

Sruti Gita

The Sruti-Gita is contained in chapter 87 of Skandha X of Srimad Bhagavata.

Raja Parikshit said:

1. Oh enlightened one! The Vedas, being constituted of words, can only describe entities coming within the scope of the three gunas of Prakrti. How can they then really reveal Brahman, the Absolute Being, who is not included in the gunas of Prakrti, who cannot be defined or described as an object before us, and who is beyond the relation of cause and effect?

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

source, the origin of everything therein.

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

The Brahman, on the other hand, is considered the Supreme Deity. IT is not one among many. Everything in the world has its being in the Brahman. IT is concrete in the sense that IT IS and asserts itself in the form “I-AM”. We only know that IT IS. It cannot be a person, as the word is generally understood. IT IS, and yet indeterminate,

beyond speech and concept.

Sri Suka said:

2. The all-powerful Lord created faculties like intellect, mind, senses and prana in the Jiva in order that they may enjoy sense contacts in the world, may perform works, gain the felicities of heaven in the hereafter, and attain to liberation from samsara.

The faculties such as the mind are in the nature of the non-physical categories that apply to human beings and other living organisms as well as all the objects in the cosmos. The difference may be in terms of degrees of applicability. As consciousness is all-pervading and permeating both the sentient beings and insentient objects, the

categories become applicable to all, though in varying degrees.

Different seers consider the non-physical categories differently. The Sankhya philosophy gives 25 categories in the nature of ontological entities. They are Purusa and Prakrti, Reason, Ego, Mind, five Sense Organs, five Organs of Action, five Subtle Elements and five Gross Elements. Sri Ramakrishna sees in his vision 24 cosmic

principles created by the Divine Mother. The categories of the Sankhya philosophy and those stated by Sri Ramakrishna are the same except that Sri Ramakrishna does

not include Purusa in the list. Sri Ramakrishna considers that these categories relate to Prakrti or Nature and are different from Purusa or Supreme Consciousness.

3. It is not proper to doubt the efficacy of the Veda. For, it is the ignorance-shattering science culminating in the knowledge of the Brahman, accepted as such by the most ancient of ancient wise men for times immemorial. A man accepting it with faith and sincerity and living a life of renunciation attains to the blessedness of abidance in the Supreme Spirit.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "The knowledge of the Absolute is absolute in itself. No amount of study will give this knowledge. It is not theory; it is realization. Cleanse the dust from the mirror; purify your own mind. In a flash you realize that you are the Brahman and your self is its reflection. In other words, the Brahman is known to every human being as "I am". But man does not know himself as he is. The Atman (Brahman) is self-illuminated. Cause and effect do not reach the Atman. This disembodiedness is freedom. The Atman – the Brahman is beyond what was, or is, or is to be".

4. In order to make this clear, I shall narrate to you an episode relating to sage Narayana. It is a conversation that took place between Narada and Rishi Narayana. 5-6. Once in the course of his peregrinations all over the universe, Narada, the beloved of the Lord, went over to Badaryashrama to see Rishi Narayana who has been engaged during the whole kalpa in austerity constituted of dharma (righteousness), jnana (knowledge) and sama (practice of samadhi) for the material and spiritual good of men inhabiting Bharatavarsha.

7. Narada put this very question to sage Narayana who was sitting there surrounded by rishis living in the village of Kalapagrama.

8. The worshipful Narayana narrated to Narada what had taken place during a seminar on the Brahman at a sacrificial assembly held in Jana-loka by the ancients. Rishi Narayana said:

9. Oh son of self-born Brahma! It was in Jana-loka, under the auspices of the mind-born sons of Brahma who are lifelong celibates, and amidst the residents of that region

that this prolonged discussion on the Brahman, participated in by a large number of savants and self-controlled sages, took place.

10. You had gone to Swetadweepa at that time to pay obeisance to its lord Aniruddha when this assembly for discussion on the Brahman took place in Jana-loka. The

question investigated then was the very question you have now raised.

11. Though all these sages were equal in learning, austerity, character, and even-sightedness towards friends, foes and neutrals, they made one among themselves, Sanandana the speaker while the others heard him with deep attention.

Sanandana said:

12-13. In order to awaken a sleeping emperor in the morning, the minstrels attached to his court come and proclaim his glorious deeds in praise of him. In the same way,

in

order to awaken the Lord at the end of the pralaya from the cosmic slumber into which He had entered when the previous kalpa had ended, withdrawing into Himself the

whole universe and the powers connected with it, the Srutis (the Veda) recited a hymn recalling all His distinctive majesties.

The Srutis said:

14. Hail, Hail unto the Supreme Master unconquerable! Withdraw Thy Maya, constituted of the three gunas, from covering the knowledge of all Jiva, moving and unmoving, with the pall of ignorance. But in Thee, the controller of Maya, Maya is not the veil of ignorance as it is in the Jiva, but Thy inherent puissance and divine majesty. The Veda

reveals Thee as sometimes manifesting Thy inherent power of Maya and at others as subsisting in Thyself, with all powers quiescent.

The Svetasvatara Upanisad gives an idea that Maya is a kind of net thrown on Being, making it look like the world fixed by some laws, constituting the structure of the net.

This idea makes it clear that Maya is not mere illusion. The object of any illusion, like that of dream, disappears later, whatever fright it may have created in the person experiencing it. The idea of the Brahman creating the world, which does not exist on its own, through His will, involves something like the idea of illusion. Salvation as the ultimate goal is freedom from determinateness whether it is the life of pain or pleasure, happiness or sorrow, good or bad, knowledge or ignorance. It is the same as freedom

from Maya.

