

O Supreme Person! Protector of the votaries (who bow to Your feet)! I salute Your lotus-feet which are even worthy of being meditated upon, which end all the insults and insubordinations (suffered from the members of the family and one's own sense-organs), bestow all the desired objects, the resort of all sacred places, are praised by god Siva and Brahma, an asylum worthy of taking refuge, annihilate the afflictions of Your servants (devotees) and which are a boat for crossing the sea of *samsara*.

O the most religious-minded King (Nimi)! I bow to the lotus-feet of the Lord who, at the word of His father (Dasaratha), resigned His prosperous kingdom (which was covetable even to gods and hence was very difficult to give up), departed to the forest, and gave chase to an illusory deer which was desired by His beloved (Sita). O exalted Person!

In this manner, O King, glorious Lord Hari, who confers all blessings, is worshipped under different names and forms appropriate to the age (Krita, Treta, etc) by men belonging to that particular age.

Noble discerning persons, who know the excellences and essentials, appreciate Kali age in which all the desired ideals in human life are fully accomplished by merely singing the name and deeds of Hari.

To persons who are wandering in the cycle of *samsara* in this world, there is no higher gain than this (glorification and singing the name and deeds of the Lord); for, it is

by virtue of it, that a person attains sublime serenity, and the *samsara* in his case comes to an end.

Persons belonging to the ages like Krita and others (Treta and Dvapara) wish to be born in the Kali age, O King! It is certainly in the Kali age alone that persons exclusively devoted to Lord Narayana will be born.

O great King! Such (exclusive devotees of Lord Narayana) will be born in some places here and there (in Kali age), but a majority of them will be born in the Dravidian lands wherein flow the rivers, the Tamraparni, the Krita-kala, the Payasvini, the sacred-most Kaveri and the western Mahanadi. People who drink water from these rivers become pure in heart and generally turn into votaries of the glorious Lord Vasudeva, O ruler of men!

(With the realization that Lord Vasudeva abides everywhere and hence) entertaining no notion of difference, (absolutely giving up all duties prescribed by *sastras*, he, who, with all his heart, seeks refuge in Mukunda (Visnu), the shelter of all beings, is under no obligation to gods, sages, creatures, relatives and people, nor is he the servant of any of these. (Hence the performance of the *pancha-mahayajanas* which is obligatory for all according to *sastras* is not applicable to him. He is above the prescriptions and interdictions of the *sastras*).

(A devotee stands in no need of expiation for the non-observance of the prescriptions of *Dharma*). As Lord Hari, the Supreme Ruler, abides in the heart of His devotee who seeks shelter at His feet, giving up attachment to his body, etc (and is not propitiating any other god), the devotee (does not go astray, but) if, perchance, he commits any sins (owing to the force of previous *karma*), Lord Hari absolves him of all sins.

Narada said:

Thus having listened to the exposition of the course of duties meant for the devotees of the glorious Lord, Nimi, the king of Mithila, became highly delighted. Accompanied by his family priest, he duly worshipped the nine sages, the sons of Jayanti.

Thereupon, immediately, all the *Siddhas* vanished while all people remained merely looking on. The King also practised the duties (the *bhagavata* way of propitiating the Lord), and attained to the highest state (*moksha*).

O highly fortunate Vasudeva! If, entertaining no attachment and with devout faith, you follow the *bhagavata dharma* (course of conduct), you will also reach the highest goal.

The whole world is filled with the fame of you both (Vasudeva and your queen Devaki) as the Supreme Lord Hari is pleased to accept you as his parents (is pleased to be your son).

Your soul has been already purified by cherishing parental affection to Krisna (as your son) by his sight, embrace and conversation, as also by sleeping and sitting with him and by feeding him.

If inimical kings like Sisupala, Paundra, Salva and others brooded over Him with hatred (all the while) while sleeping, sitting, etc and had their mind transformed, as it was deeply impressed with His gait, graceful activities, glances, etc and could attain to the semblance of His personality (the *Sarupata* type of liberation), what need be said of those whose mind is deeply attached to him?

You should not entertain the notion that Lord Krisna is your child; for He is the Supreme Ruler, the Soul abiding in all beings, the Immutable Transcendence that has concealed Its Supreme nature by assuming a human form, by the dint of Its *Maya* potency.

