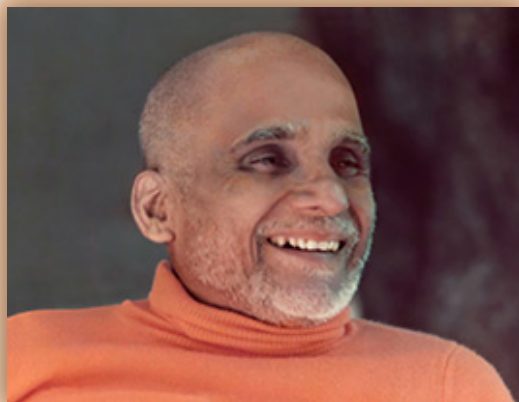


THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PANCHADASI



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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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PREFACE

The Panchadasi is a standard text on the philosophy of the Vedanta, consisting of fifteen chapters, written by Sage Vidyaranya. Historians and teachers of philosophy sometimes hold that the later portions of this work were written by Bharatitirtha. Whatever be the authorship of this treatise, it stands as an unparalleled compendium expounding the fundamental principles of the Vedanta propounding the non-dual existence of Brahman, the supremacy of the Absolute.

In accordance with the accepted definition of the Ultimate Reality as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), the fifteen chapters of the Panchadasi are grouped into three sections of five chapters each, which are designated as Viveka, or Discrimination, Dipa, or Illumination, and Ananda, or Bliss, corresponding to the Existence, Consciousness and Bliss aspects of Reality, which is the theme of the fifteen chapters.

The text purports to point out that the universe finally gravitates to the realization of this great purpose of all life, namely, the experience of Absolute Existence, which is a blend of infinity and eternity, wherein are brought together into the highest fulfilment all the aspirations of the whole of creation. The first five chapters endeavour to discriminate by analysis and understanding (Viveka) the nature of Reality as distinguished from mere appearance, both in the external universe of the five Elements – Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth – and the individual consisting of the five sheaths – Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya – meaning the Physical. Vital, Mental, Intellectual and Causal encasements of the pure Spirit. Incidentally, the sequence of the process of creation is described, in the context of stating the relationship between

Brahman and the universe, which involves also an explanation of the specific connection that seems to obtain between the individual percipient and the world of perception. These are highly interesting in-depth analyses and studies which probe into the final structure and substance of all things.

The second set of five chapters throw light (Dipa) on the fact that Consciousness is the supreme principle, the only Reality, which is identical with pure Existence. Here, again, a detailed description is entered into regarding the nature of Isvara (God), Jagat (world) and Jiva (individual), with an outstanding exposition of their mutual action and interaction. The theory of perception, which is a very important field of study in all philosophic circles, is discussed in an entire chapter in this section. Simultaneously, there is a picturesque delineation of the gradational process of the ascent of the individual to its supreme goal, liberation in union with Brahman, the Absolute. A very poignant and candid discourse on the meaning and method of meditation leading to contact with Reality is also a stimulating theme discussed in this section.

The last five chapters go into great detail in expounding the inner constitutive essence of Brahman as unexcelled Bliss (Ananda). Joy is the essence of life. Happiness is the core of all things. Everything struggles in the end for reaching a state of infinite satisfaction. There does not seem to be any other aim or purpose in life, whatever be the movement or the activity with which persons and things seem to be busy in the complex arrangement of the evolution and involution of the universe. That the cause and the effect are finally non-different, that reality and its manifestations cannot be drastically separated one from the other, that God and the world are not two

different realities, that the deepest in man is Existence, which is Consciousness and Joy, that all effort at the gaining of knowledge is an adventure in the direction of the union of knowing and being, Consciousness and Existence, that the Self is the source of all happiness, whether the concept of Self is empirically limited to persons, things and relations, or understood in its primary sense of unlimited universality, and that the notion that pleasures come from external objects located in space and time outside as the non-Self is a blatant error, perfection being attainable only in the realization of the Absolute Self, form the enthralling subjects inimitably described by the author in the concluding five chapters.

The Panchadasi is usually, and perhaps invariably, prescribed as a pre-condition of study before one takes up the larger initiations into the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita, inasmuch as this basic text acts as a fitting introduction to the central doctrines of the Vedanta philosophy in general.

The present book consists of the lectures delivered on the philosophy and the teachings of this great work to audiences of students at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society.

—Swami Krishnananda

Chapter I

DISCRIMINATION OF REALITY

Analysis of Self

The world consists of objects, and every object is a content of positive or negative perception and cognition. The special feature of each object is that it is distinguished from the other by characteristics that are ingrained in it in a particular manner. This is why we see the world variegated in colours, sounds, tastes, touches, and smells. The difference is in the existence somewhere of some characteristics outside the range of others at other places. Thus, for example, we mark a difference between a cow and a tree, because we do not find in a cow the features of a tree, and those of a cow in a tree. Objects manifest a mutual exclusion of one another. It is this that enables us to know the multitudinousness that the world is.

We also conceive such difference as that between God and the individual, God and the world, one individual and another, the individual and the world, in addition to the differences among the various contents of the world. There is a difference of limbs in the body. There is difference among individuals of the same species as also individuals of different species. There is external and internal variety. We may here raise a question as to what it is that knows that there is difference, and how is difference known at all? We have an immediate answer that a kind of consciousness in us is the knower of the different objects outside as also inside, and this difference is also known by consciousness itself. The world can be known by nothing other than consciousness. Though the objects differ in their external

features, we do not find any difference among the various types of consciousness. There is distinction of sounds, colours, etc., but there is no distinction between the consciousness of sound and the consciousness of colour, and so on. This, then, means that the knowing consciousness is one and the same, though things are multifarious and possess changing characters. One and the same consciousness sees, hears, tastes, touches and smells, and it is also possible to be conscious of the consciousness of all these. Consciousness is a synthetic unity of apperception, it is all at once. Though the eyes cannot hear and ears cannot see, etc., and each sense has one particular function to perform, consciousness is the unity of them all. It is one and indivisible, and it is responsible for all the experiences in the world.

This same predicament is observed in the state of dream, also. The difference of the waking state is only in the permanency of experience which it reveals. While dream experience is short, the waking one is comparatively long. But there is no difference in the constitution, the make-up, or the construction of the two states. Yet, it is seen that the consciousness does not differ. Though there is difference between waking and dreaming, there is no difference between the consciousness of waking and the consciousness of dreaming. This is testified by the experience that one and the same individual wakes and dreams, and asserts: "I dreamt." While the waking state is due to actual perception through senses, dream is brought about by the memory of waking state on account of the impressions of the latter

imbedded in the mind, which manifest themselves on suitable occasions. Consciousness has no forms or shapes.

Also, taking into consideration the condition of deep sleep, it is seen that there is, in it, for all practical purposes, no consciousness at all. One wakes up from sleep and exclaims: "I knew nothing, but I enjoyed happiness, I had wonderful rest." Notwithstanding that there was no consciousness or knowing in deep sleep, there is a persistent memory of one's having slept and experienced joy therein. There is a total absence of experience from the point of view of consciousness, but the effect in the form of memory of having slept is enough evidence that there was some sort of experience even in deep sleep. The continuance of impression is the outcome of a continuity in basic being. When there is no experience, there is no memory, too. But it cannot be denied that we have a memory of sleep. This leads to the conclusion that the condition of deep sleep is one of a conscious experience, though this consciousness is not to be construed in the ordinary sense of the term. When we affirm that there was all darkness in sleep, it means, we knew darkness. Else, we would not be making such an assertion. To know darkness there must be knowledge, and knowledge is identical with the luminous intelligence with which the states of waking and dreaming are also experienced. There is, therefore, an unbroken continuity of consciousness in the states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. And, as it is different from the objects it knew in waking and dreaming, it is also different from the darkness or ignorance which it knew in deep sleep. But, it never differs from the consciousness of

either state. From this it may be concluded that the same consciousness persists for days and nights together, for months and years and centuries and aeons, for ever and ever. It has no beginning, middle or end. It is absolute.

One cannot conceive of the cessation of consciousness, since it is impossible to conceive of one's own destruction. There is the persistence of consciousness even when one imagines that there is total annihilation. Consciousness precedes thought, volition and feeling. There is an immediacy in consciousness and it never becomes an object. The knower, knowledge and the known are one and the same and inseparable. There is not in it the opposition of subject and object, as in the case of the various things of the world. It is not known by itself, nor known by another; the former case is impossible, and the latter leads to infinite regress in argument. It is best defined as That which Is.

This consciousness is the Atman, and is the repository of supreme bliss. The bliss of the Atman is unvarying, as different from the pleasure that one feels with any set of objects which are changeful in nature. All things are dear and lovable for the sake of this Self, and hence all things are subservient to the Self. Nothing in this universe is pleasurable for its own sake, but for the sake of the Atman. When the loves in regard to objects change due to changing circumstances in life, one realises at the background of all these that the love of the Atman stands unbroken and persists through change. Even displeasure with oneself is not in regard to the essential Atman within, but with certain painful conditions in life which are repulsive to one's tastes, inclinations or desires. It is not existence that is

hated, but certain forms of existence. None ever condemns or tries to negate oneself. There is an inner prayer from everyone that one may live for ever. 'May I not cease to be; may I exist always' is the deepest wish in every living being. This love is ingrained in the bottom of one's existence.

It is never seen that the Self is subservient to objects. On the other hand it is seen that objects are subservient to the Self. On a careful psychological analysis it is observable that the love which people have for things outside is the outcome of a confused mixing up of the bliss of the Atman with the changing names and forms that make up what we call the world. Hence, in loving an object, the confused mind attaches itself to the changing names and forms in its ignorance and the false notion that its love is deposited in the objects, while in truth it is in the Atman, and even when we love objects we are unwittingly loving the universal Atman. Hence the Atman is Supreme Bliss, which is the only natural condition of spiritual existence, while all other conditions with which it associates itself are transitory phenomena, and unnatural.

From the above it would be clear that the Atman eternally exists as consciousness and is absolute bliss. It is Sat-Chit-Ananda, which fact is demonstrated both by reason and intuition. The identity of the Atman with Brahman or the Absolute Being is declared in the Vedanta texts such as the Upanishads, which is also established by reason. But this Atman is not seen, it is not visible to the eyes, and hence all the misery of individual existence. Nor can it be said that it is entirely invisible, else there would be no love or pleasure. That there is a faint recognition of the

existence of the Atman is proved beyond doubt by the unparalleled affection which one has towards one's own Self. But it is also true that it is not properly seen or known; otherwise, one would not be clinging to objects, the perishable forms of the world, which have neither reality in them nor the happiness which one is seeking. Thus there is a peculiar situation in which we find ourselves where we seem to know it and yet not know it. There is a muddle of intelligence and torpidity of understanding due to which there is a perpetually disturbed feeling and distracted knowledge. It is that which is responsible for our partially evincing love for ourselves and partially clinging to things that perish. The beauty and the joy are not in things but in the Atman. And this is not known. It is falsely imagined to be in objects; hence the attachment that we cherish in regard to them.

Just as in a large group of students, who are chanting the Veda in a chorus, and where every kind of voice can be heard, it is possible for the father of one particular student in that group to hear the voice of his own son, due to his familiarity with it, though this voice is mixed up with the voices of others, the Atman with concentration on its nature can recognise itself in the midst of the millions of things of the world, amidst the deafening clamour of the senses, because its presence in them is natural and eternal. Just as the obstruction in the case of the father's properly hearing the voice his son, is the crowd of the voices of others, so in the case of the Atman, the obstruction to its recognition is Avidya or Nescience, which has the twofold function of veiling and distracting consciousness. The

veiling is effected by suppressing the character of existence and revelation in regard to Reality, and then manifesting opposite characters, viz., that it does not exist and it is not revealed. Hence we all feel that the Atman is not, and it is not known. This conviction which is brought about by Avidya is the deluding factor in the case of every individual. There is not only the veiling of Reality, but also the projection of phenomenality in the form of the universe outside, and the bodily layers inside. (Verses 3-14)

The Evolution of the Universe

Prakriti or the matrix of the universe, animated by a reflection of Consciousness or Brahman, divides itself in the beginning into the cosmic forces called Sattva (equilibrium), Rajas (distraction) and Tamas (inertia). These three properties of Prakriti are really its very constituents, not merely qualifications or adjuncts, and stand to Prakriti in the relation of the three strands of a rope to the rope itself. Cosmic Sattva is called Maya. On account of its transparency and the absence of the property of Rajas in it, it is omnipresent and reflects in its essence Brahman in a universal manner. The cosmic reflection of Brahman in the Sattva aspect of Prakriti is called Isvara, the Sovereign of the universe. It is Isvara who is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. In Isvara the universe exists in a seed-form, and all the Jivas who had not the opportunity to attain Self-realisation at the time of Pralaya or cosmic dissolution, lie latent in Isvara prior to the subsequent creation. This condition may be compared to a cosmic sleep (Yoganidra), where everything lies

dormant as the tree exists in a seed. When the cosmic seed slightly manifests itself, showing symptoms of creation, the faint outlines of the universe, it goes by the name of Hiranyagarbha. The fully manifested aspect of this universe as informed by the presence of Brahman, is called Virat. Thus, Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat are manifestations in Cosmic Sattva, and are Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent.

The Cosmic Rajas creates variety in form, and manifests the various individuals constituting the universe in the different stages of evolution. Each individual goes by the name of a Jiva, affected and conditioned by Avidya or nescience. Corresponding to the three cosmic states, the Jiva has also three states which are called Prajna, Taijasa and Visva, wherein it sleeps, dreams or wakes into world life. The Jiva stands in the status of an inverted reflection or image of Isvara and the highest in Isvara appears as the lowest in the Jiva, so that though the condition of cosmic sleep is the highest from the point of view of Isvara, the state of sleep is the lowest from the point of view of the Jiva, because in the state of sleep the Jiva is deprived of consciousness and is rendered incapable of any personal effort or understanding; the highest for the Jiva is the waking state in which it becomes possible for it to contemplate Reality in the form of Virat. While Isvara controlling Maya is omniscient, Jiva controlled by Avidya is ignorant and powerless.

The Cosmic Tamas, which is called Tamasi, divides itself into two powers called Avarana and Vikshepa, which respectively mean 'veiling' and 'projecting'. This power not

only veils the existence and consciousness aspect of Brahman, through Avarana, but also projects the objective universe by Vikshepa. The Vikshepa-Sakti or the projecting power appears in five forms as Sabda, or the principle of sound, Sparsa, or the principle of touch, Rupa, or the principle of sight or colour, Rasa, or the principle of taste, and Gandha or the principle of smell. These principles have in them again the subsidiary qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The Sattva of Sabda becomes the sense of hearing; the Sattva of Sparsa, the sense of touch; the Sattva of Rupa, the sense of sight; the Sattva of Rasa, the sense of taste; and the Sattva of Gandha, the sense of smell. These Sattva properties taken together constitute the internal organ or the Antahkarana. The Antahkarana has four aspects, viz., Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkara and Chitta. Manas does the function of general indeterminate thinking; Buddhi functions as intellect with the character of determination and will; Ahamkara is the individual or ego which asserts and distinguishes itself from others. Chitta constitutes the conscience, and the subconscious level, and is the seat of memory.

The Rajas aspect of the five principles of Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha become the organs of action. The Rajas of Sabda becomes the organ of speech; of Sparsa the organ of grasping; of Rupa the organ of locomotion; of Rasa the organ of generation, and of Gandha the organ of excretion. These Rajas forms taken together constitute the Prana or the total energy of the system. The Prana has five main functional variations: Prana which causes expiration, Apana which causes inspiration, Udana which separates the

physical and subtle bodies at death, Samana which digests the food taken in, and Vyana which causes circulation of blood in the body.

The Tamas aspect of the these five principles becomes the gross universe consisting of the five elements, Akasa or ether, Vayu or air, Tejas or fire, Apas or water, and Prithvi or earth, by means of the process of Panchikarana or quintuplication of elements. This process is thus: Half of the Tamas of Sabda mixed with one-eighth of each of the other four principles in their Tamas states becomes ether. Half of the Tamas of Sparsa in combination with one-eighths of the Tamas of each of the other four principles is air. Similar is the way of the formation of the remaining elements.

Isvara has mastery over Maya, because the latter is undivided Sattva, with no individualisation while Jiva has no control over Avidya as the Jiva is an effect of the latter. Avidya qualifies and modifies Jiva. The individual thinking principle with a personalistic consciousness is distinct from the object perceived. Avidya being many, Jivas, too, are many. The Jiva goes by the names of Prajna, Taijasa and Visva, when it associates itself with the bodies: causal, subtle and physical. These names are not of the bodies but of the consciousness which knows them and experiences them. The causal body of the Jiva, consisting of nescience, further expresses itself as the subtle body which consists of the five senses of knowledge, five organs of action, five Pranas and the fourfold Antahkarana. This subtle body is also called Linga-Sarira, or insignia and symbol, and it is so called because it is the mark or indication of one's

individuality, it being entirely responsible for the multifarious experiences which the Jiva has in the form of a subject isolated from the differing objects. Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat are Samashti-Abhimanis or Cosmic Existences seeped in a simultaneous association with the totality of the universe in all its states, while the Jiva's states have only a consciousness segregated by individuality. Isvara has the instantaneous knowledge of everything as identical with the knowledge of His own Self. For Him there is no such thing as subject or object – the two are one, and they form His very being. His knowledge is Aparoksha or immediate, while that of the Jiva is Paroksha or mediate. The Jiva has only a relativistic knowledge born out of contact through sense-organs, and there is no such thing as eternal knowledge in a Jiva. It is for the sake of experience by the Jivas that the world is manifested for providing them with various conditions to work out their destiny in accordance with the nature of the groups of unfulfilled desires that are yet to be fulfilled in a practical life or birth. Thus the world is a training ground to the Jivas for their higher evolution.

The Jivas are enabled to have the needed types of experience by the order or Will of Isvara towards the quintuplication of the elements. These elements become the sources of the bodies that appear as subjects and objects in relative experience. The worlds thus produced differ in their quality, intensity and constitution in accordance with the nature of the desires of the Jivas for whose experience they are made manifest. The whole cosmos is materialised out of the five elements, and in it are situated the various

Lokas or planes of existence. The subtleties of the bodies of Jivas also vary in accordance with the worlds they inhabit. Thus the Devas or celestials have no physical body, and there are those who have only the causal bodies bringing them into great proximity with the Reality. The Universal Consciousness in forming this physical realm is known by the name of Vaisvanara or Virat. When it animates the physical cosmos, all Jivas in all the fourteen planes of creation, are characterised by externality of consciousness, due to which they are deprived of insight into their own inner essences. This absence of true knowledge involves all Jivas, notwithstanding that some of them may be endowed with greater degrees of understanding. Being thus bereft of true knowledge the Jivas engage themselves in activity for the fulfilment of their desires. This fulfilment stimulates further activity in the same direction, and there is no end to this process, as desires are endless. The Jivas, thus, drift helplessly like insects caught in the currents of a river and find it impossible to get out of the whirls of the flow. Samsara or world-existence comes to an end only when the Jiva recognises its true identity with the Absolute.

The fall of the Jiva takes place in seven stages: Avidya, Aviveka, Ahamkara, Raga-dvesha, Karma, Janma and Duhkha. The first stage is when the Jiva is deprived of its universal consciousness and is made to feel as if it is not there at all. This is Avidya, the negation of Reality and the cause of the manifestation of relative reality. Avidya becomes the source of the erroneous identification of the Self with the limited existence in the form of a personality or a body. The Jiva under its influence begins to honestly

feel that there is a real diversity of things and these are all absolutely real. The Jiva in its waking state is really a part of the universal Virat and ought really to know that its existence is impossible apart from Virat, but when, due to Aviveka, or non-discrimination given rise to by Avidya, it begins to feel otherwise, and asserts its independence, considering the other parts of Virat as objects of its consciousness, Ahamkara or ego is thereby developed which veils the ultimate Reality and confirms the value of its own personal experiences as set in opposition to those of others. This principle of Ahamkara, while asserting its finitude and imperfection, is automatically made to feel an intrinsic want in itself, and struggles in every way possible, to overcome the limitations by fulfilling the wants. The finitude of the Jiva being ultimately rooted in its erroneous identification with a particular body by forgetting its essential nature, the desires born of it assume infinite forms and it becomes impossible for the Jiva to fulfil them by finite means. Thus, its desires and the actions directed to their fulfilment, exceed the limitations set to it by the short duration of its life, which it can live through any particular body. A succession of births and deaths is the result, with the false hope of complete satisfaction of the desires born of finite nature. Ahamkara causes likes and dislikes for particulars (Raga-dvesha), which is the incentive for all action (Karma). The binding actions infused with desires bring about birth in a body (Janma), and there comes in the grief (Duhkha) of the Jiva. A proper understanding of this state of affairs is a part of Viveka that should form the equipment of a sincere Sadhaka or spiritual aspirant,

endeavouring to attain Brahman through knowledge. It is with this qualification that one should approach a spiritual preceptor or Guru, being dissatisfied with the worlds of desire and action, and with the genuine longing for freedom from Samsara. The Guru should be a Srotriya and a Brahmanishtha, one well-versed in the scriptures and established in Brahman. He instructs the disciple in the true nature of Brahman.

The company of a genuinely great preceptor is the result of maturation of one's past good deeds, and to such a blessed soul, he becomes a veritable shady tree to cool its thirst in the desert of life. (Verses 15-31)

Enquiry into the Atman

The Atman-consciousness is encased, as it were, in the sheaths called the physical (Anna), vital (Prana), mental (Manas), intellectual (Buddhi) and causal (Ananda) bodies, restricted to which it forgets itself as a universal reality and enters the space-time world of objects. The outermost sheath, which is the physical encasement, is born of the five quintuplicated gross elements. The vital sheath is formed of the five Pranas and the five organs of action. The mental sheath consists of the thinking mind and the Chitta in association with the five senses of knowledge. The intellectual sheath is constituted of the discriminating Buddhi and the Ahamkara working with the same senses. In the causal sheath the presence of a little Sattva becomes the source of the Jiva's happiness in states like deep sleep, and this happiness reveals itself when the Jiva sees (Priya), possesses (Moda) or enjoys (Pramoda) a desired object. The

condition of the Jiva-consciousness is just the condition of the sheath with which it identifies at any given time.

The independent character of the Atman is ascertained by a process of Anvaya and Vyatireka, or positive and negative analysis. The existence of the Atman in the state of dream while the physical body is not then existent, is called Anvaya (positive concomitance). The non-existence of the physical body in dream, while the Atman shines as a witnessing consciousness is called Vyatireka (negative concomitance). The existence of the Atman in the state of deep sleep, while the subtle body is not then existent, is Anvaya, and the non-existence of the subtle body in the deep sleep, while the Atman is inferred to exist, is Vyatireka. The existence of the Atman in Samadhi (divine realisation), while the causal body does not then exist, is Anvaya, and the non-existence of the causal body in Samadhi, while the Atman exists, is Vyatireka. By this process, the independence of the Atman over the five sheaths is established. The analysis of the three bodies involves also a clear discrimination of the five sheaths, which are all distinguishable by their quality and state of function, and not in substance.

The Atman exists in all the three states, while bodies function only in particular states. Or, the whole of the Anvaya-and-Vyatireka process can be put shortly, thus: The Atman is whatever and wherever the sheaths are, but the sheaths are not whatever and wherever the Atman is. This independent nature of the Atman is to be realised by carefully analysing the material unconscious nature of the sheaths as distinguished from the universal and conscious

nature of the Atman which is the Kutastha-Chaitanya or immutable consciousness. Great moral courage is demanded of the spiritual aspirant by way of an unshakeable establishment in Sadhanachatushtaya, which includes intellectual discipline and ethical perfection. The teacher instructs the disciple in the essential nature of the Atman by the Mahavakya (great dictum): Tat-Tvam-Asi (That thou art), which is one of the Siddhartha-bodha-vakyas or affirmations of existent facts, which have to be made the objects of contemplation for the attainment of Atmasakshatkara or Self-realisation. When the Atman is discovered to be different from the sheaths, it is at once realised as Brahman.

The meaning of a word or a sentence is usually understood by the power that is inherent in it, called the Sakti-Vritti, and it is this Vritti that manifests the primary apparent meaning of a sentence. Such meaning of a statement is called Vakhyartha. But the underlying indicative meaning of the statement is known by another Vritti called Lakshana-Vritti, or definitive power, which opens the way to the correct grasp of the intended meaning. This underlying meaning of a sentence is its Lakshyartha. The Lakshanas or definitions are of three kinds called, Jahat-Lakshana, Ajahat-Lakshana, and Jahat-Ajahat-Lakshana. The Jahat-Lakshana is a definition by which we make out the true sense of a statement by abandoning its primary meaning and accepting the indicative one, such as when we say, 'there is a village on the Ganges', or, 'there is noise in the street', etc. Here the apparent meaning is rejected – for a village cannot be on the Ganges, and the street cannot

make noise- and an altogether different one is accepted. In such a statement as “the white is running” we add another word, e.g. ‘horse’, to make the sense clear, and here we do not abandon what is given primarily, but bring something in addition to make the meaning complete. This is Ajahat-Lakshana. But in understanding the true meaning of sentences like ‘Tat-Tvam-Asi’, we follow the process of Jahat-Ajahat-Lakshana, by which a part of the meaning is abandoned and part of it accepted, as, when we say, “This is that Devadatta”, to identify a person at a particular place and time as the same person seen at a different place and time. Here the limiting factors, viz. space and time are abandoned, and the common factor, viz. the identity of the person is taken into consideration. In the statement, Tat-Tvam-Asi, likewise, Jiva and Isvara, seem to have apparently contradictory characters, such as Alpajnata or limited knowledge and Aikadesikatva or limitedness in space and time in the case of the Jiva, and Sarvajnata or Omniscience, Sarvasaktimattva, or Omnipotence and Sarvantaryamitva or Omnipresence in the case of Isvara. Isvara and Jiva are therefore not related as two different subjects or objects, nor as substance and attribute, or indicator and indicated; but constitute one universal being viewed differently on account of the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts) of Prakriti in its various forms, which cause an apparent division of Isvara (God), Jagat (World) and Jiva (individual). In this apparent manifestation, Isvara as Brahman reflected through Suddha-Sattva or Maya becomes the Nimittakarana or instrumental cause, and in relation to the Tamasi Prakriti becomes the Upadanakarana

or material cause. It is Brahman itself that appears as Jiva through the medium of Avidya. Thus, there is a simultaneous transcendence of the characters of Isvara, Jagat and Jiva, in the correct apprehension of the meaning of the declaration, "Tat-Tvam-Asi".

Isvara and Jiva become the objects indicated by the two terms, Tat and Tvam in the Mahavakya, 'Tat-Tvam-Asi', while their apparent verbal meaning is abandoned and the two are regarded as Brahman itself, associated with Suddha-Sattva (Maya) and Malina-Sattva (Avidya), respectively. Isvara becomes the instrumental cause of the universe when He is considered to be in association with Suddha-Sattva, and He himself becomes its material cause in association with Tamasi Prakriti. Thus Isvara is called Abhinna-Nimitta-Upadana-Karana, or the unified cause of the universe, instrumental as well as material. But the Jiva, being totally conditioned in Malina-Sattva in the form of Avidya, is infected with such defects as selfish desire and action directed to its fulfilment. With these limiting properties, Suddha-Sattva and Malina-Sattva are regarded as being distinct from the Common Substratum which is Brahman. Freed from these accidents the reality shrouded in the two grades of Sattva is one and undivided. Reality, as such, is independent existence, having nothing to do with either Suddha-Sattva, Malina-Sattva or Tamasi Prakriti, all which produce the false appearance of a division among Isvara, Jiva and Jagat. The transcendence of these relative properties is the realisation of Brahman, which is Akhanda-Ekarasa-Satchidananda (one, indivisible, essence of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).

Now the question arises: is the ultimate Meaning, Brahman, Nirvikalpa (without attributes) or Savikalpa (with attributes). It cannot be said that the Nirvikalpa has attributes, because it would involve a self-contradictory statement, as when it is said, 'a lame person is walking'; nor can we decide that attribute is present in the Savikalpa, because such a reasoning would land us in the fallacies of Atmasraya or begging the question, Anyonyasraya or mutual dependence, Chakraka or circular reasoning, and Anavastha of absence of finality. These fallacies will be present if we are to consider Brahman as associated even with such other properties as action, genus, objectness, relationship, etc. We should therefore regard all these characteristics as present only in perceivable and conceivable things and not in Brahman which cannot be said to be either Savikalpa or Nirvikalpa, as it transcends all concepts. The attributes that are supposed to be present in it are those that are mentally transferred by the Jiva from the world of its experience. (Verses 32-52)

Meditation and Spiritual Experience

Study of Reality in this manner is called Sravana, and pondering over it for a protracted period is called Manana. When the mind is totally free from all doubts and does not stand in need of even the reasoning process and gets fixed firmly on the object of contemplation, and there is only a single Vritti or mental modification, i.e. Vritti of meditation, it is said to be in the state of Nididhyasana. Samadhi is the superconscious divine realisation wherein the so-called distinction between the knower and known is

overcome and the consciousness is itself, and shakes not as a flame in windless space. On rising from Samadhi one often retains a memory of it on account of the persisting Sattva-Samskaras (pure impressions), though in that experience no memory or any mental operation is possible on account of the absence of desire. The subsequent memory is the consequence of the intensity of previous practice, as well as of the unseen resources in the form of antecedent merit of contemplation.

In the process of meditation all the Vrittis (modifications) of the mind get subdued. These Vrittis are grouped into two categories: painless and painful. The painless modifications of the mind are Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smriti. Pramana is the process of right perception of things with the help of sense-organs, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, etc. Viparyaya is erroneous knowledge born of defects in the perceptive organs or confusion in the mind caused by various factors. Vikalpa is the oscillating condition of the mind as to the true nature of the thing known. Nidra is the negative condition of the Vrittis where the activities of the mind are adjourned for a future time, and all psychological processes are wound up temporarily. Smriti is memory, wherein there is a remembrance of previous experience. These constitute the painless Vrittis of the internal organ.

The painful Vrittis are Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesha and Abhinivesa. Avidya is ignorance on account of which one goes wrong in the assessment of values and deeds, and then comes to grief. Asmita is self-consciousness or egoism by which a person appropriates undeserving attributes to

himself. Raga is attachment and Dvesha is aversion for desirable and undesirable things, respectively. Abhinivesa is clinging to one's body due to which there is love of life and fear of death. All these Vrittis are obstructive in their nature, from the point of view of Yoga. In the state of true Yoga there is a single modification of the mind called Ekagrata, and here it perceives only its objective or ideal. In Dhyana or meditation there is a twofold consciousness of the meditator and meditated, while in Samadhi or absorption there is the transformation of all Vrittis into the Brahmakara-Vritti which destroys ignorance, desires and actions, and settles down, extinguishing itself like burnt camphor. In the state of Savikalpa-Samadhi there are Sattvika-Vrittis which cause the waking up of the Yogi into normal life. Even these Vrittis get transcended in Nirvikalpa-Samadhi. It is in this highest Samadhi, in which Consciousness rests in its own nature, that there will be a rain of the highest divine qualities, and a flood of virtue; hence this Samadhi goes by the name Dharmamegha (cloud of righteousness). Here comes the liberation of the soul, all Karmas having been completely abolished. The liberated ones are grouped in a graduated series in accordance with the degree of Sattva still present in them, and are called Brahmavit, Brahmavidvara, Brahmavidvariya, and Brahmavidvarishtha, when they are in the states of Sattvapatti (where there are flashes of Brahman), Asamsakti (wherein one is spontaneously free from all attachments), Padarthabhavana (in which there is only the perception of Brahman alone in everything), and Turiya (where

individual consciousness gets permanently transfigured in the experience of Brahman).

The virtue that is showered in Dharmamegha-Samadhi is not the ethical quality to which we are accustomed in this world, but the spontaneous expression of the highest Reality itself. As luminosity is the very nature of the sun and does not stand in need of any effort on the part of the agent for its manifestation, this Samadhi puts an end to the entire network of past impressions embedded in the mind even unconsciously, and removes by root the entire conglomeration of the causes of further experience. On account of the direct realisation of the stupendous inter-relatedness of things, the Yogi knows the highest in his knowledge and does not consider himself as an agent of actions which will bear any particularised fruits or results in the future. This is Aparoksha-Jnana or direct knowledge, on having attained which the perception of Reality becomes as clear as the observation of a fruit on one's palm. This is the maturity of deep meditation practised after the acquisition of Paroksha-Jnana or indirect knowledge in the form of a correct understanding of the meaning of the great Upanishadic sentence, Tat-Tvam-Asi. While indirect knowledge received from a preceptor destroys all palpable sins, direct knowledge burns up the results even of the deeds done prior to such knowledge, and blazes up Brahman-realisation shining like the midday sun thoroughly destroying all darkness. (Verses 53-64)

Chapter II

DISCRIMINATION OF THE ELEMENTS

The Properties and Functions of Spatio-temporal Manifestations

The existence of Brahman proclaimed in the scripture, such as the Chhandogya Upanishad, can be inferred even from an analysis of the nature of the physical elements, the Mahabhutas. As Brahman, by itself, is beyond perception, it has to be known by an investigation into its effects. The qualities of the elements beginning from ether downwards, are sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, respectively, as their special features, but each succeeding element in this series has one quality more than the preceding one, so that ether has one quality, air has two, fire three, water four and earth five qualities, the property of each preceding element being carried forward in the succeeding one. It is these qualities that become the objects of perception of the different senses of knowledge. The senses are, again, inferred to exist by their external activities and they really exist in the subtle body, their manifestation being made possible through certain locations in the physical body which we call the Karanas or instruments, while the internal powers are called the Indriyas or senses. The senses cannot see or feel the presence of the substratum of the elements, since it is their substratum, too. They can only come in contact with their manifest qualities. The substratum is to be inferred by way of analysis. The seats of the senses are ear, skin, eyes, palate, nose, tongue, hands, feet, genitals and anus, grasping objects like sound, etc., as

stated in the first chapter. They all have a tendency to move outward into the space-time world of objects.

The senses of knowledge and the organs of action are situated in the subtle body and their presence is inferred by the effects that we observe externally in the form of perception and action. They themselves are not perceived, as they are constituted of the subtle elements. The senses, though they usually perceive only external things, do occasionally have internal perceptions, as when we hear internal sounds produced by the Pranas or by gastric fire on our closing ears; feel the sense of touch within while drinking liquids, taking food etc.; have inner vision of darkness on closing the eyes; taste and smell internally when there is an ergot or hiccup. These are certain types of internal perception, though, strictly speaking, all bodily sensations are to be regarded as external perceptions, since even the body is an object in the world. The mind is the ruler over the senses of knowledge and action, because it is capable of synthesising their functions into a harmony, while the functions by themselves are discrete. The mind is supposed to have its seat in the heart, though it pervades the entire body, like the light of a lamp that pervades an entire room though the lamp may be at a particular place in it. The mind is called the internal organ as it is incapable of functioning outwardly, independent of the senses. It is as much bound by the conditioning factors of space, time and causation as the senses are. This is its weakness, but its speciality over the senses is that it can remember things even when they are not perceived, and can bring about the needed synthesis in the perceptual and conceptual

activities. The mind considers the pros and cons of the reports made by the senses and decides as to what should be done when a particular sensation or perception is brought to its notice. It functions through the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and changes itself in accordance with the preponderance of one or more of these properties within. It is called Santa (peaceful), Ghora (terrific), and Mudha (torpid), respectively, in the states of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Virtuous qualities like knowledge and dispassion, forbearance and magnanimity are caused by Sattva. Qualities like desire and anger, greed and activity are the results of Rajas. Lethargy, inertia, confusion and sleep are the modifications of Tamas. Merit accrues in the state of Sattva, sin in Rajas, and nothing at all in a condition of Tamas. The principle within that appropriates and arrogates to itself all these functions and thus gets bound in Samsara is called Ahamkara, the relative agent of all actions in this world.

It is clear that physical objects are material in their nature, from an observation of the fact that they are being perceived externally. We have now to understand that even the powers of the senses are of a similar nature, through scripture and reasoning. The scripture says that the mind is formed of the subtlest essence of food, Prana of the subtlest essence of water, and speech of the subtlest essence of heat. It is also known that there is a relation of Anvaya and Vyatireka between the senses and their elemental objects. The senses and the mind are incapable of perceiving non-physical things such as the celestial spheres or the still

higher planes. The senses are correlative with the physical universe, the one being impossible without the other.

This whole universe, which is capable of being known by the powers with which a human being is endowed, whatever one is capable of knowing by reason or scripture – all this, taken together, is referred to by the term 'Idam' (This), in the great statement of the Chhandogya Upanishad: Sadeva somya idam agre asit (This was just Existence alone in the beginning). The Universe is created, and so, prior to creation, there was One alone without a second, all variety and from being absent then. Form is the shape of a concrete manifestation, known to the senses or the mind, while name is to be taken in the sense of that determining force within all things, which marks out a particular individuality apart from the others by means of its special constitution or make-up. It is the name-form nexus that determines an individual, and explains the variety of creation. In Brahman no such thing exists. (Verses 1-18)

The Nature of Existence

We have three types of difference: Svagatabheda or difference as between the limbs of one's own body, Sajatiyabheda or difference of one from another of the same species, and Vijatiyabheda or difference of one from another of a different species. The scripture asserts that Brahman is one without a second, and we cannot conceive of limbs or parts in its universal existence. Existence was prior even to the manifestation of names and forms, and therefore it should be naturally free from names and forms.

We cannot conceive of parts within existence, because the differentiation of parts cannot be explained without an assumption of existence. Existence is not different from another existence; as such a reasoning makes no meaning. Nor can we say that existence is different from non-existence, because non-existence has no validity. We cannot think of difference in the Infinite, without limiting it and making it finite. Existence is absolute, and when we say that It is, we have said everything about it, and no adjective or attribute can in any way help us in understanding its real nature. Existence is Brahman. Name and form cannot be considered to be its parts as they subsist on existence.

The state of Pure Existence appears to some as non-existence, inasmuch as it is a negation of all names and forms and the mind finds it impossible to conceive of a thing which has no names and forms. The mind gets stupefied when it is confronted with an indeterminate Absolute, because it is never used to such an experience. It moves fearlessly when it is presented with familiar objects, and is in a state of fear when it finds nothing to hold on, its activities get stilled and tacts confounded when it is lifted to the status of trans-empirical being. The great teacher, Gaudapada, refers to this supreme Yoga of the Absolute as Asparsa-Yoga, or the Yoga of non-contact, which means, a 'union without a real union' where the soul's realisation is not a 'coming together' but mere being. It is difficult to approach because of its uncommonness, and the mind dreads it, as it is not familiar with it, having never seen it or known it before. Like a baby that cries in fear when placed in an unfamiliar atmosphere, the mind turns back from the

Absolute, unable to reach it and repelled by its stupendous nature. The schools of thought which consider void as the ultimate Reality arrive at such a curious conclusion because of their extreme dependence on inferential logic without the aid of scripture or intuition. They say that void was or is, not knowing that thereby they posit its existence unwittingly. It is impossible even to think or conceive of anything without the presupposition of existence. Denial of existence would mean a simultaneous denial of even the function of thought. We cannot say that the names and forms of the world are characters superimposed on something else, nor that they may have some sort of reality at least temporarily, because these cannot be super-imposed either on existence which underlies them or on non-existence which itself has no meaning, or on the world which is only another name for a large group of names and forms.