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

15. The whole universe of experience is ultimately Thyself alone. For, it is known to the Veda and the rishis that Thou alone remain when everything is dissolved to the subtlest state. Just as the appearance and disappearance of all effects like pots take place in their material substance clay, so do the appearance and dissolution of the universe take place in Thee, their material cause. But there is this difference that, unlike clay, Thy substance is not in the least affected by the creation of the universe out of, and its dissolution in, Thee. As everything that is conceived by thought and

touched by the senses is only Thy manifestation and, therefore, Thyself the various deities and forms of worship described in the Veda really relate to Thee only, though indirectly. The steps we place on any object on the ground, though they appear to be placed on the object, are in the final sense placed on the earth only, as the earth supports all objects. So, too, do all the words and teachings of the Veda point towards Thee, though they may appear to deal with deities.

The world (cosmos) is the realm of cause and effect, and the realm of means and ends or of instruments and effects. This world is the world of process, action. The world of action is an empirical reality. It is also an empirical being. This does not mean that it is only a matter for experience. For instance, dreams are experienced. But they are not considered an empirical reality. An empirical reality is meant to be a realm of action, the result of past actions and impressions (samskaras), and is changeable through present actions, controlled by the laws of causes-and-effects and ends-and-means.

Logically and ontologically, the Brahman is prior to everything. IT is, therefore, the origin of everything. When the Brahman is considered the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world, then IT must be the personal God. This interpretation does not conflict with the position that the Brahman is without qualities (nirguna). It only means that the Brahman is the ground of everything. This conforms to the concept of the four levels of being, each higher being, being the ground of the lower and ultimately the Brahman is the ground of all the lower levels and the world.

As IT is the ground or basis, the Brahman is called the cause (karana), in the ordinary sense of the term, of the world. Incidentally the Sanskrit word 'karana' also means

ground, support and reason besides cause. It, therefore, follows that the Brahman is only the supporting being (ground) of the forms of the world. What constitutes the forms of the world is Prakrti (the unmanifest - Maya).

Anyway, the world of forms is an ordered whole in which the laws of space, time and causation hold true. But it is not a self-contained and self-consistent whole. The self-contradictory nature of the world in relation to space, time and causation establishes it. What lies beyond the world is no chaos, but being itself. The being of the world we experience is the Brahman – the Supreme Being. It is the nature of the Being to support the world in spite of its self-contradictions. The self-contradictory aspect always points to something that is at least relatively not self-contradictory. In spite of its self-contradictory nature, causality holds true in the world.

16. Oh Master of Prakrti! Knowing that all the divine manifestations and Incarnations are really Thyself, great sages have dived into the ocean of the world-sanctifying accounts of Thy sportive actions as such divine Incarnations and manifestations, and, through that, assuaged the heat of all their suffering. Oh Thou the Supreme One! It is

then needless to say that those who overcome the limitations of space, time and mental modifications and intuit Thy Being will overcome all suffering, and be established in Thy state of Supreme Bliss.

Mythological epics refer to Divine Incarnations. They represent the actual descent of the Brahman in various mundane forms into the world. The Immanent dwells in all

souls and accompanies them in life and death. It is the Brahman residing in the spirit (atman) of man like lightning in a cloud. The Incarnate as worshiped is the idol of God in various forms acceptable to devotees.

God's play on earth as an Incarnation is the manifestation of the glory of the Chit-sakti, the Divine power. That which is the Brahman is also Rama, Krishna and Siva. The special manifestations of the Absolute are the Incarnations – the known and the knowable. God becomes the Incarnations in different ages to show us the way to become perfect.

The concept of Divine Incarnation is the first link in the chain of ideas leading to recognition of the oneness of God and man. God appearing first in one human form, then reappearing at different times in other human forms is at last recognized as being in every human form, or in all human beings.

17. Man can be said to be a man, truly alive, only if he adores Thee. Otherwise, he is merely a pair of bellows, a breathing machine. For, Thou art the Power that activates

the insentient cosmic categories and enables them to take the shape of the universe, including man. In the human personality so formed, Thou, as the Purusa, permeates

the five sheaths (kosas) – the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnamaya and Anandamaya. Interpenetrating all these and taking their shape, Thou art described also as transcending them as their support – the One remaining as the ultimate substratum when all the distinctions of cause and effect are eliminated.

The Vedanta philosophy describes five koshas (sheaths) that are stated to exist in a human body. They are the annamayakosha or gross physical sheath made of and sustained by food; the pranamayakosha or vital sheath consisting of the five vital forces, the manomayakosha or mental sheath, the vijnanamayakosha or sheath of intelligence and the anandamayakosha or sheath of bliss.

The five vital forces constituting the pranamayakosha are stated to be prana, apana, samana, vyana and udana. These five denote the physical, biological (vital), mental, rational and blissful functions. The Taittiriya Upanisad refers to them as atmans (selves) in a person. They are presumed arranged, one inside the other, covering the spirit – atman, which is the innermost constituent. These are really levels of one's existence as man.

The Katha Upanisad refers to seven levels of existence or of the self, the seventh being the highest, beyond which there can be nothing. This highest level is that of the

Purusa, the absolute 'I'-Consciousness.

18. Among the followers of the path of the rishis, those who are most gross-minded called sarkarayanans meditate on Thee in the stomach region, that is, the centre in the

navel called manipura, probably including muladhara. Others, more subtle-minded called arunis, meditate on Thee in the spiritual dimension in the heart region called dahara.

From the heart, sushumna, the spiritual conduit leads to the head, the highest region where Thou art intuited in the sahasrara or the thousand-petalled lotus. There is no

more birth and death for those attaining this.