In order to annihilate the demonic *kshatriyas* who, being veritable *asuras*, were a burden to the earth, and for the protection of the good and for conferring liberation from *samsara* on them, Lord Krisna has descended on the earth, and his glory spreads all over the universe.

Sri Suka said:

Having listened to this, the highly fortunate Vasudeva and the blessed-most Devaki were extremely astonished, and the infatuation (of parental affection to Krisna) dissipated (from their mind).

Whoever with a concentrated mind understands and retains in memory the sacred account (of the discourses of nine Siddhas) will shake off the illusion (of *samsara*) here, and become eligible to attain to the Brahman.

Hamsa-Gita

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Introduction

The Hamsa-Gita is contained in slokas 22 to 54 of chapter 4 of *Skandha VI* of *Srimad Bhagavata* which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The Hamsa-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between Raja Parikshit and Sri Suka as is the text of *Srimad Bhagavata*. The Hamsa-Gita is a very brief exposition of the core content of the Vedanta philosophy revolving round the Supreme *Brahman* – Supreme Consciousness.

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

Hamsaguhya

Sri Suka said:

He (Daksha) extolled the worshipful Lord, who is not perceived by the senses, with a hymn known as *Hamsaguhya*, which pleased the Lord very much; I shall transmit it to you.

The Prajapati Daksha said:

Salutations to the Supreme Being whose experience is Truth abiding, who is the sustainer of both *Maya* and the *Jiva*, whose glorious presence is not felt by people with intelligence overpowered by longing for material fulfillments, who transcends all the ordinary means of knowledge but is intuited as Self-effulgent Consciousness.

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 (*cit-sakti*) which is larger than the universe and yet subtler than the minutest sub-atomic particle and, therefore, invisible. I am the consciousness that exists everywhere like butter in milk, and whose very nature is experiencing. That consciousness is the reality that bestows the individual characteristic on each and every substance of the universe. It is continuous and homogenous in waking, dreaming, deep-sleep and the transcendental 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 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.

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

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.

Just as the object of a sense, though in intimate contact with that sense, does not perceive that sense as the sense perceives the object, even so the Supreme Being, the friend and lover of the *Jiva*, is present with the *Jiva* in the same body, but the *Jiva* knows Him not, the universal witness, and His love. To that Supreme Being, my salutations!

Perception (*pratyaksa*) 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* come 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.

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

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

external objects. If the consciousness within is tranquil and placid, the whole perceived world is tranquil and placid. If the consciousness within is agitated, the perceived world is no different.

The *Brahman* is undifferentiated. 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 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.

The physical body, *pranas* (vital energy), mind, gross elements and subtle elements, being aspects of *Prakrti*, are not naturally conscious of themselves or of the senses which grasp them or of the presiding deities. But the *Jiva* who makes them all externally conscious is aware of them all and their source, the *gunas* of *Prakrti*. Still the *Jiva* is not aware of the knower of all, the Ultimate Knower who is the support of the *Jiva* himself. May I offer my words of praise to that Supreme Being!

A *Jiva* is generally considered an individual who is not conscious of his true nature being part of the Supreme Being. Ontologically, the *Jiva* is no different from 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 by the Upanisads and expounded by Sri Sankaracharya.

‘Once it is known 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 (*acetana 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 pots) 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 *cicchakti* from the All-pervading Consciousness and itself appears as *Cetana*. The main difference is that the *Prana* is not all-pervading like the *Brahman*, in the words of P. Sriramachandrudu.

Salutations to Thee, who shines in Thy pristine state with a mind that has attained to extreme purity by the subsidence of all perception and memory, and the consequent arresting of the mental modifications that objectify names and forms or take shape as external objects!

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 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.

Though Thou art covered by Thy powers manifesting as the various categories, *mahatattva*, *ahamkara*, *manas*, and the five *tanmatras*, wise men separate and grasp Thee through discriminative intelligence as existing in the heart, just as the celestial fire lodged in the sacrificial fuel is ignited and brought into manifestation through the fifteen sacred *mantras*.

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 universe.

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.

Thou art the transcendent Spirit ever steeped in eternal bliss, negating the diversities of relative existence produced by *Maya*. But being the possessor of the innate power *Maya* that baffles all definitions, Thou art also all manifested beings having names and forms. May that Sri Hari be propitious unto me!