In the statement of the Upanishad, 'Existence alone was', the words Existence and Was do not denote two different things or even concepts, but convey one and the same meaning, the difference of words being introduced only with a concession to the weakness of human language which consists of sentences with verbs. Thus no kind of duality is intended in the statement, but only the undifferentiated Brahman is asserted.

'Existence alone was in the beginning'. In this statement the terms 'in the beginning' do not imply the non-existence of Brahman at the present time and its presence only prior to creation. The declaration is meant only to make the student understand that prior to the manifestation of

names and forms Brahman was undifferentiated. It does not mean that time is existent apart from the Absolute, and we should remember that questions and answers are possible only in the language of duality, and non-dual can never be designated as such-and-such. The teacher has to employ, perforce, the language of the student who finds himself in duality. The truth is that the origin of things, the state of existence, was one which was absolutely changeless, deep and incapable of mental approach in the sense of light or darkness as we know them, impossible to describe, unmanifest to the faculties known to us, something which cannot be said to be either this or that. It is that which remains after every concept is set aside as inadequate, above space, and experienced directly in a state of stillness of mind, rid of all desires. The mind may mistake a sense of voidness for actual realisation of Brahman, but from the fact of its being self-luminous, Brahman should be experienced as a state of doubtless Existence. The student or aspirant should be careful not to get ensnared by the temptations, perturbed by the oppositions, terrified by the states of stagnation, or confused by the various tricks of side-tracking which the mind resorts to at different times in the practice of Yoga. The Atman is the witness of even the ideas of there being no meditation, and it stands above even the modes of Sattva in one's thought. It is known in non-relational experience or Aparokshanubhava. Existence is not a void or nothingness, for it is known and realised in one's own being, it is not empty like space, but the plenum of Reality revealed in a state of freedom from desire, as that

which is prior to the distractive work of Maya. (Verses 19-46)

The Nature of Maya

As there is the existence of a consciousness behind the manifestation of all thought, there is a pure existence prior to the rise of names and forms as the universe. There is a power in Brahman which is not independent of it, but which can be inferred from the various effects that it produces, in the form of ether, etc., just as we infer the existence of heat in fire by means of its burning capacity. This power is not the same as Brahman, even as heat is not the same as fire. It is possible by certain methods to inhibit the burning power of fire without destroying the fire itself; yet we know that we cannot separate heat from fire at any time. This power of Brahman which is existence cannot therefore be considered to be different from it; else, it would become non-existence. Also, it is not existence in the sense of Brahman; hence essenceless. It is therefore indeterminable in character – Sad-asad-vilakshana – different from what is existence and non-existence. The Vedanta proclaims that in the beginning of things there was neither being nor non-being, but there was an indescribable something which looked like darkness. Even this darkness should have existence as its basis, because, without it, even darkness would not be possible. Even ignorance is something that we superimpose on what is existence. Thus there is no cause for any duality between Brahman and its power, even as there is no distinction between a man and his strength. This power is the same everywhere, but

appears to be different due to the difference in the intensity of the manifesting media. We therefore, do not count Sakti or power by itself, nor do we consider it as the same as Brahman. Hence it is Maya which is Anirvachaniya, that which cannot be described in words, nor thought of by the mind, because language and thought are the expressions of Maya itself. It is impossible therefore to investigate its origin, its why and how, because all our faculties of understanding are only its effects. There is no understanding of the cause by the effect. The effect has first to rise to the state of the cause, so that it may know the latter. The mind has to rise to the condition of Brahman in intuition; only then will there be a knowing of what this power is. It is real to the ignorant, indescribable to the rational and non-existent to the Self-realised.

The Sakti of Brahman does not operate in the whole of Brahman. Else there would be no such thing as a possibility of freedom from Samsara. This Maya-Sakti works only in relation to the Jivas who are involved in it, and who regard Brahman as qualified by it in the form of Isvara. For the ordinary understanding, therefore, it is said that this Sakti does not pervade the whole of Brahman, but is only a part of it, as it were. The Vedas and the Smritis assert that creation is as if a mere quarter of the Creator, and three-fourths of Him stand above as the resplendent Immortal Being, transcending creation. It does not mean that Brahman can be divided into parts, for it is indivisible on account of its non-spatial and non-temporal character. What is meant is that this creating power of Brahman is relative to those in bondage, and it is those that are in

bondage who seek for an explanation of the cause of this bondage by locating a cosmic causal principle which is unintelligible to them, and which they therefore, call Maya. The explanation of the world being impossible without a discovery of the cause behind it, and because such a cause has to be a cosmic principle in order that it may be able to provide a permanent explanation of the cause of the Jivas in bondage, this principle is associated with the creative Intelligence itself. Thus Maya is not eternal as Brahman is, because it has an end, though no beginning.

It is this Sakti that introduces change in the changeless, as a wall would appear to be variegated due to the paintings on it. (Verses 47-59)

On the Unsubstantiality of the Elements

The first of these changes is the manifestation of Akasa or ether. Akasa has the property of spatiality in addition to existence. We feel that space is, and it has also the quality of distinguishing things by a peculiar feature in it, which we call emptiness. Minus the quality of spatiality and reverberation of sound, space is nothing but existence, which is the same as Brahman. The Sakti which makes the manifestation of Akasa possible brings about also perversion in one's understanding of the relation between existence and Akasa. Instead of feeling that Akasa is an after-effect and existence is prior, we are apt to think that Akasa is the primary substance and existence is a property associated with it, as when we say 'Akasa exists', thus mixing up the two, and making existence a predicate of the subject Akasa. This reversal of understanding is called

Bhrama or delusion, which is carried further down into the various errors that we commit in the hundreds of precepts and concepts that we have or cling to in our life.

The perversion of understanding that causes the perception of space as a substance and existence as its property is again reversed into the right knowledge that Existence is the anterior substance and space is incapable of being without existence. It is therefore necessary to undertake a serious enquiry into the nature of space in order that there may not be deluded perception in regard to it. Existence and space differ from each other on account of their different names as well as by the disclosure of their real nature through reasoning. Existence and space are not synonymous terms. Hence they should indicate two different objects. Existence is commonly present even in air and other elements, but not spatiality. Thus the two have to be distinguished. Existence has a greater pervasive capacity than space and hence it should be the substance and space the property. Minus existence, space is nothing. We should not think that spatiality has a value of its own, because it is just another name for emptiness. Space is only an appearance like objects seen in dream, which are contradicted in waking. The differentiated world is contradicted in the experience of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara. As genus and the individual, Jiva and its body, qualities and objects are distinguished in ordinary life, existence and space are to be differentiated. It is due to a lack of concentration of mind and certain doubts still lurking in it that one is not able to really feel that existence is the true substance. Concentration is to be practised for a

protracted period by the usual methods of Yoga, and doubts have to be removed by right observation and proper reasoning. By meditation, observation and reasoning one comes to realise that existence is not space and space is not existence. To a Jnani or knower, the existence behind space alone is visible, and he does not see any such thing as spatiality or emptiness. In that condition he would rather be surprised to notice that people mistake space for existence. This analysis has to be carried on further in regard to the other elements also, viz., air, fire, water and earth.

The element of air also is to be analysed in the same manner as space. Air occupies a smaller part than space and inherits the quality of sound from space. The features of air are: (1) drying, (2) touch, (3) motion, and (4) velocity. It is felt to be existent; – this is the property of Brahman. It is unsubstantial when it is divested of existence; – this is the quality of Maya. It produces sound; – this is its inheritance from space. Though it is an effect, it is thus likely to be considered an independently real substance. As it has nothing which is not present in the preceding principles, we should regard air only as an appearance. It is existence alone that follows all the elements as a natural concomitant of everything, and space cannot be said to follow in that way. The quality of sound belonging to space follows the elements, but not spatiality. It should not be thought that air is absolutely real just because it is not directly connected with Maya which is the unmanifest qualifying adjunct of Ishvara. The answer is that unsubstantiality does not depend on being manifest or unmanifest, but on the

capacity to vanish when divested of existence. Maya is not to be taken in the sense of any real substance that may create duality, but a name given to our inability to explain the relation of appearance to Reality. The existence-aspect of air is Brahman. The other aspects are unsubstantial. Similar is the case with fire, water and earth. Fire, water and earth have their own qualities, together with those of the preceding principles which are their causes in a sequence, but none of these have any intrinsic value when taken independently of existence. They are all a naught, minus existence. It is the earth-element on which existence is superimposed that the physical cosmos is situated. In the cosmos are located the fourteen worlds in which Jivas are placed differently under different circumstances according to their desires and actions. The Jivas are to recognise by this way of analysis that they are bound back to Brahman in their essential being; it is an erroneous feeling that they are widely separated in a spatial universe, an aberration of consciousness and not a fact. Nothing, really, separates one Jiva from another except the imaginary space. There is a real eternity and infinity here and now.

When the unsubstantiality of the elements and their modifications, of Maya and its forms, is properly driven home into one's mind, the conviction that Brahman-existence is undivided reality gets firmly established. (Verses 60-98)

Liberation-in-Life

When existence is differentiated from the physical cosmos that appears as the object of Jivas, it may still

appear to them, but cannot affect the indivisible nature of existence, as the water of a mirage cannot wet the desert. Once knowledge arises to the effect that the background of all the elements and their formations, and even of Maya, is the indivisible Absolute, Brahman, it cannot again be shaken by any other experience. Nevertheless, the liberated souls may, through the medium of the body, continue to perform actions as before on account of the presence of certain Sattvika samskaras, but may not get bound, as the ignorance is destroyed. The divergent truths that are indicated in the different schools of philosophy such as the Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, and so on, are to be regarded as having a partial validity from their own standpoints, though none of them is absolutely complete. When there is a rise of divine wisdom, there is also the realisation that everything has a relative value in its own place, and nothing is absolutely wrong, though not absolutely right. When a person gets rooted in the feeling of the oneness of things, he becomes a Jivanmukta, liberated while living. If one is able to establish oneself in this knowledge even at the end of time, one shall attain to the Bliss of Brahman, says the Bhagavadgita. Here, the phrase, 'at the end of time' means either the end of ignorance or the end of the body, because it is possible to have divine knowledge even if the body is to linger on due to some past Karmas. It does not matter what the physical condition is of the liberated person at the time of his shuffling of the body. He may be physically healthy or otherwise, may even be temporarily in a state of unconsciousness, but the knowledge which has been once attained will revive itself again when he is placed under

different circumstances and regains consciousness, even as what is learnt the previous day is remembered the next day, though it is forgotten in the middle during sleep. The knowledge attained through meditation on the truths of the Vedanta is indestructible. Thus, by a careful analysis of the nature of true existence behind the five elements, and remaining in that state of knowledge at least at the last moment of one's life, one reaches the state of Divine Bliss. (Verses 99-109)

Chapter III

DISCRIMINATION OF THE FIVE SHEATHS

The Sheaths and Their Constitution

The Upanishad speaks of the cave in which the Atman is hidden, as it were. This cave is nothing but the series of the five kosas or sheaths, namely, (1) Annamaya, (2) Pranamaya, (3) Manomaya, (4) Vijnanamaya, and (5) Anandamaya Kosas, the succeeding one being internal to the preceding. The physical body is the Annamaya-Kosa, which is born out of the essence of the food consumed by the parents, and it is again sustained by the essence of the food given to it. This body has a beginning and an end, and so does not have the character of eternity found in the Atman. It is unconscious, changeful and external, and hence different from the Atman which is Consciousness, unchanging and universal. If it is supposed that the body is Atman, it would follow that it should come into being without there being a reasonable cause, because as an effect, the body ought to have a cause and the cause should necessarily exist prior to the effect. If the determining cause of the body should rise simultaneously with the body, then, the body would be undergoing experiences which it really does not deserve, there being no logical connection between the cause and the effect. Anyone would be experiencing anything without any rationality behind it. That the body of a particular individual has particular experiences shows that it has a determining cause, and this cause being connected with it inseparably, it is clear that the experiencer in the present life ought to have existed in the previous life also; and as the body could not have existed

prior to this birth, the doer of the actions causing present experiences must be someone other than this body and yet connected with this body. If this logical factor is denied, there would be the defect of what is called Akritabhyagama or the coming in of what is not deserved by oneself. Similarly on the death of the body there would be Kritanasa or the destruction of the merits of all actions without their being enjoyed. Thus there would be chaos in the universe and no law determining anything. For all these reasons we should conclude that the body is not the Atman.

The Prana is internal to the body, subtler and more pervasive, propels the senses, and gives power to the body. But it cannot be the Atman since it is an effect of Prakriti, changing in nature and also unconscious. It is also characterised by externality. The mind or the Manas has the sense of 'I-ness' in regard to the body and 'mine-ness' in regard to its possessions, such as house, etc. It is affected by the course of life, by desire, passion, anger and the like and on many occasions gets confused and cannot know the true nature of anything. It gets dissolved in swoon, sleep, etc., and it is also a mode of Prakriti. It is thus not the Atman. The intellect is internal to the mind, more subtle and pervasive, but gets dissolved in sleep and other unconscious states. It pervades the body in waking, from head to foot, in association with the Chidabhasa or the reflection of the Atman in the Sattvika-Prakriti. It has a beginning and an end. It is an effect and is unconscious without the reflection of the Atman in it. The intellect and the mind act as the agent of action and medium of action, respectively, the intellect going by the name of Karta, or doer, and the mind

Karana, or instrument. As the doer and the process of doing, the two are distinguished, and hence, though included in the single principle of the Antahkarana, they become causes of two different sheaths called Manomaya and Vijnanamaya. The intellect is not the Atman for similar reasons as the mind.

The Atman reflected in the Sattvika Buddhi is called Chidabhasa. The Buddhi, by itself, is unconscious because of being an effect of Prakriti, but it assumes intelligence when the Atman is reflected in it. This itself is the Jiva. The Ahamkara or the principle of ego is associated with it, so that the ego and the intellect go together.

When they are in an inactive state, there is a passive introversion of their modes which goes by the name of sleep. The Vrittis of the mind, being accustomed to contact with external objects and unfamiliar with any supernormal experience, find nothing positive when there is a forced introversion brought about either by fatigue or by frustration, but there is some sort of a joyous experience when the Anandamaya-kosa or the causal body is in operation on account of its being the medium of the fructification of the meritorious actions which one has performed in previous lives. All happiness that the Jiva has in this world is nothing but a logical consequence of the good things it has done in its past lives. When there is a cessation of conscious experience, there is sleep. This causal body, too, is not the Atman, because it has a beginning and an end, for it is the cumulative effect of the actions of the past and shall cease to be when there dawns spiritual knowledge and realisation. The causal condition cannot be

identified with eternal and infinite Being, as the cause is connected with an effect which is obviously other than itself. It cannot have the character of universality. The Atman is that which is the very presupposition of all thinking and experience and so no Jiva has an experience of it for the reason that in the universal Atman there is no distinction between the knower and the known. It is experience itself, and not any objective experience. It cannot be known by another process of knowing different from itself. It appears to be non-existent from the point of view of the Jivas, because the latter have no means of perception of what is universal, they being used to sensory and mental perception alone.

They are three types of the unknowable: (1) That which is absolutely non-existent and therefore cannot be known, such as the horns of a hare; (2) that which does not have any contact with the operative Vrittis of the mind for the time being, such as distant objects and unthinkable regions such as heaven; (3) Universal Being in which there is no possibility of the operation of the Vrittis. The latter function only where there is the idea of space, time and cause; not in Brahman, the Absolute, which is prior to all these. The Atman is the Light of all lights. It precedes even the light of thinking and understanding. It is Svayamjyoti, or Self-luminous. Everything shines after it, and everything borrows light from that absolute light. It being the Knower, it cannot be known. This is a clue to the understanding of the nature of ignorance in which the Jivas are shrouded, and also a hint for the Jivas to find their way to rising above their predicament of Jivahood and Samsara.

Anandamayakosa is a name given to the latent condition of the Vrittis of the Antahkarana, wherein not only the manifested but also all the unmanifested potencies of future possible experiences are hidden. They are the subtlest impressions of all past thoughts and deeds, ready to germinate when proper conditions are provided. The providing of such conditions is called birth. (Verses 1-10)

The Atman

There is nothing that one can know, other than the sheaths, and the sheaths are not the reality. But the fact of there being an experiencer of the states of sheaths, which are all relative, cannot be denied. This is the Atman. The self-luminous Atman, being the knower of all things, cannot be known by anything else. The Upanishad says: 'Who can know Him by whom everything else is known? Who can know the knower?' The mind, which is the means of knowing, is not to make the Atman its object, because in the Atman the opposition between the seer and the seen is abolished. The mind can know only what is knowable as an external object, but it cannot know what cannot be objectified, and the Atman is unknowable as pure experience free from the opposition of the knower and the known. Its unknowability therefore does not indicate its non-existence. Though it is not known, knowledge does not cease. It, the unknown ever, knows everything. The Atman is different from the known and unknown, the known being the whole of visible creation and the unknown, the cause of all things, Prakriti. The Atman is above both. It is not to be touched either by the mind or the senses. The Jiva

is apt to complain that it does not know the Atman, even as one may doubt and say whether one has a tongue or not. To recognise the Atman-principle in all things, it is necessary to ignore the objectness involved in the process of knowledge, and whenever there is perception or knowledge, every such factor in the capacity of an object should be abandoned, and only the illuminating light of consciousness should be taken for the purpose of analysis and contemplation. This kind of Self-establishment is Atmasakshatkara or realisation of the Atman.

That which remains after the negation of all conditioning factors, such as the five sheaths, is one's own Self. It is not a void because it knows that it is, and that is Absolute. There is such a thing as self both in worldly parlance and in the universe of philosophy. In ordinary life, by the self one means the personality of the individual, but in the philosophic sense, it is the ultimate metaphysical reality beyond which there is nothing. There cannot be any doubt or dispute about the ultimate Self, for there would be no one to conduct the dispute or argument. No one doubts oneself or denies oneself, and hence the scripture says that one who denies Brahman denies himself, meaning thereby that Brahman cannot be denied. The Atman or Brahman may not be known as an object, but, it being one's own self, cannot be gainsaid. It is not to be considered as either this or that, because we generally consider what is known by the senses as this, and the Atman is not known by the senses. We consider what is remote as that, and the Atman is not remote, because it is our own self. Hence it cannot be

pointed out by any determining article such as this, that, etc. That it is universal, explains everything.

Though the Atman is unknown in an objective sense, it is known in the minimum experience or Aparokshanubhava. It is described in the scripture as Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, truth, knowledge, infinity. Truth is that which is not contradicted by any other experience. The witnessing consciousness can stand apart as the observer of the cessation of all phenomena, as in the cessation of the experiences of waking, dreaming and deep sleep under different circumstances; but there cannot be a negation or cessation of the Atman itself, because there would then be no observer or knower of the cessation of the Atman. Nor can it be said that there is no observing principle at all, because there is no possibility of an experience without even the barest minimum of intelligence, as when all the contents in a house are removed, something viz., space, remains within, as that which cannot be removed. So, also, when everything of the nature of an object is set aside as the Anatman (not-self), something remains as that which cannot be further emptied out. That is the ultimate minimum of consciousness. Thus, even the total negation of every experience should land finally in something positive and capable of being experienced. The scripture, therefore, having described the nature of all things, takes us along the path of the realisation of the stupendous spiritual Being, by negating all that which is not. Whatever can be designated as this or not this is transcended, and that which cannot be so designated is taken as Reality. Brahman is thus known to be Sat, or

Being, and Chit, or experience and consciousness, unconditioned by space, time, causation or objectness (Desa-kala-vastu-parichheda-rahita). Brahman is unlimited in these three ways. When the ideation of creation is withdrawn, the network of space, time and causation also falls from experience. Isvaratva or the idea of God and Jivatva or the idea of the individual arise on account of the perception of the difference between the seer and the seen in this world and the consequent experience of the creator of both the Jiva and the world. These concepts are correlative and will come to a naught with the rise of Self-realisation or Atma-Jnana. (Verses 11-37).

Isvara and Jiva

There is a universal determining power, which ordinarily goes by the name of law of nature, hiddenly present in everything in every condition, by which everything is regulated and on account of which things do not overstep their limits and maintain their distinctive features. This law is responsible for the harmony seen in creation: If there were to be no such law, anything could change its nature any time, and one would not be able to determine even the way in which one has to direct one's actions. There would be catastrophe in the cosmos and chaos created if a governing law were not to exist. It is Brahman reflecting itself through its Sakti or Power that appears as this law and determines the nature of things. Brahman, when it is supposed to be in association with this inscrutable Sakti, is called Isvara, and when it is looked at from the point of view of the sheaths, it is called the Jiva.

Maya and Avidya are responsible for the designation of Brahman as Isvara and Jiva, as a person may be a father or a grandfather at the same time, to his sons and grandsons. Brahman is called Isvara or Jiva when it is envisaged through Maya or Avidya, and as Maya is pure Sattva, it is universal, and the reflection of Brahman in it is undivided, while Avidya is manifold, and so Jivas are many. When there are no sons or grandsons, there is no father or grandfather and when there is no Maya, or Avidya in the form of sheaths there is no Isvaratva or Jivatva in Brahman. When this truth is meditated upon profoundly with the proper inner qualifications such as the Sadhana-chatushtaya (fourfold ethical means), there comes about realisation of Brahman. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself. Knowing is the same as being in the case of knowledge of Brahman. There is then no rebirth for such knower, for Brahman is unborn. (Verses 38-43)

Chapter IV

DISCRIMINATION OF DUALITY

Creation by Isvara and Jiva

Though truth is unitary and Brahman is absolute, the realisation of it is possible only by stages and by a gradual rise of consciousness from its Jivahood in various degrees of reality which it experiences in the different stages of its evolution. God, world and soul, in their distinctive features, appear to have a reality in the beginning, and this being the fundamental stage, the Sadhana of the Jiva should begin from this level. The creation of the world, which is being taken for granted by the Jiva, is to be first analysed. It is to be shown now that the creation of the world as it is, and as projected by the will of Isvara, is not the difficulty of the Jiva. Towards this end, the two types of creation are being studied here. The Upanishads speak of Isvara's creation in various ways. Prakriti which also goes, sometimes, by the name of Maya, is the material cause, and the Supreme Lord or the Mayin, the instrumental cause of creation: so says the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

The Atman alone was in the beginning, and it willed to create the many by a cosmic ideation; so says the Aitareya Upanishad.

Brahman was truth, knowledge and infinity, and from it arose ether, air, fire, water, earth, the different bodies, and so on, and the variety of creation was effected by the primeval contemplation of the Divine Being to appear as the many: so says the Taittiriya Upanishad.

In the beginning it was only pure Existence, and in it arose the idea to become manifold, and it created the

luminous medium of fire, from which water and earth and other bodies came out as effects: so says the Chhandogya Upanishad.

As sparks emanate from fire, all the variety consisting of conscious and unconscious beings came out from the one Imperishable: so says the Mundaka Upanishad.

In the beginning it was all unmanifested, and by the will of the unmanifested Absolute the latent became patent, and the one became the many names and forms, down to the gross universe which is animated by the Virat. By subsidiary evolution, after the manifestation of Virat, the celestials, human beings, and animals, etc., even up to the ants, became the variegated expressions of the Universal Purusha: so says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Isvara entered in the form of the life-principle in all the apparently divided aspects of Himself, and made them appear as Jivas with their own subjective ideations.

The substratum of consciousness called the Kutastha, the subtle body called Linga-Sarira, and the reflection of this consciousness through the subtle body, together constitute the Jiva, one being impossible without the other. The Sakti of Isvara which is responsible for the creation of the universe, also acts as a deluding factor when it enters into the constitution of the Jiva as Avidya or ignorance. The Jiva and Isvara are compared to two birds perching on the tree of the body or the universe, of which Jiva, by eating the fruits of the tree, experiences sorrow, while Isvara remains an unattached spectator and enters into no relations whatsoever. The eating of the fruits of the tree is the establishing of relations with the manifested world,

positively as likes and negatively as dislikes, due to the fact that the Jiva is incapable of having a totality of experience as Isvara has, and is limited to particularised experiences of separated objects with which it has varying relations in the different stages of its evolution. The objects, with which the Jiva thus maintains relations, are, in their own capacity, creations of Isvara, but to the observations of the Jiva they bear differing values at different times so that the Jiva has no permanent and definite information of anything in the world, since, as it evolves, its ideas of things also evolve.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we are told of the creation of the seven kinds of food or objects which constitute the support of Jivahood, both on earth and in heaven. Food such as rice and wheat, are considered as the general food. Oblations offered in the new moon and full-moon sacrifices are regarded as foods of the celestials by which they sustain themselves as individuals in a higher plane. Milk is supposed to be the food of animals, which supports the animal nature in others also. The mind, speech and Prana are the internal foods of the Jiva, by which it retains the network of relations in the world, and without which it cannot exist. Though, in essence, all these are the creations of Isvara, they are converted by the Jiva into its foods, for sustaining itself, through its psychological and sensory functions. The psychic activity of the Jiva referred to here is the Vishayachintana or the idea of objects and its sensory activity is the effort it exercises towards reaching the objects either with the idea of possessing them or avoiding them. So far as pure relationship is concerned, it is immaterial whether it is in the form of likes or dislikes,

because both are after all, relations by which the Jiva gets bound in the process of Samsara. As one and the same person may be looked at from different points of view due to purely private relations – a woman, for instance, is daughter to her father and wife to her husband – the world is considered by the Jiva in different ways according to its own predilections and idea of things. Maya acts as the means in the creation of the universe by Isvara, and the mind becomes the means in the experience of the world by the Jiva. Though the mind of the Jiva does not create the world in itself, it can create its own world and reduce the former to instruments of personal satisfaction; and it is only with this latter that it is concerned – not with the world of Isvara, in its practical dealings.

The objects created in the world of Isvara have differing values to the Jivas. Take, for example, a precious stone. It creates pleasure in the mind of one who desired it and has possessed it. It generates displeasure and anger in another who desired it but who could not possess it. It creates an attitude of indifference in a third who is dispassionate and is neither happy nor grieved on its perception. The three types of values, pleasure, unhappiness and impersonal non-attachment are not intrinsic values of the precious stone, which is a creation in the world of Isvara, and which, in itself, has a uniform value at all times, i.e., the value of being an integral part of Isvara's creation. It exists as any other object does, and this is really its ultimate value. But that it means something to someone is not its essential nature. Objects set up emotions in the Jiva by acting as correlatives of its own internal feelings of a kind of incompleteness

within itself. This is the reason why all do not desire the same thing, and even the same person does not desire one thing alone, at all times. Values differ when ideas differ, though objects do not change their nature even when they are looked at by various observers. They are capable of evoking different thoughts and feelings in the Jivas.

In perception, there is a twofold process. The mind which is inert, and is very subtle, projects itself as a force towards an object, envelops the form of that object, as light would cover a substance which it illumines, and takes the shape of that object. Simultaneously with this enveloping process, which is called *Vrittivyapti*, there is a lighting up of this process by the *Chidabhasa* within, which is called *Phalavyapti*, and by which knowledge the form of the object is given to the observing Jiva. When this knowledge is received by the *Buddhi*, it gives orders, immediately, to the whole system of the Jiva, in accordance with the meaning that it reads in the object perceived. The activity of the Jiva in relation to the object is dependent on the meaning that it finds in the object and is not caused by merely the existence of the object, as such. The bondage of the Jiva, therefore, lies in this, that the world means something to it, merely because it considers the world to be outside it, and sets up a series of reactions in regard to it, throughout its life. The liberation of the Jiva consists, therefore, in the withdrawal of this process of reading meaning in things, and acting accordingly; in regarding all things as parts of *Isvara's* creation, and seeing no other meaning than that their existence is *Isvara's* existence.

In the perception of an object, such as an earthen pot, there is a twofold activity of the mind going on: (1) The perception of the object, and (2) the conception of it. Perception is brought about by a projection of the mind towards the objects outside, while a concept can arise in the mind even without there being a physical object, really. There is, thus, a physical earthen vessel, and also a mental one, by which the manner in which the vessel is related to the seer is determined. By Anvaya and Vyatireka it can be known that the cause of bondage is Jiva's creation. When there is Jivasrishti, there is bondage. This is Anvaya. When there is no Jivasrishti, there is no bondage. This is Vyatireka. And this is a matter of experience by everyone. When we are not concerned with anything, we have a peculiar kind of freedom, and a feeling of happiness, which we do not experience when our thoughts get entangled in what we term the business of life. We concern ourselves with things, and hence it is we that have a variety of feelings. The mind of the Jiva acts only in regard to external objects. When no objects are presented before it, it cannot have any definite psychological reaction. Now, these internal reactions can be possible, even if there is no real physical perception; for example, in dream we have various experiences even when there is no actual contact with objects: and on the other hand, in Samadhi, sleep and swoon there is no perception of objects even when they are really present. A person may be grieved on receiving the news of the death of a dear relative, though the news may be false, but he remains happy, even if the dear one is really

dead, if only the news would not reach him. The bondage of the Jiva is caused by its own mentations.

It is the operation of the Jiva's mental functions that is the cause of the same person being designated as father, brother, husband, nephew, friend, enemy, and the like. These appellations have their counterparts in the minds of the Jivas. As a molten metal cast in the mould assumes the form of the mould, or as the light of the sun covers the objects it illumines, the mind which envelops forms assumes their respective shapes. There is first the rise of a mental modification in the subject, then the movement of this modification towards the object, and then the transformation of the modification into the shape of the object. The physical object is perceived by the senses, but the imagined form is visualised by the Sakshin or the Witness-consciousness directly.

There is a difference between Vijnanavada and Vedanta in that while the former denies the physical world altogether, independent of the individual's thinking, the latter accepts the world of Isvara, without which even thinking would not be possible. The objects in the world exist whether or not they are perceived by the Jivas, and their existence does not depend upon the test of utility that may be imposed on them. Utility is not the test of truth. We may not know things as they really are, on account of the psychological cloggings in which we are involved, but it is not difficult to see that there cannot be a perception unless there is something to be perceived, no matter whether its nature can be determined by us or not.

The liberation of the Jiva from this self-entanglement is brought about by Brahma-Jnana or realisation of the Absolute, and not merely by a suppression of the activities of the mind negatively, as it is done by several immature minds believing that mere absence of the sensation of pain would do, and that there is nothing higher. The truth is far from it, which is positive realisation of Brahman, wherein one is possessed, as it were, by a feeling of immortality and universal existence.

It does not matter if the duality of the world of Isvara is apparently perceived. What is necessary is an insight into the fundamental unity of all things and the realisation that all things in the world of Isvara are divine in nature, being manifestations of Isvara Himself. When this truth is known, the apparent duality does not in any way affect the Jiva. On the other hand, mere absence of the perception of duality does not in any way help one in spiritual evolution, as, for example, in the state of Pralaya. Nothing is seen as a manifested world in the state of final dissolution, but Jivasrishti does not come to an end there. The Jivas rise once again to a world of duality and multiplicity, subsequently, and the state of dissolution does not help them. Thus there is no purpose in merely closing one's eyes to the duality of the world. What is necessary is the wisdom of truth and realisation of oneness behind the apparent duality.

Isvarasrishti is not only non-obstructive to all Jivas in their evolution, but is a positive help, and is instrumental in the rise of true knowledge in the Jiva. The world-experience is an educative process, and we learn lessons in every

condition of our existence. The world is the great Guru to the Jiva, and Isvara Himself imparts lessons through His various manifestations, whether the Jiva knows this or not. Hence there should be no cause for complaint on the part of anyone against the world. (Verses 1-42)

Variety in the Creations of the Jiva

The duality created by the Jiva is twofold: scripturally ordained and scripturally prohibited. The ordained one is to be accepted because it is good and necessary for the spiritual evolution of the Jiva. The ordained duality consists in such things as study, self-analysis, investigation of truth and spiritual contemplation. Even these have to be given up when Brahman is realised. The scriptures say that we should abandon the craze for study when insight dawns within. The Upanishad exhorts that, having known Him, the wise one should resort to the superior Understanding, rejecting verbal controversy and argument which are just weariness of speech; and that the energy of the senses should be conserved in the mind, the mind should be fixed in the intellect, the intellect in the cosmic intellect, Hiranyagarbha, and the latter in Isvara, by the process of meditation.

The prohibited kind of duality is, again, twofold: the intense and the mild. The intense one consists of such inner forces as passion, anger, etc. The mild one is such useless mental activity as building castles in the air. Both these should be given up early, for the sake of the rise of knowledge, by practice of self-restraint at all times. It is not necessary to reiterate that these are objectionable traits even

after the rise of the knowledge. In a Jivanmukta there will not be any trace of these; and by this let it not be thought that only Videhamukti could better be aspired for, for fear that in Jivanmukti desires have to be abandoned. Spiritual insight and desire are contradictions, and there cannot be even an inclination to maintain desire when insight dawns. Desire is the greatest evil, and it is good that one carefully abandons it.

The state of Jivanmukti is one in which desires cannot have any place because the Jivanmukta is in a definite condition, wherein established, he practises spontaneously the law of the Absolute. All desire in the world is selfish, because it is always connected with something that is expected to bring personal satisfaction, even if others are to be deprived of their desires in this attempt. Moreover, desire is directed to something, to the exclusion of something else. Hence desire is not universal. But a Jivanmukta is a universal person, inasmuch as his consciousness is attuned to Brahman. For him the law of the world is the law of God, and so it is impossible for him to act wrongly, or cherish personal desires. Goodness, virtue, etc., which are qualities that a seeker aspires to possess by an effort on his part, become spontaneous expressions of a liberated soul, for the simple fact that his soul is the Soul of all beings.

Objects of desire have to be relinquished by the perception of the defects that always accompany them. Life is short, and time is fleeting; death does not come with any previous intimation. Youth fades, and the strength of the body diminishes even without one's being aware of it. All

accumulated stuff shall depart one day. Every rise has a fall. All union ends in separation, some time or other. Life must end in death. The meeting of things in this world is as unstable as the meeting of logs of wood in an ocean. Nothing in life is under the control of man. Thus, and along such lines, the defective nature of things has to be analysed in the mind, by gradually withdrawing oneself from the tantalising things of phenomenal existence.

The mild obstacle referred to as building castles in the air (Manorajya) is as bad as such Vrittis as lust, anger, and the like. The contemplation of an objective desire leads to contact with it, and then desire for it arises in the mind; desire begets anger; anger deludes the mind; delusion brings about loss of understanding eventually, and ends in the destruction of all good in man. Manorajya can be conquered by Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, through the practice of Savikalpa-Samadhi as detailed in the Yogasastras. Even if this elaborate technique of Yoga is difficult for many, it is possible for one to bring the mind under control by living in seclusion, by a sincere effort to free the mind from desires, by constantly remembering the transient nature of all things, and by protracted practice of the correct chanting of OM, until the mind becomes tranquil, and by freedom from Rajas which allows the reflection of the Atman in its placid nature. When the mind is taught the lesson that the universe is the appearance of the Absolute, it shall not think of objects. This itself is the highest attainment. If sometimes the mind gets distracted due to the operation of Prarabhda Karma, it is to be brought back to the source again, by force of effort, as restive horses are controlled by reins. He who

has no distraction of mind, and whose mind does not contemplate objects, is not merely a knower of Brahman, but Brahman itself. Abandoning all attraction to objects, he who stands firm in his own nature, is, verily, Brahman. That, by the relinquishment of the creation of the Jiva (Jivasrishti), Jivamukti is attained in its full glory, is the opinion of the seers and the knowers of the Vedanta scriptures.(Verses 43-69)

Chapter V

DISCRIMINATION OF THE MAHAVAKYAS

‘Consciousness is Brahman’

There are four Mahavakyas, or great statements in the Upanishads, which have a profound significance as pointers to Reality. They are: (1) Prajnanam Brahma – Consciousness is Brahman; (2) Aham Brahmasmi – I am Brahman; (3) Tat Tvam Asi – That Thou Art; (4) Ayam Atma Brahma – This Self is Brahman.

These Mahavakyas convey the essential teaching of the Upanishads, namely, Reality is one, and the individual is essentially identical with it. In the sentence, ‘Prajnanam Brahma’ or Consciousness is Brahman, a definition of Reality is given. The best definition of Brahman would be to give expression to its supra-essential essence, and not to describe it with reference to accidental attributes, such as creatorship etc. That which is ultimately responsible for all our sensory activities, as seeing, hearing, etc., is Consciousness. Though Consciousness does not directly see or hear, it is impossible to have these sensory operations without it. Hence it should be considered as the final meaning of our mental and physical activities. Brahman is that which is Absolute, fills all space, is complete in itself, to which there is no second, and which is continuously present in everything, from the creator down to the lowest of matter. It, being everywhere, is also in each and every individual. This is the meaning of Prajnanam Brahma occurring in the Aitareya Upanishad.

‘I Am Brahman’

In the sentence, ‘Aham Brahmasmi,’ or I am Brahman, the ‘I’ is that which is the One Witnessing Consciousness, standing apart from even the intellect, different from the ego-principle, and shining through every act of thinking, feeling, etc. This Witness-Consciousness, being the same in all, is universal, and cannot be distinguished from Brahman, which is the Absolute. Hence the essential ‘I’ which is full, super-rational and resplendent, should be the same as Brahman. This is not the identification of the limited individual ‘I’ with Brahman, but it is the Universal Substratum of individuality that is asserted to be what it is. The copula ‘am’ does not signify any empirical relation between two entities, but affirms the non-duality of essence. This dictum is from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

‘That Thou Art’

In the Chhandogya Upanishad occurs the Mahavakya, ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ or ‘That thou art’. Sage Uddalaka mentions this nine times, while instructing his disciple Svetaketu in the nature of Reality. That which is one alone without a second, without name and form, and which existed before creation, as well as after creation, as pure Existence alone, is what is referred to as Tat or That, in this sentence. The term Tvam stands for that which is in the innermost recesses of the student or the aspirant, but which is transcendent to the intellect, mind, senses, etc., and is the real ‘I’ of the student addressed in the teaching. The union of Tat and Tvam is by the term Asi or are. That Reality is remote is a misconception, which is removed by the instruction that it

is within one's own self. The erroneous notion that the Self is limited is dispelled by the instruction that it is the same as Reality.

'This Self is Brahman'

The Mahavakya, 'Ayam Atma Brahma' or 'This Self is Brahman', occurs in the Mandukya Upanishad. 'Ayam' means 'this', and here 'thisness' refers to the self-luminous and non-mediate nature of the Self, which is internal to everything, from the Ahamkara or ego down to the physical body. This Self is Brahman, which is the substance out of which all things are really made. That which is everywhere, is also within us, and what is within us is everywhere. This is called 'Brahman', because it is plenum, fills all space, expands into all existence, and is vast beyond all measure of perception or knowledge. On account of self-luminosity, non-relativity and universality, Atman and Brahman are the same. This identification of the Self with Absolute is not any act of bringing together two differing natures, but is an affirmation that absoluteness or universality includes everything, and there is nothing outside it.