Tantra preaches a kind of yoga, called Kundalini (serpent power), leading to spiritual perception and mystic visions. It is awakening the spiritual energy latent in human beings.

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

These centres placed in the Sushumna (antravestika) form the ascending steps by which the Kundalini or the spiritual energy passes from the foot of the spine to the cerebrum. The spiritual energy passes through these centres upward and downward with no resistance, along the Sushumna. It is said to penetrate the six centres, also called the six charkas, before it gets vitalized in the Sahasrara centre. This is known as Shatchakrabheda - penetration of the six chakras.

The Sahasrara is considered the abode of Lord Siva - the Supreme Brahman. This abode is stated to be as white as the radiant full moon, as bright as lightning and as mild and serene as moonlight. The Sahasrara centre is where the spiritual energy manifests itself in its full glory and splendour. The lotuses of these centres are like the fruits and leaves of a wax tree, in the subtle body. Only a yogi can see them. They are not physiological entities.

The chakras (centres) are formed of consciousness. The Primordial Energy resides in all bodies as the Kundalini. It is like a sleeping snake coiled up. The movement of the

Kundalini along the Sushumna nerve is called the movement of the Mahavayu, the Spiritual current.

Spiritual consciousness is not possible without the awakening of the Kundalini. This is, otherwise, to say that when the Kundalini is awakened, the Jiva goes beyond the realm of Maya (Prakrti) and becomes united with the Supreme Soul. This is the vision of God.

19. Though Thou art already present in these diverse creations of Thine as their material cause, still it looks as if Thou hast entered into them again after the creation of the bodies, manifesting identification with their shape and character, just as the fire takes the shape and nature of the fuel it is burning. Therefore, men, who are endowed with a dispassionate mind and who have renounced all self-centred values, recognize Thee as the enduring Spirit in these transient bodies.

The Brahman, being the Supreme Being, permeating and pervading everything in the world is the Supreme Consciousness. It is also considered the Supreme Spirit or the

Atman. By its very nature of all-encompassing and all-pervading phenomenon, the Supreme Spirit or Atman is considered the innermost attribute or constituent of the individual spirits or atmans. The Supreme Being becomes the Atman of all the atmans - the Universal Spirit residing in all individual spirits. The Supreme Spirit inwardizes

into the individual spirits.

20. The Purusa abides in the bodies created by the karma of the Jiva, without the

spiritual nature being effaced by anything within or without, in the midst of the cause and effect relationship. He is described as 'part' (amsa) of Thee, and Thou as the Whole endowed with infinite puissance and excellences. Arriving through discrimination at this spiritual origin and destiny of man, wise men adore Thee with deep faith and devotion, having accepted the Vedic teaching that Thou art the fulcrum for dedicating and depositing all one's actions and that devotion to Thee can secure one's release from samsara.

Every action has merit or demerit resulting from good or evil it produces. Ethical action includes disciplines for realization. The first is discrimination between the eternal and

the non-eternal. The seeker is to discriminate at every level of action focusing whether the action leads to grasp of the eternal being. If the objects of action relate to the

transient or the temporal beings, he is to withdraw from action related to them. This is ultimately to enable him to grasp the eternal being. The second is detachment from all

selfish pursuits - worldly and otherworldly. The third is cultivation of the six virtues – tranquility (sama), restraint (dama), renunciation (uparati), endurance (titiksa), meditation (samadhi) and faith (sraddha). The fourth is desire for liberation.

Of the virtues, renunciation is the most important and of three types – sacrifice, charity and penance (tapas). All the three are actions. They purify the soul. They are obligatory actions to be performed without any attachment to the results thereof.

One who does not do actions out of ignorance is under the influence of the attribute of the Darkness (tamas). One who gives them up because of the difficulties they involve

is under the influence of the attribute of the Active (rajas). Either is wrong. The one who performs actions without any self-interest is under the influence of the attribute of the Transparent (sattva). He is the true renouncer of action, the true knower and the truly wise.

The ideal man following ethical action is one who has realized his rational being. His reason becomes steady. He preserves his equanimity under all conditions, whether in

grief or in joy. He does not have any egoistic desires. He looks upon all events that happen, without being disturbed. He does not have any attachment for the objects of his senses. He can withdraw his mind and senses from all temporal objects and focus his mind on eternal objects.

21. Oh Lord of all! In order to reveal this spiritual nature of man which is difficult to comprehend, Thou dost arise as divine Incarnations from time to time. There are some who enter into the vast nectarine ocean of Thy deeds and excellences, revealed through the sportive actions of these, Thy Incarnations, and exclude all other forms of spiritual striving. They leave their homes and all worldly attachments, and join that community of all-renouncing men who constitute the Paramahansas ever sporting with delight at Thy lotus feet. They reject even liberation, and prefer premabhakti.

One way of realization is the way of devotion (bhakti). The theistic schools of

philosophy, mainly Vaishnavism, generally advocate this way. This way is to surrender oneself to God in love and devotion.

Emotional attachment to God is easier than dry detachment from fruits of action. In fact, the detachment from the fruits of action or the ethical way of life automatically brings about surrender to God in love and devotion. The seeker is to realize that he is only an instrument in the hands of God. He is to think that he performs his duties in

obedience to the will of God. The fruits of his action belong to God, not to himself.

Devotion implies the difference (duality) between the devotee and God. The plurality exists. The ego of the devotee persists. The Vedantic thought indicates that so long as the ego of the aspirant remains, it is not possible for him to realize the Supreme Being. In the case of a true devotee, it is different. The devotee retains a trace of ego to be distinct from the Divine. This ego is not the ego of an ordinary individual, which keeps him away from the Divine. This ego is that of the greatest of the sages like Prahlada and Narada who have been ever realized.