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 *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.

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.

Whatever is described by words and understood by the intellect, and whatever is grasped by the senses and imagined by the mind is not Thy pristine nature. They are all the expressions of Thy power *Maya* with its three *gunas*, from whose work of creation, preservation and dissolution Thy being is indirectly cognized.

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.

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 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.

Whatever that is manifest as high and low, as objects, instruments, agents, actions, etc, Thou didst exist before them transcending them as the unitary non-dual *Brahman*, the Cause of all causes.

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.

Salutations to Thee with countless attributes, whose inscrutable Power causes self-forgetfulness and delusion in those controversialists to whom that Power forms the topic of argument and counter-argument!

An aspirant reasons about the *Brahman* as long as he has not realized IT. One cannot have this knowledge so long as there is the slightest trace of worldliness. The aspirant is to keep his mind aloof from the objects of sight, hearing, touch and other things of a worldly nature. As long as an aspirant is conscious of his body, he is conscious of duality. It is when he tries to describe what he sees, he finds duality. He is to give up his identification with worldly things, discriminating 'not this, not this'. Only thus does he realize the *Brahman* as his own inner consciousness.

The aspirant believes that the acts of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe and all its living beings are the manifestations of Sakti, the Divine Power. By reasoning, he will realize that all these are as illusory as a dream in the sense that they are transient. The *Brahman* alone is the Reality. All else is unreal. Even this very Sakti is unsubstantial, like a dream.

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. Every thing is Its manifestation. It is God alone that has become everything. The world by no means exists apart from Him.

Viewing Thee as their common ground, the *Yoga* (the school of ascetic practice) and the *Sankhya* (the school of knowledge) claim absolute truth for their respective views, but speak of Thee in divided and contradictory ways – the one positively as Personal Being with all auspicious attributes and a form, and the other negatively, denying all these and describing Thee as 'not this, not this'. Thou art that Transcendent and Infinite Being, favourable to both these views alike. (What are called contradictions cease to be so in Thee, the Infinite Being who art both the Personal Deity and the Impersonal Absolute).

The *Brihadaranyaka* Upanisad states that the *Brahman* has two aspects – *murta* (with form) and *amurta* (formless). The Puranas accept both the aspects, but concentrated particularly on the *murta* aspect as it is more significant for a devotee. The *amurta* aspect is the Non-dual Absolute and the *murta* aspect is the *Sakti* or the manifesting power of the *amurta* aspect in the absence of which the *amurta* aspect is indistinguishable from *sunya*. In the same way, if the *murta* aspect alone is accepted without the *amurta* aspect with the Infinite and the Absolute Being as its complement, the *murta* aspect will only become a limited aspect indistinguishable from an exalted man.

The Puranas in general and *Bhagavata* in particular accept the Supreme Being as both *Murta* and *Amurta* with a greater stress on the *murta* aspect and call Him the Bhagawan. The Bhagawan here is *Param-purusa*, the Supreme Person, but not an individual. He has an Archetytal Form which is a potential multi-form that can take any

form in which He is invoked. An anthropomorphic garb is put on Him, as man could think of Him only in terms of the highest that he could conceive of and that He is, in himself, in an idealized state of existence. So the Puranas depict the divine majesty of the Bhagawan through symbolic and supra-human descriptions that account for many unearthly and unusual features. When the details of these descriptions are taken together as a whole, with a receptivity born of devotion, they make a tremendous impact of divine consciousness on the mind of man.

May that Infinite Being, the worshipful-Lord, who transcends name and form, but manifests Himself in many forms of *suddha-sattva* and under countless names as Deities and Incarnations, and performs various sportive actions for blessing the devotees, be propitious unto me!

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*.

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.

May He, the Lord of all, who, like the air that takes the smell of whatever it is in contact with, assumes the forms of Deities as conceived by even various crude cults according to the tendencies of the votaries, be propitious to me and grant my prayers.

Ideal stimulations of the Cosmic Mind without any reference to history can become psychic verities of very great potency. Such verities are the deities worshipped by the Hindus like Vishnu, Siva, Sakti, etc. They never had location in earthly space and time except as images used in worship. They are the manifestations of the Supreme Being as Spiritual Verities before which what we call material objects are mere shadows.