Chapter VI

LIGHT ON THE ANALOGY OF A PAINTED PICTURE

Universal Superimposition

The process of the manifestation of the universe is fourfold, as there is a fourfold process in the painting of a picture. There is, first, a piece of cloth, pure in its original state. It is then coated with starch, to stiffen it into a canvas suitable for painting. The artist draws on the canvas an outline of the picture that is in his mind. Finally, the outline is filled with the necessary colour, giving it the appearance of the contemplated picture.

The universe is a vast picture painted, as it were, on the basis of Brahman. Pure Consciousness, which is the nature of Brahman, is the substratum of all things, and this may be compared to the pure cloth necessary as the background for the painting. The condition in which the projection of the universe is latently conceived and held in a seed-form, unmanifest and invisible, is the state of Isvara, where the universe is in sleep. There is a rousing from this sleep into a dreaming condition of creation in Hiranyagarbha, where faint outlines of the picture of the universe are visible, though a clear perception of it is impossible there. The colourful presentation of creation is brought into high relief in the state of Virat, where is a waking of all things into their own individualities, and where each regards oneself as a distinct entity. All manifested beings, right from the Creator to a blade of grass, animate and inanimate, exist as a graduated series of manifestations, all painted on the substratum of Brahman. Higher consciousness, lower

consciousness and unconsciousness are differences introduced in the various items constituting the painted picture of the Cosmos, from the point of view of the degree in which Brahman-Consciousness is manifested in each of them. The difference in the expression of consciousness in different individuals does not mean that the individuals are really possessed of any intelligence of their own, for one and the same Consciousness is manifest in all these, in various ways, in accordance with the subtlety of the medium of expression. The intellect or the Buddhi, being a subtler medium, reflects a greater amount of consciousness than the lower kingdom, in which such a medium is absent. Just as we differentiate, artificially, the painted dresses and the painted human beings from the real cloth on which the picture is painted, we do in this world make a false distinction between the imaginary, reflected intelligence called Chidabhasa, and the real Intelligence, which is Brahman. As these reflections or Chidabhasa are different owing to the difference in the degree of intelligence manifest in them, Jivas are manifold in number, and there are countless ways of drawing a distinction between Jiva and Brahman. As the colour of the painted clothes is unwisely superimposed on the cloth-background by the observers, the individualities and the variegated world-forms are wrongly felt to be in the Brahman.

The feeling that Samsara is real, that it is intertwined with the Self, really, is the bondage of the Jiva, and this is called Avidya. The firm conviction that bondage does not belong to the Atman, that it is a phase of Jivahood or Chidabhasa, is true knowledge, and this is acquired by deep

reflection. Hence one should constantly engage oneself in a thorough investigation of the nature of Isvara, Jagat, and Jiva (God, World and Soul). When there dawns the awareness that the world and Jiva are correlatives and have no independent reality or value of their own, they cancel each other, and there rises the higher knowledge of the Paramatman or the Supreme Self. Mere non-perception of the world should not be mistaken for the liberation of the Jiva. Else, there would be liberation in sleep, swoon, death and cosmic dissolution, where the world is not objectively experienced. Liberation is positive knowledge of the unreality of multiplicity, and the reality of the universal Unity. In the state of the true Knowledge the outward perception of the world need not necessarily be negated. The appearance of the world may be there, but the feeling of its reality is not there. Such a state is called liberation-while-living (Jivanmukti).

Spiritual knowledge is of two kinds: direct and indirect. It is only in direct knowledge that contemplation and meditation reach their culmination. To know that Brahman is, is to have an indirect knowledge of it. To know that one is identical with it in actual experience, is to have a direct knowledge. Towards this end, the nature of Truth is being analysed here. (Verses 1-17)

Jiva and Kutastha

The One Truth appears to have a fourfold distinction as Kutastha, Brahman, Jiva and Isvara, even as the space contained in a jar, the vast universal space, the space reflected in the water contained in the jar, and the space

reflected in the widely spread clouds in space may be distinguished from one another. Kutastha is that which is the changeless substratum of the physical and the subtle bodies which the Jiva experiences. This substratum is called the Kutastha because it is unmoving like an anvil, even while it is beaten severely. The intellect which is superimposed on the Kutastha and through which the latter is reflected, becomes the source of the appearance of the Jiva, which is so called because it infuses life into the individuality and appears to get involved in Samsara. As the space reflected in the water of a jar completely covers the real space in it, Jivahood takes the position of the Kutastha and makes it impossible for one to have a direct knowledge of the Kutastha, by mutual superimposition (Anyonya-Adhyasa) of attributes. The existence, consciousness, freedom and bliss of Kutastha are superimposed on Jivahood, and the Jiva begins to feel thereby that it exists as intelligence, freedom, bliss, and so on. Conversely, the changing characters of the Jiva, such as pain, pleasure, etc., are superimposed on the Kutastha, and one begins to feel that one has really these experiences. Thus the Jiva, getting busy with itself and its activities, forgets its own source, and knows it never in its daily life. This forgotten nature is called Mula-Avidya or the original ignorance.

Avidya exists as Avarana and Vikshepa, on account of the operation of which one makes the assertion "I do not know the Atman; and it is not there". This is the work of the Abhana and Asatta aspects of Avarana. Though the Atman is the Centre of everyone, it is not known, and its existence is practically denied in the daily business of life.

That such an Avidya exists is self-evident to everyone, though it will not stand the scrutiny of logic. The existence of Avidya is a mystery which is accepted by everyone in experience, but none can investigate into its nature, as the process of investigation, logical analysis, etc., is a working of the intellect, which itself is an outcome of Avidya. Yukti (reasoning) should be based on Sruti (scripture), logic should ground itself in intuition. Kutastha-Chaitanya or General Consciousness is not opposed to the existence of Avidya; else there would be the negation of Avidya in the state of deep sleep. Avidya has no meaning for the Atman, and hence the opposition of Avidya by the Atman has also no meaning. Avidya is dispelled by a Vritti of the mind in its cosmic form, which is called Brahmakara-Vritti, as this supreme Vritti has no other object than Brahman; it subsides after bringing about the requisite elimination and does not continue to proceed as the Vishayakara-Vritti, which has an external object correlative to it. As silverness is superimposed on the mother-of-pearl, the Chidabhasa, together with the bodies, is superimposed on the Kutastha. Here, in this superimposition of silver on nacre, the reality of nacre and its immediacy referred to as 'thisness' are transferred to an unreal silver, whose shining character is brought into contact with the nacre in an erroneous perception. Thisness and reality are the common features which are recognised in the silver that is not really there. Selfhood and substantiality are likewise characters of the Kutastha, which are falsely seen in the Chidabhasa. Just as the special features of nacre, such as bluish black, triangularity, etc., are completely overlooked and are not

seen in the perception of it as silver, the unattached condition and the blissful nature of the Kutastha are forgotten in the mistaken notion of it as the Jiva, and vice versa. Even as what is superimposed on nacre is called silver, here, in our own case, what is superimposed on the Kutastha goes by the name of 'Aham' or 'I'-ness. By seeing merely the 'this'-ness of nacre, one wrongly feels that it is silver. And while, in fact, there is only the experience of Kutastha, one mistakes it for 'I'-ness or 'Ahamta'.

In the observation this silver, 'thisness' and silver are two different things. So also, Selfhood and 'I'-ness are different from each other in the feeling: "I am". The general and the special features are not to be confused with each other, and the 'Self' is an invariable concomitant in such common usages as "Devadatta himself is going"; "you yourself may see"; "I myself will not be able to do this", etc. The term 'Self' that is used here is a general feature in all cases, as in such statements like, "this is silver", "this is cloth", etc., where thisness refers to the common feature in things. The Selfhood of things is the Kutastha, and it is their reality; particularities like 'I'-ness etc. are special features which are different from Selfhood. The Self is other than all sense of objectivity.

Though it is a fact that the Self is present, as far as we know, only in what we call a sentient being, we, in our language, use the word 'Self' even when referring to insentient objects like a pot. In such statements as 'a pot by itself has no consciousness', we unconsciously introduce selfhood into the pot, though the pot has no consciousness and has thus no characteristics of Self. But the Self or the

Atman is not only consciousness but also existence. When we say a pot exists, we say the least that can be said about it, viz., that it is. We also mean thereby that it is real, because the unreal is not; but the real is not capable of being seen as an object outside consciousness; yet we affirm that an object is. Here the mistake that we commit is that we combine in perception existence or the reality of the Atman and a special property which we term objectness, but we cannot see that we are making this mistake; and if only we could see it, we would not see the world as it is. We would then begin to see the luminous substratum of things, which cannot be called an object at all. In the perception of an object like a pot, the existence-aspect of Brahman is revealed, and it is this that makes us say that pot is there. It does not matter if the pot has no consciousness. It has existence, and this is enough to give it the character of reality. Reality is not merely consciousness without existence, but consciousness with existence, in such a manner that the one cannot be distinguished from the other. The appearance or the non appearance of Chidabhasa is the cause of our bringing in a distinction between the sentient and the non-sentient. As Chidabhasa is superimposed on the Atman, the objectness of the pot is also superimposed on it in a like manner. There is a universal background of things, on which appear the subject as well as the object, both of which are superimposed on it. The term 'Self' which we use to indicate the general feature in all things is different from the meanings of such terms as 'this' and 'that' etc., which are also, apparently, invariable concomitants of

substantives. For the former is exclusive of all objective element in experience, while the latter merely indicate the exclusiveness of things or the difference of one thing from another, and do not signify 'Selfhood'. The Self is not an adjective qualifying itself, and it does not demonstrate anything other than itself, not does it distinguish itself from itself, while such words as 'this', 'that', etc., do indicate such distinction. This and That, Self and non-Self, I and you, etc. are exclusive of each other, but the Atman is not exclusive, except in the sense that it stands opposed to all attempts at objectivising Reality.

The Self is set in opposition to the notion of all objectivity, because it is never objectified in experience. To it, everything objective is outside reality, as the feeling of 'I'-ness in the individual regards all other things in the world as outside its reality. The sense of 'I'-ness in the Jiva is falsely taken as a centre of consciousness, and all other things known by it are regarded as objects merely instrumental in bringing about experience in the former. Though 'I'-ness assumes selfhood so far as its experiences are concerned and considers the world as an object to it, the 'I'-ness itself is an object from the point of view of the Atman. The 'I'-ness may falsely regard itself as a conscious principle, but from the standpoint of the Atman it is not consciousness-in-itself. The ego is objective to the Atman. 'I'-ness and Self are different from each other, as silver and nacre are different in the analogy cited. This intrinsic superimposition, called Tadatmya-Adhyasa, between the Chidabhasa and Kutastha is responsible for the confused form of experience as conscious individuality. Avidya is the

cause of all these, and when Vidya dawns Avidya is destroyed. However, the effect of Avidya may persist for sometime, though the cause is removed by Jnana. In the case of the Jnanin the Bhramaja-Adhyasa or the misconception consequent upon false identification of the Kutastha with Chidabhasa, and vice versa, is cut off, due to which he will not have any further birth. But the Sahaja-Adhyasa or the natural error of identifying the Chidabhasa with Ahamkara (ego), and vice versa, as also the Karmaja-Adhyasa or the identification of the ego with the body, and vice versa, will persist. The Sanchita-Karma or the result of actions done in the past, but not manifested in experience yet, and Agami-Karma or the result of actions performed during the present life, do not, in the case of a Jnanin, bring about any reaction in the form of rebirth, etc. But the Prarabdha-Karma, or that portion of the Sanchita-Karma which has been allotted for experience in a particular span of life, has to be undergone until its momentum is exhausted, whether the Jnanin feels the working of the Prarabdha or not. The Chhandogya Upanishad (Ch.VI.) testifies to the operation of Prarabdha in a Jnanin. It is reasonable, as it is possible, for a momentum to continue even while its cause has ceased to operate. This is also corroborated by the saints who have given expression to such experiences. (Verses 18-56)

Different Views of the Self

The varieties of non-perception of Truth have resulted in various doctrines of the nature of the Self. The Lokayatas or Charvakas, the Indian materialists, consider the visible as

real. Inasmuch as the objects and the body alone are visible, nothing above these is regarded by them as real. They hold on mainly to perception as the main proof of knowledge, and consider the real to be that which is perceived by the senses. The object which is made up of five elements is held by them to be the true self, and they cannot envisage any other state of liberation than the death of the body. The famous Virochana of the Chhandogya Upanishad is supposed to be the initiator of this doctrine.

Another school of Charvakas began to feel that the body without sensations has no life, and hence the senses are the self. As we have a direct, personal awareness of the senses, they are we. The senses are more important than merely the physical elements. Those who have pondered over the activities of the Prana and noted that the senses are directed by it, consider the Prana to be superior, and infer that it functions even if the senses may vanish. The Prana operates even in the state of deep sleep. The supremacy of the Prana over the senses is heard of even in the scriptures. Hence, that Prana is the self is the doctrine of the Upasakas of Prana.

The mind considers the functions of even the Prana. The Prana does not enjoy or experience anything. It knows nothing even if it functions in the deep sleep of the Jiva. It is also heard that the mind alone is the cause of the bondage and liberation of the Jiva. The mind knows what the Prana does not. Hence one of the schools hold that mind should be regarded as the self.

The Vijnanavadins go higher, and for them the Vijnana or intellect is the self. It has its primary source in the

Alayavijnana, the reservoir of consciousness. This Vijnana is Kshanika or momentary, and is made up of bits of process, one different from the other, but having the semblance of continuity due to the Samskaras or impressions generated and left behind by every momentary phase. The Vijnana constitutes the sense of the 'I', while the Manas or the mind denotes the sense of 'this' in cognition. The Vijnana is the source of the 'I'-consciousness, and is the origin of the mental Vrittis, which contact objects outside. There is no outward perception without a presupposition of the 'I', and this 'I' is the Vijnana. There is birth and death of Vijnana every moment, and its unity is similar to the continuity of the flame of a lamp. It is not one mass, but is made up of several parts, though it has the appearance of the whole. This Vijnana is the transmigrating Jiva.

As in the case of a pot illumined by sunlight, the light and the pot are indistinguishable to non discriminate persons, and yet the light and the pot are two different things; so, also, the procession of bits of intellectual impressions is different from the basic consciousness that is underlying it, though, to a nondiscriminating Jiva, the two appear to be the same. The intellect is, thus, not the Atman. The scripture refers to the intellect as the charioteer (Sarathi) and not the lord of the chariot (Rathi). Moreover, if the Atman were a momentary consciousness, as the Vijnanavadins hold, one would not remember even one's having taken food a little before. The theory of Pratyabhijna or a series of understandings, one preceding the other, is untenable, as it would lead to an unending regression of

consciousness behind consciousness. There cannot be a mere series without a substratum. The assumption that Samskaras or impressions of Vijnana can be identified with the Atman would lead to *petitio principii* (Atmasraya), since Samskaras would depend on Vijnana as their basis, and the latter again on the former for its existence. The Atman, therefore, is above all processes of understanding or intellectual becoming.

The Madhyamikas urge that Vijnana is momentary like the flash of a lightning or the rending of a cloud, or the winking of the eye. There is no permanency in the Vijnana, and consequently there is no substantiality in what is perceived. The whole universe is a series of phenomena appearing on void, and the world of contact between the seer and the seen is unreal due to the impermanency of the contact and the momentariness of all things. This doctrine of the Madhyamikas, however, is untenable, because one cannot imagine even delusion or phenomena unless there is an underlying basis. Moreover, even void cannot be known if there is no witness of it as a conscious observer. We cannot conceive of an unknown void. The existence of Atman, cannot therefore, be ever doubted.

The Naiyayikas and the Prabhakara-Mimamsakas consider that the Anandamaya-Atman is the real self, as it persists even in transmigration, and there is, in its experience, a sense of some existence, though indeterminate.

There is also difference of opinion regarding the size of the Atman. Some think that the Atman is atomic in size, because it is said to pervade even the minutest nerve-

current (Nadi), and one of the Upanishads makes mention of the Jiva to be as subtle as the hundredth part of a hair divided hundredfold. There are also other references in the Upanishads to the effect that the Atman is subtle and minute, and incapable of perception. This makes some opine that the Atman is of the size of an atom.

The school of the Jainas, called Digambaras, feels that an atomic Atman cannot pervade the whole body, and so it is of the size of the body. It is seen that consciousness pervades the whole body and the Upanishads also mention this fact. The Digambaras conclude that the Atman is medium in size and it can pervade even the subtle Nadis, as we thrust our hands into the sleeves of a shirt. The Atman can assume a bigger size when it enters a big body and a smaller one when it enters a smaller body by an expansion and contraction of its parts. Now this doctrine is defective, because the Atman cannot be said to have parts, and there can be no contraction or expansion of it to suit the size of the body. That which has parts would be perishable like any other body in the world; and if the Atman is to be perishable, there would be no rule regarding virtue or vice, good or bad, and the world would be a chaos. The conclusive doctrine is that the Atman is universal and absolute, not atomic or medium in size. It is all pervading and partless, indivisible and eternal.

With regard to the essential nature of the Atman, there is, again, a difference of opinion. The Naiyayikas and Prabhakara-Mimamsakas think that the Atman is unconscious essentially, is a substance like ether, having the quality of consciousness inherent in it, as sound is the

property of ether. They also assume that the Atman has other qualities like desire, hatred, effort, virtue, vice, pleasure, pain, and their impressions. Consciousness, and the other qualities, are, according to them, the result of the contact of the Atman with the mind, which is brought about by the operation of Adrishta or the invisible potency of previous action. When the potency subsides, there is unconsciousness, as in sleep; when the potency is activated, there is consciousness. The Atman is held to be an agent of actions and experiencer of pleasure and pain, which are caused by the effect of past deeds.

The Bhatta school of Mimamsa considers that the Atman is both conscious and unconscious, and the above-mentioned qualities inhere in it. It is unconscious because it has no experience in sleep. It is conscious because this is inferred after one's awakening from sleep. They compare the Atman to a firefly which may flash light or withdraw it on different occasions. The Sankhya repudiates this doctrine and holds on to the theory of a universal conscious Purusha or Atman, and posits an opposite principle called Prakriti, which is unconscious in nature.

The Sankhya holds that Purushas are many in number, each being infinite and intelligent. Prakriti is inert and is an eternal principle like Purusha. The function of Prakriti is to bring about conditions for the experience of Purusha, and create for it a training ground, towards its final liberation. Bondage is the non-discrimination on the part of Purusha as regards its true relation to Prakriti. Liberation is this discrimination. The Purusha, when it rests on its own

essential nature, attains Moksha. The existence of Purusha and Prakriti is known from the Sruti. (Verses 57-101)

Isvara or the Universal God

The Yoga doctrine feels the necessity for an Isvara, inasmuch as Purusha and Prakriti, alone, cannot, by mutual contact and non-contact, explain the law and justice operating in the world, for there would be none to dispense the deserts of the Purusha if they are let free to themselves. There should be, therefore, an over-all, regulating law, above Purusha and Prakriti. This is the Isvara of the Yoga school.

The Sruti (Antaryami-Brahmana) is in support of the Yoga in advancing the doctrine of Isvara, but we have different schools of thought defining Isvara in various ways. The Yoga defines Isvara as a special kind of Purusha who is unaffected by anything, therefore untouched by afflictions, Karma, their fruits and their impressions. He is unattached consciousness. Though He is untouched, He is the ruler of the universe, because on the non-acceptance of such a ruler of all things, there would be confusion, and there would be no arrangement for the liberation of the Jivas from the state of bondage. The Upanishad refers to the existence of Isvara when it states that 'due to His fear' everything functions everywhere. Though the Jiva also is untouched and untainted consciousness, essentially, like Isvara, it gets into bondage by a mistaken notion of the identity of itself with Prakriti.

The Naiyayikas or the logical schoolmen feel that a completely detached Isvara cannot have rulership over the

world. So they attribute to Him qualities like eternal knowledge, eternal effort, and eternal desire. "His desire is truth; His volition is truth," says the Upanishad. Isvara is a special Purusha, on account of these attributes.

The worshippers of Hiranyagarbha think that if Isvara in His original state were to be the Creator, there would be perpetual creation due to His permanent contact with all things. Hence, it should be regarded that He is Creator only in a state of Hiranyagarbha with a Universal Subtle Body, and not otherwise. In the Udgitha Brahmana of the Upanishad the glory of Hiranyagarbha is sung abundantly. Though Hiranyagarbha has a subtle body, he is above Jivahood because of his universality, and so above Karma and its fruits. Some think that without a gross body there cannot be even an idea of the subtle body. Hence the Virat or the Cosmic Body spreading everywhere, alone, is to be considered as the real Creator and not Hiranyagarbha. The Rigveda and other scriptures corroborate this view when they say that the Purusha is thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, all-seeing, etc.

As it is difficult to conceive of Virat in His essential nature as Creator due to His being inside and outside, equally, Brahma, described in the Puranas, is to be considered as creator, in the opinion of the Upasakas of Brahma. The Vaishnavas regard Vishnu as supreme since even Brahma came out of his navel, according to the Puranas. The Saivas regard Siva as supreme, and quote the instance from the Puranas, where it is said that Vishnu and Brahma could not fathom the depths of Siva. The worshippers of Ganesa think that he is supreme, as even

Siva worshipped him while engaged in the destruction of the Tripuras.

Thus, there are countless views of Isvara from the points of view of different Jivas in different levels of evolution, looking at Isvara from particular angles. Right from the Upanishad concept of Isvara, down to such deities as trees and stones, there are religious beliefs and worships, covering a wide range. The truth, however, is that Isvara is the Absolute Individual, including even space and time within himself, and operating both as the instrumental and material cause of creation, with His power called Maya. Maya is inseparable from the one who wields it. Everything is strung in the body of Isvara, as beads in a thread, and He exists supreme above all things like a magician who is untouched by the magic he displays. From this standpoint of Isvara, as the all inclusive whole, every special form of worship has a truth in it, and meaning, since Isvara is everywhere, and is everything.

The nature of Maya, taken independently, is inscrutable. In the Tapaniya Upanishad it is described as Jada (inert) and Mohatmaka (delusive). Its existence is proved by the personal experience, in everyone, of having a sufficient knowledge in regard to it. The inertness of Maya is that which we see in things like an earthen pot; delusion is that wherein the intellect gets stultified and cannot understand anything. For the ordinary people of the world, Maya is a reality, because it projects this world which is clearly seen by them as a fact; but to the logical mind, or the philosophical intellect, it is a mystery, because it cannot be said to be either non-existent (due to its appearance) or

existent (due to its ultimate negation in Brahman). It is real from the point of view of popular common sense, inscrutable from the point of view of logical philosophy, and unreal to the illumined sage. It is seen in three different ways from three levels of evolution. The dependence of Maya is seen from the fact of its being impossible where there is no consciousness. It has also a semblance of independence as it manages somehow to present a world to the untainted consciousness. It manifests a world to the unattached Kutastha, and brings about a distinction between Iswara and jiva by manifesting itself cosmically as well as individually. The wonder is that it does not affect the Kutastha, and yet appears to involve it in world-experience. The world appears to be 'there', but is yet inexplicable. The very meaning of Maya is that it can effect marvels and bring about events and occurrences which are usually impossible. The intellect of the Jiva gets divided here, and the only thing open to it is to conclude that mystery is perhaps the stuff of Maya, as liquidity is the nature of water, heat of fire, hardness of stone etc. It intrigues a person, who is involved in it. It is known to be unsubstantial when the light of Brahman reveals itself. No question in regard to Maya will bring a satisfactory answer, because the very nature of Maya is a question as to the origin of things. Maya is a query and a wonder, not a subject for logical scrutiny or empirical observation. The solution lies only in the cessation of the intellect, in the subsiding of all interrogation, and the effacement of individuality in the greatest wonder of Brahman. Sincere seekers, therefore, should not worry themselves as to the

origin of Maya and its nature, but endeavour hard in finding ways and means of attaining freedom from it. The answer to the question of Maya lies only in the experience of Brahman. There are explanations and statements satisfying the intellect open to a certain limit, but there is a point reaching which the intellect turns back baffled, and where it finds itself confronted by a mighty wall of ignorance. How did life originate? How did consciousness enter the individual? How is a large tree contained in a small seed? These are questions which the intellect cannot answer. It is wrong on the part of anyone to enter into discussions and arguments in regard to transcendental mysteries, knowing well that such arguments reach their fulfilment and obtain their answer only in the utter surrender of one's individuality in the Absolute. Logical definitions and affirmations are circumscribed by the empirical categories of space, time and causality, and these assertions can be faced with counter-statements in a world of relativity. The wonder of creation is so tremendous to the mind of man, that he cannot even approach it. The wisest position would be to recognise that the true insight lies in real humility before the marvel of Brahman, and a sincere effort to realise it in one's own experience.

The seed of Maya is present in the Jiva as the Anandamaya experienced in sleep, from which rises the tree of dream and waking life. In the condition of sleep are hidden the impressions of all relativistic existence. The Universe is subtly submerged in the state of Isvara. The sumtotal of experiential impressions manifest through the intellects of the Jivas becomes the medium of the reflection

of Consciousness as Isvara, like the indistinct appearance of the sky through the widespread clouds.

The existence of Isvara is to be inferred in the same manner as we infer a reflection of space through the clouds. The subtle impressions of the intellects (Buddhis) are embedded in the Cosmic Anandamaya or Isvara, as drops of water exist in the clouds. It is the Anandamaya that sprouts as the Buddhi, both cosmically and individually. Jiva and Isvara appear due to the twofold activity of Prakriti as Avidya and Maya, respectively. Maya is like clouds, the psychic impressions like the particles constituting them, Isvara like the ether reflected in them. Isvara is extolled in the Vedas and Vedantas as Mahesvara (Overlord), Antaryami (Inner Controller), Sarvajana (All-knower) and Jagad-Yoni (Seed of the World). Isvara is the Lord of all, by His being the Self of all, and He has control over them, not by the exercise of an external power, but by the regulation of the very substance of them all. His knowledge of all beings is not mediate knowledge (Paroksha Jnana), as it is in the case of the Jivas. His knowledge is immediate realisation (Aparoksha Anubhava) of the essence of all things, both in their generality and particularity. What Isvara creates by His Will, Jivas cannot change by their efforts. The activity of the Jiva is regulated by the Will of Isvara and the effort of the former is nothing but its personal notion of the manner in which Isvara's Will works through it. The seeds of all Jivas exist in the body of Isvara, and so He is, naturally, the sole Creator of the universe, which is the universal psychic impressions objectified for the experiences of the Jivas that are in Him as parts of a

whole. The Jiva has no omniscience, due to its knowledge being exteriorised (Paroksha), and so far as the Jiva is concerned, Isvara is a matter of inference and omniscience an article of faith. In the Antaryami Brahmana, Isvara is extolled as the Inner Ruler of all beings. He is called Antaryami or Inner Regulator and Controller, because He exists within all things as an invisible being and yet the indispensable existence. The Upanishad says that Isvara is seated in the Buddhi, and is within it. The Buddhi does not know Him. The Buddhi is His body. He controls the Buddhi from within, and He is the material substance of all things, right from the intellect to the physical sheath, as threads are the sole material of cloth. Isvara is, therefore, present everywhere. Internal to the cloth is the thread; internal to the thread is the fibre; and thus, if we go on continuing our analysis of the internal stuff of the substance, until its ultimate limit is reached, we would end in Isvara. We may be aware here of one or two layers that present themselves before our eyes, but His inmost being cannot be seen. This can be known only through the teaching of the scripture and in direct insight. As cloth may be said to be the body of the threads, the universe is the body of Isvara, for He exists as all things. As the contraction, expansion, motion, etc. of the threads would immediately bring about a corresponding change in the cloth, so is the world entirely determined by the Will of Isvara, and nothing is independent of Him. The materialisation of His Will is the Cosmos, and as He directs it, so shall it be. The Bhagavadgita refers to this control of Isvara over all the Jivas, in whom He is seated, and whom

He revolves, as if mounted on a machine. Here the Jivas are to be understood in the sense of the Vijnanamaya elements or the principles of intellectual intelligence, which have their roots in the Anandamaya, of which the ultimate substance is Isvara, and any modification in His Will, ought naturally to determine the modifications in all the individual wills of the Jivas.

The machine (Yantra) that is referred to in this verse of the Bhagavadgita, is the body on which the Jiva is mounted by means of the Ahamkara or ego. The term, 'revolving,' mentioned in this verse, refers to the involvement of the Jivas in good and bad deeds, through the ego. It is Isvara who ultimately directs the course of the actions of the Jivas, and makes them proceed along particular lines, though by a false consciousness of agency in action, the latter get bound to Samsara. The self-development in the constitution of the body of Isvara, due to His own Power, compels the Jivas to change accordingly, and this is what is meant by 'revolving' them by their individual egoities. This is also the control that Isvara exercises on everything in creation.

People are not wanting in this world, who feel that they know what is right, but cannot do it, and know what is wrong, but cannot desist from it. There is a force above the Jivas, over which they have no control. This does not mean that there is no such thing as free-will in the case of the Jivas, because Isvara Himself appears as free-will, the only difference being that the Jivas do not know that it is Isvara alone who is working from within. Thus free-will does not detract from Isvara's omnipotence. And by this knowledge the supremacy of Isvara and the unattached nature of the

Atman in the Jiva are established, and when this truth is deeply felt by the Jiva, within, its liberation is assured. This is strongly advocated in the Srutis and Smritis, which are the Divine Words of God conveyed through the intuition and inspiration of seers and saints.

The Upanishad refers to the overlordship of Isvara when it declares that by fear of Him everything moves and works. He is, thus, the regulating law from without (Sarvesvara) and the controlling power from within (Antaryami).

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, sage Yajnavalkya says that by the command of this Imperishable Being the sun and the moon stand apart, and so on. The Upanishad also mentions that this Being is the Supreme immanent Ruler of everyone. Isvara is the source of all creation, as everything originates from Him and returns to Him. The origin of things is nothing but their unfoldment or manifestation, and their return is the involution by the Will of Isvara. The pattern of creation in any particular cycle depends upon the nature of the collective totality of the Karmas of the Jivas to be manifested in that cycle, though the motive force of this creation is Isvara Himself. When there is complete fructification of the Karmas meant for experience in a particular cycle, there is dissolution, and the involvement of the Jivas in the body of Isvara. Creation and dissolution may be compared to day and night, waking and sleeping, opening and closing of eye-lids, thinking and being silent, and the like.

In the creation of the world by Isvara, the questions of Arambhavada or creation of a new effect from a different

cause, or Parinamavada or transformation of the constitution of the cause into the effect, do not arise. The world is not a new effect that is produced out of a cause different from it, nor is it transformation of the cause with a change undergone in its being. The non-dual and partless nature of Brahman repudiates these possibilities. Creation is an appearance (Vivarta), as silver appears in mother-of-pearl, or a snake appears in a rope in indistinct light. The conscious (Jiva) and unconscious (material) evolutes in creation are on account of the predominance of the Chidabhasa or Prakriti in certain things. Isvara is commonly present in all, though in certain beings, one or two Gunas of Prakriti alone, are revealed, or all are revealed. It is sometimes held that Brahman is the origin of this world, directly, as when the Sruti says that Brahman which is truth, knowledge and infinity, is the source of Akasa, Vayu, Agni, etc. There is a mutual superimposition of attributes when Brahman and Isvara are thus regarded as non-distinct and consequently Brahman is considered to be the Creator of this world. However, on a careful investigation, we understand that Brahman, in its pristine purity, is utterly unattached, and Isvara, endowed with the power of Maya is the direct cause of creation. There is, in fact, no necessity to engage oneself in any argumentation in regard to the relation subsisting between Isvara and Brahman, since from the standpoint of Brahman, there is neither creation nor the world, and the explanation of the process of creation is afforded only to the Jivas who consider the world as real and creation as a fact. The creation-theory is a help to the Jiva in understanding the

all-pervading nature of Reality, and the necessity to realise its identity with it. Brahman and Isvara are one, as the pure canvas is one with that stiffened with starch.

Referring to the creation theory, the Upanishad tells us that Isvara, in the beginning of things, willed to be many, and this primary Will of Isvara took the form of a subtle manifestation of the cosmos as Hiranyagarbha, as the condition of sleep may give rise to the perception of dream. From one point of view, creation is simultaneous (Yugapat-Srishti), inasmuch as there is a sudden illumination of things by primeval ideation of Isvara, and the Jivas all begin to feel their own individulaised conditions as they were at the time of the conclusion of the previous cycle (Kalpa). There is, then, subsequently evolution of things systematically from the lower to the higher in different levels, and hence, from another point of view, creation is a gradual and successive process of one following another (Krama-Srishti). The scripture supports both these views. Our dreams corroborate this reasoning.

Hiranyagarbha, who is an appearance of Isvara, has the feeling of 'I-ness' in regard to all the individual subtle bodies, with whom He is one. He is therefore the cosmic subtle body, with omniscience and omnipotence. In Him the universe appears indistinctly, as if in twilight, or in dusk, and in Him slight outlines of the future creation become visible, as we can have a faint idea of the picture to be painted from the outlines drawn on the canvas treated with starch. Hiranyagarbha is the sprout of the world, germinating from the seed of Isvara. In Virat, however, creation becomes complete and shines clear and distinct, as

the world seen in bright day-light, as a picture beheld when the work of painting is completed, as a plant that has grown into a tree. The Vedas speak of the grandeur and greatness of the Virat Purusha, in the Purusha-Sukta, and in the chapter on Visvarupa.

All things, beginning with the creator down to the inanimate matter, constitute the limbs in the body of this Great Being. It is thus possible to visualise and worship Isvara in any thing, for He is everything:- Isvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra, Agni, Ganesa, Bhairava, Devi, Yaksha, Rakshasa, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, cow, horse, beast, bird, the pipal, banyan and mango trees, barley, rice, grass, water, stone, earth, wood, chisel, spade – all these are names and forms of the One God of creation, and any of these shall bring about the desired result when envisaged and adored in true spirit.

The whole universe being, thus, divine in nature, all forms of worship have meaning and validity, provided, of course, the worship is done with the sole unselfish motive of realising Brahman. Different worshippers attain different results due to differences in their motives and endowments, not because there is difference in Isvara, for He is everywhere, and in every shape, at all times. As is the worship, so is the end realised. What one intensely feels, that one definitely obtains, Isvara being the source and consummation of everything. (Verses 102-209)

Towards Ultimate Freedom

The liberation of the Jiva is possible only in the realisation of Brahman, not even when the least difference is felt, such as that between Jiva and Isvara. As dream does not end until waking, Samsara does not end until Brahman is realised. Dream and waking are similar in so far as there is in both a mistaking of the Absolute for the relative and the particular. From the point of view of Brahman, the whole universe is a dream, inclusive of the differences between Isvara and Jiva, the sentient and non-sentient, etc. Isvara and Jiva, being included within the realm of Maya, become the cause of the twofold creation as described in the Upanishads. From the beginning of the original ideation of Isvara to become the many, up to His entry into the manifold as the enlivening force in all individuals, it is Isvara-Srishti (metaphysical existence). From the time when individuals begin to feel the usual waking consciousness involved in externality of perception, and consequently desire, dream, sleep, etc., up to the freedom of the individual from the Samsara, it is Jiva-Srishti (psychological reaction). Not knowing that Brahman is One, and there is no second to it, people unnecessarily enter into argumentation in regard to the nature of Isvara, Jiva and Jagat. Everyone, right from those who worship with faith trees, plants, stones, etc., up to the worshippers of Isvara according to Patanjali's school, has a confusion in regard to the nature of Reality, and everyone, from the materialist Charvaka onwards, up to the Sankhya, is confused about the nature of the Self. There may be difference in the degree of truth revealed in these various

systems of thought, but it is definite that there is some error in each of them, even as a person is, after all, in a state of dream, whether he is dreaming that he is a king or beggar. Therefore one should not argue too much on the nature of creation, Isvara and Jiva, but concentrate one's mind on Brahman alone, that is non-dual. It may be true that one should study well the nature of experience and its relativity by an understanding of the nature of Isvara, Jiva and Jagat, but the study should not end there, and the investigation not concluded with such knowledge. The finale of philosophy is Brahma-Jnana, not merely a study of the categories of phenomenal experience.

The Sankhya thinks that the Atman is manifold and universal, the world is real, and the Yoga feels that Isvara is distinct from both. Though this difference may be tentatively accepted in the course of our observations and studies, we should not regard it as an ultimate fact. It is to make this point clear that we have introduced the analogy of Ghatakasa, Mahakasa, Jalakasa and Meghakasa. The reflection of ether through water or the clouds is not an independent reality, for its basis is the reflecting medium, and the original ether alone is real. So is Brahman ultimately real, and not the reflections as Jiva and Isvara. The Vedanta accepts the element of truth in every system of thought, even the Charvaka or the materialist, as a necessary stage of development, but steps above every such stage as an inadequacy in the higher reaches of reality.

The Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta will come together when the Sankhya and the Yoga abandon their notions that the Atman is manifold, the world is real and Isvara is a

distinct personality separate from both. The mere understanding that the Atman is unattached will not be enough for the purpose of the liberation of the soul. The realisation of its Absoluteness is essential. But so long as Isvara is there, controlling all from above, and the world is there outside, limiting all in every way, the Atman cannot be free. Isvara and Jiva would circumscribe Brahman. It is only on the transcendence of these differences that the Atman is experienced as Brahman. It is not necessary that, for the purpose of philosophical explanations, we should accept a plurality of Atmans, or the reality of the world. They may have an empirical utility, but they are transcendently unreal. The scripture affirms that from the standpoint of Brahman there is neither creation nor destruction, neither bondage nor liberation, neither a seeker after liberation nor the liberated. This is the ultimate truth, though in practical, worldly experience, these processes are seen and accepted. They come under Vyavaharika-satta or relative reality. The Paramarthika-satta or Absolute Reality is Akhanda or indivisible existence.