Devotion is intense love of God. The way of devotion results in knowledge. Knowledge perfected, made steady and constant becomes love. Love is, thus, uninterrupted flow

of knowledge, uninterrupted like the flow of oil. It is very difficult to practise, as mind by nature is fickle and moves from object to object.

To strengthen the love of God, several types of yogic practices, meditations, forms of worship, initiations, etc are recommended. They are also difficult to practise. Strict observance of ethical code and self-control are equally difficult. Action, knowledge and devotion throw man on himself and require absolute self-reliance. But as a finite being,

man cannot be perfect in action, knowledge and devotion. Therefore, he has to surrender his self to God, instead of relying on himself.

Self-surrender includes doing what is in conformity with God's will, not doing what is against His will. It involves absolute faith that God saves men, and all are to surrender to Him for His guidance and protection. This is true renunciation. The philosophy of Non-Dualism of the qualified Brahman (Visista-advaita) states that devotion and

self-surrender are essential for salvation. These two are not opposed to the way of knowledge, but are its consummation.

Pure love is attachment to God alone. It is of the nature of bliss for the seeker. God cannot be realized by logic or reason. Without devotion, all penance, rites, austerities

become futile. Nor can man realize God by self-exertion. In the absence of the grace of God, His vision is not possible. The pure mind of the seeker, seeking God-vision in

ecstasy, is devotion. In essence, it is the cultivation of divine love for God.

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

'Pure love (prema) is the rope by which one can tether God, as it were. Higher than worship is japam; higher than japam is meditation; higher than meditation is bhava and

higher than bhava are mahabhava and prema. When one attains prema (pure love), one has the rope to tie God. Whenever one wants to see Him, one has merely to pull the rope. Whenever one calls Him, He will appear before one' in the words of Sri Ramakrishna.

22. This human body, so well-suited for Thy service, is now readily available for one like a bosom friend or a dear relative to be used for devotional purposes. So also, Thou

art eager to bless the devotee, being very benevolent to him. But alas! Ordinary man shows no interest in Thee because of his indulgence in sense objects of a degrading nature. By this neglect of devotional life, he becomes an annihilator of the soul. By the force of tendencies developed through a life of attachment to this body, he roams

about in inferior bodies in this terrible maze of samsara.

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

fibre sticking out.

23. Through remembrance, Thy antagonists attained to the same spiritual goal as the sages that had established complete control over their vital force, mind and senses,

and meditated on Thee in the their heart. The Sruti-Devatas look upon Thee as equally present everywhere, and ever commune with Thy lotus feet. The gopikas of Brindavan

that longed for the embrace of Thy arms, powerful and handsome like Adisesha, similarly communed with Thy lotus feet. Whatever is the nature of the passion that moves the devotee, if it makes him intensely think of Thee, Thy grace is ever on him!

To develop love for God, scriptures indicate that the devotee has to build up an intimate personal relationship to God. They suggest that God may be regarded as the

devotee's parent, master, friend, child, husband or sweetheart. Each succeeding relationship represents a further intensification of love. These attitudes (bhavas) toward God are known as santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhur.

Santa is the serene attitude. Bhishma of the Mahabharata, on the bed of arrows after the Great War at Kurukshetra, awaiting physical death was a glorious example of this

attitude. The Vedic seers, too, had this attitude toward God. They did not desire any worldly enjoyment. It is like the single-minded devotion of a wife to her husband.

Dasya is the attitude of a servant toward his master. Hanuman had this attitude toward Rama. A wife feels this attitude toward her husband, with all her heart and soul. A mother also has a little of this attitude, as Yasoda toward Krishna.

Sakhya is the attitude of friendship. The cowherd boys of Brindavan had this attitude

toward Krishna.

Vatsalya is the attitude of a mother toward her child, like Yasoda's attitude toward Krishna. The mother feels happy only when the child eats to its heart's content.

Madhur is the attitude of a woman toward her paramour. Radha had this attitude toward Krishna. A chaste wife feels it for her husband. This attitude includes all the other four.

Unconditional love and longing are the two requisites for a devotee to attain the Godhead. Bhakti matured becomes bhava. Next is mahabhava. Next is prema. The last of all is the attainment of God. These are the conscious state, the semi-conscious state and the innermost state. In the conscious state, the devotee only chants the name of God. In the semi-conscious state, he dances in ecstasy. In the innermost state, he remains in samadhi.

24. Thou art the Primeval Being prior to whom or by whose side there none else existed. Lo! How can any one who came from Thee, and who is bound to dissolve into Thee, know Thee? From Thee, the creator Brahma arose, and from him the two types of divinities. And when Thou enter into Thy cosmic slumber drawing everything into Thyself, there is nothing left to be known as gross or subtle or as combination of both, no movement of time, no scripture. How can anyone, therefore, know the subtle truth about Thee unless instructed by Thee? So, to practise devotion to Thee, and win Thy grace is the easier way of salvation for man.

The Brahman is ontologically prior to everything. IT is, therefore, to be regarded as the origin of everything. The Vedanta Aphorisms define the Brahman as that to which the

birth, maintenance and destruction of the world have to be attributed. The Brahman is, therefore, considered the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world.

The world-appearance is said to have the Absolute Brahman as its cause, in the same way as the sky (space) is the cause of the growth of the tree, for the sky does not

obstruct its growth. In fact, the Brahman is not an active causative factor.

