

Yoga, Enlightenment and Perfection



of
**HIS HOLINESS JAGADGURU
SRI ABHINAVA VIDYATHEERTHA MAHASWAMIGAL**

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of

**His Holiness Jagadguru
Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha
Mahaswamigal**



**Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation
Chennai**

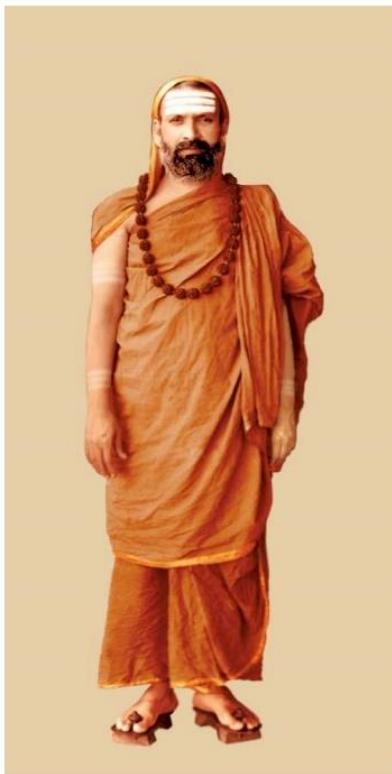
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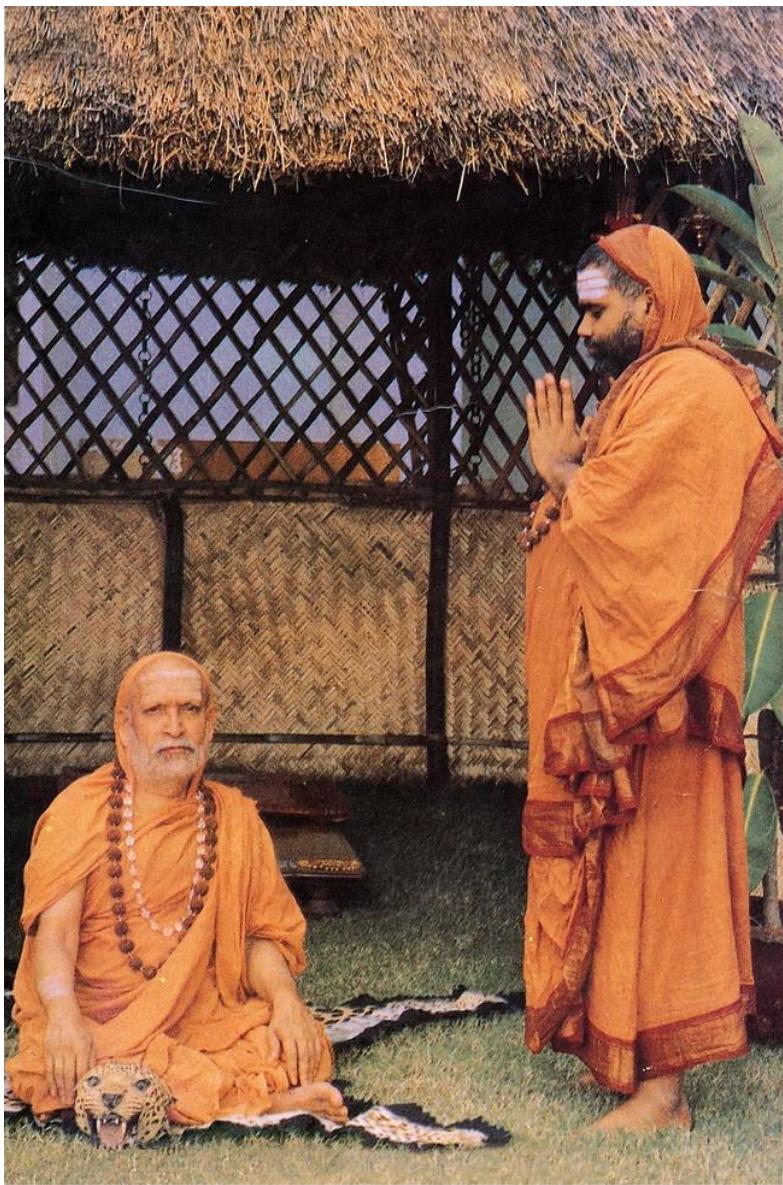
ध्यायन्वरिष्ठं भवदद्वियुगमं व्यक्तस्थिरं मङ्गूदयारविन्दे ।
तस्मिन्निमां प्रेरकयाश्रये मे नत्वा तदीयां कृतिमर्पयामि ॥