The distinction between Isvara, Jiva and Jagat being relative, it is conclusively proved that Kutastha and Brahman are one, and Brahman exists as non-dual in the three periods of time, whether there is creation or not. In the bondage and liberation of the Jiva, Brahman remains the same, as unaffected Being. The experiences of the Jiva have nothing to do with Brahman's undividedness. Even those who have an insight into the spiritual nature of things feel the reality of the world, but they are not bound by it as

they were before the rise of such knowledge. Bondage is not in the perception of the world, but in the nature of the reaction that is set up from within the mind. There may be, on the other hand, no external perception, but there may be feelings of internal attachment and aversion. The difference between the bound and the liberated soul is that the former considers all its experiences in the present and the future worlds as real in themselves; but the latter knows with certainty that the world-experience is relative, and not ultimate. The realisation of non-duality is not merely a negative state of the abolition of an existent duality. It is the original, real state, of existence prior even to the manifestation of duality. The world of duality is relative because here one thing is observed to hang on the other for its subsistence, and nothing can rest independently in itself. The world is a relative mass of interconnected forces where everything determines everything else, and nothing by itself can be considered as real. Let this be known, and the mind be fixed on Brahman alone, as that which remains after everything is set aside as “not it”. If, in meditation, the feeling of duality persists due to force of past mental impressions, self-analysis is to be carried on again, and the notion of duality avoided. Meditation should be continued until the goal is realised, without any anxiety or impatience on one’s part. Forces like hunger, and thirst will attempt to hamper the progress in one’s meditations, but let it be remembered, again and again, that these are forces of Prakriti impinging on its own manifestations in the body of the Jiva, and the real Witness behind all these varieties is unaffected. The feelings of pleasure and pain and body-

consciousness will appear persistently, and the only way of overcoming them is in dwelling constantly on the absolute nature of Brahman in which pleasures and pains cannot abide, and there cannot be confinement of consciousness to any particular body. The innermost consciousness of the Jiva is Brahman, which is the unattached witness of all duality, such as the objective and subjective worlds, and it is never involved in them. This truth is to be instilled into the mind for a protracted period with intense vigilance and tenacity. The success achieved in meditation is in proportion to the extent of the honest feeling within ourselves that Brahman is the only reality, and is the one aim of life. The world, being of a presented character, and so necessarily relativistic and transient, its negation in spiritual experience involves also the transcendence of personality and individuality.

Consciousness precedes the rise of dualistic perception, because consciousness is necessary even to think that there is duality. The fact that duality cannot be imagined in consciousness, proves that consciousness is indivisible, and the fact that it cannot be known as an object outside oneself shows that it is known in immediate realisation and not in sensory or mental perception. There are people who are capable of understanding things by their rational powers but cannot arrive at truth, because of their attachment to reasoning process alone, which works on the basis of duality, and not resting their arguments on scriptures and intuition. It is necessary that all the desires of the heart should be liberated once and for all, if the highest insight is to be obtained.

It is stated in the Upanishads that the mortal becomes immortal when all the desires of the heart are cast off, and the knots of the heart are rent asunder. Verily, it is the desires that are referred to here as the knots to be broken. Avidya, Kama and Karma are the knots of the heart. The feeling, 'let me have this, and that,' is the essence of desire, which arises on account of one's confusing between the Atman and Ahamkara, mistaking the ego for the Atman. If the primary misconception of the identity of the Atman with the ego is gone for good, there would be nothing left to bind the soul to rebirth, though the natural desires common to a human being and consciousness of the body may persist in such a person for some time, due to operation of Prarabdha. However, one who has attained such a wisdom will be unconcerned with what the Prarabdha Karma does, with passing wishes or diseases, as, for example, one is unconcerned with things unconnected with oneself, such as cutting of a tree in a forest.

The breaking of the knots of the heart is nothing but awareness that one is Atman essentially and hence desires convey no meaning to it. Not knowing this is confinement to the body and personality and the objects related to it. In regard to the outward activities of the body, senses and mind, the Jivanmukta and an ordinary man are similar, but the difference lies in their attitudes towards them. Whether pains come and pleasures go, or otherwise, the Jivanmukta is unaffected, and is indifferent in the highest spiritual sense of the term. The indifference of the liberated one is not to be equated with Tamas or lethargy, for it is the absence of

craving for things, though he has the ability to possess and enjoy anything, if he so wills.

Sensory activities or mental functions mean nothing of consequence to the Jivanmukta, though, occasionally, even certain wishes may arise within him due to the remnant of a kind of Prarabdha. He is not concerned because he has a deep conviction of having attained everything that he wished to have. Contact is the cause of bondage, and hence the wise always refrain from it. Their aloofness from society as in the case of Jadabharata or enjoyment as with Janaka or Saubhari, mean the same thing to their unaffected being.

This achievement is possible for one who is equipped with the necessary means, viz., Vairagya (renunciation), Bodha (enlightenment), and Uparati (withdrawal from world-consciousness). These three great virtues rarely coexist as in sages like Suka and Vamadeva, but mostly one or two of these alone are seen to be present in the aspiring souls. Vairagya is the dispassion which arises on account of the perception of the defects inherent in things, such perception being its cause. The nature of Vairagya is a feeling of 'enough' with all things, and a discontent with the satisfaction that is derived from the world. The result of Vairagya is non-dependence on objects and states as previously, and a feeling of higher independence within. The cause of Bodha or knowledge is study and hearing (Sravana), reflection (Manana), and meditation (Nidhidhyasana) on the truths into which one is initiated by the Guru. The nature of knowledge is the ability to distinguish between, the true and the false, and the resting of oneself in the Supreme Reality. The not rising again of

any desire is the result of knowledge. The practice of Yoga such as through its eight limbs, Yama, Niyama, and the rest, is the cause of one's Uparati or cessation from worldly activity. Control of the mind in all its five modifications (Vrittis) is the nature of Uparati. The total absence of practical concern with the world of duality is the consequence or result. These three divine qualities adorn a Jivanmukta. In him all these exist together, though in some, one or two may be absent due to obstructions of various kinds.

Among these qualifications described, Bodha is primary and the most important of all. Vairagya and Uparati, are, as a matter of fact, auxiliaries to it, accelerating its function. If, at any time, all these three virtues are found in one and the same person, it should be considered as the result of great penance performed prior to their rise. Mostly one or two of them alone will be found in a person due to some impediment or the other, which prevents the manifestation of all the qualities. If a person has attained to full knowledge, but has body-consciousness some times, due to the absence of firm establishment in Vairagya and Uparati, there will be the perception of the world and also the feelings of pain and pleasure on such occasions, though, of course, he will have no rebirth on account of his knowledge. This, however, is meaningful not in the sense that spiritual realisation needs any other additional qualification to complete itself, but that the Jivanmukta will have Prarabdha-Bhoga, or the natural concomitance of space-time-body perception. But if he is a person endowed with Vairagya and Uparati, while not with Knowledge, he

will not attain Moksha, but will be reborn either in a noble and rich family, where he will have all facilities to continue his Sadhana, or in the family of a Yogi, wherein he will attain quick success in his spiritual pursuits. The height of Vairagya is regarded as that state where one feels distaste even for the joys of Brahmaloka. The height of Bodha is that where one feels that one is Brahman itself, as intensely as one ordinarily would feel the body. The height of Uparati is that condition of mind where the presence of sense-objects is completely forgotten and wiped out from memory, as in sleep. Though these are the highest states, there are stages to their attainment.

The first stage of Vairagya is called Yatamana-samjna, or the effort towards freeing oneself from attachment to things. The second stage is Vyatireka-samjna, or the isolation of the thing to be avoided from among the many things in the world. The third stage is Ekendriya-samjna, where one discovers that it is after all the mind from which freedom is to be attained, the one sense which is the cause of all trouble, and not from the world as such. The fourth stage is called Vasikara-samjna, or the complete mastery over all things, by a total absence of desire for everything, whether seen or only heard of. Vairagya reaches its climax when one has no desire even to exist as a personality or individual, and abandons even the primordial properties of Prakriti.

The first stage of knowledge is Sattvapatti, or attainment of pure Sattva; the second is Asamasakti or non-attachment to all things; the third is Padarthabhavana or non-perception of materiality and perception of spirituality

in things; and the fourth is Turiya, where one rests in one's own Self. Uparati reaches its summit when one realises that the whole universe is a single family, and there is the total absence of selfishness by a gradual rising from concern with one's own body to other bodies outside, by extending this feeling to the community, the nation, and the world, till it embraces the whole universe as an undivided unit. Due to the difference in Prarabdha, sages behave in various ways and their actions differ. Sri Krishna, Vasishtha, Vyasa, Suka, Janaka, Jaigishavya, Saubhari, Jadabharata are examples of this strange variety in behaviour of divine personalities. But their knowledge is the same, and their attainment is also one. It is to be concluded, therefore, that this painted picture of the cosmos appears on the screen of Brahman-Consciousness, and wisdom lies in considering oneself as this background of Consciousness, and not the appearance of the picture. Such wise ones do not get deluded even when they see this picturesque representation called the universe. (Verses 210-290)

Chapter VII

LIGHT ON SUPREME SATISFACTION

The Passage to Knowledge

“If one realises that one’s essential nature is the Atman, then, desiring what, and for what purpose, should one identify oneself with the body?” We shall discuss here the true import of this scriptural statement.

The entire creation is a joint action of Isvara and Jiva, one providing the material, and the other the means of experience. It was already noticed that the creation of Isvara extends from His original Will to diversify Himself to the act of His animation of all individualities; and the creation of Jiva commences from the waking consciousness and ends in final liberation from individuality (Vide, Aitareya Upanishad). The Jiva, which is the cause of its own bondage, is in essence the Kutastha-Atman, but, somehow, it begins to assume an independence and importance by mutual transference of attributes between the Atman and the Chidabhasa, and by considering that the intellect is its real form. There is no such thing as Jiva independent of the Kutastha, because the former cannot exist without the latter. The feeling of Jivahood arises when the Chidabhasa, which is an appearance of Kutasthta in the intellect, is identified with the three bodies, and gets used to feel that it is a part of Samsara. When the time comes for the Jiva, in a state of maturity, to discard its personality and individuality, and accept the presence of its own higher Self, then it is that it begins to feel its oneness with the unattached Atman.

Though the Atman has no feeling of 'I'-ness, the feeling 'I am the Atman' is possible, as there are two subtle meanings of the term 'I', other than the ordinary one that is known in connection with the body by a mixing up of the natures of Kutastha and Chidabhasa. An illumined soul has a deep consciousness whereby there arises an occasional feeling of the body and the world, simultaneously with the constant feeling that he is the Atman. This is possible due to his being in a state of Sattva, where is a clear discernment of the presence of the original universality, though the limitation of the reflection is also felt together. Hence, while referring to bodily actions, the knower refers to the lower 'I' or Chidabhasa, and when feeling that he is the Absolute, he makes reference to the higher 'I', or Kutastha. It is not easily understandable as to how one and the same person has two feelings at the same time. But it is an uncommon possibility with a sage, due to the Jiva being an appearance and yet rooted in the Atman. The Chidabhasa asserts: 'I am the Atman', because its meaning is in the Atman, as a reflection has meaning only in its original.

As the Chidabhasa is entirely dependent on the Kutastha, it has no independent reality. Hence its activities, also, have no reality of their own. The efforts of the Chidabhasa are within Samsara, and even its lofty aspirations in the form of the spiritual quest are within phenomena, though this highest work on its part is capable of removing its ignorance and awakening it into a sublime Consciousness. As the movement of a rope-snake is not real, so are the changes of the Chidabhasa, by themselves. From this it would follow that the knowledge which the

Chidabhasa is endeavouring to attain would also be unreal; but this is no fault; for, to dispel what is not really there, a knowledge which is of the same category of being would suffice. As a certain experience in dream may awaken the dreamer from the dream, though that experience is within the dream, the spiritual endeavour of the Chidabhasa in the form of meditation on the Kutastha-Atman brings about its liberation, though this process is within the realm of appearance in which the Chidabhasa is involved. It is in the culmination of this knowledge that the Chidabhasa begins to feel its identity with the Kutastha, by dissociating itself from the feeling of the body. Its liberation becomes complete when it reaches a certainty of consciousness that it is the Atman, as intensely as it feels that it is the body in the worldly state. It begins to realise: 'I am this Atman'. (Verses 1-20)

The Analogy of the Tenth Man

A distinction between direct and indirect knowledge, as well as knowledge and ignorance, in the case of the Atman, is possible, as could be illustrated by the following analogy:

One of the ten persons that crossed a river, while counting the number among them that have safely reached the other bank, lost consciousness of one among them, namely himself, by forgetting himself in directing his attention entirely to the others whom he was counting. This state of not finding the tenth person out of the group, though he is really there, is Ajnana or ignorance of truth. The consequent feeling that the tenth person is not there, and is not seen, is Avarana or the veil that casts itself over

one's consciousness. The subsequent grief, due to the feeling that the tenth person is dead, is Vikshepa or the distraction that arises out of it. The faith that the tenth person is alive, which arises when they are told about the fact by a friend who passes by, is the indirect knowledge obtained through a teacher, that the object of quest is, after all, there. When the tenth man is told that he himself is the one whom he has been searching all the while, the knowledge that arises in him, then, indirect knowledge or experience. This leads to the satisfaction that the object sought for has been gained, and all sorrow departs.

The Chidabhasa is in a similar position. It is the tenth man struggling in ignorance and its effects. It is engrossed in the perception of the world of objects, and as its attention is completely lost in them, it never realises that there is the eternal Atman, which is itself in truth. This is Ajnana. It further feels that the Atman is not there, and is not seen. This is Avarana. It then feels, again, that it is the doer, enjoyer, and so on. This is Vikshepa. When a competent person instructs it that the Atman exists, it has Paroksha-Jnana, or indirect knowledge. When it is told that it is itself the Atman, and there comes about this realisation due to intense meditation, there is Aparoksha-Jnana or direct knowledge. Then the grief-ridden world, with agency, enjoyment, etc., vanishes, and it arrives at the supreme satisfaction that on the realisation of the Atman, everything necessary has been done, and obtained. Here the goal of life of the Chidabhasa is reached. (Verses 21-32)

The Stages of Enlightenment

The stages of knowledge mentioned above, are conditions of the Chidabhasa. Of these seven stages, viz., ignorance (Ajnana), veil (Avarana), distraction (Vikshepa), indirect knowledge (Paroksha-Jnana), direct knowledge (Aparoksha-Jnana), freedom from sorrow (Sokamoksha), and satisfaction (Tripti), the first three are the sources of bondage, while the later stages are processes of the liberation of the Chidabhasa. Ajnana or ignorance is the condition wherein seated the Jiva has no knowledge, at all, of there being such reality as the Atman. It is the state where there is not even the feeling that one is in a state of ignorance. It is complete obscuration of knowledge, and absence of an awakening into the true state of affairs. On account of restricting oneself entirely to the intellectual ways of approach and not receiving inspiration from the revelations of the scriptures and the words of saints and sages, the Jiva begins to feel, as a consequence of ignorance, that the Atman is not there and is not known. This is the effect of Ajnana. Its further effect is body-consciousness by which there is an intensification of Jivahood and engagement in actions with the notions of agency, or doership and enjoyership. This is the Samsara of the Jiva to which it gets bound. Though Ajnana and Avarana are prior to the active appearance of the Chidabhasa, they are to be regarded as its own conditions, since they cannot be states of the Atman, and, also, they are merely the causal conditions of the Chidabhasa, to sprout later. There is the Samskara or impression of the Vikshepa even before its actual rising into visibility. It is this Samskara that exists in

a latent form as Ajnana and Avarana. Nor can it be thought that these are states of Brahman, just because they are superimposed on it, for, in fact, everything in this world is superimposed on Brahman. Hence, the Jiva's subsequent feeling of being in bondage, having knowledge, getting freed, and attaining joy, as also its conditions of ignorance, and the feeling that there is neither existence nor knowledge of the Atman, are its own relative conditions, whether manifest or unmanifest. The superimposition on Brahman is made by the Jiva. Brahman, by itself, has nothing to do with this superimposition. Brahman is the final substratum of the appearance of Ajnana and its effects, while the Jiva is the experiencer of these, and is involved in their meshes. By the indirect knowledge received through a Teacher, the Jiva knows that the Atman is, and by the direct knowledge attained through realisation, it merges in the Atman. When knowledge of the Atman arises, the idea of Jivahood vanishes, and together with it the feelings of doership and enjoyership, etc., as well as the whole world of bondage and sorrow. On account of the complete removal of Samsara of the Jiva by the illumination of knowledge, there shines forth the experience of eternal freedom, and unfettered bliss which knows no end.

Aparoksha-Jnana, and the removal of sorrow by means of it, are the conditions of the Jiva. It is this truth that has been revealed in the verse quoted from the Upanishad, in the beginning of this section. Aparoksha-Jnana is only a continuation and deepening, and not a negation, of Paroksha-Jnana. As the Atman is self-luminous, and thereby its existence is recognised by the purified intellect,

it can be said that knowledge of the Atman has two aspects or stages, in one of which there is immediate realisation of its essence, and in the other there is only a mediate knowledge in regard to its existence alone. The characters of reality known are the same both in indirect and direct knowledge. Notwithstanding that there is a difference in the quality of experience in the two stages, Paroksha-Jnana is valid, since it refers to certain facts about Brahman, and not unrealities.

It is not that the existence of Brahman as indirectly known in Paroksha-Jnana is contradicted in Aparoksha-Jnana, for what takes place in the latter is an intensification and exaltation of the contents of the former, but not a negation of them, since it is never seen that Brahman's existence is subject to contradiction. Just as we have a real, though inadequate, knowledge of existence of heavenly regions, etc., from scriptures, there is an inadequacy, but not unreality, in Paroksha knowledge of Brahman. The aspect of Brahman that is known in Paroksha-Jnana is its existence, and the aspect that is realised in Aparoksha-Jnana is its essential nature as Consciousness. The veil over the 'existence' is removed in Paroksha-Jnana, while the observation of the 'Consciousness' is removed in Aparoksha-Jnana. As in the case of the tenth person in the analogy cited, the knowledge of the existence of the tenth person derived by hearing it from a friend is real and not invalid in any way, the knowledge that is derived from the Preceptor as to the existence of Brahman is a fact that is not going to be contradicted, later. As, when true knowledge dawns that the one who is counting is himself the tenth

person, he would include himself in counting the members of the group, and would not forget himself as he did before, so the Chidabhasa which, in its state of ignorance, forgot itself while being engrossed in the objects of the world, would always take into consideration its essential universal nature in reckoning the five sheaths and in its dealings with anything in this world, when it awakens to the knowledge that what it sought for in the world of objects has been its own Self, and not anything lying away from it. After the dawn of knowledge, the forgetfulness of the Atman will never recur again, wherever one may find oneself in the world, and in whatever condition, and it would then be immaterial where and how one is, because of the certainty of realisation that the supreme objective of quest has been attained.

The mode of the introduction of the mind of the student from Paroksha-Jnana to Aparoksha-Jnana is indicated in the sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad, while Uddalaka Aruni instructs the student Svetaketu. While the indirect knowledge of Brahman is declared in such statements of the Upanishad as 'Satyam-Jnanam-Anantam Brahma,' – Truth-Knowledge-Infinity is Brahman, the direct knowledge of it is the theme of the sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad, which expatiates upon the great sentence, 'Tat-Tvam-Asi' – 'That Thou Art'. The demonstrative pronouns, 'That' and 'Thou', refer to a remote object and an immediate object respectively, as is well known. In this sentence, 'That' indicates Isvara, or God, and the word 'Thou' indicates Jiva, or the individual. The separative connotation of these two

indicative words may appear to prevent the identification of Isvara and Jiva, since, at least from the point of view of the Jiva, Isvara is a remote object who existed even before creation, and the Jiva is a subsequent manifestation posterior to creation. But the inseparability of the cause and its effect requires the recognition of an identical substance present both in God, the Creator, and the individual, the created embodiment. The usual illustration offered to explain this basic identity of this Supreme Cause with the individual effect is the way in which we recognize the identity of a person here and now with the very same person seen somewhere else at a different time. In the identification of the single person in this manner, the associations of the person with a different place and a different time from the place and the time in which he is recognised now, are ignored, and only the person concerned is taken into consideration, for instance, when we say 'This is that Devadatta', indicating thereby that this Devadatta who is in this place at this moment is the same Devadatta who was seen at some other time earlier in some other place. In a similar manner, the identity of the basic Substance in God and the individual is established by a separation of this Substance from the limiting adjuncts of remoteness and immediacy associated with God and the individual – Isvara and the Jiva.

It is the appearance of space and time in the creational process that causes this apparent distinction between the cosmic and the individual, projecting the appearance of externality in the world and an immediacy of selfhood in the individual perceiver thereof. We say that God is

Omniscient, Sarvajna, and the individual is of little knowledge, Alpajna; God is Omnipresent, Sarvantaryami, and the individual is localised, Aikadesika; God is Omnipotent, Sarvasaktiman, and the individual is impotent, Alpasaktiman. These well-known distinctions which appear to be absolutely real, are in fact apparitions caused by the projective activity of the interfering principles of space, time and causality. In this sense, we may say that what we call the world and world-experience is only a space-time complex outwardly cognised by the finite consciousness of the individual.

The process of the negation of the space-time attributes and the taking in of the main Substance involved, in the illustration cited, is a local procedure known as Bhagatyaga-Lakshana, or Jahad-Ajahad-Lakshana, in the language of the Vedanta philosophy, meaning thereby, 'Defining by division and separation' and 'Defining by rejecting and taking in', as detailed. The relationship between the individual and the Absolute, thus, is neither one of contact of two things or of an attribute qualifying a substantive, but one of homogeneous identity. What appears to be the individual is in fact a configuration of Brahman-Consciousness itself deflected through the ramifying media of space and time. When such knowledge arises in the individual, it at once ceases to be the individual that it appeared to be and enters into its essential nature, which is universality of being. Here, the indirect knowledge that Brahman exists, becomes a direct experience as 'I am the Absolute', even as the space within a jar may realise that it is the same as the all-pervading space. The immediacy of

Jiva-consciousness and the remoteness of the concept of Isvara, vanish at once in such a realisation, and experience becomes a total indivisible whole. What direct experience actually means is to be known by us by the substantiveness of such an experience we have every day in the form of 'I am' or 'I exist'.

In the perception of an object, the mind modifies itself into the form of that object, but the modification itself is not self-conscious, or rather, conscious of anything at all. The consciousness of the object arises on account of the modification of the mind being attended by the consciousness of Chidabhasa, or the reflection of the Kutastha-Chaitanya in the Buddhi, or the intellect. But in the case of the knowledge of Brahman by a universalised form of the mental modification known as Brahmakara-Vritti, consciousness need not attend the mental modification, because Brahman is not outside in space, and any movement of consciousness towards it is inapplicable. The modification of the mind into the form of the object is called Vritti-Vyapti, and the illumination of this mental modification by consciousness is called Phala-Vyapti, in the language of the Vedanta. The latter instance is exemplified in the illumination of the mental modifications internally, when a person is aware that he is thinking, wherein the thoughts are the objects, not existing outside but inseparably from themselves, thus not needing the movement of consciousness externally and endowing of mental modifications with a sort of self-luminosity. Thus are distinguished the processes of external perception and internal cognition.

Indirect knowledge received by means of instruction from the preceptor requires to be deepened into experience by reflection and deep meditation. Indirect knowledge influences the conscious level of the student, but it has to percolate into the recesses of his being, which is possible only by the absorption of indirect knowledge into the very being of the spiritual seeker, because, ultimately, knowledge is inseparable from being. Existence is the same as consciousness, and consciousness is existence. A knowledge or consciousness which has its object external to it is indirect and inadequate, though it has its own value in acting as a secondary means for achieving the primary purpose of direct realisation. This realisation is impossible for those whose minds are not calm through the restraint of the senses and freedom from mortal desires. More than anything else, an intense longing for liberation is to be considered as the supreme qualification of a seeker.

Even during meditation one may have to face many difficulties, such as the inability to reconcile apparently contradictory statements occurring in the scriptures, the persistent feeling that the world and the body are real, and, finally a sense of hopelessness and a feeling of impossibility in regard to the achievement of the supreme purpose of life. These three obstacles, known as Samsaya-Bhavana, Viparita-Bhavana, and Asambhavana, are met with and overcome through the processes of Sravana, or listening to the wisdom imparted by the preceptor, Manana, or deep reflection on the truths so received, and Nididhyasana, or profound meditation. The difficulty in understanding the true meaning of the scriptures arises on account of dullness

of intellect, doubt regarding the Supreme Reality of Brahman alone, and a feeling of the reality of the world due to impressions of many lives lived wrongly in earlier forms of existence, and a sense of impossibility of achievement due to the heavy operation of clouding (Tamasika), and distracting (Rajasika) Karmas (actions performed with a feeling of the agency of the self) in past lives. Unselfish service (Karma-Yoga), devout worship of God, Isvara (Upasana), and an analytic understanding of the all-comprehensiveness of the Absolute (Jnana) are the ways to Self-realisation. Mala (dirt), Vikshepa (distraction) and Avarana (veiling) are the hindrances to right thinking, which act as impulses arising from the mind contrary to the concentration necessary for fixing oneself in Brahman-Consciousness. The supreme method, of course, is known as Brahma-Abhyasa (practice of the presence of Brahman) which consists in thinking of Brahman alone, talking about That alone, mutually discoursing on That alone, and depending for one's sole sustenance on That alone in a whole-souled surrender and dedication of one's being to the Universal Reality. As days pass and one becomes mature in thinking and understanding, too much of study and discussion should be avoided and one must resort to internal analysis and meditation more and more. Herein we are reminded of the great proclamation of the Bhagavadgita that God looks to the welfare and protection of those who undividedly think of Him, feel His Presence everywhere and entirely depend on Him by a surrender of their being to the Supreme Being. Such meditations burn up all the dross of psychological impediments and enable the inner

light to shine brighter than ever. Meditation should be conducted with freedom from unnecessary effort and fatigue, for it is the spontaneity of the feeling for God that is to be taken as the final criterion of success in this endeavour. While the sense objects appear outside to the mind, the object enters into the being of the meditator's consciousness in deep absorption, thereby the distinction between the subject and the object, the knower and the known, becomes narrower as meditation advances, finally to be abolished altogether in a coalescence of the subject with the object, and vice versa. The essential point to be remembered in all meditation is that there should be no thought except that of the chosen object or the ideal of meditation. The hardship involved in the control of the mind is pointed out by ancient masters by such analogies as drinking the ocean, shaking the Meru mountain, swallowing blazing fire, and the like, to illustrate the difficulty in the practice of self-restraint. Those who cannot directly carry on meditation in this way are advised to listen to the glories of God through epics (Itihasas) and legends (Puras) and even by easier means as dramatic presentations of the majesty of God and His Creation.

Nididhyasana is profound absorption in the thought that the world and the individual are not outside Isvara, that Isvara, the world and the individual are an apparently triple manifestation of Brahman, and that, thus, there is no distinction between the knower and the known, and there is no such thing as an external world or an extra-cosmic creator. For one who is established in such deep meditation, the world and the individuals around are not

any more a hindrance in any way. When the mind is affected by distraction in the midst of meditation, repeated efforts should be put forth by drawing the mind away from relationship to externals and concentrating it on the glorious ideal of meditation. Here, study of sacred scriptures and such other occupations by which the mind is made to wean itself away from things, have to be adopted. Even if the consciousness of the supreme object of meditation is sometimes lost and forgotten during the day, there is no harm since it will return later due to the force of the earlier meditation. Momentary forgetfulness is not so dangerous as an erroneous conviction that the world is external and material in nature or that persons and things are really cut off from one another as they are totally independent in themselves. It is advisable to engage oneself during spare hours in the study of such subjects as are conducive to entertaining the thought of the object of meditation. All engagements, religious or secular, in which one will be occupied should be dexterously transformed into processes of a spiritual movement towards the Absolute. It has to be remembered constantly that engagement in any kind of work or occupation is a resultant of actions performed earlier in previous births and is not to be thought as means of enjoyment in this life, and no sense of doership in any matter whatsoever should be attributed to oneself in such occupations, since, otherwise, there is the possibility of accumulating more impressions of action which may lead to further rebirths.

As far as the experience of the fruits of one's previous actions is concerned, the knower and the non-knower may

appear to be alike; only, the former bears it with patience and fortitude till the time of its exhaustion, while the latter worries himself and is excited over his experiences in life. This may be illustrated by the case of two travellers on a journey, equally fatigued, the one knowing that his destination is not far off and thus going on quicker with patience and confidence, and the other who does not know the distance yet to be covered feels discouraged and lingers on longer on the way. The conviction that there is a desirer and there is a desire for objects should be melted down in the greater conviction that Brahman is the all. Thus, the pains caused by unfulfilled desires cease, like the flames of a lamp without oil. When we witness the performance of a magician, we know very well that it is unreal, in spite of our seeing it as if physically real. We rather laugh at the performance and rejoice at the tricks of the performer and do not get emotionally disturbed or intellectually befooled by the performance. Similarly, a knower of Reality does not seek enjoyment even in objects apparently pleasing. He is convinced of their absence in the form in which they appear, their impermanence and unsubstantiality, and gives up attachment to them. Material wealth of any kind is not a source of joy, truly speaking. It is attended with anxiety and worry, in earning it, in maintaining it, in losing it, and even in spending it. One cannot expect peace of mind through possession of wealth. So are the longings for name, fame and power and other joys of an emotional nature and egoistic in their essential make-up. Who will drink poison even if hungry for days together? Much less will be the desire of one who is already satisfied with the best of foods.

True seekers of liberation are satisfied even with obtaining the minimum needs of life and do not ask for large possessions, for desire is never extinguished by the fulfilment of it. It is only the unenlightened one that is not satisfied even with endless enjoyments in this world. It is the wisdom of the knower to convert the world into a help in his progress towards salvation, instead of imagining that it is an object of enjoyment, because in this creation everything is connected to everything else and nothing is subsidiary to or dependent upon another except as imagination under states of delusion of mind.

One undergoes suffering by Prarabdha-Karma, which is accumulated either intentionally or unintentionally, or in the interest of other people and other things. Unintentional suffering is caused by operations of Nature, such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and the urges of the natural instincts of the human being. The intentional type consists of the sorrows that come upon oneself in the wake of deliberate misdeeds like theft, deceit and wilful injury caused to others, or by neglecting the laws of one's own physical and mental health. Suffering caused by taking interest in others, whether willing or unwilling to do the thing, is instanced by such events as receiving a sun-stroke while walking in the hot sun to escort a guest to his destination, and such other actions which may bring a painful reaction even if they are performed with good intentions to help others in any way.

The way in which desires attain fulfilment in a knower is a little difficult to understand, since they defy the normal laws of their operation. There is such a thing as unattached

enjoyment even of objects indulged in, either for the reduction of the intensity of desire in a harmless manner by giving it its demand in a way not injurious either to oneself or to others, or to exhaust the fruit yielded by the impressions of previous actions. In this case, the enjoyment of the knower is to be attributed not so much to a personal desire as to the impersonal will that operates behind his apparent personality. But these enjoyments cannot bind him, as roasted grains have no potency to shoot up into plants. Likewise, the desires of a knower are no more real desires, as they do not arise from his personality but are volitions directed by a more impersonal purpose and motivation.

The world is to be contemplated upon as a kingdom seen in a dream. It is a reality at the time of its experience but vanishes instantaneously on one's rising to wakefulness. The waking world of space, time, objects and relations is similarly constituted as a manifestation of the Cosmic Mind, thus having no real objectivity in itself. Profound meditation in this way will lessen the intensity of a longing and attachment in respect of persons and things. It is the function of knowledge to demonstrate the unreality of the world and it is the nature of Prarabdha-Karma to yield experiences of the world. Thus, knowledge and fructifying Karma are not opposed to each other, since they are relevant to different aims. The Prarabdha may continue to operate in spite of the knowledge of the unreality of all things, but such knowledge sets at naught the stinging character of these pleasures and pains. Since Prarabdha-Karma does not create an idea of the reality of things, it is

not opposed to true knowledge. Things do not disappear in knowledge but only reveal their true nature. Even in dream, objects which do not really exist cause pleasure and pain to the experiencer. This would suggest that the reality of objects is not necessarily a criterion for experiencing them as such; the only thing needed for experiencing is a placement of the subject and the object of experience on a par, i.e., in the same degree of reality. In the case of the knower, the experience of pleasure and pain is to some extent like the ones experienced by an audience before a dramatic enactment or a magical performance, the absence of reality in which is known to the experiencer even when experiencing them. For the same reason, the waking world does not establish its reality merely by the fact of its being experienced. This analysis of the nature of desire in an ordinary sense and an extraordinary sense would show that the ethical laws of empirical life do not apply to the realm of transcendent experience.

An Analysis of Enjoyment

Due to ignorance of one's relation to the object of experience, one mistakes it for an instrument of enjoyment or satisfaction. By erroneously transferring changeable properties on itself, the Jiva regards its enjoyership as real, and never wants to abandon the objects which it considers as real. We know too well that things are not loved for their sake, but with a motive behind, a purpose to be fulfilled, other than the things concerned, this purpose being inner satisfaction, a pleasure felt within. And that becomes an object of abhorrence, which stands in the way of the

achievement of this end, the one motive behind all affection and love being the selfish maintenance of a condition of inner delight. The enjoyer of objects is, therefore, a combination of the Kutastha-consciousness and the so-called Chidabhasa, though this is permissible from our practical standards, and has no meaning in itself.

One should not attach oneself too much to objects, as the main point behind such attachment is not the love of objects, but the releasing of the inner tension caused by desire for them. Let all love be, therefore, centered in the Atman universal, which is the finale and end of all aspirations. Let our affection for the Supreme Being become as firm as that the ignorant persons have towards sense-objects. By this method, the mind can be gradually weaned away from sense-enjoyments, and all love directed to the Absolute within us. As the foolish one is extremely vigilant about obtaining objects of sense, such as gold and sex, a wise man should be vigilant in his engagement in the Atman. As one who wishes to achieve success in this world studies logic, literature, and so on, let the true aspirant engage himself in the study of the Atman within. As one who wants to attain heaven and superhuman powers (Siddhis), etc., practises recitation of Mantras and performs sacrifices, with great faith, let intense faith in the Supreme Reality be developed by one aspiring for liberation. As Yogins practise concentration of mind, undergoing great hardships, for the sake of attaining higher perfections, let the aspirant engage himself in the liberation of his self. As the powers of the practicants increase by protracted efforts, the intensity of the discrimination of the aspirant after

freedom increases by continued endeavour. By knowing the true nature of the enjoyer through the process of reasoning, as detailed above, the detached nature of the Atman in all the states is realised. What is visible in the various states of experience is in that particular state alone, and does not follow the perceiving consciousness in the other states. Experiences of different lives, and of different states even in one life, differ from one another, but the Consciousness is everywhere one and immutable. One should meditate, therefore, that one's Consciousness is the same as Brahman, which is the illuminator of the different states of experience, and by this knowledge one gets liberated. There cannot be rebirth for a person who knows that there is only one Consciousness pervading all things, dissociated from all objective conditions. It should be affirmed always that one is the Witness, different from whatever is regarded as the enjoyer, enjoyment, or the enjoyed, in all the three states of experience. On analysis, it thus becomes clear that what we consider usually as the enjoyer is only the individual self that goes by the name of Chidabhasa, or the Vijñanamaya. Again, it is not real in itself, because it is within the vast world of relativities, which is transcended in Brahman. It has a beginning and an end, and, therefore, it is to be distinguished from the real.

Having attained this knowledge, the Chidabhasa never, again, desires enjoyment, because its spiritual insight is a preparation for its own self-annihilation, just as no one who is about to die wishes to get his marriage performed at that time. The Chidabhasa, then, becomes ashamed even to regard itself as enjoyer, as before, and, as a person whose

nose is cut off would be unwilling to come before the public, it undergoes the Prarabdha silently, without complaining of suffering, knowing well that it has only to wait till the exhaustion of the Prarabdha. When it does not attribute enjoyership even to itself in that state of knowledge, where comes the doubt that it will attribute it to the Kutastha-Atman? The scripture, therefore, disregards the erroneous concept that there is any such thing as a real enjoyer, and interrogates as to how there can be association of oneself with the conditions of the body when there is such enlightenment.

The three bodies have three types of transformation, which may be regarded as their conditions, or fevers. The disbalance of the humours, and the various diseases cropping up as a result of this condition, the foul smell, the ugly nature and subjection to burns, wounds etc., are the sufferings or fevers of the physical body. Desire, anger and such other passions, the pleasure of possession and the displeasure caused by non-possession of what is longed for, are the fevers of the subtle body. The ignorance by which one knows not either oneself or others, in which there is a negation of oneself as it were, and which is the seed of future troubles in the form of various experiences, is the fever of the causal body. These are the natural, intrinsic conditions of the three bodies of the Jiva. They, rather, form the bodies themselves, for the latter do not exist independently of these conditions. These are not the outward qualities, or even inherent attributes, but the essential constituents of the bodies. As there is no cloth when its threads are pulled out, no blanket when its hairs

are removed, no earthen vessel when the earth is removed from it, so there is no body when it is divested of its various transformations, or fevers. The Chidabhasa by itself is not subject to these sufferings of the bodies, it being essentially of the nature of intelligence or light, but by false association it regards all these conditions as its own. The reality of the witnessing Atman is transferred to the conditions of the body, and they are all regarded as real by this transference of property. Subsequently, they are considered as part of the Chidabhasa itself. When the body suffers, the Chidabhasa feels that it is itself suffering the conditions, as a family man would suffer the situations of the members of his family by attachment to them.

When discrimination dawns, by which the Chidabhasa casts off its delusions, it does not regard even its own personality as anything meaningful, and engages itself in continuous meditation on the Sakshin, or the Witnessing Atman, and does not again subject itself to the various processes of the body. As a person would run away from a piece of rope, mistaking it for a snake, but when he realises that it is only a piece of rope he feels sorry for his act of having run away from it, the Chidabhasa repents for its having attributed the Kutastha-Atman falsely with all the undesirable attributes belonging to the world, and, as if begging pardon from the Kutastha for its past misdeeds, it engages itself in profound meditation on the latter. To expiate the sins of the past in the form of wrong thoughts and wrong deeds, it performs meditation on the Absolute. The Chidabhasa does not again make friendship with the changes of the body, as a holy person would not mix with

infidels, having performed penance for all the impurities that he might have come in contact with due to association with them previously. As a prince who is about to be enthroned, learns the art of administration from his father, with a desire to become an able king later, the Chidabhasa voluntarily undergoes inner discipline by spiritual meditation, with the intention of becoming Brahman in the end. He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman, because Brahman is universal, and hence its knowledge is the same as its existence. As persons desiring to attain luminous bodies in heaven offer themselves in certain holy fires, the Chidabhasa wishes to abolish its own individuality and shine as the Atman, by practising meditation on IT. As the body is visible in fire for the time being, before one's attainment of the celestial regions, the Prarabdha of the Chidabhasa continues for a period, till it is exhausted, though, in the end, the attainment of Brahman is ensured. When a person mistakenly sees a snake in a rope, he fears and trembles, but on realising that it is a rope, his confusion is over, though the trembling continues for a few minutes. Not only that; when he comes back and sees the rope, it will, again, look like a snake, though he has now a clear knowledge about it. Likewise, the Prarabdha of a Jnanin ceases gradually, and not abruptly, but during the time of occasional contact with objects, it is likely that he may feel he is a human being, and may see the world, again, as it was before. By this casual perception of the world, the knowledge of the liberated one, the Jivanmukta, is not affected in any way, because Jivanmukti is not like a ritual that is to be performed with minute details of discipline,

but is a natural state of being which is known to be there spontaneously without any particular effort or imposed rule.