The Brahman has no initial cause. It is, therefore, uncreated (anadikarana). IT has no precedent state. IT is not a product. Nothing changes to be the Brahman, nor does IT

change to anything else. IT does not undergo modification. The Becoming that arises out of IT takes place without affecting Its very nature (vivartakarana). Vivarta means

change without being affected by change. The Brahman is changeless.

The Absolute is immaterial; IT is spiritual; so material sources of light like the sun do not illumine IT. IT is self-luminous. Therefore, IT is not inert or dark. The Absolute cannot be realized or experienced by another. Only the Absolute can realize Itself.

The path of discrimination and knowledge is very difficult. Unconditional love and longing for the Divine are what can take a devotee to the God-head. Devotion matured

becomes bhava, mahabhava and prema (unconditional love), in that order. Prema is the attainment of God.

25. Different philosophers have different theories of Reality. The Vaiseshikas say

that real entities arise from a previous state of non-existence. Naiyayikas have the theory

that existent entities perish. The Samkhyas contend that the Spirit is many and, therefore, different in each body. The Mimamsa-ritualists find the truth in the fruits of ritualistic works. All these theories are guess-work based on misconception. So also, the materialist's theory that man is a product of the three gunas of Prakrti and that every being is, therefore, a separate and perishable individual, is a theory based on the ignorance of Thy nature. For Thou, Pure Consciousness, in whom ignorance has no

place, is the ultimate Truth.

The Reality is that which exists in the beginning and in the end.

The Reality is only one and that is the Self. It is Pure-consciousness and eternal in nature. To one with the Reality, there is neither the mind nor the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. There is, therefore, no extroversion. The state of the sage with the Reality is the ever-awake state. He is ever awake to the eternal Self. His is the ever-dreaming state as the world is no better than a repeatedly presented dream phenomenon for him. His is the ever deep-sleep state as he is without his body

consciousness ever.

Reality must always be real. It has no names or forms. It underlies all limitations, being limitless. It is not bound in any way. Being real, It is That Which Is. It transcends speech and is beyond description such as being or non-being. That alone is real, which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself and which is eternal and changeless.

Reality is Being, Pure existence, Consciousness.

Reality alone exists as a perfect undivided whole. The awareness of this Reality alone is the Truth. There is no other reality. The Reality is in the form of experience throbbing within one's real self.

26. This universe of the three gunas, a mental projection, and the individual self or the Jiva, are asat, something non-existent in themselves, but become sat, or derive existential value, because of Thee who art the substance behind them. The knower of the Self, therefore, recognizes all this as sat or existing, because everything is an expression of Thyself. A product of gold is not rejected as illusory because it exists in identification with its substance, gold. Having manifested the universe, Thou dost indwell it as its substance as gold abides in all its products.

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

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

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

Water in the mirage does not come into being and go out of existence. So this world,

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

In the waking state there is no materiality in the objects seen in a dream, though, while dreaming, the objects appear to be solid. This dream-like appearance is yet true

during the period of the dream itself. The world-appearance is but a long dream. This world, therefore, appears to be material, though, in reality, it is all pure consciousness.

The universe can be said both real and unreal. It is real because of the reality of consciousness and unreal because the universe does not exist as universe, independent of consciousness. The existence of consciousness cannot be denied, as it is a matter of experience.

The world is as true in relation to the Brahman as the dream-city is true in relation to the experience of the waking consciousness. Just as a mountain is seen both inside the mirror and outside it, this world is both within consciousness as solid matter and outside it as its reflection. The world and the cosmic consciousness are just synonyms.

27. Those who adore Thee as the soul and substance of everything overcome death. The others, who are averse to this truth, are bound by Thee to the life of samsara like

animals, with the rope of Vedic ritualism, even though they are great scholars. Those who love Thee purify the worlds, not the others who put on a garb of spirituality without

love of Thee at heart.

There are three kinds of formal devotion – tamasic, rajasic and sattvic.

While showing devotion to God, if a person is actuated by arrogance, jealousy or anger then his devotion is tamasic. It is said to be influenced by the quality of inertia.

If a person worships God for fame or wealth or any otherworldly ambition, then his devotion is rajasic. It is said to be influenced by the quality of activity.

If a person loves God without any thought of material gain, if he performs his duties to please God alone, and if he maintains the attitude of friendship and goodwill towards

all, then his devotion is called sattvic. It is said to be influenced by the quality of harmony.

But the highest devotion to God transcends the three qualities. It is a spontaneous and uninterrupted inclination of the soul towards God. Such devotion springs up spontaneously in the heart of a true devotee, as soon as he hears the mention of God or His attributes. A devotee possessing love of God of this nature desires nothing even

if he is offered the happiness of Heaven in whatever way it is conceived. The devotee's desire is only to love God under all conditions – in pleasure and pain, honour and

dishonour, prosperity and privation.

28. Though Thou, the self-luminous and self-conscious one, are without limbs and sense organs, Thou art the power that supports the sense faculties of all creatures. Dominated by Thy Maya, all the Devas and creators like Prajapatis offer tribute to Thee as subordinate kings do to their suzerains, and they in turn subsist on what men

offer them as sacrificial offerings. Out of fear of Thee, all the Devas perform their appointed tasks.

The pure Infinite Consciousness appears to become whatever forms It takes whenever It manifests Itself. The mountains, the forests, the earth, the celestial bodies in the

cosmos are all but Infinite Consciousness. When the Infinite Consciousness in the form of life-breath enters into bodies and begins to vibrate various parts, it is said that

those bodies are living. It is a small part of the Infinite Consciousness that becomes the intelligence in these bodies. This intelligence, entering into these bodies, brings into being the different organs like the eyes.