The deities so worshipped are conceived of the *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* either in their pristine purity or in combination of two and more in different proportions. The deities conceived by people of crude cults will be predominantly of the *guna* of *tamas*, with a combination of the *guna* of *rajas*. The deities take the forms in which they are conceived by their votaries and answer their prayers accordingly.

Sri Suka said:

Hymned in this way at the holy lake of *Aghamarshana*, the worshipful Lord, who loves His devotees, appeared before Daksha who extolled Him with deep faith and fervour.

He appeared seated on the shoulders of Garuda. He had eight powerful arms, sporting His discus, conch, sword, shield, arrow, bow, cord and mace. Blue like a rain cloud, clad in yellow cloth, serene in expression, and luminous with *srivatsa* mark and the *kaustubha* jewel, He appeared, framed in a wreath of wild flowers and leaves. He was adorned with a great crown, bracelets, gleaming ear ornaments, girdle, rings, anklets, and armlets. Assuming a form impressive enough to dumbfound the three worlds of which He was the Lord, He appeared surrounded by sages and attendants like Narada, Nanda and other celestials.

The above is the description of the divine majesty of Bhagawan in a symbolic and supra-human way that account for many unearthly and unusual features. When the details of these descriptions are taken together as a whole, with a receptivity born of devotion, they make a tremendous impact of divine consciousness on the mind of man.

At the sight of this rare and wonderful form, followed by the hymning choir of *siddhas*, *charanas* and *gandharvas*, the *Prajapati* Daksha was awestruck.

With the mind overflowing with joy, he made full prostration to the Lord, falling before him like a stick. For a while he was not able to speak anything, as his mind was like a lake filled with the water of mountain-torrents flowing into it.

The Lord Hari, who knows the heart of all, now said as follows to that saluting *Prajapatis* desirous of progeny:

Sri Bhagawan said:

Oh son of Prachetasas! Oh noble one! You have become perfect by your austerity. For, your intense faith and devotion to Me has generated supreme love of Me in you.

Oh protector of men! I am much pleased with your austere practices, because they are meant for the good of the world. It is My wish that prosperity attends on all beings.

Brahma, *Bhava*, *Manus* and you *Prajapatis* are all expressions of My power for working towards the prosperity and advancement of all beings.

Oh learned one! My heart is *tapas* consisting in the practice of inward concentration. My body is *vidya* consisting in the repetition of the sacred *mantras* in the proper way with all their auxiliaries. My form is *kriya*, the performance of the daily and occasional rites. The sacrificial rites (*kratus*) are my limbs. *Dharma* consisting in the *apurva* or the efficiency-potential of sacrifice is my mind. And the *Devas* receiving sacrificial offerings are my vital energy (*prana*).

The power or energy of the Infinite Consciousness, ever in motion, is the reality of all creation related to space and time. That power is also known as *Mahasatta* – the great existence, *Mahaciti* – the great intelligence, *Mahasakti* – the great power, *Mahadrsti* – the great vision, *Mahakriya* – the great doer or doing, *Mahabhava* – the great becoming and *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*.

At first I alone was, Pure Consciousness, transcending relations, devoid of within and without, and un-manifest. Nothing else there was. It was as if everything were in slumber.

Ontologically All That Exists is Infinite Consciousness.

When in Me, the immeasurable and of infinite attributes, My Power *Maya* brought out My cosmic body (the *Brahmanda*), simultaneously Brahma, the original being and self-born one, also came into existence.

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.

Though the first of divinities, and though fortified by My prowess, Brahma still felt weak when he started the work of creation.

Afterwards that Divinity, as instructed by Me, performed *tapas* (inward concentration) of an intense nature. Becoming all-powerful by such *tapas*, he first brought out you, the nine *Prajapatis*, into existence to aid in the work of creation.

As you are anxious to have progeny, you may accept this woman Asikni, daughter of another *Prajapati* Panchajana as your wife.

By following the law of co-habitation with her, who is also desirous of the same, you will be bringing forth numerous progeny.

The generations that are to come after you will all consort with women prompted by My *Maya*, and offer Me service.

Sri Suka said:

Saying so, even as Daksha was looking on, Sri Hari, the worshipful Lord and protector of the worlds, disappeared like a phenomenon perceived in a dream.