Self-Realisation and Its Effect

In the illustration of the ten people crossing the river, it is observed that there is grief due to ignorance, and even striking of the head in sorrow by the ignorant ones, and the sorrow ceases the moment knowledge is gained about the existence of the tenth person. But the wound created on the head heals slowly, by about a month or so, and not immediately, though knowledge has come quickly and removed the grief totally. Just as, on account of the knowledge that the tenth person is alive, there is joy, and this joy supersedes and overcomes the pain of wound in the head, so, in the case of the Jivanmukta, the Prarabdha may continue for a time, even after knowledge, but the delight of Self-realisation overcomes the pain of Prarabdha, because it far surpasses all worldly sorrows. Whenever there is a feeling of superimposition of the Self on the body, let there be further discrimination and meditation for the sake of infinite knowledge, just as alchemists drink elixirs repeatedly to strengthen their bodies and avert hunger. As the wound in the head heals by medication, the Prarabdha is made to cease by undergoing its experience.

The six stages viz., Ajnana, Avarana, Vikshepa, Paroksha-jnana, Aparoksha-Jnana and Sukanivritti, have been explained. Now the seventh, Tripti, or supreme spiritual delight is being discussed. All satisfaction derived from sense-objects is restricted (Sankusa), because it is

obstructed and conditioned by other desires which are still unfulfilled, but spiritual satisfaction is unbounded, for it comes as the result of realisation of the Bhuma, or the Infinite which is everything. There is the joy that all that is to be done has been done, and all that is to be obtained has been obtained. In the past, due to absence of insight into the truth, there was a lot of hardship and activity with the desire for acquiring material prosperity and worldly happiness, as well as the joy of heavens, etc., in the future; but in the state of realisation there is no such fear or sorrow, no activity of that nature, because everything has been accomplished at one stroke. There is, at that time of sudden flash of divine bliss, an immediate contrast brought about between the present state of freedom and the previous one of desire and activity.

People who are ignorant suffer in Samsara, with desires for temporal ends, but he who has felt that Supreme Divine Bliss has no such troubles, for, what desire can he have? Those who wish to go to other regions, such as heaven, perform sacrifices of various kinds, but he who has all the worlds within himself has no need to exert for such travelling into distant worlds of light. People study and expound scriptures in this world with different motives, but there is no such duty for a spiritually illumined soul. Even such acts as sleep, taking food, bath, conducting ablutions, etc., are not directed by desires in a Jivanmukta, but are foisted on him by the onlookers outside; and naturally what others impute to him cannot affect him. He is inwardly free. Actions attributed to him by others do not touch him, as the redness of a flower has not the burning capacity of

fire, though someone may mistake it for ember. Study, reflection and meditation being only means to an end, serve no useful purpose in his case, because he has reached the end of all striving, and has no misconception in regard to the nature of the world and the Atman. It is likely that, occasionally, he may have the feeling that he is a human being, but this is only a passing phase not to be bothered about, since it shall cease of its own accord some day in the future, and there is no serious trouble to be expected from it, since the original state of consciousness shall regain its position, as a line drawn on water. All activities cease when Prarabdha dies, but while it functions, it cannot be overcome even by the force of meditation. No doubt, those who wish to abstain from activities completely may concentrate their minds with the idea of subjugating all distractions caused by perception of objects, but when true knowledge arises in the mind, there will be no desire even to abstain from activity. There is no modification in his mind, as objects do not form any impression on it, for there can be such impression only when there is desire. In its absence, there is no attempt on his part either to control the mind in meditation or to give it a long rope in activity. Since his essential condition is Selfhood, including all the selves in the universe, he is a Seer par excellence, without an object to be seen; hence the realisation of having done everything, and obtained everything.

There are Jivanmuktas who perform certain works as their Prarabdhas permit, and there are others who do so merely out of compassion for others, to set an example to the ignorant, on account of their love for creation. Even this

they do spontaneously, without any deliberate will, because their condition is one of absolute freedom, not directed by any restrictive injunctions. They are above mandates, and their works follow the Will of Isvara. Their will is Isvara's Will, and their being is Brahman.

The perception of the Jivanmukta is wide enough to cover all aspects of mental and physical activity, and so no conflict arises in his mind in regard to the various works that he performs, either voluntarily, or as fulfilment of his Prarabdha. Whether he performs worship, bathes in waters, does Japa of Mantras, studies scriptures, or contemplates on God, it matters little to him, because all these differences are a variety in the real unity. There is a gradual ascent of the mind from the outward to the inward in the spiritual path. The lowest condition of the mind is where it contemplates sense-objects with a desire to possess them or avoid them, as the case may be. This is what we call Samsara, from the bondage to which the Jivanmuktas are ever free. The ascent of the mind in the spiritual path commences the moment there is an awakening of Consciousness to the existence of the higher life, and there is a discrimination between the real and the unreal in life. This leads further to an aspiration for being good and doing good, for ethical and moral perfection and a development of the yearning for the liberation of the soul. The ascent becomes complete when the mind is wholly engaged in studying and contemplation of the higher truths under the directions of a spiritual preceptor and the mind is concentrated on things spiritual. The culmination is reached when the mind is totally withdrawn from sense-

objects and there is a complete introversion of the mind in meditation of the Divine Being.

Action and Knowledge

The Jivanmukta-Purusha, the one liberated while living, during this state of spiritual expansion, sees no difference between the different types of activities in the world, because, from his standpoint, all movements are movements within the Absolute. There is no controversy in his mind as to the relative merits of Karma (action) and Jnana (knowledge), because, for him, Karma is only a manifestation of the Jnana aspect, since to his vision, activity loses its usual significance of being directed towards temporal ends. His Karma is all a cosmic movement of Divinity, God working the miracle of creation. The binding Karmas of the ignorant individuals, and even the purificatory Karmas of the aspirants, stand united in his vision, and do not differ from activity as such, because, for him, action is only a form of existence and not a force meant to achieve an ulterior end. Self-realisation is at once God-realisation, and it is a perfection which comprehends within itself everything that is anywhere in creation, whether active or inactive, whether inward or outward. This is why the state of the Jivanmukta is equated with God's Consciousness and God's Existence, in a very important sense.

There is no dispute between the Karmin (one who engages himself in action) and the Jnanin (the knower of Truth) from the point of view of the Jivanmukta, because, whether the Karmin does actions thinking that they are

ends-in-themselves in the state of ignorance forgetting even the Atman, or whether the Jnanin concerns himself with the Atman alone, the root on which these are all finally stabilised is the same. Though Pravritti (extroversion) and Nivritti (introversion) are both meaningless from the point of view of Self-realisation, Nivritti leads to an aspiration for knowledge in the case of those who are still aspirants. The knower, however, has neither to seek knowledge by means of Nivritti, nor has he any concern with Pravritti for its benefits. Knowledge exists not because of the value of any means to it which persons attach to it, but on its own right (Vastu-tantra). It depends on itself and not on anything else. Knowledge of Brahman is Self-existent, because its nature does not depend upon the caprices of the individual attempting to know it (Purusha-tantra). Neither Avidya (ignorance) nor its effects can contradict knowledge, because they are already overcome by knowledge through intense Sadhana (practice) before attaining realisation. While the appearance may still continue, it does not negate knowledge; what binds is not appearance as such, but the notion of reality in appearance. If one knows that appearance is after all appearance alone, it cannot affect him. When appearance is mistaken for reality, it becomes the source of all troubles. This error of perception has already been sublated (negated), and, therefore, it cannot rise again in the case of the Jivanmukta. Objects in the world appear to him as mere corpses without life, because of his knowledge that they entirely depend upon Brahman for their existence. It is but natural that, in the state of ignorance, people engage themselves in activity for the

fulfilment of desires of various kinds, because no one exists in this world without some activity or other. Activity is the very condition of individuality and it shall persist as long as there is individuality-consciousness. Hence the vidvan, the knower, while living in the midst of ignorant people does not shake their beliefs by contradicting them in any way, but puts on their own conducts in his actions with a view to conducting them rightly, merely out of compassion. If he is in the midst of aspirants, he tries to instruct them by gradually trying to wean their minds away from attachment and faith in perishable things, by slowly diverting their attention from the false to the true, by stages, and not abruptly. He is like a father to children, full of love and pity, and is not affected whether he is insulted or praised by those who do not understand him. Whatever be the attitude of others towards him, his only attitude towards others is one of love for all and service to all by means of precept as well as practice. He, always, looks to the good of others. Whatever others may think about him, he considers how he should conduct himself for others to be benefited by his presence, and he lives accordingly, not for his own sake, because he wants nothing for himself, but for others' sake, because it is his nature to love all as his own Self. He has no duty to perform except, perhaps, the one he deliberately takes upon himself, viz., the education of the ignorant towards Self-realisation.

The Delight of Self-Realisation

The realised soul is all the while happy, and is highly exhilarated due to the immense realisation that he has, the

clarity of perception that he has attained, and the absolute bliss that he is experiencing. He sees with wonder the fancy of Samsara (world-existence) and the play of people around. He is delighted due to the majesty of his experience which is incomparable, and inwardly glorifies the scriptures which had helped him in gaining this knowledge, the Guru who has directed him to this experience, and the knowledge and the bliss which he now realises as his own nature. He has done what is to be done (Kritakritya), obtained what is to be obtained (Praptaprapya) and known what is to be known (Jnatajneya). Thus, does the liberated one rejoice in the indescribable ecstasy and rapture of Universal Experience, when in embrace with the glory of Brahman, the Absolute. (Verses 33-298)

Chapter VIII

LIGHT ON THE INTERNAL SELF

The Deepest Self in Man

The body is illumined by a twofold consciousness in the same manner as a wall, for example, can be illumined by two types of light. Just as a wall can be lighted up directly by the sun as well as by the reflection of the sun through a mirror, and we can observe the natural sunlight on the wall existing in the middle of the different patches of reflected light, so also we can observe the natural consciousness of the Atman between different thoughts and feelings, in the short span of time when one thought subsides and another thought has not yet arisen. Generally speaking, the human mind gets attached to certain objects, and its perception is always coloured by the nature of the object to such an extent that there is no time left for the mind to contemplate the Consciousness as it is in itself, unconnected with the objects. It is possible by careful and thorough investigation and psychological processes to differentiate between the factors that belong to the object and those that belong to Pure Consciousness. In the waking, the dreaming, as well as in the deep sleep states, it is possible to make this analysis by which we are enabled to dissect consciousness from the object. An object is known by the mind with the assistance of Chidabhasa-chaitanya (consciousness reflected through the intellect, or the psyche), and it is by this that we know there is such a thing as an object or a form, but the Consciousness behind the 'I', which is at the background of even the object consciousness is Brahma-chaitanya (Absolute Consciousness), designated here as Kutastha

(internal Self). The knowledge, “This is a body” is brought about by the Chidabhasa, and the knowledge, “I know the body” has its reference to Kutastha. Even the knowledge of the absence of an object is based on the Consciousness of the Kutastha, and it is this very Consciousness that enables, later on, the particular form of perception in relation to an object. As an arrow may be sharpened with a pointed steel-head for the sake of hitting objects, the Buddhi, or the intellect, has in itself the projecting form of Consciousness of the Chidabhasa. It is when this Chidabhasa begins to act that we have object-consciousness; otherwise there is ignorance of it, the Consciousness not being particularised. Both the unknown and known conditions of an object are, thus, finally rooted in Brahman-Consciousness, as Kutastha-chaitanya. The intellect by itself cannot know an object, because it is, after all, a modification of Prakriti (cosmic matter). Just as matter cannot know matter, the intellect cannot know an object. What is known is material and what knows is Consciousness. The freedom of the Consciousness lies in its Self-realisation that it is independent and absolute and is not really tainted by the nature of any object at all. (Verses 1-9).

The Nature of Perception

The perception of an object is due to the activity of the mind, or the intellect, in regard to it, together with the Chidabhasa attending on it. It is these that become responsible for an active perception of the object. It is not the General Consciousness of Brahman but the reflected consciousness, Chidabhasa, that particularises knowledge.

As Brahman is present always, it cannot be said that it is manifesting itself only during the perception of an object. It is the Chidabhasa that rises and falls, but Brahma-Chaitanya is always there, and has no beginning or end. There is a verse quoted from Suresvaracharya (a pupil of Sri Sankara) to the effect that Consciousness which manifests itself as an illuminating factor in all external perceptions is really the ultimate object to be known. Here, while Suresvara regards Consciousness as the ultimate end of endeavour, what he means is that the ultimate Consciousness, for all perception, being Brahman itself, it is the Goal of all aspirations, but he does not mean that this Consciousness is the Chidabhasa, because, the latter is absolutely dependent upon the Kutastha. This has been mentioned also by Sankara in his Upadesasahasri. When there is a manifestation of the Chidabhasa there is external perception, but the Chidabhasa is itself illumined by another Consciousness as even the absence of any particular object is known by it. The mental modifications, the Chidabhasa and the object, all these three, are simultaneously illumined by the General Consciousness, but the Chidabhasa can illumine only the object. Thus, the distinction between the two is clear.

In the perception of an object, there is a twofold consciousness, one particular and another general. Some schools of thought regard the General Consciousness as Knowledge of knowledge or Knowledge of perception, calling it Anuvyavasaya. The knowledge, "This is an object" is due to the activity of Chidabhasa, and the knowledge, "I know the object" or "the object is known by me," is due to

the existence of Brahman. This distinction between the particular and the General Consciousness made, thus, in external perception, is also to be made in internal perceptions. The Chidabhasa lights up the modifications of the psychological instruments in the form of the 'I', as well as its ramifications such as desire, anger, and so on, as fire can heat up an iron ball. Just as a red hot iron ball can illumine itself, but does not illuminate other objects, so do the psychoses within (Vrittis) illumine themselves, being enlightened by the Chidabhasa, but do not directly illumine other objects. These psychoses within come in a series as bits of a process, with intervals between the different links of the process, and do not flow continuously. Also, they get dissolved in sleep, swoon and Samadhi (Super-Consciousness). The intervals between the various processes of thought as well as the absence of thought itself are illumined by an Unchangeable Consciousness, which is the Kutastha, as in the perception of an external object; the object is known distinctly and the General Consciousness is not so known. The psychoses as thoughts and feelings etc. are known more clearly than the General Consciousness of the Kutastha which is continuously present, whether thoughts come or go. In the case of the psychoses of the Antahkarana (internal organ) there is no question of known-ness and unknown-ness, because they are self-luminous and, hence, there is no chance of their either knowing themselves as objects or not knowing themselves at all. This happens also in the case of inert objects where Consciousness is absolutely absent and in which case there cannot be any such thing as known-ness. The subject does

not become an object where either Consciousness is totally absent or where there is self-luminosity. In the two types of awareness mentioned, the particular one which gets itself connected to objects has a beginning and an end, and because of its changeful nature, it is different from the General Consciousness behind it, which is immutable and is, therefore, called Kutastha. There has to be posited a witness of the modifications of the mind; otherwise they cannot be known even to exist, and as it is in the case of the reflection of a face in a mirror, where the mirror is the medium and the face is the original with its reflection, in the case of the Self, too, the Anthahkarana is the medium, the reflection is the Chidabhasa, and the Atma, or Kutastha, is the original.

It is not that the Atman by its being at the back of even the process of transmigration undergoes any change. The limitation referred to here as the Chidabhasa is not merely like the limitation of the vast space by the walls of a jar for example, because the Atman does not become a Jiva, or the individual, merely by an enclosure. We cannot say that the Atman has become the Jiva, just because we have raised some walls around with material substance. The difference is that in the case of the Jiva, the Buddhi is transparent, but mere transparency is not the sole conditioning factor, because there may not be any difference in certain cases even when there is transparency such as in a glass measure, which, after all, can contain only as much quantity of grain as wooden measure. What makes the essential difference is not merely the limitation but the reduction of quality by quantity by reflection, and it is here that we notice a

difference between the original and the reflection. We call that a reflection which appears to be like original, but does not have really the characteristics of the original.

The Individual Nature

In luminosity the Chidabhasa resembles the Atman, and it is for this reason that the Jivas mistake themselves for reality and mistake the objects of the world also for similar realities. The difference, however, is that the Atman is never attached, because it is universal, while the Chidabhasa is not. The Atman never undergoes transformation, because it is absolute, while the Chidabhasa does. The internal psychological organ conditions the Chidabhasa and the latter cannot exist without it. The former is different from the latter because of its material nature and is distinguished from the latter which has the characteristic of luminosity. In the scriptures, especially the Upanishad, it has been established by various explanations that the Atman is different from the Buddhi, and is not limited by it. The limitation is due to the variety of the constitution of the Antahkarana, not because of the variety in the original which is the Atman. The manifold that we observe can be traced back to the variety in the reflecting media, though what is reflected is one and the same.

In the Aitareya Upanishad, it is stated that it is the Atman that enters into the various individuals and gives them the character of a Jiva. The Jiva, thus has a twofold nature, that which limits, namely, the Antahkarana, and that which shines, namely, the Atman. The Upanishad says that the Atman enters into the variety of creation and the

latter become the Jivas, on account of their partaking of the Consciousness and Existence aspects of the Atman. Hence, the formation of the Buddhi and the Antahkarana is a subsequent act in creation, not originally connected with the Atman. But how the Absolute, All pervading One manages it is wonderful, indeed. This wonder is similar to the wonder of the whole of creation. Creation, being relative to the Jivas, cannot be regarded as an ultimate truth, and the entry of Brahman into the Jivas, being a part of the process of creation, remains, then, a mystery.

Sage Yajnavalkya mentions, as we have it in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, that the Jiva rises by being connected with the various limiting agents, such as the elements, body, mind, etc., and ceases to be when these limiting agents cease to be. The sage says that there is no consciousness after the destruction of individuality, meaning thereby that there cannot be externalised consciousness in the state of salvation of the soul in Brahman, where there is no duality in order that one may perceive another. The Atman is declared as indestructible and is equated with the Kutastha-Atman. While the Atman is supposed to operate in the Jiva by an apparent contact with the elements, the Jivahood is destroyed in Moksha, or final liberation, but not the essence of the Jiva, which is the Atman. It is the Jiva that undergoes transmigration in different worlds; the Atman is unaffected. How does one know that one is Brahman when Jivahood is destroyed? It is quite obvious, because, knowledge is not the prerogative of the Jiva, and as a matter of fact, it is only a semblance of knowledge. It shines, in fact, in borrowed feathers, and has

no consciousness of its own. The identity of the Jiva with Brahman is established by a method known as Samana-Adhikaranya, which means the identity of one thing with another that can be known only when the obstructing characters of the things identified are removed. In the present case it means the union of the Jiva with Brahman, not literally in its present form, but essentially after the Jiva is divested of its limiting features such as the three bodies; but the identity of the Kutasha-Atman with Brahman is direct and primary, and, hence, it is called Mukhya-Samanadhikaranya, or primary identity, like the identity of space within a vessel with the all-pervading space. Just as one may mistake in the dusk a standing post for a human being, but after going near it and carefully observing it one generally knows that it is a post alone and not a man, so, in the darkness of our ignorance we have mistaken Brahman for the Jiva, but by a careful investigation into the subject, and observing the situation correctly, we will realise that the Jiva is only an appearance and it is really Brahman, after all. When this realisation takes place, there is an immediate destruction of the false notion of doership, enjoyership, etc., which are attributed to the Jiva. The identity of the world with Brahman, or of the Jiva with the Kutastha-Atman, is to be understood in the sense of the Badhasamanadhikaranya, or sublative identity, mentioned above. When the names and forms are separated from the essence, the essence is known to be Brahman.

There is the question of the identity of the Jiva with Brahman by negating certain attributes, only if we regard the Jiva from the point of view of its essence, as

Consciousness. If we define Jiva as a limited individual with a reflected consciousness, etc., then naturally, in that state, it cannot be identified with Brahman, and to effect identification there should be the abandoning of its limiting characters. If it is regarded as Consciousness in its innermost being, then there is this direct identity of substratum. When the Jiva is investigated into and its true nature is researched, then it will be known that it is the same as what we call Kutastha, and in this condition it is immediately one with Brahman. Kutastha and Brahman mean one and the same thing. That is called Kutastha which is Consciousness acting as the substratum of the appearance of the Jiva with the appendages as body, mind, senses etc. Brahman is the same Consciousness existing as the substratum of the whole cosmos. When the entire cosmos is something super-imposed on Brahman, what to speak of this Chidabhasa, which is only a part of creation? We make a distinction between Isvara (God) and Jiva (individual) by introducing a difference between the whole and the part, namely, the universe and the body. The one Brahman in relation to the universe is called Isvara, and it alone in relation to the body is called Jiva. The substance is one, Consciousness is one, appearances are two. Jivahood, therefore, is ultimately to be sublated, it being an appearance, because it is a false constitution made up of the erroneous notions of doership, enjoyership, etc., and belongs to the world and the semblance of consciousness borrowed from the Atman.

The Kutastha-Atman

What is this intellect and what is this Jiva? What is the Self, and what is the world? The inability to arrive at a clear definition regarding this issue, and the consequent activity to which one is driven, is called Samsara (worldly entanglement). He who knows the answer to these questions is a knower of Truth; he is the liberated one; such is the proclamation of the Vedanta texts. In spite of the decisions of the Upanishads, there are perverted intellects who raise false questions of a quibbling nature and involve themselves in tangles of logical arguments which have the appearance of reasonableness, but really are unreasonable. Such questions have been dealt with in detail in such polemical works (argumentative texts) as those of Sriharsha, Chitsukhacharya and Madhusudana Sarasvati. The Kutastha-Atman is the witness not only of the various modifications of the mind, but also of their absence, and also the state of aspiration for knowledge. As it is the basis of the appearance of the transient world which is untrue, it is called Truth; because it is the one light illuminating everything that is inert, it is called the Consciousness; and it is called Bliss because it is the most dear and lovable of all things. It is complete and perfect, because it has relations with everything and knows all things immediately. It is the Power of cosmic Maya that, by its properties of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, creates the distinctions among Isvara (God), Jiva (individual) and Jagat (world). As transparent things can reflect light in different ways, Ishvara and Jiva reflect the Consciousness of the Brahman in different degrees. Isvara and Jiva differ from the world of matter

inasmuch as the latter is not open to the expression of Consciousness through it, Tamas (inertia) being predominant in it. As Ishvara and Jiva illumine things by means of the Consciousness present in them, we have to conclude that their essential nature is Consciousness alone. Maya, which is capable of working wonders, has really nothing impossible for it. Even when our own dreams can effect incredible differences, what to speak of Maya which has immense powers! However, it should not be thought that the Kutastha, too, is an effect of Maya, because there is no proof whatsoever to establish that it is included in Maya. It becomes necessary that we should accept the ultimate changeless Substratum, which itself is not involved in change, in order that even change can be known as such.

The Vedanta texts proclaim the essential substantiality of the Kutastha-Atman and do not tolerate the idea of anything opposed to it or the acceptance of anything that may be regarded as a second to it. Here, in the text, we expound the true meaning of the scripture and do not engage ourselves merely in dry argumentation. There is no true purpose served in mere sceptic doubts of the professional logician, and hence they are irrelevant to the subject on hand. The aspirant after liberation, therefore, should resort to the true import of the scripture, abandoning perverted arguments. The scripture declares that both Jiva and Isvara are created by the Cosmic Power, called Maya. From the time there was the Primeval Ideation of the Supreme Being, till the animation of every diversified thing in this world by the Consciousness of this Being, it is to be regarded as Isvara-srishti (God's creation). From the

time the waking state commenced till the freedom of the Jiva is achieved finally, it is Jiva-srishti (individual imagination). Things as they are in themselves are Isvara-srishti, and things invested with the psychological reactions of the various individuals are Jiva-srishti. Kutastha, however, is unattached, and does not undergo increase or decrease at any time. It has neither birth, nor death, nor decay. Thus should one contemplate Truth in one's mind. From the point of view of the ultimate Truth, there is neither destruction of things nor their origination, neither bondage nor liberation, neither aspiration nor the aspirants, the Atman being one Self-completeness, unchanging and eternal. This Truth is unapproachable by mind and speech, and to awaken one to this Truth the scripture resorts to such means of explanation as the tentative acceptance of the distinctions of Isvara, Jiva and Jagat, and a subsequent transcendence of these concepts. Only that method of instruction should be considered as beneficial which is befitting the nature of the student and by which the student can have real knowledge in regard to the Atman. But the ignorant ones, not being able to grasp the true meaning of the scripture, wander about in ignorance and confusion. The discriminating one, having understood everything correctly, takes his stand on the ocean of Bliss. This Bliss of the Atman and its Consciousness and Existence are unaffected by the activities of Maya and the varieties of the creations of the world, as the sky is not affected when clouds shower rains. The Atman is Brahman, and suffice it to say that it is unaffected by the processes of creation, preservation and

destruction associated with the universe and its contents.
(Verses 10-76)

Chapter IX

LIGHT ON MEDITATION

Total Error and Advantageous Error

Meditation on Brahman leads to its realisation, as in the case of Samvadi-bhrama, or erroneous notion of a thing leading to a successful result in relation to that thing. Hence in the Upanishads various kinds of Upasanas, or meditations, are described. Take the instance of a person seeing from a distance the ray of a light, situated within the walls of a room. He sees a gleam of light passing through the window of a house and getting reflected outside, and mistakes the ray of the light seen outside for a gem shining. He commits this error in his mind because he has not seen the source of the light, but only its reflection outside. Suppose this person runs after that reflection thinking that it is a gem. We can imagine the mistake that he is making in cherishing that notion. But, suppose, at another place, there is a gem kept inside a room at a distance and the light emanating from it through an aperture is also reflected outside. If this reflection of light outside is mistaken for the gem itself, there is, naturally an erroneous perception, for the light of the gem is not the gem. In the two instances cited, where one person sees the gleam of the lamp and takes it for a gem, and another where one sees the ray of light emanating from a gem and thinks it is the gem itself, though there is similarity in so far as there is a mistaken notion regarding the gem, yet, there is a difference in the results that they would achieve in pursuing the objects of their quests. While the one who has mistaken the light of the lamp for the gem would not acquire the gem by

approaching it, the other who has mistaken the light of the gem for the gem itself would, by going near it, obtain it. This is an illusion in perception called Samvadi, because, though initial perception is a mistake, the end reached is the desired one. Where the end reached is something quite different from the desired one, the mistaken perception is called Visamvadi-bhrama.

We have also instances of Samvadi error in inference and also acts based on scriptural injunctions. It is likely that by seeing mist at some place we may mistake it for smoke emanating from fire and move towards it in search of fire, and by chance, find fire there, though what was perceived originally was not the smoke emanating from the fire. This is an instance where there is Samvadi in inference. If a person sprinkles some water over himself thinking that it is from the holy Ganga, and gets purified, but it so happens that the water is not of the Ganga but of the Godavari, which is also holy, it is again the mistake known as Samvadi, where the mind thinks something different from the actual fact and yet reaches the desired result. If one is affected by high fever and utters in a delirious mood the holy name of Narayana, and reaches spiritual exaltation in the higher planes of existence thereby, it should be considered as an instance of Samvadi error. And so on, there can be hundreds of instances of such errors in respect of perception, inference and scriptural testimony, which lead to the desired end, nevertheless.

Types and Methods of Meditation

All types of meditation on images, such as those made of earth, or wood or stone, and also meditations on such concepts as prescribed in the Panchagni Vidya of the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, come under Samvadi ideas, because, here, the desired object is attained even though the means employed is a knowledge which does not really and directly correspond to the whole nature of the object. As in the example of the Samvadi-bhrama cited, an incorrect knowledge leads to a proper realisation of the end; so Upasana, or meditational concepts on the reality of Brahman lead to the final liberation of the soul because of the intense habituation of the mind to the sublime concepts of universal Existence, Consciousness etc., by which the Vedanta texts describe Brahman. By acquiring such indirect knowledge, the aspirant begins to intensely feel within himself the communion of his innermost 'I' with Brahman and recognises the presence of Brahman in his innermost being. This is the highest type of meditation, whereby the highest Reality is asserted in each and everything in the universe, including one's own Self, but as long as there is only an idea of Brahman in the mind, as Existence, and there is no direct inward realisation in one's own experience, as in the case of indirect knowledge of the deities like Lord Vishnu gathered from scriptures, this general knowledge acquired has to be regarded as conceptual (Paroksha) alone, notwithstanding that by the study of scriptures one has a clear notion of the Divine Being, Vishnu. This is just indirect knowledge, because, here, the Divine Being is not directly seen, but only

visualised; but because of this, it cannot be said that indirect knowledge is an illusion, for, what makes knowledge an illusion is not its indirectness but the absence of the object to which it relates. A Divinity like Lord Vishnu is not a non-existent being, because his existence is affirmed in the scriptures which are valid proofs of knowledge, though in the present state of knowledge we have no direct realisation of such a Divine Being. Similarly, though we hear from the scriptures that Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, etc., since this has not yet become an actual experience within, it cannot be equated with realisation or direct knowledge of Brahman. Yet, this knowledge of an indirect nature is not illusory, because it has a relevance to reality, though indirectly. Though there are instructions in the Upanishads such as, Tat-Tvam-Asi (That Thou Art), where direct experience of Brahman is indicated, yet, merely on hearing such sentences, no immediate realisation comes to the seekers because of the absence of proper discrimination, reflection and profound meditation subsequent to hearing or studying. So long as there is the strong erroneous feeling that one is only a body or an individual, and there is the consequent relationship with the objects of the world, no amount of force applied on the mind will ever succeed in coming to the realisation of the Oneness of the Atman with Brahman, because here, after all, the impurity of the mind still persists, which accounts for its dullness and incapacity to grasp deeper truths. The faithful disciple and the student who knows the true meaning of the scripture has an adequate indirect knowledge of Brahman, but this indirect knowledge is not opposed to the direct knowledge of the

dualistic world which he sees simultaneously. There is no opposition between the indirect feeling of the Divinity in an image and the direct perception of an ordinary object in it; naturally, no one can prevent the mind from visualising Beings like Lord Vishnu in images, though to the ordinary mind the image is only a physical object. Here the instance of the faithless need not be brought in as an argument, because the faithful alone are competent to undertake these arduous processes of practice prescribed in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Once this faith is acquired, there is an immediate rising of devout knowledge of the objective of meditation by means of instruction from the Preceptor, and this instruction in regard to meditation does not need any argumentation. Due to a possible diversity likely to be seen in the instructions, and the variety of Karmas and Upasanas mentioned in the scriptures, which are hard to understand for the ordinary minds of mortals, sages have taken the trouble of bringing all these teachings together and collating them in a suitable manner in such works as the Kalpa-Sutras, Brahma-Sutras, etc. With the help of these guides, the faithful aspirant can, even without further rational investigation, undertake the practice directly, with confidence in the words of the teachers.

The sages of yore have described the practice of various Upasanas (devout meditations) in their works, and those who have not the capacity to conduct self-enquiry and investigation for themselves can study these and grasp these under the instruction of a preceptor and then directly engage themselves in meditation. No doubt, a thorough investigation and enquiry may be required in the case of

those who are aiming at ascertaining the true meaning of the scripture such as the Vedas, but the practice of Upasana does not require such arduous investigations. What is necessary is a mere implicit confidence in the words of the teacher and an immediate resorting to its practice. However, Brahma-Sakshatkara, or the realisation of Brahman, is not a question merely of faith or belief in what others say about it. It is a question of direct experience for oneself in one's own deepest understanding and conscience. What prevents success in putting into practice all the indirect knowledge acquired through the scripture or the teacher is faithlessness, and the obstacle to direct realisation is non-discrimination. Though it may be that a person has practised self-enquiry for a very long time, if he has not yet realised Brahman, the duty here of the aspirant is not to discontinue meditation and enquiry, but proceed with it again till the attainment of direct experience. Sadhana (practice) concludes only in experience and never before. It is also possible that even though one practises enquiry and meditation till death, yet, the Atman has not been realised. But this should not be the cause for any dissatisfaction, because it only means that the obstructing Karmas have not yet come to an end, but it is certain that on their cessation realisation shall be attained in some future birth. In the Brahmasutras, too, it has been corroborated that one can attain knowledge either in this birth or in a future birth and it shall be attained the moment the obstacles have come to an end. This is also the reason why many people, though they have heard and studied much on the nature of the Atman, have no real

knowledge of it. In the case of Sage Vamadeva, the obstacles to knowledge came to an end even while he was in the womb of his mother, and he had illumination then and there due to the force of the previous spiritual practices which he had undergone in past lives. As in the case of studying one may not be able to commit to memory a particular part of a text, for example, even after repeated reading of it, and it may be that on the next day the memory of it comes of its own accord, so in the case of knowledge, it reveals itself as a consequence of intense practice for a very protracted period, when the impediments are over. Knowledge matures gradually and not immediately, as in the case of the harvest. A child in the womb matures gradually, and Nature always goes by stages, and never by leaps and bounds. Yet, it is likely that on account of the threefold obstacles mentioned previously, knowledge may not dawn at all even after continued practice. These obstacles have to be overcome first in order that there may be final success on the path.

Though a person is learned, it may not be possible for him to attain to the spiritual ideal immediately on account of ignorance, as a person who may daily walk over a treasure hidden beneath the earth may not know that he is daily walking over it. In fact, Jivas go to Brahman daily in the state of deep sleep, but do not know it, being covered by ignorance, and return to external consciousness of the world outside them. As mentioned, the obstacles may be grouped under three heads – past, present and future – due to which the Self-manifestation of knowledge is obstructed and its revelation becomes difficult. Past impressions harass

the mind. There was a householder who was attached to a she-buffalo to such an extent that even when he took to renunciation later on, the love for the she-buffalo became an obstacle in his spiritual practice and it is said that he approached his Guru for initiation, and the Guru had to take into consideration his love for the she-buffalo and described to him Brahman as conditioned by the form of a she-buffalo. However, by intense concentration on his beloved object, he was able to feel and realise the unity of himself with the object of his meditation and it is then that the Guru came and gave him the proper initiation into the mysteries of true meditation, admonishing him that the form he was thinking in his mind was only an adjunct outside truth, and that the truth was the Consciousness witnessing the form. The present obstacles are in the form of attachment to sense-objects and dullness of the mind, perverted argumentation and an obsessed wrong notion confirming the reality of the world and its objects. These obstacles are to be gradually eliminated by the practice of such virtues as tranquillity of mind, sense-restraint, etc., and by hearing, reflection and meditation on the great truths of existence, as also by employment, of proper means to suit, then and there, the different circumstances which one may have to encounter on the path. By such gradual elimination of desires, the obstacles decrease by degrees and then the Truth shines by itself. The future obstacles are the part of Prarabdha-Karma which manages to bring about future experience and even rebirth, such as in the case of Sage Vamadeva, whose Prarabdha was just enough to make him enter the womb of a mother, and the moment

he entered it he had knowledge and realisation. In the case of Sage Jadabharata, the births were three before he had ultimate Self-realisation; but in the case of most people, the births are many. As mentioned in the Bhagavadgita, these seekers attain to a certain stage in Yoga, but not having had the final consummation of it, take further births until all the Karmas as obstacles are got over; but their honest practices are not a waste, though they have not succeeded in a particular life. Every little bit that is added to the storehouse of spiritual merit is a permanent asset and it shall never be destroyed, though it may be very meagre. Seekers and Yogins who have some desires in their minds unfulfilled, reach, after the dropping of their bodies, higher realms of joy accessible only to highly virtuous persons, and when the momentum of that enjoyment is over, they are born again in the house of pure-minded and wealthy persons. But those who have no desires in their minds are reborn in the homes of great Yogins endowed with spiritual wisdom. Such a birth is very rare to obtain and cannot be had by a mere little merit acquired in the world. Having acquired such birth, the Yogin is pushed forward by the spontaneous impulse which he carries with him and superior intelligence, as a result of his past practices. Consequently, he exerts more on the spiritual path in this birth. Hard indeed is this blessedness to obtain, for, here, one is driven forward by the spiritual current even without one's personal will and effort. Thus, after several births the Yogin attains the beatitude of Brahman.

If there is any desire left in the mind, such as the longing to reach Brahma-loka, the meditation would not be

completely successful, because realisation of Brahman will not be possible if there is any desire suppressed within. Those who meditate with a desire to go to Brahma-loka reach that region and attain to Brahman in the end, at the end of the age-cycle. In the case of most persons, even spiritual effort is very difficult, and self-enquiry is still more difficult, because of the obstructing Karmas. It is in regard to such persons that it is said that there are many to whom the Atman has not come within the purview of even their hearing, due to dullness of mind and the absence of the proper requisites, such as a proper Guru, a suitable place, conducive circumstances, etc.

As in the case of Saguna-Upasana (meditation with attributes), as described, so in Nirguna-Upasana (meditation without attributes), too it is possible to fix the attention of the mind on a series of concepts relating to Brahman. In Saguna meditation the mind is made to think and deeply feel the presence of God in the best conceivable form, called the Ishta-Devata (chosen deity). The fundamental stage here would be to regard the Ishta as the absolute deity, standing or sitting in front of oneself and possessed of sublime qualities, the best that can be ever conceived of. There is then a flow of thought towards the Ishta-Devata, the current of love proceeds from the meditator and envelops the object of meditation with the intention to gain communion with the desired objective. However, this is not so simple as it appears, because the mind has the natural habit of thinking something which is different from the prescribed object, due to the notion that there is some other thing in this world which can also bring

the needed satisfaction to it, and an involuntary, rather unconscious, question arises within itself as to why one should not enjoy these pleasures of communion with the other objects of the world when they too have values of their own. Here commences the great difficulty which every seeker has to encounter in his spiritual endeavour, the difficulty of giving a proper education to the mind to the effect that its highest consolation lies not in coming into contact with sense-objects, but in seeking the source of all pleasure, which definitely is not the objects, and the purpose of meditation is after all to seek this ultimate source of perennial bliss, and, so, meditation is not an end in itself, but a means to this realisation. When one succeeds in such an educative attitude in regard to the mind, the mind will come back to the object of meditation. Then the seeker puts forth efforts to give a little relaxation and a wider range of activity to the mind by bringing before its eye the various names, forms and actions of God which he is meditating upon, feeling also simultaneously that what is meditated upon is only a form of God, and God is not only in one place, but everywhere. All the forms of the world are then invested in meditation with the glories of God so that the meditative consciousness begins to rise to the concept of the Virat (Cosmic Form) and the ideas of inside and outside get transcended. Eventually, even this kind of meditation gets surpassed in the resting of the consciousness in itself without an attempt at feeling anything external to itself or even as an adjective to itself. The Nirguna form of meditation should be mostly concerned with the effort to make the mind subside

whenever it tries to take some shape or form, even a concept of Brahman, to feel that Brahman is unthinkable, undefinable, unknowable, and to perpetuate this feeling for a protracted period would be to engage oneself in a type of Nirguna meditation. Whatever may be the idea that arises in the mind in regard to Brahman, that should be withdrawn as inadequate and the consequent condition maintained for as long a period as possible, continuously setting aside attributes whenever they arise in the mind and trying to remain a witness of all the ideas that arise.

Nirguna meditation may be of two kinds, positive and negative; one associated with direct qualities, and the other with indirect ones.