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

29. Oh unfettered one! When Thou, the Transcendent Being, desire to sport with Thy Yogamaya and cast Thy glance at her, then the powers and tendencies of the Jiva that had become latent in Thee at the close of the cosmic cycle are roused up, and as a consequence, the Jiva, with bodies moving and unmoving, come into being. These

differences noticed in the nature and the power of the Jiva are due to their own karma and not of Thy making. For, to Thee, who art the highest of all beings – who art the

same towards all like akasa, beyond thought and words, and extremely subtle – there is no such difference as the favoured one and the disfavoured one.

In the mirror of Infinite Consciousness are seen countless reflections, which constitute appearance of the world. These are the Jiva. Each Jiva is like a little agitation on the

surface of the ocean of the Brahman. When, in that slight agitation, the infinitude of the Infinite Consciousness is veiled, limitation of Consciousness appears to arise.

This

too is inherent in that Infinite Consciousness. That limitation of Consciousness is known as Jiva. This limitation of Consciousness when it is fed by latent tendencies and memories condenses into egotism – 'I'-ness. This 'I'-ness is not a solid reality. But the Jiva sees it as real, like the blueness of the sky. When the egotism entertains its own notions, it gives rise to the mind-stuff, the concept of an

independent and separate Jiva, mind, Maya or cosmic illusion, cosmic nature, etc. When Consciousness, clothed as it were, by its own energy, limits itself and considers itself Jiva, that Jiva, endowed with this restless energy, is involved in the world-appearance.

The universe exists in the Infinite Consciousness just as future waves exist in a calm sea, with the potentiality of an apparent difference. Infinite Consciousness is un-manifest, though omnipresent, even as space, though existing everywhere, is manifest. Just as the reflection of an object in crystal can be said to be neither real nor entirely unreal, one cannot say that the universe, which is reflected in the Infinite Consciousness, is real or unreal. Just as space is unaffected by the clouds that float in it, the Infinite Consciousness is unaffected and untouched by the universe that appears in IT. Just as light is seen through the refracting agent, the Infinite Consciousness is revealed only through the universe. IT is essentially without name and form but Its reflections are only known through names and forms. Consciousness reflecting in Consciousness shines as Consciousness and exists as Consciousness.

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

30. Oh Eternal Being! If the embodied beings (the Jiva) are countless in number, and are also eternal and all-pervading, they cannot come under Thy control, as each would

be its own absolute authority and could go in its own way. They can be under Thy control only if it is otherwise. If the Jiva are the manifestation of Thyself through an adjunct, then Thou, as their causal substance, will be permeating them in all their transformations through their adjuncts and would be their controller without losing Thy own original nature as the Supreme Being. But the all-pervading and ultimate seer that Thou art, Thou cannot be an object of knowledge like other knowable things. To say that the ultimate seer can be the seen will be an absurd doctrine.

Once it is considered that the Supreme Consciousness (Brahman) is One and All-pervading, there can be no second consciousness called Jiva, independent of and different from the Brahman. P. Sriramachandrudu states that Jiva is no other than Antahkarana which is translucent and is the purest (nirmala) of all the non-sentient objects (acetana padarthas) capable of reflecting and radiating the cicchakti of the Brahman with which it is constantly connected and, therefore, it is never without chaitanya. It is only the Antahkarana with all its constant associates like the subtle body, sense organs, etc which migrates from life to life. It receives the chaitanya from the all-pervading Brahman wherever it moves about. Jiva is not a particle emerging from or a piece cut out of the Brahman to be ultimately united with IT, as the Brahman is all-pervading like Akasa with no form or parts. As the chaitanya of the so-called Jiva is nothing but the Brahman, it is declared that Jivo Brahmaiva naparah (Jiva is the Brahman only, not different from IT) – the essence of the philosophy of Advaita (Non-dualism).

31. A living being (Jiva) cannot be a product of Prakrti (matter) alone or of Purusa (consciousness) alone. For, both these are eternal, whereas living beings come and go.

They are, therefore, the product of the mutual superimposition of both into a complex unit in which their separateness cannot be understood or experienced. They may be

compared to bubbles in which air and water particles combine. When all those Jiva dissolve in Thee, the Existence-Knowledge-bliss, either in deep sleep or in liberation,

then all their separateness disappears. The only difference is that in deep-sleep the mergence is still in combination with the adjuncts in a subtle form as of flower nectars of various kinds in honey, while in liberation it is absolute mergence as of river water in the ocean.

32. Knowing that it is due to the delusion caused by Thy Maya that the Jiva are subjected to birth after birth in the trans-migratory cycle (samsara), wise men adore Thee, the granter of release from samsara, with intense devotion. How can there be samsara for one who serves Thee? For, Thy wheel of Time with its rim of three parts, the past, the present and the future, on which the course of transmigration is mounted, causes fear only to those who do not take refuge in Thee.

Samsara is a Sanskrit word meaning 'to wander or pass through a series of states or conditions'. It is the beginning-less cycle of birth, death and rebirth, a process impelled by karma. Taken together, samsara and karma provide a causal explanation of human differences and an ethical theory of moral retribution.

The word samsara is also applied to phenomenal existence in general to indicate its transient and cyclical nature. Samsara is thus the conditioned and ever-changing universe as contrasted to an unconditioned, eternal and transcendent state of the Supreme Self.

Samsara is generally characterized by suffering and sorrow as well as impermanence. The cause of perpetual rebirth is found usually in desire based on ego-sense for

individual existence, and in ignorance of the true nature of the Reality.

As such, the supreme goal of human endeavour is considered as liberation from samsara, that is, as release from bondage to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, nullifying the impressions (samskaras) of karma accumulated thus far.