dhyanvarishham bhavadarnghriyugmaṁ
vyakthasthiram maddhrudayāravinde
tasminnimaṁ prerakayāśraye me
natvā tadiyām kṛutimarpayāmi

(Meditating upon Your two feet, which are the greatest, which are manifest and firm in the lotus of my heart, which direct me and are my refuge, I prostrate before them and offer unto them this work that belongs to them.)



Acharyal paying obeisance to Paramacharyal H.H. Jagadguru
Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal



H.H. Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamigal
paying obeisance to Acharyal



श्री श्री जगदुरु शङ्कराचार्य महासंस्थानम्, दक्षिणाम्नाय श्री शारदापीठम्, शृङ्गेरी

शृङ्गीरि:

२९.१२.१९९८.

प्रातःस्मरणीया: अस्मदुरुवेरेण्या: जगदुरु श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थ
महास्वामिनः बाल्य एव स्वीकृतपरमहंस्या: योगानुष्ठाननिष्ठा आसन् ।
निर्विकल्पसमाधिसुखमप्यनुभूय असाधारणीं योगसिद्धिमवाप्नवन् ।
सम्प्रदायपरिपालननिरतास्सन्तः आश्रमधर्मान् पीठाधीशधर्माश्च
निर्वर्तयन्तोऽपि योगसाधनं अविच्छिन्नतया विदधति स्म । तदीया
साधनरीतिः तैः अवासा अनुभूतयश्च सर्वेषामपि विस्मयावहाः । ताः
लोकानवगमयितुं श्रीमान् ब्रह्मचारी उमेशः प्रकृतं प्रबन्धं व्यरचयदिति
नितरां मोदामहे । गुरुचरणानाम्भसीमकृपापात्रमयं लेखकः अत्रत्यान्
विषयान् तेषामेव मुखारविन्दात् समधिगतवानिति ग्रन्थोऽयं
वास्तवांशबोधक इति निश्चिप्रचम् । साधकलोकाः ग्रन्थमिमः सश्रद्धं
अधीत्य साधनपथे अग्रतः सरन्तु इत्याशास्महे ।

इति नारायणस्मरणम्
भारती तीर्थः

Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya
Mahasamsthanam, Dakshinamnaya
Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri

Sringeri
29.12.1998

Our Pre-eminent *Guru*, who ought to be thought of at the start of every day, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal took *paramahariṣa-saṁnyāsa* at a young age itself and was steadfast in the practice of yoga. Having experienced even the bliss of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, He attained extraordinary perfection in yoga. Dedicated to the protection of tradition, He discharged the duties of the *saṁnyāsa-āśrama* and the duties of a *pīṭhādhipati* (pontiff); notwithstanding this, He uninterruptedly engaged in the practice of *yoga*. His mode of practice and the experiences attained by Him all bring on amazement in everyone. We are extremely happy that the *brahmacārin* Sri Umesh has authored this work to enable people to know about them. This author, the recipient of the limitless grace of the revered *Guru*, has correctly acquired the matters here directly from His lotus-mouth; it is, therefore, certain that this book reveals what are facts. We bless that those striving for liberation study this book with faith and advance in the spiritual path.

With the recollection of Nārāyaṇa
(s/d) **Bharathi Theertha**

Publisher's Note to the First Printed Edition

We are grateful to His Holiness Sri Sannidhanam for conferring His *śrīmukha* to this book. He had earlier asked the author to pen a detailed account of the spiritual disciplines practiced by H.H. Mahasannidhanam and then expressed His appreciation of the material submitted to Him. Our *namaskāra*-s to His Holiness.