The Nirguna form of meditation is laid down in several of the Upanishads. The main type of meditation inculcated is on Pranava, or Omkara. There is the injunction to feel the unity of the component parts of OM with the different states of Consciousness. Macrocosmically as well as microcosmically, A,U, and M, which are the component sounds of OM, are to be gradually identified with the conscious states of Visva (waking consciousness), Taijasa (dream-consciousness) and Prajna (sleep-consciousness), subjectively; and with Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara cosmically. Chanting of OM and the feeling of its vibrations set up a rhythm and harmony in the system, nervous, emotional and intellectual, so that due to this equilibrium brought about in the whole system, the Rajas of the mind is made to subside for the time being and a Sattvika state introduced which is conducive to Upasana, or meditation. The feeling of the union of Omkara with the states of

Consciousness should lead ultimately to the feeling of the presence of Brahman as identical with oneself. The procedure is laid down in the Mandukya Upanishad, as well as in the Panchikaranavarttika of Acharya Suresvara. This Upasana is a means to Knowledge. Knowledge is the end, and the Upasana is the means leading to it. Most people do not take to such difficult meditations, as they are hard to practise, but notwithstanding this, it is there and is open to anyone who has a will to undergo the requisite discipline for the practice. Being frightened by the difficulties involved in such stupendous meditations, people resort to lower Upasanas of inferior deities, and do Japa of Mantras for lower ends in view, but it is the duty of every true seeker to endeavour hard to reach that stage where he can summon the requisite capacity from within to commence truly spiritual meditations.

All the attributes of Brahman mentioned in the Upanishads, positive as well as negative, may be brought together in a single group as aids to meditation. Different qualities do not indicate different objects. They refer to one and the same being, though various modes of meditation are laid down in different recensions or sections. They are to be gathered together under one group, since it is the uniform teaching of the Vedanta that the Atman is one. It may be looked upon from various points of view. This is to be done both in the case of the positive qualities such as Ananda (Bliss), Vijnana (Knowledge), etc., and the negative attributes such as Asthula (not gross), Ahrasva (not small), etc. It will be found on practice that the numerous attributes may be condensed into a few for the purpose of

convenience in meditation, the most fundamental and the highest attributes being Sat (Existence), Chit (Consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss). Though it may be remembered that the Nirguna-Brahman being above qualities cannot be brought under the head of objective meditation, yet, for all practical purposes, we need not regard such attributes as Sat-Chit-Ananda to be limiting qualities, but only indicators of the Supreme Absolute. However, the case is different in such meditations as the Divine Purusha situated within the Sun, who is asked to be meditated upon as a resplendent golden figure. Though qualities do not exist in Brahman, they indicate its presence and give us a hint as to its nature. Let the meditation be carried on thus. We may meditate that the essential being is one with the Akhanda-Ekarasa-Atman (Undivided, single essence of Self), which is faintly indicated by such descriptions as mentioned above.

There is a difference between knowledge and meditation. Knowledge is dependent on the nature of the object (Vastu-tantra), while meditation is dependent on the option of the mind of the meditator (Purusha-tantra). While the former cannot be made otherwise than what it is, the latter can be conceived of in any form that one likes. When true knowledge dawns, it puts an end to all the ills of life and the feeling of reality in objects to which one is usually attached. Then Jivanmukti is reached and the highest satisfaction attained. But in Upasana, faith is the prime factor, and here the discipline is not to engage in any personal enquiry or critical examination of the nature and meaning of the teaching of the preceptor, but to go on with

confidence and devotion, continuously contemplating on the ideal before one with no intrusion of a second thought. Meditation should be continued till there arises the feeling of one's communion with the object. The spirit of meditation should be retained till the death of the body. One must attain as much union with the ideal of meditation as in the case of the Brahmacharin mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanishad, who practised Prana-Vidya and felt his identity with the Cosmic Prana.

Upasana is capable of change, it being subject to option (Purusha-tantra). It is possible, therefore, and it is necessary, to employ different means of practice as and when one advances in the spiritual path, to suit the convenience of the particular state which one has attained on the path of meditation. In different stages of meditation, or Upasana, different levels of consciousness present themselves and different types of obstacles are encountered. Hence, it is essential that different processes of tackling these situations are to be employed by the intelligent seeker in order that he may attain ultimate success in overcoming the opposing forces. Sadhana (practice) is not a set of uniform routines of a fixed nature, for all individuals alike, for all times, but varies in its nature from person to person, and from one condition to another. When there is complete establishment in Dhyana (meditation), it goes on spontaneously by force of habit, just as people do Japa of Mantra, keeping on doing it even in dream due to continuous practice during the waking stage. This is an indication that Upasana, or Dhyana, is to be well-grounded, and this state is achieved when all the external attractions

are set aside and there is a continuous flow of thought on the spiritual ideal without any intermittance. As a person engaged in work may do it as a matter of routine without bestowing much thought on it, the thought being fixed on something else, one who is well established in spiritual Sadhana keeps on doing his daily duties perfectly well, yet not bestowing his whole thought on them, the thought being mostly directed to the higher ideals. Thus, an Upasaka (worshipper or meditator) keeps on performing his daily duties as any one else does them, but does not cherish any love, either for objects or for actions, his love being directed to the Divine Being. However, when perfection is attained, no distinction is made between knowledge and action, because the perfected one sees the One Being in the many, and what we call action is to him nothing but an expression of knowledge. Naturally, there cannot be any attachment either to one thing or the other in a person who has the established conviction that the Atman is the Universal Consciousness and everything is included in it. Moreover, activity does not demand the reality of the objects to which it is directed. What is essential for any activity is the availability of the means of activity, such as the mind and the senses, and the feeling of reality in regard to external appearances, called objects.

The world of objects does not get annihilated in realisation, but is seen from a different perspective. There is no attempt on the part of the seer to suppress his mind or to control his senses because he just sees a uniform reality perpetually for which there is no necessity to forcibly direct the mind in any particular fashion. Just as we see the world

when we open our eyes, spontaneously as it were, and for this purpose we do not have to concentrate our mind on the world, so in the case of the seer there is a revelation of Truth, and this revelation is different from concentration of mind, though, in the beginning, there is an endeavour to practise such concentration. We have, no doubt, to direct our minds to an object for our seeing it, but there is no such effort when the perception is complete and the knowledge of the object in question is continuous.

Having attained this sublime state, the seer is free to do or think as he likes. He does not attempt either to forget or to remember the world, for he achieves no purpose either by seeing it or by not seeing it. He is a storehouse and an embodiment of all goodness and virtues. Wherever he is, and whatever he is, there is good alone emanating from him, to the good of all, and also for him. What he does is left to his option and free will. There is no particular injunction, even scriptural, that may restrict him in any manner, because he is a liberated one, and has attained liberation by the mere fact of having attained the Self-revealing knowledge. If he sees variety, it does no harm to him, because, for him, variety is nothing but the form of the One. Hence, there is no overstepping of limit either of law or rule, because he has reached the highest law of the Absolute. Rules apply to persons who are situated in the various levels of society on account of their different endowments and capacities etc., but no rule can be applied to one who is cosmic and has everything within himself.

Action and inaction, the positive and the negative, have lost their meaning to him who has rid himself of all the

Vasanas, or mental impressions, of a binding nature. He has no desire either for this world or the other. How, then, can he have the impulsion to live and to do anything at all?

There is no injunction in regard to a seer, just as there is no injunction to a child. A child is not bound by rules because of its ignorance of ethical distinctions and rules of society, while the seer knows everything and, therefore, transcends all things. All rules are pertinent only to a person of little knowledge, who is neither totally ignorant nor knows everything. There is no prohibitory rule to restrict either a child or a sage.

A sage of practical wisdom is not necessarily one who deliberately exercises powers, either to bless or to curse. There are types of Tapas, or austerity: one intended for acquisition of powers by the conserving of energy, and the other for the sake of insight by the dedication of one's whole individuality for the sake of Truth. No doubt, there are exceptional persons like Sage Vyasa, who had the highest knowledge and the highest power, but this is because they had performed the Tapas by way of sense-control and mental concentration, through which they had immense strength within them, as also the higher one in the form of contemplation of the Eternal Being, through which they had omniscience. The Tapas which is the cause of powers is quite different from the Tapas which brings wisdom. The former consists in the inhibition of the senses and in concentration of the mind, while the latter is essentially a lifting up of one's consciousness to wider and wider realms until it reaches universality. Mostly, one sees only masters with one or the other of the mentioned

perfections, but very rare are persons like Vyasa, in whom there is perfection in the highest sense. It is, of course, common in this world that people with a little power of Tapas belittle those serene men of wisdom, even as it is not very uncommon that sensualists belittle men of Tapas for their austerities, which the ignorant ones consider as foolish. We should never make the mistake of craving for miracles as the criterion of wisdom. Men of the highest realisation may not exercise powers at all, because of their absolute desirelessness, but they are veritable sources of all powers, far beyond the little powers acquired by ordinary persons with meagre austerities. No doubt, when there is the revelation of knowledge, a Jnanin may perform the usual functions of a person in the world on account of the presence in him of such instruments of activity as the mind and the senses. Though he realises the unreality of the world in its manifested form, he lives his life either working as the other people do or meditating on the spiritual truths, in accordance with the nature of his Prarabdha. But the Upasaka should continue his meditation always, and never cease from it till the end of his life, because his final success entirely depends on the success of the meditation. It is imperative that he should maintain his exalted consciousness by way of meditation until the goal is reached. Visions in meditation may come and go, but the meditation should not cease, and no concept or vision should be confused with realisation, because all visions belong to certain planes of existence, still within the realm of relativity.

Brahman does not cease to be, just because there is no knower of it, while visions will cease when meditation ceases. Though Brahman is present in all beings without distinction, it is manifested in a greater or lesser degree in different persons and it is this degree of manifestation that explains the distinction between the wise and the ignorant. Though the general existence of Brahman is common to one and all, it is its particular manifestation that determines the degree of enlightenment attained by different persons. There are degrees in approaching the Truth, and naturally one is lower and the other is higher, all these forming a successive series leading to the highest Sakshatkara, or realisation. Better than ignorance are the selfish activities of people immersed in worldliness. The performance of duty and engagement in activities of an unselfish nature with a view to the purification of oneself, is higher. Higher than this is meditation on Saguna-Brahman (Brahman with attributes). Saguna-Brahma-Upasana, again, is of two kinds, in accordance with the nature of the symbol used in meditation. When particular symbols are used, it is called Pratika-Upasana, where the meditator seeks to find the universal in the individual symbols by making them vehicles of the higher concept on which he is meditating. In the other kind of Saguna-Upasana, the whole universe is taken as a symbol for meditation, where one's feeling is that all, indeed, is Brahman. In Ahamgraha-Upasana, or the meditation by which one strives to grasp the essential inner 'I', the symbol is Consciousness, which, in the beginning, appears as personal and later on becomes universal. That which approximates to true knowledge in a greater degree

is to be considered better than the others as a means of liberation. In this manner, by stages, Nirguna-Upasana becomes mature and merges into Brahma-Jnana, or Experience of Brahman. As Samvadi-bhrama leads to correct perception later on, so does Upasana lead to real experience by sufficient maturity in the end. Just as Samvadi-bhrama is not the direct cause for the perception of the desired object, since contact is the direct cause, yet the former is responsible for the latter, so, indeed, Upasana may not be the direct cause of Brahman-Experience, but it leads the seeker to the acquisition of that knowledge which is the direct cause of liberation. Here, we have to concede that Japa of Mantras, devout worship of images, and so on, are also means for spiritual perfection in the end, though not the direct means. We consider that as a better means and a higher one which has a greater nearness to Truth.

Fully perfected Nirguna-Upasana ends in the absorption of the Universe in Consciousness, which is simultaneous with the direct perception that the Atman is Brahman. This is knowledge of Truth, which one acquires by the laborious practices of meditation on the Absolute Brahman, with such attributes as Nirvikara or Changeless; Asanga, or unattached; Nitya, Eternal; Svaprakasa, or Self-luminous; Eka, or One alone; Purna, or Full; Bhuma or the Plenum; etc., which are only ideas in the beginning but become realities in the end, as the embodiment of the Universal Atman itself. It is towards this end that the practice of Yoga has been enjoined on the aspirants. One should not, here, mistake the lower stages for the final end to be reached, and there should be no stagnation at any

lower stage with the wrong feeling that it is the goal. Upasana, as a soul-filled approach, is prescribed for those who enter into the more difficult means of directly meditating on the higher realities. It is in the absence of this primary means that Yoga as concentration of mind is prescribed as a secondary means. It is for these latter that concentration on special concepts is prescribed, by which the dross of the mind is removed and it is steadied to enable it to reflect Truth. For the higher minds Samkhya (knowledge) is prescribed, and for the lower ones Yoga (concentration). Here Samkhya means knowledge of the Absolute and not the special jargon of the school of Kapila. Samkhya is to be taken in its liberal sense of knowledge of Truth by discrimination between the Universal Self and the not-Self, and not in the sense of the metaphysical concepts of the school of Kapila, according to which Purushas are many, Prakriti is eternal and the one is different from the other. For the Yoga, Isvara is isolated from both. When Samkhya and Yoga are understood in their true sense, they lead to the same goal, says, the Bhagavadgita.

The goal finally reached by the Samkhya and the Yoga is one and the same, inasmuch as the principles involved in both practices are similar. In the Samkhya, there is an acute and penetrating understanding of the different categories of the Universe, and this is achieved by an investigation of every item of experience which presents itself before the consciousness of the individual. This result is achieved also by the Yoga, which is the force of the concentration of the mind on the ideal by deliberate direction of the mind and the will towards it.

One whose practice, whether by Samkhya or by Yoga, is not adequately mature in one life, may have its completion at the time of his death, and, if this is not practicable on account of the working of obstructing Karmas, knowledge will dawn in the next life, or a future life. Knowledge usually should dawn at least in Brahma-loka, and there the final liberation is to be attained. Whatever is the last thought of the individual at the time of death shall be the determining factor of one's rebirth, because the last thought is the quintessence of all the thoughts one has been cherishing throughout one's life, and it is but natural that at the time of the death of a body the Pranas should stand collected and projected towards the region whose experience shall be the materialisation of one's last thought. This is equal to saying that what one does in the present life shall fashion the nature of one's future life. It does not mean that the last thought can be anything other than what one has been thinking throughout life. Moksha is the immediate non-objective experience of Brahman on which one has been meditating all along with intense devotion. By the force of Upasana, the primeval ignorance of the Jiva is dispelled, and Brahman is attained. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states that in the case of the desireless one, who has no other desire but the desire for the Atman, the Pranas do not depart. They do not get directed to any region or realm like projectiles, as they do in the case of ordinary mortals, but they dissolve then and there into the Substance of Brahman. Upasana leads to Jnana, the supreme achievement in life.

By the practice of unselfish Upasana, Moksha is attained, is the teaching of the Upanishad, and that by Upasana attended with desire, Brahma-loka is attained. One who meditates on the different constituents of Omkara, identifying them with the Brahman in Saguna form, passes through the region of the Sun, and having then reached the Brahma-loka, is finally liberated by the end of time when there is cosmic dissolution (Pralaya). He who meditates thus, transcends all realms and attains the ultimate liberation gradually, and so it is called Kramamukti, or Progressive salvation. The Upanishad, in this connection, mentions that at a particular stage the soul of the Upasaka encounters a superhuman being who guides it along the path further until liberation is attained. In the Brahmasutras too, the author makes out in one of the aphorisms that by Upasana on that which is not merely a symbol, the seeking soul becomes fit to receive the guidance of the superhuman being referred to. It is also made clear here that the rule according to which one attains whatever one intensely thinks upon determines the attainment of the ends of Upasana. This rule of fulfilment of wishes is called in the Brahmasutras as Tatkratu-nyaya, after the term used in the Upanishad. There, in Brahma-loka, by the force of the Upasana practised previously, one attains to Truth and returns not to this world again. He is finally liberated. There is only ascent and no reverting to the mortal world, as a result of desireless meditation.

Usually, in the Upanishad, the manner in which Pranava-Upasana is described, is Nirguna, but sometimes it is also regarded as Saguna for the purpose of Upasana. It all

depends upon the nature of the object with which Pranava is identified as the designator thereof. In the Prasna Upanishad, Pippalada gives his instructions to Satyakama on Omkara which is conceived of as both Para and Apra, i.e., the higher and the lower. Similarly, in the teaching of Lord Yama in the Katha Upanishad, it is said that the Upasana on Omkara leads to the realisation of whatsoever is in one's mind at the time of the Upasana, depending on the nature of the determination with which one commences the Upasana.

Thus, summing up, we may say that liberation may be possible either here immediately, now, or at the time of the dropping of the body, or it may be even after one's having attained Brahma-loka. Here, what determines the attainment is the nature of the Upasana. This fact is also emphasised in the Atma-Gita, where we are told that one should resort to continuous meditation on the nature of the Atman when discriminatory enquiry and investigation into the truths of things by direct approach is found difficult due to impurity of mind, fickleness of intellect, etc. Nevertheless, one should engage oneself in the practice, without the least trace of doubt in the mind, even though the realisation may not be near at hand. At the proper time the realisation shall come and there should be no impatience in this regard. As in digging out a treasure from the earth the stones etc., from above are removed with the help of instruments, so by setting aside the stone of the body and digging the earth of the mind with the spade of the intellect, one obtains the treasure of the Atman within. Meditation is imperative in the case of every seeker even if

there is no immediate experience. Let there be the confidence that what we are seeking for is our essential nature and, therefore, naturally, it should be much easier to realise it than to acquire other things which are extraneous to our nature. There will be felt within in the case of meditation an uncommon tranquillity and peace of mind, a joy and a sense of power which cannot be had in this world. By overcoming attachment to the body in this manner, by protracted meditation on the Atman which is the Absolute, the mortal becomes the immortal and there is Sadyo-mukti, or instantaneous experience of the Supreme Being. (Verses 1-158)

Chapter X

LIGHT ON THE DRAMA THEATRE

The Birth of the Individual

The Paramatman, the Supreme Being, who is non-dual in nature, blissful in essence, enters into every part of the Universe and assumes the form of the Jiva, the individual. It is the animation of the Jiva by the Paramatman that makes it pass for a reality in this world. Though Paramatman is universally present, everywhere, without any distinction whatsoever, His presence is felt in a greater or lower degree due to the difference in the subtleties of the media through which He manifests Himself. When there is this manifestation through rarefied media such as those of superphysical beings like the Lord Vishnu, etc., the One Being goes by the name of a deity or celestial. When He manifests Himself through a grosser medium, He becomes the mortal, as it were. The greater the manifestation of Sattva, the subtler and the more rarefied is the medium; and the greater the preponderance of Rajas and Tamas, the grosser is the medium. We find, therefore, in inanimate matter, the grossest form of this manifestation, while in such divinities such as the Lord Vishnu there is the highest possible manifestation. By passing through a series of births or transmigratory lives, the Jiva awakens to the consciousness of there being such a thing as higher life than the one in which it immediately finds itself, and by continuous endeavour on its part to purify itself by means of unselfish activity, worship, and so on, the pure discriminatory faculty dawns in it, by which it is enabled to draw a clear distinction between the true and the false, and

consequently to abandon the false and betake itself to the true. As a result of protracted Sadhana, in this manner, performed in various lives, there comes finally the realisation that the Atman alone is real.

The Illustration of the Lamp

The story of the Jiva may be said to be rooted in its consciousness of duality. This is its bondage, its movement towards the 'other-than-itself', and its freedom consists in its resting in the essence behind all empirical consciousness. Bondage which has been caused by non-discrimination can be removed only by correct discrimination. Hence it is the duty of everyone to correctly understand the true relation between the Jiva and the Paramatman. The Jiva is, for all practical purposes, the notion of the 'I', the principle of individuality. The Jiva's instrument of action is manas, the mind, or the Antahkarana, and its activity is in the form of its various transformations, both within and without. Inwardly, there is the notion of the 'I', and outwardly there is the apprehension of "this-ness" in regard to an object. This idea in regard to an external object, which is a general activity of the mind, is diversely interpreted by the senses in accordance with the special functions which they perform, such as seeing, hearing etc., but there is a third essentiality illumining both the doer and the deed, the witnessing Consciousness within, the Sakshin, as it is called, which instantaneously illumines the doer or knower, the mind and its modifications (Vrittis) and illumines also the various objects outside. This illumination is made not in succession, but simultaneously. To put it in the style of the

eighth chapter, the Sakshin, or the Witness Consciousness illumines the Chidabhasa, the Vrittis of the Antahkarana, and also the objects, at the same time. We have variegated sense-perceptions which are different from one another, but these are brought together in a single Consciousness, which knows all these varieties at once and illumines all these, like a lamp fixed in a stage or a drama theatre. The lamp in the stage illumines, equally, the director, the actors, the musicians, as well as the audience, and it shines even if no one exists there. This is its speciality. The Sakshin within, the witnessing Consciousness, illumines the ego, the mind, and the objects, all alike, and it shines even when all these subside, as in the state of deep sleep. It is on account of the shining of the Sakshin, or the Kutastha, that the mind appears to have a light of its own and performs different functions. Here, in the analogy of the theatre, we may compare the ego to the director of the play, the senses to the musicians, and the objects to the witnessing audience. In this enactment, the mind is the actor which dances to the tune of the senses, the musicians. The Sakshin, or the Witnessing Consciousness is comparable to the lamp which illumines all things in the stage.

The lamp in the stage illumines all things equally, from all sides, and shines also when there are no things to shine upon. In a similar manner, the Sakshin is a steady existence unmoving and unaffected and illumining everything inside and outside. This idea of an inside and outside arises on account of our judging things from the point of view of the body, and not from the point of view of the Sakshin itself. We say that the objects are outside because they are outside

the body, and similarly we say that the ego is within, because it is inside the body. The standard of judgment is the body in all our conceptions, and our statements are involved in this conception of inside and outside. The mind, which is within, moves without through the avenues of the senses, again and again, and this activity of the mind is falsely attributed to the Sakshin, and then it is said, “I see”, “I do”, and so on. Just as a beam of light proceeding from the Sun and passing through an aperture in a house may appear to be moving when a hand is passed or crossed over it rapidly, though there is no such motion in the light, so the Witnessing Consciousness appears to be actually active and undergoing changes etc., while these activities and changes belong to the intellect and the mind alone, due to their juxtaposition with the Witnessing Consciousness and on account of the transparent nature of the intellect and the mind, as there is a preponderance of Sattva here. There is a reflection of the Consciousness in the Antahkarana, and the whole Samsara begins and has its roots in this confusion between the Antahkarana and the Atman, whereby the luminous character of the Atman is superimposed on the Antahkarana, whose character is transformation without self-consciousness, and, conversely, also, takes place a transference of the changes of the Antahkarana to the unchanging Atman. Thus, the Sakshin, which is always at the same place without any movement, appears to move and act when it is falsely associated with the psyche. We cannot even say that the Sakshin is in any place, because it transcends space, time and individuality. We cannot say that it is everywhere, strictly speaking,

because of there being no spatial conception in it. The Atman is neither inside, nor outside, nor everywhere. All these are the notions of the Jiva in terms of its spatio-temporal experiences. The Atman is the Witness of even the concepts of space, time and individuality, or objectivity. It is inexplicable by words and unthinkable by the mind, and ununderstandable by the intellect. In one word, it is trans-empirical. There is no way of grasping it by the senses or the mind. It is known only when all attempts of grasping cease. When there is perfect equilibrium of the mind, a stillness born of Sattva, due to the absence of activity born of Rajas, the Atman shines by itself. Self-knowledge is its own proof and does not stand in need of any external proof. If, however, it is found difficult to completely cease from all psychic activity, then the other alternative would be to recognize the presence of the Atman as the unaffected Consciousness accompanying all cognitions and perceptions, as the light illumining all these, and yet apart from all these. This will lead, gradually, to a meditation on the real 'I' within. (Verses 1-26)

Chapter XI

THE BLISS OF YOGA

The Bliss of Brahman

Now we describe the nature of Absolute Bliss, or Brahmananda, by realising which in actual experience one is totally freed from all sorrow, instantly. One attains to supreme satisfaction, incomparable in nature, and quite apart from the ordinary happiness with which a mortal being is familiar. There are innumerable passages in the various Upanishads which state that Brahman is Bliss, and by attaining it one becomes immortal. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that one who knows Brahman reaches at once the highest state. The Mundaka Upanishad says that one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman itself. The Chhandogya Upanishad declares that the knower of the Atman crosses beyond all sorrow, and one who is established in Brahman attains immortality. the Taittiriya Upanishad, again, compares the Bliss of Brahman to Rasa, or the quintessential essence, the highest taste conceivable, and it is said that having obtained this essence, one enjoys divine bliss. We are also told that one who has gained perfect establishment in that super-sensible Brahman becomes absolutely fearless, and he who tries to see a difference in it, even in the least, has fear from all sides. That the Jiva is an integral part of Brahman, inseparable in nature, and identical with it in essence, is the import behind the whole teaching. The Jiva-consciousness, which is mostly characterised by egoism in some form or other, tries to create a difference between itself and the Reality, not only in its activities, but even in its thoughts and feelings. It is

this erroneous notion on the part of the Jiva that explains its Samsara, its suffering. Everything in this creation works in rhythm, and in unison with the perfect and inexorable law of the Absolute, and so pain should be the inevitable consequence of the attempt of the Jiva to break away from this universal law. Even the deities, the celestials, the denizens of heaven, in short, all things, stand in a state of perfect and harmonised relation with the Supreme Being. It is as if for fear of this Being that everyone performs his allotted duty without failure. It is impossible for anyone, at any time, to get away scot-free by violating the universal law, by asserting selfishness, however slight it may be. The Law of Brahman is utterly just and absolutely impartial. Therefore, it is the duty of everyone to maintain a consciousness of harmony with its existence, and it is this maintenance of a perpetual consciousness of harmony with Reality that goes by the name of Yoga. One who knows in experience the Bliss of Brahman fears not from anything and lives the true life of freedom from all grief and of deathless delight.

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that one who knows the Atman regards it as the only Reality, and is permanently established in that Consciousness, and then nothing that he has done or not done, viz., no Karma whatsoever, can affect him, or torment him. The results of action no more worry him. They may be there or not there – he is just not concerned with them. Abandoning, thus, both these Karmas, done as well as not done, he considers that everything is a manifestation of the Atman alone. “All this is the Atman alone” to him, says the Brihadaranyaka

Upanishad. Having regarded everything as an appearance of the Absolute Atman, he feels the presence of the Atman even in these Karmas and, naturally, it seems then that they should not be a source of trouble any more. In his case the knots of the heart, i.e., the connections apparently established between the Consciousness and the mind, are broken and the Consciousness stands supreme in its own Self without external relations, either with the mind, or the body, or the object outside. All the doubts are rent asunder and there remain no misgivings within in regard to the real nature of the Atman, or the world. The Karmas, too, perish and, excepting that the Prarabdha-Karma seems to linger on for some time notwithstanding that the Jivanmukta has no concern with it consciously, all the Karmas in his case drop off from his consciousness the moment he beholds the Eternal. He transcends death by knowing that resplendent Divine Being, and the scripture is emphatic that there is no other way to attain this state than direct realisation (*na anyah pantha vidyate*). By knowing and realising that splendid Existence, the Supreme Being, there is a cutting off of all bondage in the form of likes, dislikes, anger, and the like, and all these afflictions of the soul having crossed, there is a cessation of rebirth. Rebirth is due to the remnant of unfulfilled desires. When they are no more, there is no rebirth, too. By an inner vision of the Supreme Atman, one gets rid of pairs of opposites, like exhilaration and grief, etc., caused by events in the world, and that unusual hero who is adorned with a rare moral toughness within, sets aside both merit and demerit, which mean so much to the ordinary individual. One attains to supreme transcendence

(Kaivalya Moksha). There are statements in the scriptures which affirm that Brahman is Ananda, or Bliss, and its realisation puts an end to all sorrow and affliction.

Happiness may be spiritual, intellectual or sensory. These three types of happiness are being discussed here in detail. In the Taittiriya Upanishad we learn that Bhrigu approaches his father for wisdom and hears from his father the nature of Brahman as that which is the cause of all things, the sustenance of all things and also the end of all things. Bhrigu tries to investigate Brahman in his own experience and passes, stage by stage, from the physical to the vital, from the vital to the mental, from the mental to the intellectual, and from the intellectual to the blissful layers of experience. He does not go beyond Bliss, and recognises that Spiritual Bliss is the source of everything, and everything lives on account of this Bliss and returns finally into this Bliss, at the end of time. Brahman should definitely be Eternal Bliss in nature.

The Nature of the Infinite

Prior to the creation of this world, there was the One, undivided Absolute, unconditioned by the differences of the seer, the seeing and the seen. There was that divine, Infinite Brahman, above the differences of knower, knowledge and known. It was without distinction of space, time and causality. This difference starts only when the Jiva arises as an evolute at the time of creation, wherein are the intellect as the seer, the mind as the process of seeing, and the various external objects as the seen. No such thing ever was before creation. This state of feeling is faintly indicated

in such relapses of consciousness as in Samadhi, sleep and swoon. Sage Sanatkumara asserts that Bhuma, or the Plenum (fullness, completeness) alone is Bliss. There is no Bliss in the finite things which are subject to the distinction of knower, knowledge and known. This was the reply given by the Sage to Narada who complained about the dissatisfaction of his mind and the grief that was tormenting him in spite of his vast learning and proficiency in the arts and the sciences. Well, prior to learning there is only the triple affliction from the internal, external and celestial causes, but after it comes there is the pain of committing it to memory, the possibility of forgetting it, the chances of humiliation before more learned ones, and also the likelihood of priding oneself in front of learned ones. With all this grief, Narada approaches Sanatkumara requesting to be taken to what is beyond all sorrow. Sanatkumara's answer is that Bliss is what is beyond sorrow, and it is only in the Absolute; it is not to be found anywhere else. Certainly it is not the happiness that one is accustomed to in this world, because the happiness of the world is entangled in many troubles and afflictions, and often it brings only sorrow as its consequence. Hence it is the opinion of Sanatkumara that all earthly happiness is pain only in another guise and he gradually asserts that wherever there is a perception of a second to oneself, it should be considered as finite and a source of unhappiness, and where there is no second to oneself, it is the Infinite, and it is Bliss. The Non-dual Infinite is not directly experienced by mortals, yet it is the consequential effect of the experience of the relativity of things, and naturally it

does not require any proof to establish its existence, because of its Self-luminosity.

The Example of Deep Sleep

Prior to the creation of the dualistic world there must have been only the non-dual condition, since there is no other alternative at all. This is known to us as a semblance in the state of deep sleep. One's own sleep is a valuable proof of it. Sleep does not stand in need of any other proof, though the experiences of others are inferred by us from their behaviour, etc. Our own experiences are not so inferred, but are directly known, as, for example, in deep sleep, where we are sure of our existence though there are no mind and senses functioning. This conviction is what is meant by Self-luminosity. In the state of deep sleep, there is absolutely no grief. Even the blind, the sick and the wounded have no such feelings of deformity, then. Thus, we have to conclude that the absence of sorrow in sleep is felt by us directly and positively, and inasmuch as there is no sorrow at all, we cannot identify it with anything other than happiness. Else, there can be no reason why people should take so much pain in preparing beddings, and so on, to go to sleep, even at the cost of wealth and much inconvenience. There is definitely something positive in deep sleep which is to be investigated.

The happiness of deep sleep should be considered as positive and not merely as an attempt to forget the pains of the world. Even healthy persons who have everything that they want and cannot be said to have any pain whatsoever, go to sleep and find there is happiness which is

incomparable. Though the arranging of soft bed, etc. at the time of entering into the state of sleep may be regarded as sensory in the sense that it is born of a contact of the tactile sense with an object, viz., soft bed, yet, the happiness of deep sleep is not born of any such contact. Tired by the activities of the world and seeking for a place of rest to remove this fatigue, one tries to go to sleep and prepares several means for this purpose, such as soft bed, etc. The truth, however, is that there is a total dissatisfaction with the business of life, because, the Jiva, though it may not be aware of it, is wandering away from the source of happiness when it moves amongst the objects of the world. Whenever there is a dualistic experience, the mind is naturally in a state of aberration and cannot be satisfied until it reverts to the natural state of unity. Soft bed etc., is only a preparation for this natural rest which it finds when the distinction of the knower, knowledge and known is transcended, and duality is completely negated. All mental activities in a world of space, time and cause should, thus, be regarded as unnatural from the point of view of the Supreme Absolute. It is to forget its miserable plight in the world that the Jiva runs to Brahman constantly in order that it may become one with its supernal Bliss.

In the Upanishad, the examples of a falcon, a hawk, a child, a king and a wise man are given to illustrate the nature of Divine Bliss which far surpasses the pleasures of the dualistic world of desires. Just as the falcon, which is tethered to a peg or held firmly in the hand by means of a string, may try to fly higher and higher, but cannot find a place of rest till it returns to the source to which it is tied;

just as a hawk may soar to lofty heights throughout the day in all directions but must return to its own nest at the end of the day for final rest, it being possible for it to find real satisfaction and true freedom and peace only in its own nest; just as a small child lying happily on a tiny beautiful bed after having drunk deep from the mother's breast smiles lovingly and appears to be an embodiment of happiness due to the fact that it is completely free from the distinction of 'mine' and 'thine' and from the afflictions and of likes and dislikes; just as an emperor who is the master of a large empire, who has all the conceivable pleasures of the world, and has the joy of having possessed everything and living unopposed and uncontested, may be regarded as an embodiment of the climax of satisfaction among human beings; so does a person who is well-versed in the scriptures and is established in Brahman, having attained the peace that comes by the realisation of having done everything that is necessary to be done and having obtained everything and known everything, having reached the summit of wisdom, have a different kind of happiness altogether, beyond all the happiness of the world, due to a direct communion with Brahman.

All these types of happiness are due either to a slight reflection of the Bliss of Brahman or a direct experience of it. The Jiva craves for this unearthly happiness and never rests until it finds it. It is for this reason that there is a regular entering into a state of deep sleep by the Jiva after all its frantic attempts at acquiring happiness in the world of objects.

The ignorant condition of a child's mind, the perfectly satisfied condition of an emperor, and the spiritually poised divine condition of the sage, represent three examples in this world of the state of the absence of likes and dislikes, due to which there is a degree of indication of the approximation of the individual to the Absolute. Everyone else who is entangled in the network of likes and dislikes is unhappy in this world, for the obvious reason that in the latter case there is a forgetfulness of the Atman and a constant contemplation of outside objects. When there is union of oneself with one's most beloved possession, there is a forgetfulness of both the internal and external world, and there is a merging of oneself, as it were, in the beloved object. The Jiva is busy with the outward world in the waking state and enters the inner world when it is in the state of dream. In deep sleep it loses its individuality and so does not know whether it is human or animal, with desire or without desire, and knows no distinction whatsoever. In this sense, we may say there is, for the time being, an obliteration of Samsara in the state of deep sleep, the Jiva having been there one with Brahman. It is one's egoism or the personal restricted consciousness relating to its specific qualifications and conditions in life that becomes responsible for one's pleasures and pains in this world. The Upanishad proclaims that when egoism is removed, one goes beyond all the sorrow that afflicts one's heart. The Bliss of sleep and the ignorance that characterises sleep are both experienced by a Consciousness, and this fact is confirmed later on by a memory that one has after waking up from sleep. But for this Consciousness which is

permanently present, there would have been no remembrance later on of either one's having had happiness in sleep or one's having known nothing there. This Consciousness is Brahman, says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, and this Consciousness is Bliss. This ignorance which acts as a covering veil in the state of deep sleep is only a withdrawn condition of the intellectual and mental sheaths which are active in the waking state. This temporary dissolution of the mind is called sleep, and this itself is called ignorance. As ghee can be solidified and melted, the intellect of the Jiva can solidify itself into certain special experiences of the waking state or get merged into the molten condition of complete negativity of experience in sleep. This state is also called Anandamaya-kosa (bliss-sheath).

The mind which is inclined towards sleep prior to the state of sleep gets later dissolved into the state of sleep itself, and while, in this introverted inactive condition it had experienced only a slight reflection of the Bliss of Brahman, it now experiences in deep sleep the same Bliss in a completely withdrawn condition of oblivion and forgetfulness of the world. As there is no ego functioning in the state of deep sleep, one does not feel this experience personally. The personal consciousness is possible only when the ego is active as in the waking state. The Mandukya Upanishad mentions that in the condition of the deep sleep the Jiva is unified as it were, and becomes a mass of Consciousness, enjoys the Bliss of Brahman through the inactive psychoses of the mind, and itself becomes the embodiment of Bliss there. All its ramifications as thoughts,

feelings, etc. get unified into one, and, as several grains may be unified into a lump of paste made out of them, all the variegated mental modifications of the waking condition become heavy laden when they get reduced to a harmonious state, as different drops of water may gather into one mass forming mist or snow. This is the medium of the manifestation of the Sakshi-chaitanya, or the Witnessing Consciousness, and it is Bliss itself, as has been explained already, and not merely a state of the absence of pain. It is an experience of positive delight. But with all this experience of Brahmananda in the state of deep sleep, the Jiva hastens back to the waking condition due to certain Karmas working to fulfil their demands in a different state of consciousness. It is on account of these unfulfilled Karmas that one does not continue to exist for long in any particular state of consciousness. There is a constant change of states on account of the change in the manifestation of the Karma forces. When there is waking up due to this reason, the Jiva, for a few minutes, after having experienced sleep, continues to remember the Bliss it experienced there, and retains this conscious condition as a faint recollection of the Bliss of Brahman manifested in sleep.

After the experience of deep sleep, there is a return of the mind to the waking world due to the activity of the Karmas not yet worked out. These Karmas direct the mind of the Jiva in certain particularised channels of activity, which is the business of the waking world. The Bliss of the Absolute experienced in sleep is forgotten by the Jiva instantaneously, because of the sudden switching on of the consciousness to something quite different from what was

experienced previously. However, there is an inclination of the mind towards this Bliss experienced prior as well as posterior to the state of deep sleep. This is the reason why there is an unequalled happiness immediately just before and after deep sleep. This, however, does not mean that any inert condition of the personality has any spiritual significance because, here, in an ordinary inert state, there is not even a consciousness of the state in which one is at the time. It is essential to have a vigilant consciousness of the condition in which one finds oneself in order that it may be converted into a step in the spiritual ascent. If one knows very well that the silent condition of the mind without thoughts of objects is the conscious condition of oneself, then, naturally, it would have spiritual value. It is not enough if one is merely silent and sits quiet without doing anything. It is essential also to maintain a steady consciousness in that silent condition of the mind. This is exactly what differentiates between Nidra (sleep) and Samadhi (Super-consciousness).

Mere informative understanding also is not of any significance here. What is essential is experience by an actual living in it, and this cannot be possible unless one lives a dedicated life under an able preceptor and studies the scriptures with faith and devotion. Else, it would be like a person who said that he knew that the Vedas are four, and demanded the present promised to one who knew the four Vedas. Intellectual information is bare featureless description. It does not enter into one's life and cannot affect one's position. A mere reading of words is one thing and the understanding of their meaning is another, and

even if there is correct understanding, actual realisation is far above and beyond it. Until actual realisation is attained, it is necessary to serve a preceptor who is established in true wisdom.