33. Oh Birthless One! Even though a person has gained control over his senses and the pranas, if he has not surrendered himself at the feet of the guru, all his effort to discipline the extremely fickle mind, which is like an uncontrolled horse, will result only in the pain and trouble of striving, and he will be overwhelmed with deep sorrow because of failure. His condition will be like that of a party of merchants in the mid-ocean without a helmsman to direct the boat.

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

34. When Thou, the essence of all bliss, art available as his very self to man who has resigned himself to Thee, what further use will he have for such objects as relatives,

sons, body, wife, wealth, house, lands, life and properties like chariots, etc? And what joy can a man derive, who, without knowing Thee, the bedrock of Reality, goes after

the joy of sex-life and other pleasures of the world that are ephemeral and doomed to destruction by their very nature?

The Brahman is Consciousness. The Brahman is Bliss. Bliss is the collecting together of our dispersed and divided being into an intense unity. It is infinitely more intense

than the essence of everything in the world. It is the intensity of being. As such the state attained in realization is Bliss itself.

Being, Consciousness and Bliss are not qualities of the Atman or the Brahman, which is without qualities (nirguna). These three are the attributes of the Brahman.

These

are not the qualities the Brahman possesses. They are the Brahman.

35. Though these devotees, who are free from the pride of narrow egotism, hold Thy lotus-feet in their heart, and have within themselves that all-sanctifying stream of devotion flowing from those feet of Thine, still they resort to pilgrimage to holy centres during their life-time, abandoning hearth and home. For even those who have but once seriously bestowed their mind on the ever-blessed Atman, which is Thyself, can never feel happy in the self-centred life of the home, which has a baneful effect on the spiritual essence in man. By their visit to such holy places, they sanctify them, and enhance their holiness.

To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation. Abandonment of home, family, relations, etc is renunciation. Renunciation of everything puts an end to all sorrow. By

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

36. It is contended that all this world has arisen out of sat, a really existent cause, and, therefore, it must also be real. This, however, is not acceptable to reason; first it is not universally applicable to all cases of cause and effect, as in the case of father and son. The son has a different identity from that of the father, and cannot be reduced into the latter's form, as a pot can be reduced into mud. Next, sometimes an effect may be a mere appearance on a real cause, as the snake is in a rope in an illusory

perception. In such types of instances, the rule that the effect is as real as the cause is not found to fit in. At the most, from the point of view of practical efficiency, it may have some relevance, even as a wrong idea blindly accepted on the ground of a transmitted tradition is found to work in practice, or as a false coin passes for a genuine one undetected. The permanence of the fruits of Vedic rituals based on Thy

words, the Veda, is only wishful thinking of dull-witted persons who are not able to comprehend the Veda in its implications, suggestions and many-sidedness. Vedic rituals may bear fruits which may last long, but are not really eternal.

'The Brahman alone is real. IT is beyond the limits of space and time and is free from all kinds of differences and changes. The ever-changing world is transitory and unreal.

It is unreal in the sense that it is not as real as the Brahman; but it has practical reality. That is the reason why it is called Mithya but not Asat (non-existent). It is not an illusion. Things seen in a dream are quite true as long as the dream lasts; they are unreal only when one is awake. Similarly the world is quite real as long as true knowledge does not dawn. The dreams are the creation of the individual being and, therefore, they are private. The world is public. It is the creation of Isvara. Therefore, no

one can escape from and avoid the worldly activity. Even the man of the highest spiritual knowledge (jivanmukta) cannot but witness the worldly activities and participate in them. He is like the cinema-viewer of mature minds who, while knowing fully well that he is seeing the unreal, at the same time, gets the experience through his eyes and ears of what is presented before him on the screen by an unseen operator. Therefore, it is wrong to get alarmed that the world is robbed of its importance and significance by

being reduced to the status of Mithya (unreal)', in the words of P. Sriramachandrudu.

37. This universe did not exist before its creation and will not exist after the cosmic dissolution, too. So its existence in Thee, the Sat-Cit-Anand, during the interval, can only be in a phenomenal sense, without any substantiality. It is, therefore, compared to ornaments and pots which are the modifications of gold and mud respectively. Ignorant people mistake these temporary transformations of the mind to be permanent.

The Reality is that which exists in the beginning and in the end. The transformations arise in the middle; and they are only phenomenal and super-impositions on the Reality.

They are ever transient and, therefore, unreal, though they are not non-existent during the period of their existence.

38. Prompted by Maya, Thy creative Power, the Jiva embraces the ignorance aspect of that Power and gets established in the feeling that it is a body-mind complex.

Consequently it loses its blissful nature and becomes subject to birth and death in the trans-migratory cycle. But Thou, who art established in Thy spiritual glory, have shed

ignorance, like a snake its slough, and shine in Thy unlimited majesty exhibiting the six-fold powers.

The practical activity in the manifold world is the result of the dynamic, creative aspect of Maya or avidya. The cognitive aspect of our life and the cognitions of our activities

and of the objects toward which our activities are directed are due to the pure,

conscious aspect of Maya or avidya. Indeed, Maya or avidya is obviously creative. Said in other words, Paramatman as ruling Maya is Isvara. Paramatman as under Maya is Jivatma. Maya is the sum total of manifestations that will vanish in realization.

Maya is the energy of the universe, potential and kinetic. Until the Divine Mother releases us from Maya, we cannot be free.

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

39. Oh Lord! If renunciates (yatis or sannyasins) do not root out the desire for enjoyment from their hearts, then Thou, though present in their hearts, dost not reveal Thy presence to those hypocrites, just as a jewel does not reveal itself to its wearer who has forgotten its presence on his neck. The ascetics who are after sense enjoyment have to suffer misery from two sources, death which is sure to visit them, and from Thee who does not reveal Thyself to them.

