

discarded as vice. The Vedas show the ways of employing life both for good and bad. This transitory life transforms itself into the Life Absolute when *Brahma jñāna* is obtained. Short of that Enlightenment, this mundane existence drags on painfully without beginning and without end. It is therefore called *avyayam* — the imperishable.

He who reads and understands the compiled books called the Vedas is not the real *Vedavit* — the knower of the Vedas. These books are mere aids and guides. He alone is a *Vedavit* who truly sees into the marvellous working of Nature. Prakriti is the true imperishable Veda, projected by the Maker.

A man standing outside a market-place hears a general buzz, nothing is distinct. But his perspective changes as soon as he enters into the market. The transactions are all clearly heard and understood. Similarly when a man is away from Iswara, his inquiry is all in confusion. There is no end to his search into the cause and effect, to his cogitating over the why and how of the things, to his debates, to his arguments and counter-arguments and to his theorizing. But on the realization of Iswara all these speculations and conjectures come to an end. The mystery of Nature becomes an open book to him.

— Sri Ramakrishna

That the Prakriti is constituted of the three Gunas and that the Paramatman is supremely above the Prakriti was presented in chapter fourteen. This chapter deals with the fact that the Prakriti branches down from its Source which is the Paramatman. The symbol of the Cosmic Mother Durga expounds these facts very graphically. She is