Variety in Happiness

When there is the feeling of the possession of a desired object, there is also a temporary cessation of that desire, and the quality of Rajas in the mind which propelled the desire outwardly comes to a cessation. The Rajas having ceased for the time being, there is a quick introversion of the mind and a revelation of the stability of Sattva brought about as a consequence, which occasions a sudden reflection of the Bliss of the Atman within, which makes one happy at the time. Sensual happiness, therefore, is not something imported from the object outside, but really belongs to the Atman within, though, on account of ignorance, the Jiva does not know that this is the fact. The object merely acts as an outward agent causing a temporary cessation of Rajas in the mind and an accidental manifestation of Sattva, wherein the Atman is reflected perspicaciously. Thus, it becomes clear that every sensory happiness of the world is ultimately a distorted expression of Brahmananda. Yet the mistake here lies in the Jiva's wrong notion that the pleasure has come from the object, and its consequent clinging to the object. It is this clinging that causes the sorrow of the Jiva, and its transmigratory life is occasioned by its desires due to love for pleasure. In this world there are only sense-pleasures of various kinds, but the true Bliss of Brahman is never felt at any time

except during the short duration of the interval lying between the cessation of a thought and the rise of another. Broadly, we can classify happiness into three groups: 1) Bliss of Brahman experienced in direct realisation; 2) Impression or the Vasana, of it, experienced immediately after waking from deep sleep, etc; 3) Sensory happiness which is the reflection of Brahman Bliss through the psychological organs. Other than these three types, there is no happiness anywhere. However, it does not mean that there are three independent kinds of happiness; the latter two are only manifestations of Brahmananda, or Absolute Bliss. The Bliss of Brahman is manifest in the state of deep sleep in the way explained, and the mind and intellect, working in dream and waking, distract it by the operation of Rajas, externally. The same thing, in fact, appears as the cause in sleep and as effect in the other two conditions. These changes in the states of the Jiva are due to the working of the Karmas of the past, lying hidden as latent forces ready to germinate when suitable circumstances are provided. During the waking state, Consciousness pervades the whole body and is said to be specially active in the right eye; in dream it operates in the region of the throat, and in deep sleep it resides in the heart. There is a gradual widening of the field of Consciousness as it moves from sleep to waking. It is due to the identification of Consciousness with the objects in the waking state that one begins to feel that one is a human being, and so on. Such feelings are connected with bodies and are not relevant to Consciousness as such. The individual is, accordingly, happy, or unhappy, or indifferent, as and when the forces

of the Karmas begin to work differently in the different stages of evolution. When there is a complete cessation of both happiness and sorrow, it means that the Karmas are not actively operating. By contact with physical objects, and also by generating of imaginary ideas, happiness and sorrow are possible, but when there is neither of these experiences there is joy which is not born of sense-contact, and in this condition of silence of the mind true spiritual bliss is revealed.

On account of there being a generality of egoism (Ahamkara) in these experiences, the Jiva does not have actual experience of Brahman then, but only the inferential glimpse of it. Egoism is of two kinds, gross and subtle. The gross one is that by which one refers to oneself as “so-and-so”, meaning thereby that oneself is a body. The subtle ego is the simple feeling of “I am”, without any other association, such as the body, etc. The subtle ego-consciousness prevails even when there is an experience of spiritual happiness, when there are no thoughts of anything in particular, and there is silence of mental activity. Just as we can infer that cool water is in a pot by the feeling of coolness outside the wall of the pot, so can we infer that there should be an Absolute due to the very fact that there is cessation of thought and individuality-sense. In proportion to the forgetfulness of the ego by the practice of Yoga does one gain an insight into the spiritual happiness revealed through the development of a subtle vision within.

The Art of Yoga

The Kathopanishad succinctly describes Yoga as a resting of the senses in the mind, the mind in the intellect, the intellect in the Cosmic Intelligence, and the Cosmic Intelligence in the Supreme Purusha. This is the way of what is called Nirodha-Samadhi, or Super-Conscious State achieved by complete annihilation of all psychic functions. The ego, in this condition, having been transcended and absorbed into larger dimensions of being, the Yogin ceases to be a person any more. The Lord Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita that Brahmananda is the state where there is neither the perception of duality nor experience of sleep. The Lord exhorts us that by the intellect endowed with fortitude, the mind should be gradually brought under control, and when it is once subdued well and fixed in the Atman, one should think nothing at all. Whenever the mind moves astray due its fickle nature born of Rajas, then and there should it be brought back as one does horses with reins. The mind should, thus, be fixed in the Atman. That rare, purified soul whose mind has been purged of Rajas, that Yogin who has become veritably Brahman due to freedom from the impurity of desires, reaches the Bliss which is supreme, wherein, having been controlled by the practice of Yoga, one experiences the Atman by the Atman, and is immensely delighted thereby, wherein is found the absolute supersensible happiness to be visualised only by the higher rarefied intelligence, wherein established one does not shake, or oscillate from Truth at any time, by obtaining which one does not think that there is any gain other than that, and having rooted oneself in which one is

not affected by even the most tormenting of sorrows – that is to be known as Yoga, the dissociation of oneself from union with pain. This is to be achieved by firm conviction in this spiritual ideal, without yielding oneself to despondency on the path. Thus constantly practising the Yoga of the Atman, the Yogin contacts the Bliss of Brahman and exists as Brahman, all his senses having been trained out and absorbed. But such control of mind is hard and may be compared to the difficulty of bailing the ocean with a blade of grass, uprooting the Meru mountain, or drinking fire.

In the Maitrayani Upanishad, Sage Sakayanaya instructs that when all the modifications of the mind subside, it reverts to its Source even as fire is extinguished when it is devoid of feeding material. Such a mind which seeks only Truth, which has gone back to its Source and which has turned away from all the objects of sense, sees this world of action as essenceless. The mind alone is Samsara (bondage) and, hence, it is to be enquired into. Whatever one deeply thinks, that one becomes. This is the eternal secret. By gaining tranquillity of mind, the effects of Karmas are overcome and there is the experience of the Atman by the Atman, of Bliss imperishable. If one's yearning for objects due to confusion of mind were to be directed to Brahman, one would attain liberation at once, opines the Sage. The mind is twofold in nature – pure and impure. The impure one is enmeshed in desires while the pure one is that which is free from desires. The impure mind is the cause of one's bondage, and the objectless mind is the way to Moksha. The Bliss of Samadhi which comes out of a total rise of the

mind from Rajas and Tamas, by the establishment of itself in the Atman, is ineffable in nature.

A person of faith recollects the Bliss of Brahman experienced by him during the intervals of thoughts and feelings. There arises also the determination that all the variety of the world is spiritual, too. Once there is an insight of this nature, there can never again be any confusion in the mind in regard to the true nature of things. Nevertheless, this happiness which arises during the cessation of Rajas in the mind, is a manifestation of Brahman's Bliss through the Sattva mode of the mind, and so it cannot be a perpetual condition of experience. All modes of Prakriti are transient. They change their position constantly like a wheel that is rotating. Knowing this, the seeker ignores even this happiness and tries to enter into the primary Bliss of the Atman, uncontaminated by the changes of Prakriti. A person who is well established in this state lives in the world unconcerned, yet performs his duties like anyone else, in the same manner as one who is serving under a master may do appointed duties as a routine and still be thinking in his mind what is really and inwardly cherished by him. Living in this world, and yet being conscious of the Divine Being, the hero attains internal peace, because of the fact that he is unconnected with what is happening either outside or inside. True heroism is the capability to subdue the senses and concentrate the mind on Brahman alone, even when the senses are impetuous and violent. As a person who throws down a load from his head feels that he has got rid of fatigue, one throws down the load of Samsara by conscious dissociation from it, and attains inner

tranquillity. Happiness and misery do not affect him in the least, and it becomes immaterial to him whether there is a positive occasion for exhilaration or a negative one of grief, or whether he is indifferent. He is averse to anything that is an opposing factor to spiritual meditation, as a person is averse to adorning the body and looking beautiful in other's eyes when there is an imminent chance of being swallowed up in the conflagration of a fire. The consciousness of the seer moves between the happiness of the world and the Bliss of the Absolute as and when occasion demands it, just as the power of perception in a crow moves between the two sockets of its eyes. Like a person who knows two languages, the seer experiences world-consciousness and also the spiritual consciousness of Brahman successively. He is not, as before, grieved or upset, due to his present novel perception, and is not annoyed or irritated by the pains of the world. He has a double experience simultaneously of world-life and Godliness, as a person standing waist-deep in the cool waters of the Ganga may experience coolness below and heat above from the Sun. In this manner, the seer recognises the Bliss of Brahman even in the waking state of Consciousness, not merely in the state of deep sleep. When he is established in such a state, he manages to retain this vision even in the dream state, but inasmuch as, together with the power of his spiritual experience, his past Karmas also work parallelly, he may have a twofold experience of spiritual Bliss and worldly pain. There is all this struggle between the inner and the outer, between the present and the past, between the power

of Sadhana and the forces of Karma, until Jivanmukti is attained, where the two are reconciled. (Verses 1-134)

Chapter XII

THE BLISS OF THE SELF

Self-love Explained

Though the Yogins who are engaged in meditation and are endowed with an acute discriminative faculty do recognise the Bliss of Brahman in actual experience, as also during occasions of the cessation of Rajas in the mind, and at the time when there is an impression left by the Bliss of Brahman after its experience in the state of sleep; yet, the more ignorant ones cannot discover this Bliss so easily due to their minds being affected with greater amounts of Rajas and Tamas. On account of the performance of Dharma and Adharma, or meritorious deeds and sinful deeds, the cycle of births and deaths is kept on revolving, and the Jiva, thus, takes countless births. It may, therefore, appear that, perhaps, there is no way at all for dull-witted persons to get out of the wheel of Samsara. But, really, the way of Sadhana being vast and all-comprehending, there is to be found a way for everyone placed in any circumstance in life. The moment there is a commencement of the sacrifice of one's selfishness even in the least degree one is on the right path, though living at a lower level. For those who are of superior understanding the method has already been explained in the eleventh chapter, but to those who are mostly extrovert in nature, unselfish activity and Upasana, or devout contemplation, should be prescribed. By those who are really aspiring and yet are not endowed with a higher understanding, the procedure mentioned below may be adopted.

This procedure has actually been followed by Sage Yajnavalkya in his instructions to his consort, Maitreyi. He holds that everything in this world is desirable and lovable for the sake of the Atman, the True Self. The mind is moved gradually inward in this teaching, by taking into consideration the outward aspects of objects and the external nature of the world. The love between husband and wife, for instance, is a conditioned, personal desire made manifest. If there is an absence of desire either by the call of duty or by diminishing of desire, the love, too, gets diminished. The love is indicated to bring satisfaction to one's own self in the end, whether in the case of the husband or the wife. Even in mutual love, the incentive is a desire for one's own happiness. The parent's love for children is of a similar nature. The parents expect the release of an emotional tension within, in many ways, by which they acquire some pleasure, having no real objective love for children, a fact well known. One does not love wealth for the sake of wealth, because wealth has no consciousness of its own, and it is absolutely desireless. One wishes to make use of it as an instrument for one's own pleasure. People tend cattle because they expect services from them. A bull, for example, is yoked and made to carry weights, not for its pleasure but for the pleasure of the person concerned. The feeling of satisfaction due to one's being a Brahmana or Kshatriya, on account of the respectability, power, and so on, which one finds invested on oneself thereby, does not belong to those circumstances of caste, etc., because they are unconscious, and are only attributes, but they bring joy to the mind only of that

human being who has a desire of that nature. This is the case with persons in any status of life, or social position, that they may be enjoying. People love to rule in heaven, in Brahmaloaka, etc., not with the intention of bringing any good to those regions but for their own enjoyment. This, again, is very clear. Worships offered to deities are meant for achieving some personal ends, overcoming difficulties, and getting rid of troubles, etc. It is never done for the pleasure of the gods so worshipped, because the gods want nothing from men, and it is futile to think that they can be pleased by human actions. Here, again, it is a question of one's own satisfaction. People study the scriptures, like the Vedas to overcome the stigma of a false status in life. The study is really not concerned with the Vedas, themselves, but with the mind of man alone. Our regard for earth and the other elements is because they give us place and facility to live, and we cannot live without them. The earth is the abode, water quenches thirst, fire gives warmth and enables us to cook our food, air helps us in drying and makes our life-breath function, and space makes our existence itself possible. They are all held by us in great esteem, not for their own sake, but because they are instruments in bringing happiness to us in some way or other. Psychologically, this is the position, but spiritually it is an indication of an inward calling of the Infinite, without which no individual can exist, and whose love is the real meaning behind all empirical loves. It is, as it were, the Infinite summoning the Infinite, when there is an attraction of one thing towards another, because the Infinite Atman is the Source of all Bliss, and it is this Bliss that is the real

explanation and the central aim of all thoughts, feelings and actions in this world. The aim of life is the realisation of Brahman, and it is the love for the Bliss of Brahman that appears in this world distortedly and in a broken form as affections for things. The Atman, or Brahman, is the Goal. It is the existence of that Bliss that makes individuals restless here.

All the objects of the world are subsidiary to the love of the Atman, and it is certain that the affection that one has for objects is not entirely for their own sake, but for the satisfaction of one's own Self, which pulls everything to itself in the different degrees and levels of its expression. Even the good that is done to others is intended to bring the satisfaction to oneself of having done the good act. Even help of various kinds given to others brings about a release of inner tension caused by the feeling of the pain of not being able to see the suffering of others. We can generally say that whatever be the object towards which one cherishes an affection, the object is subsidiary, instrumental, and secondary to the Atman.

No doubt, there are differences in the manifestation of love. For example, when it is in relation to an object not yet possessed, it is called Ichha, or longing. If it is towards God, or Guru, it is called Bhakti, or devotion. If it is towards performance of a Yajna, or sacrifice, etc., it is called Sraddha, or faith. If it is in regard to such objects as wife etc., it is called Raga, or attachment. Nevertheless, it can be said that all these are just ramifications of a primary Sattvika Vritti, whose object is mere pleasure, and which persists whether the object in question is obtained or not

obtained, or is removed from oneself. Such things, as food and drink are only external instruments in bringing about happiness to ourselves, and hence lovable on that account; but it cannot be said that the Atman is also merely an agent or instrument in bringing happiness, as food and drink are, because, here, in the case of the Atman, the concept of instrumentality is inapplicable. It cannot be said that the Atman can be both the experiencer and the instrument, at one and the same time, because enjoyership and the object enjoyed cannot be identified with each other and the two cannot be one thing. One never knows enjoying the Atman as an objective pleasure, because the Atman is second to none, and is supreme. In the case of sense-pleasures, our affection is fickle, and is subject to conditions, on account of which it changes from time to time, from person to person, or from one thing to another, as the occasion may demand, but the Atman is unconditionally loved, and this love for the Atman can never be restricted to conditions and circumstances or to anything that is in this world. There is no change whatsoever in the love that one has for one's own Self, though one may take in one object and abandon another at different times, because of the variety in the pleasures that these objects are supposed to be bringing to oneself. The Atman cannot be abandoned or possessed like the objects of the world. Hence, it is impossible to have attitudes of like and dislike in regard to the Atman. Nor is the Atman an object of our indifference, as, for example, a piece of grass or straw, the Atman being the very essence and nature of the person who tries to develop such an attitude of indifference. The essential

Atman is not an object of mental attitude and is not conditioned by personal behaviours. No doubt, it is seen, sometimes, that people who are affected with agonising diseases and overcome by great emotions evince a desire to die. and it may appear that they have a real hatred for the Self, but this is not at all the fact. They never hate their own Self really, but are fed up with some particular unpleasant conditions in their lives, due to which they would prefer to put an end to those conditions which are the causes of the sorrow, but not end the Self itself. Suicide is a love to be free from pain, and not a hatred for oneself. The Atman is the essence of even him who tries to commit suicide. The hatred is not towards the Atman. For all these reasons it should be clear that the Atman is the object of one's deepest and most genuine love.

This is also seen from such an instance as the father having some affection for his son's friend, because of his love for his own son. That, again, is ultimately connected with his affection towards himself, and this love is certainly much more than the one he has for his son. Everyone feels: "Let me not cease to be; let me remain always". This inner prayerful feeling is always present in everyone, from which it is ostensibly clear that there is immense love for one's own Self. Yet, there are people in this world who, many a time, regard son, wife, etc., as representatives of one's own Atman and hold that the love which one has for them is real. From the scriptural allusion that one is reborn as one's son, it is made out that the son is the real Atman of the father and that the son is the true representative of the father on earth, acquired by his past meritorious deeds. But,

there is no end to the series of fathers and sons, and so we have to imagine also a series of those transferred Atmans, whereby it may look that the Atman can really be outside one's Self and loved as an object. It is seen in this world that people have intense love for their children and regard a son as not only a means of their happiness in the other world, but even of their pleasure in this world. It is seen that people are usually unhappy without children and it is a common feeling of the generality of mankind that children are of great importance, as it is seen especially when people are very eager, even when they are about to die, that their family and children are well fixed in society and their properties well safeguarded. They struggle hard to assure the safety and permanency of their family and children even after their own death, all which may make it appear that one's Atman is transferred to them and they are themselves one's Atman. This, however, is not the truth.

Degrees of Self

The relation which the father has with the son, for example, is not really the finding of one's Self in the son, but is something different and is secondary. For the clarification of the different types of attitude which people have in regard to things, the concept of the Atman may be grouped under three heads: 1) Gauna, or secondary; 2) Mithya, or false; and 3) Mukhya, or primary.

When it is said that a certain person is a lion, one does not really mean that the human being has become a lion. What is intended is that the person concerned has the bravery of a lion. The identification of a human being with

a lion is secondary, and not real, because, it is clear that a human being can never become a lion and yet such a comparison is made, only from a particular angle of vision and not in all respects. So is the identification of the father's Atman with the son. It does not mean that the son is really the Atman of the father, for this can never be, for obvious reasons. The father and the son are two different persons and the connection of the one with the other is mental and not real. There are such secondary relationships established with various other things also in this world, which one regards as dear or lovable. Hence, the secondary self, or the Gauna-Atman, is something lying outside oneself as a personality and not genuinely connected with one's real Self. But there is another self, the Mithya-Atman, the false self. We know very well that there is a difference between the external sheaths, such as the physical body, and the innermost Consciousness, because Consciousness never becomes an object at any time; yet this distinction is not seen. There is a false superimposition of the Consciousness on the Kosha, or the sheath, and so this superimposed self is naturally the Mithya self, or the false self. However, in the real Atman, or the Mukhya-Atman, there is no such distinction as is seen between the Gauna-Atman and the Mithya-Atman. The Mukhya-Atman or the Primary Self has nothing set in opposition to it, because there is nothing second to it and it is the inner Self or the essential Being of everything, including the Gauna-Atman and the Mithya-Atman. Hence, by inordinate attachment to a particular concept of the self, viz., Gauna, Mithya and Mukhya, one regards the former two as secondary, taking one alone as

primary, for the fulfilment of a specific purpose under a given set of circumstances. Suppose a person is about to die, and at that time he has a desire that his house etc. should be protected even after his death, who will do it? Not the Universal or the Absolute Atman, because it is changeless and unattached to things. Not also the Mithya-Atman, or the body, because it is about to die. There is only one thing remaining, which will be of use to fulfil this desire, namely, one's own children, or wife, and the like. Here, again, it should be remembered that we do not regard one's son really as one's own self, and this is done only in a secondary sense, just for the purpose of keeping intact one's property etc., and not for other purposes, just as, when we say that the student is fire, we say so only to indicate that the student is bright like fire, and not that the fire itself is the student, because such a meaning would be unsuited to the context as an unwarranted and extended utilisation of the idea of the Gauna-Atman. But when one says, "I am thin and lean", "I shall take nutritious diet and put on fat", etc., naturally, only the body is meant here by the term 'I', and not others, such as son, etc. When one expresses a feeling, "I shall perform penance and go to heaven", one means the individual self, or the Vijnana-Atman, and not the other Atmans, the body, the son, and so on, because even disregarding the comforts of the body one performs for this sake such austerities as Chandrayana, etc. When one says, "I shall attain Moksha, or liberation", the Atman meant here is not children, or property, or body, or even one's own individuality, but the Pure Consciousness within, which one comes to know by resorting to a suitable Guru,

and study of scripture under him. After knowing that, one does nothing else, having no desire for anything other than meditation on Brahman.

The scripture enjoins a sacrifice called Barhaspatya-Sava on a Brahmana, Rajasuya on a Kshatriya, Vaisya-stoma on a Vaisya, wherein one person becomes relevant in regard to a particular sacrifice, and the other irrelevant and secondary. The point illustrated is that something is primary for a particular purpose and other things are secondary. The point illustrated is that something is primary for a particular purpose and other things are secondary, and in this manner different things may become primary or secondary from the standpoints of different kinds of utility. Love is supreme in regard to the Primary Self in any particular condition, and the remaining ones do not command such love, but remain Gauna, or secondary. At any given moment, only a particular idea of self is taken as primary and supreme love is evinced in accordance to it, regarding others as non-essential or secondary. The love which we have for ordinary things is not unconditional. It is just nominal, but that which is neither the primary self nor the object befitting one's pleasure becomes the object of indifference, and in regard to this we have neither supreme love nor even ordinary love.

Now those objects for which we have no love at all may be either objects of total indifference or of hatred. The straw, for example, seen on the way is an object of our indifference. A tiger or a cobra is an object of hatred or fear. Thus, there is the Primary Atman for which we have supreme love, the secondary Atman for which we have only

ordinary love, the object of indifference, and the object of hatred, and as regards these four types of classification, we cannot lay down a standard and say that certain things are always dear, or always hateful, or always objects of indifference, etc., because as times change and circumstances differ, we have different attitudes and consider different things as desirable and undesirable, etc. Take, for example, the instance of a tiger. If it comes to attack us from the front, it becomes a detestable object. If it runs away in the opposite direction it becomes an object of indifference. But if it has been domesticated and is tended at home, it becomes an object of affection. Though there is no particular determination as to whether something is lovable or otherwise at all times, yet the practical world goes on the assumption and acceptance of there being such a thing as being conducive to our happiness, or opposed to our interests, or sometimes just lying outside our concern itself. The Atman is very dear, the object connected with it is ordinarily dear in a secondary fashion, but other things than these are either disliked or ignored. This is the way the world regards things.

This is also the opinion of the Sage Yajnavalkya, as stated in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Atman is dearer than son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, because it is nearer than and interior to everything. Hence, it is the dearest of all things. By careful investigation on the basis of scriptural teachings one comes to know that the Sakshin, or the Witnessing Consciousness, alone, is the true Atman, and nothing else, and this investigation consists in a differentiation of the five external sheaths from

the innermost Consciousness, and fixing the vision on Truth. That is the true Consciousness, Self-luminous in nature, by which the appearance and the disappearance of the various states like waking, dreaming and deep sleep are known, and which, therefore, is apart from these different various states. All things, right from the inner Prana, up to outward things as wealth, are secondary to the Atman, and our affection for these various things is in proportion to the nearness of anyone of these. The degree of our nearness determines the degree of our affection for them. So, for instance, the son is dearer than wealth, one's own body is dearer than son, the senses are dearer than body, the Prana is dearer than the senses, and the Supreme Atman is dearer than even the Prana, or life itself.

This being the truth, the scripture, nevertheless, delineates the controversy between the wise and the ignorant for the sake of the understanding of the student, so that the student may be aware of the difference between wisdom and ignorance. The truth, however, remains that the Atman is the object of Supreme Love. The knower of Truth holds that the inner Witnessing Consciousness alone is real, while the ignorant persons think that there are other things also in this world, like wife, children, property, etc., which are meant for the pleasure of the Atman; but the Upanishad warns us that this is not the fact. The Sage says that if you hold anything other than the Atman as dear, you shall lose what you hold as dear, and that what you consider as dear shall make you weep one day. This expression of the Sage may act as an instruction to the disciple or as a curse on the person who obstinately opposes the Truth of the

Atman. We shall be bereft of what we consider as dear if the dear object is different from the Atman. The disciple endeavours to recognise the defects in the ordinary objects of the world, which are usually considered as dear.

For instance, let us take the case of a son. The parents are unhappy when they see no chance of getting a child, and if there is any chance, there is anxiety whether the birth will be safe or not. If the birth becomes all right, there is no knowing whether the child will be affected by some fit or disease. Even supposing that this is averted, the child may turn out a dull-wit, and even when instructed may not be able to acquire any learning. There is the anxiety of finding a match; there is the chance of the youth going astray; there is a possibility of his becoming poor; and even if everything goes well, one cannot know when death will overtake the person. The miser of the parents knows no end, whether they have children, or no children. Such sort of discrimination should be extended to all things in the world which we regard as dear possessions of ours, and abandoning our love for them, the love should be centred in the Supreme Atman alone. When such a spiritual love is developed, we begin to contemplate on the Atman with unshakeable fixity, continuously, without break. Those, however, who cling to perishable things and do not give up their obstinacy in holding that the world is all and that there is nothing above, that the objects are lovable and they are primary – they suffer unending misery in lower births, where there will be contact with undesirable things and separation from desirable ones. There is even the chance of falling into lowest regions, like hell.

The Upanishad affirms that everything shall desert a person if the person considers that everything is different from oneself. As a knower of Brahman is veritably Brahman himself, he is like God, Isvara, having Omnipotence, and whatever he says shall become true, whether it is said in regard to a disciple, or an opponent. He who, however, knows the inner Witnessing Atman as Supreme and adores it as an object of the highest love, such a thing which he holds as dear will never be separated from him. The object loved, then, will never be destroyed, because the object, here, is the Supreme Absolute itself. The Atman, being the object of the greatest affection, should be regarded as the Source of the highest Bliss, also. The greater the affection, the greater is the feeling of pleasure in a thing. The degrees of pleasure felt in different degrees of love are explained in the Taittiriya Upanishad, where the gradation of Bliss is described in detail. This Bliss of the Atman is not so patent and revealing in ordinary life. Though the modifications of the mind operate equally in waking life and we are mostly conscious, we are not always blissful or happy; as a lamp kept in a room has two properties, heat and light, and it emanates both these qualities simultaneously; yet it is seen that the heat of the lamp is not felt so much as the light of it, which reaches a longer distance than the heat in it.

Moreover, we may compare the situation and the revelation of the Consciousness and Bliss of the Atman to the perception of the different qualities in a flower, for example. Though the qualities in a flower are present as a single unit, yet each is grasped independently by a

particular sense-organ and not by another sense-organ. So is the case of Consciousness and Bliss in the Atman. The unity of the Consciousness and Bliss are felt in the Atman in the same manner as there is a feeling of the unity of the different qualities in a flower which contains these qualities in itself. But, just as the one compact existence of the qualities of the flower is differently grasped by different senses, so is the one unit of Consciousness and Bliss in the Atman grasped and revealed differently by different Vrittis or modifications of the mind. Bliss can be revealed only by the Sattva-Vritti of the mind, and Consciousness follows it, so that when a Sattva-Vritti operates, Consciousness and Bliss are revealed together, because Sattva is pure and transparent. The Rajas-Vritti is disturbed and impure, and hence, the Bliss of the Atman cannot be revealed through it. As the property of a thing can be suppressed by addition of salt to tamarind to lessen its sourness, the mixing up of the impure element in the form of Rajas suppresses the revelation of the Bliss of the Atman. The clear Vritti of Sattva reveals Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; the Rajas-Vritti reveals Existence and Consciousness alone; while in Tamas, Existence alone is felt and no other quality.

The Way to Attainment

To have this realisation, one may practise Yoga or Jnana. Both lead to the same result, because their aim is the same, though their ways are different. The differences in the practice of Yoga and Jnana are due to the differences in the temperaments of the seekers. There is no difference in the path itself. Various ways of spiritual life have been laid

down to suit the differing endowments of human beings. The absence of love and hatred, the attainment of knowledge, and the transcendence of dualistic perception, are all the same both in the Yogin and the Jnanin. How can there be likes and dislikes when the Atman is known as the sole Reality and nothing second to it is seen anywhere? Both the Yogin and the Jnanin have the ordinary human consciousness when they are actually not in the state of realisation and behave like ordinary beings in the world, but when they are actually in the state of Super-Consciousness, or Atmanubhava, they do not see the duality of the world. One who is established in Advaita-Consciousness through Jnana, and one who is established in Samadhi through Yoga, will not perceive duality. When there is a recognition of the Atman and an establishment in it, together with a rising of the mind above the diversity of the world, the Jnanin is a Yogin, and the Yogin is a Jnanin, both meaning the same thing.

This analysis of the Primary Atman, as different from the secondary and the false concepts of self, has been done for the sake of those whose understanding is not sharp enough to practise the ways described in the previous chapter. (Verses 1-90)

Chapter XIII

THE BLISS OF NON-DUALITY

The Cause-Effect Relation

What was called the 'Bliss of Yoga' previously is the same as the 'Bliss of the Self' referred to recently. Because the Bliss of Brahman is directly experienced in Yoga meditation, it is called Yogananda. The essential Bliss unconditioned by anything else is called Nijananda, or essential Bliss, and because this very same Bliss is realised as something different from the Gauna Atman and the Mithya Atman, it is called Atmananda, or Bliss of the Primary Self. Now it may appear that inasmuch as it is told that the Bliss of the Atman is different from such other things as the Gauna Atman and the Mithya Atman, it is perhaps conditioned by these, or limited by their existence. This is precisely not the case, because the Bliss of Brahman is Brahman itself and not some quality attached to it from outside, and the whole world beginning from Space (Akasa) down to the grossest object like the body, is nothing apart from the Bliss of Brahman, as it will be seen from the Brahmananda-Valli Section of the Taittiriya Upanishad. This Upanishad says that everything has come from the Atman, the Omnipresent Self. Hence, the world is not different from Brahman. Brahman is non-dual. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, again, that if all this world is born from Ananda (Bliss), exists in Ananda, and is finally dissolved in Ananda, how can there be then a world different from the Ananda of Brahman? The whole Universe is the manifestation of Ananda. We all live on account of it, and we can never rest satisfied until we fully

realise it. Let it not be thought that the world is an effect different from the power of this Ananda, as an earthen pot is different from its cause, the potter. The Ananda is not merely an instrumental cause (Nimitta-karana), as the potter is in relation to the pot; but it is also the material cause (Upadana-karana), as clay is in relation to the pot. The existence and dissolution of the pot do not depend upon the existence of the potter, but they are dependent on the clay out of which the pot is made. For, clay is the substance out of which the pot is made, it is the material cause. Likewise, the existence and the dissolution of the world are dependent on the Supreme Being as Ananda, as it is the Material Cause of the world.

Material cause is, again, of three kinds: (1) Arambha, (2) Parinama, and (3) Vivarta. Arambha-Upadana is that material cause which is distinguishable from its effect, as cloth is distinguished from its threads in some respects, though the latter are the material cause of the former. Parinama-Upadana is that kind of material cause which actually renounces its nature as the effect, by undergoing a transformation within itself and remains in another form altogether, as milk becomes curd. Vivarta-Upadana is that kind of material cause which appears as an effect without actually undergoing any change in itself, and yet appearing as something different, as, for example, a rope appearing as a snake. Here, the cause has not become the effect, but merely appears as the effect. This may happen even in the case of partless or shapeless objects, because we see that a thing like Space, which has no shape at all, appears to be blue in colour, inverted like a dome, touching the horizon,

etc., and it also appears to be affected by the qualities of the earth on account of which we attribute to it clearness as well as its opposite. In a similar manner, it may be said that this world is a Vivarta (appearance) of Brahman, of the Divine Ananda, and this appearance is made possible due to a power, or Sakti, called Maya, indescribably present, as a special kind of power is seen in a magician. This power is actually not different from the substance in which it inheres, nor is it totally identical with it. We find, in ordinary life, that the burning capacity which is the power of fire cannot be said to be either identical with fire or different from it. When the effect of burning in fire is not seen actually, even when it is flaming forth, we infer that the absence of its burning power is due perhaps to the application of some Mantras, or incantations, on fire. If heat is the same as fire, fire itself ought to have ceased to exist when its heat is suppressed; nor is it possible for us to say that there is no such thing as fire apart from mere heat. The Divine Power of Brahman, called Maya, is likewise inscrutable (Anirvachaniya) and its relation to Brahman is difficult to ascertain, or understand.

Sages endowed with intuition recognise in meditation that the Divine Power, or Sakti, is hidden by its own properties, that the Supreme Power inherent in Brahman manifests itself in various ways, especially as knowledge (Jnana), action (Kriya), and will or desire (Ichha). There are those who think that there is no cause at all for the world and that it just exists by its own nature. Others think that the world has come out of nothing (Sunya), or void. Some think that the world is a conglomeration of invisible atoms

which combine themselves in a peculiar way to form this world. The astronomers and the astrologers opine that it is all Time factor that is operating everywhere and there cannot be any other cause of the world than the movement of Time in various ways creating different conditions and situations. The materialists are of the opinion that matter is everything and there is no such thing as Consciousness, and even if the latter is conceded, it is only an exudation of matter. The Mimamsakas, or ritualists, think that the potency of Karma, called Adrishta, is the real cause of the world-manifestation, and nothing can exist other than Karma, as the operative cause. The Samkhyas hold that the cause of the world is Prakriti in conjunction with Purusha, and the diversity of the world is only the evolution of Prakriti. The Yoga school posits an Isvara in addition to Prakriti and the many Purushas of the Samkhya, because it is impossible to conceive of the dispensation of justice and the proper allocation of the fruits of the Karmas of Jivas if there is no such Being who is independent of Prakriti and the Purushas. The Vedanta school of dualism (Dvaita) accepts the supremacy of God above all things, making the Goal within the aspirations of the Jivas, unlike Samkhya and the Yoga, but never thinks that there is any intrinsic relation among God, the world and the souls. According to them, the relation is only extrinsic. The Visishta-Advaita school of Vedanta accepts the intrinsic relationship existing among God, the world and the souls, making the latter two integral parts of Isvara, in the manner of qualifications, or Viseshanas, of Isvara, who is the Substance. The Advaita-Vedanta does not accept any relationship at all, because it

never feels that there are three things as God, world and soul. For it, the Truth is one and whatever appears in this world is only the way of the revelation of this one Truth.

Thus, the scripture affirms the existence of a Divine Sakti in Brahman and this is also corroborated in such other texts like the Yogavasishtha, where it is said that Brahman is Omnipotent, full with all powers, eternal, complete and non-dual. As is the revelation of Brahman at a particular time, so is the way in which the Sakti expresses itself as manifestations. All these bodies and objects that we see in all the planes of existence are the manifestations of this Sakti of Brahman. Movement in air, hardness in stone, liquidity in water, heat in fire, emptiness in space, transience in things – all these are expressions of this Sakti. The world is hidden in the Supreme Being in the same manner as a snake is hidden in an egg, or a huge tree is hidden in a seed, though the tree may have an extended form with trunk, branches, leaves etc., which are bigger than the seed itself. The Saktis of Brahman do not manifest themselves at all times, but only some of them are revealed at certain places and times as the occasions may demand, even as seeds germinate only as conditioned by space, time, circumstance etc., and not always and under all circumstances. This Omnipresent Brahman, the Self-luminous Being, when it reveals itself, becomes the many, and then there is the origin of mentation, or mind, in a cosmic sense. In the beginning, there is the Primeval Will of the Eternal Being, and then commence the individualist notions of the Jivas attended with the feelings of bondage and freedom, and then comes the grossened consciousness

of the world outside, which, somehow, assumes reality in the minds of the Jivas by their constant wrong thinking and an inability to discriminate between truth and falsehood, just as a fable may look real when we do not deeply think over its meaning.

The Sage Vasishtha continues that this world has assumed a reality in the same manner as a story may assume reality in the mind of a child. For the delight of the child a fable is narrated from one's imagination, though for the mature mind it is no reality. Take, for example, the following story: There lived three princes, somewhere, in a delightful manner, enjoying themselves, of which two were not born and one never entered the womb of the mother. They lived in a very righteous manner in a city at a non-existent place, and from this void-city they went out hunting through space, and on the way they found in the skies trees filled with fruits, flowers, etc., and these princes even today live in this picturesque city which is yet to be. This fable sounds nice to the mind of a child because his mind has not yet reached maturity and so takes in only the literal meaning of the words. This world, says Vasishtha, has the hardness of reality due to non-discriminatory thinking as in the case of the child, and consequently this Samsara sits tight in the mind of the Jiva due to lack of sufficient knowledge. Like this, and in many other ways, the world-manifestation has been described in detail both in the Sruti (revelation) and Smriti (tradition), which we intend to describe here concisely.

This Sakti, or Power, is the cause of what we call causal relation or the connection between the cause and the effect,

but it is itself different from the effect which is the world and its cause which is Brahman. For example, the burning capacity of fire is different from itself and its effect. It is felt by us through sensation. Taking a more complete example: an earthen pot with a particular size and shape is an effect, and its cause is clay with the characteristics of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. The power inherent in clay by which it gets fashioned into a pot is itself not identical with either the effect or the cause. It is precisely on account of this reason that we call it indescribable, as no words can denote it or indicate its precise nature. Before the production of the effect the power was inherent in the cause, as clay. It has taken a modified shape after it is interfered with by the potter with his instruments. People without the endowment of proper discrimination confuse between the mere shape of the pot and the characteristics of the clay, viz., sound, touch, etc., and thus remark that there is a pot. The substance and the space-and-time factor by a mutual dependence on each other produce a peculiar effect to which we give a specific name on account of the sensory observation of a particular form empirically. Prior to the time the potter touched the clay, it was not called a pot. Later it was called so because of the subsequent sensation of certain characteristics which we are unable to identify with the cause, viz., clay. Though the substance is in the effect, yet we generally make a practical distinction between the two and then say that there is an effect independent of the cause. It is individualistic perception or spatio-temporal sensation that is responsible for the notion that there is an

independent effect different from the cause, while the truth is otherwise.

The pot is really non-different from the clay, because it is seen that when it is separated from the clay it ceases to be; equally can it be said that the two are not absolutely identical with each other because of the fact that the pot was not seen when there was only a lump of clay prior to the manufacture of the pot. Hence, this manifestation that we call pot is really an indescribable something as a Sakti, or power, inherent in the clay. It is called Sakti when it is unmanifest and it is called a pot when it is manifest. When a magician conjures up a phenomenon with the power that he possesses the observers begin to see the same, say, the marching of an army, etc., but it is not difficult to understand that there is no such phenomenon as an army, etc., really speaking, and it is only the manifestation of the power of the magician. As the unmanifested it was inherent in the magician, as a Sakti, and in the manifested state it becomes observed as a coloured phenomenon. Thus, the unreality of the mere fact of modification and the reality of the basis or the substance behind the modification appears.