40. Oh Thou Lord of countless glories! In one who is illumined with Thy knowledge, the bond of self-centred life (egoity) is broken and, therefore, he is oblivious of (becomes free from) Thy laws regarding merit and demerit, enjoyment and suffering. The scriptural injunctions pertaining to man, who is body-centred, become meaningless for him.

For, he is then established in the bliss of spiritual freedom which is Thyself, who hast entered into the hearts of men through the glorious devotional traditions transmitted in

every age by great men through a succession of teachers and disciples.

The ego is the thought 'I'. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. Other thoughts arise later. Holding a form, it comes into being. It stays on as

the form is held. It breeds on it and grows strong. It changes form as suddenly as it assumes form.

If one focuses one's thought on ego-sense, it takes to flight. One is, therefore, able to transcend the phenomenal existence of the ego when one dives deep into the source

from where the 'I' thought arises. Everything rises with the rise of the ego. Everything subsides when the ego subsides. To destroy the ego through self-enquiry is renunciation.

Egotism is quietened by constant practice – abhyasa. Abhyasa is thinking of 'That' alone, speaking of 'That', conversing of 'That' with one another and utter dedication to

'That' alone. When one's intellect is filled with beauty and bliss, when one's vision is broad and when passion for sensual enjoyment is absent in one, then that is abhyasa

or practice. When one is firmly established in the conviction that this universe has never been created and, therefore, it does not exist as such, and when thoughts like

'this is the world', 'I am pleased', etc do not arise at all in one, and then that is abhyasa or practice. In such state one is beyond attraction and repulsion and, as such, egotism.

One will have attained true wisdom. This is the practice of the yoga of true wisdom by means of which one acquires the faculty of instantly materializing one's thoughts.

By

such practice one acquires full knowledge of the past, the present and the future, too.

41. Even leading Divinities like Brahma do not find the limits of Thee; for Thou art the unlimited, and the unlimited by its nature cannot be fully comprehended. For the same

reason even Thou dost not know Thy limits. Within that infinite and incomprehensible being of Thine, countless brahmandas (universes), each with its seven expansive

external coverings, whirl about together under the propulsion of Time like clusters of dust in the air. So the words of the Veda, unable to describe Thee positively, arrive at

Thee only as the final residue left after negating all conceivable entities.

An aspirant reasons about the Brahman as long as he has not realized IT. One cannot have this knowledge so long as there is the slightest trace of worldliness.

The

aspirant is to keep his mind aloof from the objects of sight, hearing, touch and other things of a worldly nature. As long as an aspirant is conscious of his body, he is conscious of duality. It is when he tries to describe what he sees, he finds duality. He is to give up his identification with worldly things, discriminating 'not this, not this'. Only thus does he realize the Brahman as his own inner consciousness.

The aspirant believes that the acts of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe and all its living beings are the manifestations of Sakti, the Divine Power.

By

reasoning, he will realize that all these are as illusory as a dream in the sense that they are transient. The Brahman alone is the Reality. All else is unreal. Even this very

Sakti is unsubstantial, like a dream.

The aspirant, sticking to the path of knowledge, always reasons about the Reality.

The Brahman is neither 'this' nor 'that'. It is neither the universe nor the living beings.

Reasoning this way, the mind becomes steady. Then it is transcended and the aspirant goes into samadhi. This is the knowledge of the Brahman. It is the unwavering conviction of the aspirant that the Brahman alone is real and the world illusory, like a dream. What the Brahman is cannot be described.

Rishi Narayana said:

42. The great sages, born of the mind of Brahma, heard this exposition of the truth of the Brahman by Sanandana with great attention, and then saluted the Rishi, their hearts illumined by the knowledge of the Atman.

43. Thus was the quintessence of the Vedas, the Puranas and the Upanisads

expounded by the ancient sage Sanandana and others, who move about from sphere to sphere in the universe.

44. Oh thou, inheritor of the bliss of Brahma! Thinking, with deep faith, over this message of renunciation for men, you may freely move about in the worlds.

Sri Suka Said:

45. Oh King! The sage Narada, who had perfect control over his mind and who observed strict celibacy in life, heard the teachings of Rishi Narayana with deep faith and receptivity and became filled with joy, thinking over them again and again.

46. Sri Narada said: 'Salutations to Thee the Divine Incarnate, a manifestation of the Supreme Lord Krishna of holy fame who comes down as glorious Incarnations for the

welfare of all creatures!'

47. Paying homage to Rishi Narayana, the first and foremost of sages, and to his worthy disciples, Narada went to the ashrama where my father Vyasa dwelt.

48. Received respectfully by Vyasa, Narada took a seat and narrated to him what he had heard from the mouth of Rishi Narayana, and I learned it from my father.

49. Thus have I answered, through the account of the above conversation, your question how the Brahman, beyond the gunas and words, can be grasped by the mind.

50. Meditate always on Hari who, as the creator, designed this universe for the benefit of the Jiva; who, as its material cause, remains unaffected as its substratum during its

creation, sustenance and dissolution; who is the lord and director of dissolution; who is the lord and director of matter and Jiva; who, after creating the categories, enters into His creation along with the Jiva as the Indwelling Spirit and directs its evolution into various world systems and bodies of living beings; who governs the Jiva providing them with food and other conditions for higher evolution; who, through instruction as the guru, enables the Jiva to take refuge in Him and to abandon identification with the body even in the waking state as in the state of sleep; and who, being ever established in the Bliss-consciousness without the slightest trace of ignorance, is capable of giving complete freedom from fear to all beings..

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