The Chhandogya Upanishad says that all modification is only a matter of words, a name, the truth being the basic substance alone, as, for example, clay. The name mentioned here is not indicative of anything substantial. The name is just an abstract notion denoting a modification which is conceptual and nothing real. Here, in this instance cited, only the clay possesses the qualities like sound, touch, etc., and not the pot. In the series of the basal substance, the unmanifested power and the manifested effect, the latter

two are different only temporarily and, truly speaking, they are synonymous, meaning one and the same, but differing on account of the succession or the distinction of priority and posteriority, one thing existing before and another appearing afterwards. In the movement of time the base, namely clay, is, however, permanent, and persists in the different stages of the modification that we call the effects. The effect is unsubstantial, though it appears there. It has a beginning and an end, and when it comes into being as an effect, it is indicated by a name expressed by word of mouth. The name persists in an abstract manner even after the destruction of the effect, and here, in this condition, the name does not indicate anything existent, but is just a sound connoting nothing. It is contentless and has no existence apart from being only in name, and such effect is called by the Sruti as simply a matter of words, nothing more. It is not real like clay, because of its unsubstantiality, transiency, and because of its being merely a name in the form of a sound, not really existent. As distinguished from this, however, the clay persists at the time of the appearance of the effect, prior to its appearance, and also after its disappearance, in one and the same form without undergoing any change. Hence, it is substantial , real, undestructive. Because of its permanency in the three periods of time, it is called real.

Ignorance and Its Effects

When there is a correct insight into the cause, the nature of the effect is also known simultaneously. In fact, when there is a concentration of the mind on the real

substance of the cause, the shape or the form of the effect will not present itself in perception. When there is an entirely free occupation of Consciousness in the knowledge of the substance, or the cause, there will not be perception of the name and form of it, as these do not exist independently by themselves. Truly speaking, the potness of the pot vanishes when the idea of its reality is sublated. Knowledge is nothing but the vanishing of ignorance, but this need not always be necessarily followed by the vanishing of the name and the form. However, in certain cases even the name and the form vanish, as, for example, in the recognition of the rope on the sublation of the snake. Now, the name and the form of the snake entirely vanish when the rope is seen clearly, but when the clay in the pot is seen, the form of the pot is still visible to the eyes. In the mistaking of a rope for a snake, there is pure ignorance unconditioned by any external factor and hence it is called Nirupadhika-bhrama, i.e., ignorance without any conditioning factor. That is why when this ignorance is removed there is a sudden vanishing of the effect of the ignorance; but in the latter instance, namely, the perception of the pot in clay, what is involved is not pure ignorance alone, but also certain other factors, such as the interference of the potter with the clay by means of instruments etc. As there is an external limiting factor here, in addition to ignorance, it is called Sopadhika-bhrama, i.e., ignorance with a conditioning factor associated with it. This is the reason why the form of the pot continues to be seen even when one begins to see the clay alone in the pot. Nevertheless, the appearance of the effect does not in any

way affect one's knowledge, because what affects one is not the existence of anything outside, but the erroneous notion which one has of that thing. Take, for instance, the case of a person standing in front of a mass of water where the person's reflection is seen in the water in an inverted position. The reflection is seen by everyone, but no one ever takes this reflection for the real person, and nobody takes an interest in it, though it is visible to the eyes. So, this visibility need not really or necessarily mean reality. Likewise, the visibility of the effect need not obstruct one's knowledge of its truth, and it is the doctrine of the Vedanta that knowledge alone is the highest aim of human existence, whether or not objects are seen with the eyes, with their usual names and forms.

Now, coming to the point, as there is no transformation of the clay when it becomes the pot, it is a case of Vivarta, or appearance, and not Parinama, or transformation as in the case of milk becoming curd. Nothing happens to the clay when it becomes a pot, and nothing happens to gold when it becomes the ornament. However much the pot or the ornament is beaten, the substance out of which it is made will ever remain, though the shapes may change. In Parinama, or transformation, the effect can never become the cause again. In Arambha, or the production of an effect different from the cause, there would be the duplication of the characteristics of the cause present in the effect since these thinkers hold that the characteristics of the cause are carried over to the effect, and yet these characteristics independently exist in the cause and effect differently.

In the Chhandogya Upanishad, Sage Uddalaka gives three examples, namely, clay, gold and iron, to show the non-difference of the cause and the effect, and to teach that by the knowledge of the cause, all its modifications or effects are also known at once. The knowledge of the cause means at the same time the knowledge of all its effects also. It may be doubted as to how a knowledge of truth could involve a knowledge of what is false. Inasmuch as it is clear that a separate existence of the effect is not true, it is only from the point of view of ordinary sense-perception that the effect is regarded as a modification plus the substance of the cause. Really, there is, in the effect, nothing in addition to the cause, the clay alone being real in the pot and the modification being something independently existent in its own right. Hence, when it is said that the knowledge of the cause is at once a knowledge of the effects, a knowledge of falsity is not implied. What is meant is that there is nothing real in the effect which is apart from the cause. There is no point in trying to know what is false, because it serves no purpose. The aim of human life is knowledge of Truth. Here, again, it may appear that, in the knowledge of the effect, nothing new is known, and we mean nothing different when we say that there is such a thing as knowledge of the cause or knowledge of the effect. We mean the same thing, though we use two different words, viz., cause and effect. Yes, it is true that there is absolutely no difference whether we say that the cause is known or that the effect is known, and from the point of view of the knower, or the Jnanin, there is nothing surprising in this. But it is a great wonder to those who regard the effect to be

absolutely different from the cause and those who consider the effect to be a transformation of the cause, or that there is no such thing as a cause at all. In crass material perception, as also in dualistic, logical perception, there is this defect of the apparent isolation of the effect from the cause, or the assertion of the effect alone without any regard for the cause.

The Supreme Brahman

The Upanishad teaching is different. In this teaching, the unity of all things is intended, and, when it is said that by a knowledge of ‘one thing’, ‘everything’ else is known, what is intended to be conveyed is not that there is any real diversity, such as “all” things, but that there is only one thing which appears as the many things, and when this one thing is known, the many-ness of the many things will vanish. By the knowledge of the One Brahman, the whole Universe is known, not as a multifarious conglomeration of objects, but as an eternal being, one and secondless of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), as different from name and form, which is the nature of the world.

Sage Uddalaka states that Reality is Sat, Existence. The Aitareya Upanishad says that it is Prajnana, Consciousness. Sanatkumara says that it is Sukha, Bliss. Thus, Sat-Chit-Ananda is the nature of Brahman. Names and forms are not existent independently of Sat-Chit-Ananda, but are appearances on its basis. It does not mean that there is a name and form of the world apart from Sat-Chit-Ananda. What is meant is that when we divest the Universe of its

Sat-Chit-Ananda aspects. There would be no names and forms to be experienced separately, just as when we remove all the clay in the pot, there would be no separate pot to be seen. When the Universe is divested of Sat-Chit-Ananda, it itself is not. Thus, there is no creation apart from Brahman. It is that One Being that has become the many, or, rather, appears as the many. The scripture says that the One Supreme Being diversifies itself, as it were, into the various names and forms. There was, in the beginning, only the unmanifest, or the Avyakrita, the matrix of all things, wherein all the names and forms were hidden as a tree is hidden in the seed, and hence we cannot say that the names and forms are really different from the Avyakrita, just as we cannot say that the tree is different from the seed. The names and forms are potentially present in the Avyakrita, and the two, viz., the Avyakrita and the names and forms of the world, are like the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, the Avyakrita being the cause, and the names and forms being the effect. Yet this Avyakrita is indescribable in words. It is a Power that is inscrutable. No mind can think it, because even the mind is an effect. All the Jivas are subsequent to creation. Hence the causal condition of creation cannot be known by the Jivas. This Avyakrita-Sakti is having Brahman as its foundation. This cause of change is based on the Changeless, and it undergoes many modifications such as the subtle and the gross Universe of varieties. This is also called Maya (illusion), Prakriti (matrix), or Karana (cause), all meaning the same thing, denoting finally the unmanifested condition of the Universe. The director of this Sakti is Isvara, God. He is

Brahman possessed of unlimited powers, the Eternal appearing as the Immanent Ruler of the temporal. He is the Lord over all things, the Controller of Maya, not affected by it in any way.

The first modification of this Avyakrita is Space (Akasa). Space has Existence; it is revealed in Consciousness, and it is the source of Joy to all living beings. These three are the aspects of Brahman in Space, but the special feature of Space is spatiality or extendedness, by which we measure distance and recognise all sorts of difference of one from the other. This latter feature is not real, while the former three characters are real. Extendedness or spatiality was non-existent prior to the manifestation of Space. It will not be there also after the dissolution of the cosmos. Metaphysically, what is not in the beginning and not in the end, is not also in the middle. Sri Krishna mentions this to Arjuna when he says that all beings have the unmanifest as their beginning, and the unmanifest as their end, but they are manifest only in the middle. That which does not persist in the three periods of time cannot be called the eternal or the real. The real is that which is continually present in all the three periods of time. Just as clay is present in the pot and all the modifications which it undergoes, so Sat-Chit-Ananda, the essential nature of Brahman, follows everything and is concomitant with all things. It persists in every form of existence, whatever be the changes that it may undergo. The true existence is revealed in the consciousness of the negation of spatiality. In profound spiritual states of meditation, Space is not felt to be existent. There is no idea even of Time or of

objects. There is only a feeling of perennial bliss, because, in the spaceless condition, Sat-Chit-Ananda manifests itself. When spatiality is forgotten altogether, what is it that remains? Not merely a negation or a void. If you contend that it is just void, or nothing, there is no harm, because you are conscious of what you call void or nothingness. As it is revealed in the conscious state, it cannot be equated with non-existence. It is the highest real conceivable, and it is also the highest bliss, because of the absence of likes and dislikes, the desirable and undesirable, friend and foe, etc. As it is an impartial condition unconnected with the objects of the world, that alone is real Bliss, wherein one is above the notions of the desirable and the undesirable. One is exhilarated when one comes in contact with the desirable; one is sunk in sorrow when confronted with the undesirable; but true Bliss is experienced only in the absence of both. There is no such thing as 'real' pain because pain is not an essential condition of the Self, it is a passing state. Both exhilaration and grief are psychological conditions, and they come and go. They are not permanent states of experience. The mind is transient and, hence, its conditions, viz., pleasure and pain, also, are transient. The permanent being is the Bliss of Brahman alone.

In Space and the other four elements, Sat-Chit-Ananda is present equally, and this can be known by a careful distinction of its presence from names and forms. Special features of things restrict them to their individualities, but in all things there is something which is above such restrictions. For example, reverberation of sound is a special feature of Space, motion and touch are of Air, heat

and light of Fire, liquidity of Water, and hardness of Earth. These are the qualities special to the elements mentioned, but 'Existence' is commonly seen in all these, and this 'Existence' is nothing but the revelation of Brahman. All things in the world are existent (Sat), are revealed (Chit), and are objects of endearment (Ananda) to someone or other, at different times. These characteristics of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the essence of Brahman, while the special qualities, such as confinement to a locality in space, appearance only at a particular time, etc. belong to the individuality of things. By a careful analysis of the visible world, it is possible to isolate Sat-Chit-Ananda from nama-rupa (name-and-form), the General Existence from particular appearances.

An object has five features in it. Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, Name and Form. The first three belong to what is eternal. The latter two pertain to the temporal world. This is how we should endeavour to separate Reality from appearance in all our perceptions. When we look at the waves we are just looking at the Ocean. When our mind is deeply concentrated on the depths of the Ocean, we forget the separate existence of the waves. All these things of which the Universe consists are ripples, bubbles and waves in the Ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. When the mind visualises an object, let it recognise in the object the profound depths of Brahman, which is its Reality, and without which it cannot be. The independent existence of names and forms is not true. Names and forms do rise and fall as waves in the Ocean. Thus, with an effort of intelligence one should discover

Brahman in this world, and when this discovery is effected to an adequate extent, the mind will never be able to go astray as before, among sense-objects. The more one ignores the external crust of name and form, the more does one go deep into the truth of Brahman and the more is Brahman discovered in this world, and the more also is one detached from names and forms. When, by such a practice, one acquires real knowledge and is established firmly in that knowledge, one becomes a liberated soul, Jivanmukta, whether objects exist or not. This rare experience is had by the practice of Brahmabhyasa, which consists in thinking of Brahman alone always, speaking about That alone, conversing with and awakening each other on That alone, and totally depending on That alone at all times, as one's ultimate refuge. When this practice is continued for a long time, without remission in the middle, with wholehearted devotion, then all the Vasanas, or mental impressions, of past births recede completely and get destroyed in the end, and the names and forms just appear as expressions of Brahma-Sakti (Power of Brahman). As clay appears as pot, etc., so does this Brahma-Sakti appear as the many things of the world. As the dream of a Jiva projects variegated objects, so does the Cosmic Maya manifest things, sustain them and withdraw them in the end. Just as fantastic things can appear in dream, so do marvellous things appear in this world. One may see oneself flying in dream, or see oneself beheaded, a moment may look like a series of years, dead persons may make their appearance, and so on. These are all the fancied visions which we can have in dream and it is difficult to say what is proper and what is improper, what is

consistent and what is not, etc. in a dream. Consistency, method, law, rule, etc. are valid only in a particular plane of existence or state of consciousness, and the logic of one state cannot be transferred to another; one level of experience cannot be judged from the point of view of another. Everything looks all right when it is directly experienced in relation to the law of the particular realm; but when it is judged with the standard of the law of another realm, it may look erroneous and even meaningless. Such is the wonder of this creation, whether it is individual or cosmic, whether it is projected by the mind of the Jiva or by the Cosmic Maya. All things, such as the five elements, the different worlds, the individuals, the inanimate things, etc., are manifestations of the one Power of Brahman. They appear to be different from one another, as conscious, unconscious, etc., because of the manifestation or non-manifestation of mind and intellect in them. The degree of intelligence in a particular being is determined by the degree of consciousness of Brahman revealed through the psychological organs in accordance with their varying subtleties. Brahman is commonly present in all things, whether intelligent or non-intelligent. The difference is in name and form and the degree of the rarefied condition of the internal organs.

The changing objects of the world are in many respects similar to the changing moods of the mind. Just as the mind takes different forms in the Jiva, the Cosmic Mind also takes various shapes, and these shapes are called the Universe. Though there is a great difference in the degrees of reality manifested by the individual mind and the

Cosmic Mind, yet, the manner of the construction of the world is similar in both the cases. Though the creation of the mind of the Jiva is short-lived, and the creation of the Cosmic Mind is more enduring, there is this similarity between the two that both are non-eternal in the end, and are subject to withdrawal into their causes. Therefore, it is essential for a seeker of Truth to abandon the notion of reality in the names and forms of the world, though they appear to one's perception. When there is an abandonment of interest in names and forms, meditation on Brahman becomes unobstructed in every way. The obstacles being centred in the desire for contact with names and forms, there is no chance of obstacles presenting themselves when such a desire is wiped out from the mind by beholding Sat-Chit-Ananda through the names and forms. Just as a firmly seated rock is not affected by a flood of water flowing over it, so is the immovable Brahman unaffected by the variegated changes in names and forms that appear on its background. Just as, in a mirror, which has really no holes in it to contain anything, the vast space with its contents of solid objects may be reflected, the world of names and forms is reflected, as it were, in Brahman, though the world is not really contained in Brahman, Brahman being unaffected and unattached, even as the mirror does not contain the objects within it. But, just as one cannot see the reflection of objects in a mirror without there being a mirror first and without observing the mirror even before seeing the reflection, it is impossible for one to merely see names and forms without first confronting the Existence of Brahman. When we see, when we open our eyes, really the

Existence of Brahman is spread out everywhere, and on this Existence the names and forms are superimposed. One thing is mistaken for another. Brahman is mistaken for a world of objects. When Sat-Chit-Ananda is beheld through the names and forms, let the intellect be fixed on it, and let it not be again diverted to the names and forms. This is the essence of Vairagya and Abhyasa, the withdrawal from sense-perception and practice of concentration on the One Reality. Thus, Brahman is portrayed as an unworldly Existence, in the sense that the world is not contained in it, but only superimposed on it, and its essential Being is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and not name and form. It is in this that one should try to fix oneself. To those who have, by the continuous habituation of themselves to this practice, the feeling that there is no world outside of Brahman, the world is Brahman only appearing. (Verses 1-105)

Chapter XIV

THE BLISS OF KNOWLEDGE

Sense-pleasure and the Delight of Knowledge

In the eleventh chapter, the Bliss of Brahman as realised through meditation was explained. In the twelfth chapter, the nature of the same Bliss was explained by the discrimination of the Primary Self from the secondary self and the false self. In the thirteenth chapter, the unity of cause and effect was explained, by which the immanence of Brahman in creation was pointed out. In the fourteenth chapter, it is intended to explain the nature of the Bliss born of spiritual knowledge (Vidyananda). In one sense, even the happiness born of knowledge has a kinship with the happiness born of sense-contact, and this is because of the fact that even sense-pleasures are really experienced by the mind within, which needs the assistance of the senses, and, thus, the mental pleasure born of sense-contact is conditioned by the activity of the senses. But the real difference between the happiness born of higher knowledge and mere sense-contact is in that the former is independent of the activities of the senses, while the latter is totally dependent on sense-activity. The happiness of knowledge may be classified under four groups, according to its different features: (1) absence of sorrow; (2) fulfilment of all desires; (3) the sense of having done everything that ought to be done; (4) the feeling of having attained everything that is to be attained.

There is a total freedom from all sorrow reached by a person in the state of spiritual insight. We may, for the sake of convenience, differentiate between two types of sorrow:

that which pertains to this world and that which is unconditioned by this world. The sorrows of this world can be overcome in the manner pointed out in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Upanishad states, “desiring what, and for whose sake should there be entry into a body, when there is the realisation, ‘I am the Atman, all-pervading in nature?’” Desires are valid when there is a body and there is the world which acts as a means in their fulfilment. For that rare being who has gone above this world, whose consciousness inhabits the whole cosmos, where is the object to be enjoyed? How then can there be an action of consciousness with body, in such a state of experience? The Atman referred to here is generally conceived of in two ways, viz., the Jivatman, and the Paramatman, i.e., the individual self and the Supreme Self. When the Absolute Consciousness has an apparent contact with the three bodies – the physical, subtle and the causal – then, it goes by the name of a Jiva, characterised by enjoyership etc., but the Paramatman, or the Supreme Self, is not so affected by the conditions. It is this Universal Self that appears as the subject and the object, and the coming in contact of the two is nothing but the temporal communion of two aspects of the same Divine Consciousness. The so-called conditioning by names and forms is responsible for the appearance of such things as the objects of enjoyment, etc., but really the Supreme Atman is neither an object nor a subject, neither is it the enjoyed nor the enjoyer, and this truth will be revealed only when there is the discrimination between the unadulterated pure Consciousness and the three bodies with which it is

apparently associated. The Jiva enters a body for the sake of experience, viz., the enjoyment of the consequence of Punya (merit) and Papa (demerit). The world is provided to the Jiva as a field of education for evolving to a higher state of Consciousness. The entry of the Consciousness, therefore, into a body is unnatural to it, inasmuch as, here, its existence itself must be restricted to the conditions of the body which it enters for this purpose. It is, therefore, compared to a morbid state, a condition of ill-health or fever, which affects the three bodies in different ways. Though the Supreme Atman is not at all affected by the processes of the body, there is such a feeling of suffering when there is even the least connection with the body. The different bodies have their different fevers. The physical body is subject to the disturbance of the humours of which it is composed; the subtle body has the morbid subjection to anger, desire, etc.; but the subtle seed-form of both these diseases is in the causal body, from which they arise and out of which they manifest themselves at different times.

The Destruction of Karmas

When, by a knowledge of the unity of cause and effect as described in the chapter on the “Bliss of Non-Duality”, the Supreme Paramatman is recognised as the sole Reality as All-Existence, there will not be any meaning in the objective enjoyments of this world. How can there be then a desire for anything in one who has realised the Supreme Self? How can, again, there be a sense of enjoyership in one who has realised the true Primary Self as different from the secondary self and the false self as described in the chapter

on the “Bliss of the Self”? How can there be confinement to the body or the undergoing of pains due to entry of Consciousness into the body? The pains of the world are, thus, negated by the abolition of enjoyership by an analysis of the truth as detailed in the previous chapters. The pains that are consequent upon one’s actions of the past and which materialise themselves in this world as merit and demerit, as also pleasure and pain, are the sorrows pertaining to the inner world, as different from the pains of the physical world. In the chapter, the “Bliss of Yoga”, it has been already said that neither pleasure nor pain, neither the idea of what is to be done, nor the idea of what is not to be done, does affect the mind of a Sage. Pains of every kind are mental conditions, and when there is a dissociation from the mind, there is also the dissociation of oneself from pains of every kind. As water does not stick to a lotus-leaf, so do the future actions (Agami-Karmas) of the Sage, performed after the rise of knowledge, fail to touch him; nor is he worried about the accumulated Karmas that have not as yet materialised themselves (Sanchita-Karmas), because there is the assurance of the scripture that such Karmas get burnt up the moment spiritual knowledge dawns in a person, even as the flame of fire would burn up a piece of cotton or straw. The Bhagavadgita affirms that as flaming fire reduces to ashes the faggots that feed it, so does the fire of knowledge reduce to ashes all Karmas of the past. When a person has no idea of agency in action, when he does not feel that he does anything himself, when his intellect is not contaminated by the idea of doership, enjoyership, etc., he shall not be affected by anything that

he does, even if he were to destroy the whole world. Such is the opinion of the Bhagavadgita. When there is the feeling of cosmic oneness in oneself, actions lose their ordinary meaning and they do not produce results as they do in the world, on account of their being disconnected from the true relation of causes and effects. The scripture assures that even what are known as heinous sins shall be wiped out totally by the all-consuming fire of wisdom, because whatever is done in the world of causes and effects, in the world bound by the pairs of opposites loses its value in the realisation of eternity and infinity, and the knower remains unaffected by actions of any kind.

The Knowledge of the Sage and Grades of Happiness

The Sage is not only free from all sorrows as mentioned above, but is also possessed of the highest enjoyment possible. The Upanishad states that a knower, having attained the fulfilment of all his wishes, attains immortality. In such a condition of spiritual ecstasy and universal intuition, the Sage does not pay any attention to his body. In fact, he does not even remember it, though he may eat, speak and laugh, play or enjoy delightful objects in the eyes of others. His body is sustained merely by his presently materialised Karmas (Prarabdha-karma) and not by any positive desire. The happiness of such a Sage is an instantaneous and simultaneous possession in eternity, not a succession of pleasures that come one after another at different times, or in a sequence, or in degrees. There is a sudden upliftment of Consciousness to the status of the Cosmic, taken as a whole, and, therefore, the Bliss of the

Sage is unconditioned either by objects or by space. It is Eternal Bliss, not temporary pleasure coming in a series.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad there is a visualisation of the highest unit of human happiness. Suppose there is a youth, beautiful to look at, possessed of all learning, unaffected by disease of any kind, powerful in mind and established in will, attended upon by a huge army to meet all oppositions, possessed of the whole earth filled with treasure;- imagine his happiness; and that may be considered as a fundamental unit of human pleasure. This would be the happiness of an ideal emperor imaginable in the mind, who is satisfied with all the pleasures of this world, but this happiness is also experienced by a knower of Brahman, at once. The emperor is perfectly happy because he has no desires. The Sage also is equally happy because he has no desires. But the reasons for the two states are different. The emperor has no desires temporarily on account of the feeling that he has possessed everything, though this may be a false feeling of satisfaction, because his satisfaction is dependent upon various external factors. The Sage has satisfaction because he personally possesses everything existent and so his happiness is perpetual. The Sage's mastery over the earth is perfect and genuine, because he has entered into the being of everything, while the king's feeling of mastery over the earth is artificial, because he can be dispossessed of all his goods, wealth and properties at any time. The man with discrimination sees the defects in the objects of sense as the king Brihadratha did in the past, as is recorded in the Maitrayaniya Upanishad. This intelligent king saw the defects of the

body, the defects of the mind, and the defects of the world of senses. When there is the height of discrimination attained, one develops distaste for all things as much as one would towards the stuff vomited by the mouth of a dog. Though there is a temporary similarity in the dispassion of a king and a Sage, yet there is a real difference of great consequence. The king had to suffer hard to acquire his position, and even when he has this vantage position, he is afflicted with perpetual avenues of fear that his possessions may be destroyed at any time or taken away by others. There is no such worry with the Sage, as his happiness is not dependent on others and as it cannot be taken away by others and it is superior to the pleasures of the emperor. The emperor, when he has all possessions, will have a desire for higher pleasures such as the pleasures of heaven. His greed and ambition know no end; hence he cannot be really happy. But, nothing of the kind is in the mind of the Sage. His union with Brahman has endowed him with infinite power and eternal joy.

Every created being has a desire for the higher happiness immediately above one's own. Though there are degrees of happiness even in this human world, on account of difference in the desires in human beings, as also in the nature of the objects desired, there are types of happiness above human happiness, above even the highest conceivable happiness in the world. According to the Taittiriya Upanishad, the happiness of the Martyagandharvas, or the mortal Gandharvas who have attained that status by performing good deeds in this cycle of existence, is a hundred times more than the happiness of

the ideal emperor described. A hundred times more than the happiness of these Gandharvas is that of the Devagandharvas, or gods who are so by birth, due to meritorious deeds performed by them in the previous cycle of existence. The Pitris, who are the inhabitants of the higher planes since the very beginning of this time cycle, are still higher than the Devagandharvas. The gods who are so by birth right from the beginning are called Ajanadevas, enjoying happiness a hundred times more than that of the Pitris. But the Karmadevas, or those celestials who have attained that position of importance due to performance of such sacrifices as Asvamedha, etc., and have become worshipful even to the inhabitants of heaven, have an enjoyment a hundred times more than the happiness of the Ajanadevas. The primary gods who are more important than the ordinary inhabitants of heaven, such as Yama, Agni, etc., are superior still, and their happiness is much more than the happiness of the ordinary celestials. It is a hundred times more than theirs. The happiness of Indra, who is the ruler of the gods, is a hundred times more than the happiness of all the gods mentioned earlier. The happiness of Brihaspati, the preceptor of Indra and the gods, is a hundred times more than the happiness of Indra himself. The Virat, which is Cosmic Being, is the highest, and here the happiness is a hundredfold more, again. Actually, here, the Bliss transcends all calculation. Hiranyagarbha is above Virat, and this is the culmination of the possible computation of happiness from the standpoint of human understanding. Isvara is above Hiranyagarbha, and transcendent to all is the Absolute, Brahman. Every

lower level aspires for the higher in the series mentioned. The Bliss of the Atman, or Brahman, is not so computable, because it is not merely a question of multiplication of quantity. it is eternity and infinity itself. The Bliss of the Absolute is ineffable, unthinkable, the highest. This is the goal of all beings.

The Knower of Brahman has, at once, without any effort of his own, an experience of the happiness of everyone mentioned above, all at the same time, because of his total desirelessness. Because of his being the Self of everyone, his glory is incomparable, his majesty rises above the thoughts and feelings of the Jivas. The greater the desirelessness, the greater is the happiness experienced within. The highest fulfilment is reached by the highest renunciation, so that when there is a total effacement of personality and a negation of the ego, there is the realisation of Brahman. This is the fulfilment reached in Jivanmukti. By the fact of his being the Self of even the gods, let alone others, no one can stand against him or oppose him; no one can obstruct him, because he is the Self of even those who may try to stand against him in any way; or, it may be said that his happiness reaches its culmination on account of his being a Witness not only of the Sattva modes of his mind, but also on account of his being everyone and everything else, also. Everyone's experience is his experience. He breathes through all breaths, eats through all mouths, and experiences happiness through all minds. He is, veritably, God Himself. Though Brahman is present even in the ignorant, equally, the ignorant person does not know it, the spiritual eye here being closed to the

presence of Brahman. The scripture confirms that he who knows Brahman attains all his desires by his conscious identity with Brahman.

The Sage in the Taittiriya Upanishad feels his Omnipresence, his being the Self of everyone, and sings his glory in an ecstasy of Consciousness: “O, I am food, I am the eater of food; I am the eater, and the eaten, the enjoyer and the enjoyed, the knower and the known, the seer and the seen.” He has risen above the notion of immortality, and his glory he alone knows; others cannot understand it. Thus, he exclaims how he is free of all sorrows and pains and enjoys all the happiness conceivable, right from the fundamental unit of human happiness up to the Universal Bliss of Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Isvara and Brahman. He feels that he has done all that ought to be done, or has to be done, and that he has obtained everything that is to be obtained, and known all things to be known. This has been explained already in the seventh chapter, which is repeated here, again. This is the Bliss of Knowledge, or Vidyananda, and one’s practice of Sadhana should be continued until this Bliss is attained in the Universal State of Consciousness. (Verses 1-65)

Chapter XV

THE BLISS OF OBJECTS

The Gate to Brahman-Bliss

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Sage Yajnavalkya refers to the Supreme Bliss as the goal of all beings, the great treasure covetable by everyone, the incomparable abode, as also the eternal goal of all life. All beings live by partaking of a small jot of this Divine Bliss. Even the totality of the happiness of the whole world is a minute drop or aspect of the Bliss of Brahman. Hence, it is possible for an intelligent seeker of Truth to detect the deeper implications even behind the natural pleasures of the world. There is an intrinsic relation between worldly pleasure and divine happiness, the latter being the original and the former its distorted reflection. The Bliss of Brahman is an undivided essence, absolute in nature and without parts in itself, but when it is revealed through the minds of the Jivas, it becomes manifold and is diminished in quality and quantity. Nevertheless, it arises from Brahman, and if only one is to have the intelligence to see clearly through the pleasures of the world, they would not appear as objects of selfish enjoyment, but several ramified forms of the One Supreme Being. But, unfortunately, due to ignorance, the Jivas are not usually endowed with such a discriminative power, and so they connect the pleasures of the world with sense-objects and seek for more and more of such objects of pleasure. This seeking is Samsara (entanglement) and it cannot easily come to an end. When objects are infinite in number and there is no use imagining that one can ever reach an end of one's satisfaction by sense-contact with

these objects, it is essential to thoroughly investigate this fact of happiness as suggested in human experience. This investigation can commence only with the analysis of the nature of one's own mind, because the mind is the immediate object through which happiness is revealed. The mind is constituted of a threefold character, namely, the Sattvika (transparent), the Rajasika (distracted), and the Tamasika (turbid) modes of its Vrittis, or modifications.

When the Sattvika mode is predominant, there is a feeling of dispassion for objects, and there is a generation within of a series of virtues, such as forbearance, magnanimity, etc. When the Rajasika mode is uppermost, there is affection, grief, attachment, and greed. In the Tamasika mode, there is confusion, delusion, fear, and the like. Though the one Reality is revealed in all the Vrittis, at all times, yet, it is not revealed fully, but only in aspects. In the Tamasika Vrittis, Consciousness, or Intelligence, is not revealed, only the Existence aspect is expressed. In the Rajasika Vrittis, Intelligence also is revealed in addition to Existence. But, only in the Sattvika Vrittis is Bliss revealed, together with Existence and Consciousness. The Divine Bliss, naturally, implies Existence and Consciousness and is, thus, complete. The One has become the many, says the Veda. It is the One Absolute that appears as the many, the Universe. Even as the one Sun may be reflected differently in various pools of water, so does the One Being appear manifoldly through the psychic functions, or internal organs (Antahkarana), of the Jivas. The One Supreme Lord is immanent in all beings. He appears as the one Isvara when his medium of expression is Cosmic Maya, and

appears as many when the medium of expression is the psyche of the Jiva. These psychic centers being many in number, there is, naturally, a perception of diversity among the Jivas. As turbid and shaky water cannot allow clear reflection of the Sun above, so do the Tamasika and the Rajasika Vrittis not allow a clear reflection of the Bliss of Brahman, due to the dirt of desire and the agitation of Rajas. The Bliss aspect of Brahman is hidden in the Tamasika and Rajasika Vrittis. In the Rajasika Vrittis, however, due to there being some slight transparency, an aspect of intelligence is revealed. It is only in pure Sattva that Ananda, or Bliss, fully manifests itself. These Sattvika Vrittis are, thus, in the position of gateways to the Bliss of Brahman, and are associated with Brahman (Brahmananda-sahodara).

The Role of Psychic Functions

On account of the impurity of the Rajasika and Tamasika Vrittis, the Bliss aspect is hidden in them, but on account of a slight transparency therein, the Consciousness aspect is revealed to some extent. Just as clean water, when it comes in contact with fire, absorbs only the heat of fire and not its light, so do the Rajasika and Tamasika Vrittis reveal only the Existence and Consciousness aspects of Reality, but not its Bliss aspect. But, in certain other media through which fire can burn, such as firewood, both the heat and the light aspects of fire are revealed. Likewise, in the Sattvika Vrittis, Consciousness and Bliss are revealed together with Existence. The degree of the manifestation of fire depends to a great extent on the medium of its

expression. It is so both in the case of ordinary things in the world, like fire, and happiness, etc., within the mind. This analysis is made on the basis of one's own experience by actual observation of facts, because it is every one's experience that there are moments of dulness, understanding, and happiness, differently felt within. The determining factors, therefore, are the means of expression. Neither in the Rajasika nor Tamasika Vrittis, can Bliss be revealed at any time, and even in Sattvika Vrittis, there is sometimes an excess of the manifestation of happiness and sometime less. Not only here in this world do we observe such a difference in the happiness of different beings, and even in the happiness of a single person at different times, due to various reasons, but there is difference of happiness in the inhabitants of the other higher regions, such as Gandharva-loka, Svarga-loka, etc., due to the varying degrees of Sattva revealed in the rarefied minds there. When there is desire for house, property etc., there is Rajas manifest therein. It is a distracting Vritti, and there is no happiness therein, because, here, the Vritti is externalised. In such desires there is always anxiety as to whether one's wishes would be fulfilled or not, and when they are actually not fulfilled, there is unlimited sorrow. When the desires are obstructed, there is anger, and the obstructing factor becomes the object of hatred; and when there is no capacity to wreak revenge against the obstructing power, there is a sinking down of the mind through despondency. This is Tamasika Vritti working. When such Vrittis, as anger, arise, one experiences great sorrow, both externally and internally. The question of happiness is far from reach in

such circumstances. When the object of desire is obtained, however, there is an exhilarating feeling within. This is the Sattvika Vritti operating, and then the happiness is intense. When the object of desire is actually enjoyed, the happiness is more intense than when it is merely possessed. When there is only a likelihood of obtaining one's wishes, there is a mild expression of happiness. But the highest reaches of happiness are in renunciation, not in desires. This is seen in such exalted beings as the Jivanmuktas, and their condition has been explained elsewhere.

Thus, whenever there is an absence of desire, anger, greed, etc., and there are Vrittis like forbearance, magnanimity, etc., there is happiness on account of the cessation of Rajas and Tamas. Whatever happiness there is in this world is a reflection of Brahman in the introverted Vrittis of the mind. It is only when there is a turning back of the Vrittis to their own Source there is an unobstructed revelation of the nature of Brahman. Brahman, not being an object, cannot be seen through the senses. It is the Supreme Subject and hence it can be known only in inward intuition. Of the three aspects, Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Existence is revealed in such things as stone, etc; Existence and Consciousness are revealed in Rajas; and Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, all in one, in Sattva. Thus, the nature of Brahman has been explained through the media of the senses.

Brahman as unconnected with the senses has been explained in the eleventh chapter, treating on Yoga, and in the subsequent two chapters dealing with Jnana. The Maya Sakti of Brahman has qualities opposite to those of

Brahman. It is Asat (Unreal), Jada (inert) and Duhkha (pain), as opposed to Sat (reality), Chit (Consciousness), and Ananda (Bliss). The Asat, or non-existence, is seen in such imaginary objects as the horns of a human being, the Jada, or the insentient, in inanimate objects, like wood and stone, Duhkha, or pain or sorrow in Rajasika and Tamasika modes of the mind. This is how Maya has spread itself everywhere in creation, and it is impossible for us to know Brahman in our individualised states except through these modifications of the mind.

Under these circumstances it is essential for a seeker to attempt to meditate on Brahman as Reality, separating it by discrimination from what is nonexistent, insentient, and painful, and this meditation should be carried on in different ways and at different times, as and when one confronts the different items of creation. When one sees a stone, for example, its existence-aspect should be separated from its name and form and, thus, its existence should be meditated upon as an aspect of Brahman. When there are Rajasika and Tamasika Vrittis in the mind, one should try to separate these apparent surface forms of the mind from the Existence and Consciousness revealed there. Similarly, when there is a Sattvika Vritti manifest in the mind, it should be isolated from Sat, Chit and Ananda, revealed therein. Contemplation on the Existence-aspect in inanimate objects is a lower form of meditation. Contemplation on the Existence-and-Consciousness aspects in the Rajasika and Tamasika aspects of the mind is a middling type. Contemplation on Existence-

Consciousness-Bliss as the whole of Brahman, in Sattva, is the highest form of meditation.

On Meditation by Analysis

The process of meditation prescribed here is for those who are incapable of getting rid of the notion that there is a world outside. The objects of the senses, of which the world consists, are intended to be taken as pointers to perfection, as bodies which show the Divine Existence in their appearance. The world presents itself as a reality to the Jiva, and it is necessary to go beyond its ways, by an understanding of its make in all its aspects. The world is taken here as an indication of the existence of the Transcending Being, and, therefore, capable of acting as a teacher to the Jiva-Consciousness. The Jiva proceeds from the lower to the higher, from the gross world, by degrees, to the highest perfection of the Absolute. Apart from the meditation mentioned, namely, the intelligent analysis of the Existence-aspect separated from the name and form of an inanimate object, the Existence-and-Consciousness-aspect from the Rajasika and Tamasika Vrittis of the mind, and the Sat-Chit-Ananda-aspect from the Sattvika Vrittis, there is another mode of meditation on merely the impression left by the previous practice of meditation, as stated before. In this condition of indifference in the mind, the Vrittis get loosened, so that they do not refer to any objects outside. Such an objectless condition is to be regarded as the most conducive state of the mind and this may be considered as a fourth variety of meditation, apart from the three already mentioned. The meditations

practised in accordance with the rigid canons of Jnana and Yoga are not mere mental processes, or simple efforts, but are verily divine wisdom itself. They reveal Brahma-Vidya, or Knowledge of the Eternal, due to their being states of highest concentration of the mind in which the Rajas and Tamas are totally obliterated, and there is an exuberance of Sattva, manifesting the wisdom of God. This knowledge gets settled down in a permanent manner when concentration is developed to a maximum degree. It is in this state of Knowledge that the fullness of the perfection of Brahman as a Single, Undivided Essence of Sat-Chit-Ananda reveals itself, without differences of any kind. Hence these attributes do not appear as properties inhering in some other substance, but as identical with Ultimate Substance itself. Sat-Chit-Ananda do not mean 'qualities' of Brahman, but 'Brahman-Itself'. Due to the absence of all limiting adjuncts, such distinctions get abolished in the state of Perfection par excellence. The Vrittis of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas act ordinarily as limiting qualities in the Jiva, but these have been overcome by Jnana and Yoga, and hence they do not any more act as limiting factors in the reality of the Absolute which is free from all empirical or relativistic limitations. Brahman is Self-luminous and Secondless. There is not the three fold difference there, as the seer, seeing and the seen. Hence, it is called the Infinite, or the Bhuma, the Full, which is Bliss. The happiness of the senses in contact with objects should, therefore, be taken as a particular stage in the discovery of the Existence of Brahman. The visible objects of sense act as portals to the Empire of the Almighty Absolute, Brahman. (Verses 1-35)