But for Sri G. Ramasubramanian, this book would not have appeared at all. He was the one who repeatedly pressed the author to allow the material that constitutes Part – II to be made available to the public as a book. With his efforts finally bearing fruit, he personally keyed in the portions in *devanāgiri* and those with diacritical marks. He contributed much to the proof correction and fully co-ordinated the publication. His has been a labour of love that is well consistent with his very deep devotion to Acharyal. We are highly thankful to him.

Sri H.N. Shankar scrutinized the manuscript and gave the author his scholarly comments and suggestions. Sri G. Raghavan generated the final print-out at his Anugraham Computer Services, while Sri N.Subramanian designed the cover and printed the book at his Sudarsan Graphics; both did so with personal involvement and deep dedication. Our thanks to all of them.

K. Narayanaswami

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R. Easwaran

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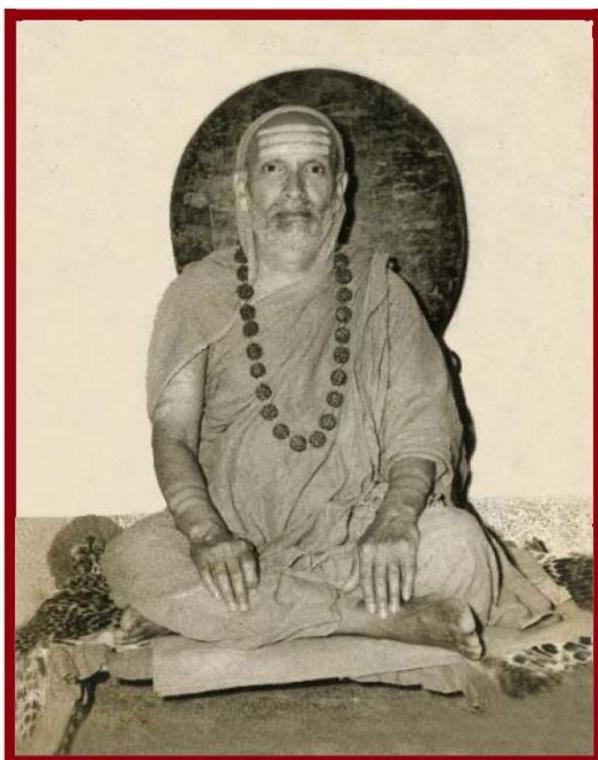
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PART I



श्रुतायां यदुक्तौ न हि श्राव्यशेषः सुरुपे च दृष्टे न दृष्यावशेषः ।
न तेऽङ्गौ न कृत्यं दयासौ न लभ्यं न माहात्म्यसीमा च येषां भजे तान् ॥

śrūtāyām yaduktau na hi śrāvyaśeṣah
surupe ca dṛṣṭe na dṛṣyāvaśeṣah ।
nate'mghrau na kṛtyām dayāptau na labhyām
na māhātmyasīmā ca yeṣām bhaje tān ॥

(I worship Him whose greatness has no limit, on hearing whose words, nothing remains to be heard, on seeing whose graceful form, nothing remains to be seen, on prostrating before whom, nothing remains to be done and on obtaining whose grace, nothing remains to be attained.)



This book extensively deals with Acharyal's spiritual practices right up to their culmination. As the events concerned span a period of less than five years of Acharyal's life, a short account of Acharyal's whole life is provided first. As they deeply involve the role of Paramacharyal as Acharyal's Sadguru, a short account about Paramacharyal is also included here. The final chapter of this part is meant to present the spiritual prelude to Acharyal's post-Sannyasa, spiritual practices.



1. H.H. Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal

[*The following brief account consists wholly of excerpts from an essay penned in 1993 and a discourse delivered on October 4, 1989, by His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamigal, the 36th Jagadguru Sankaracharya of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham.*]

Our revered Acharyal, who should be thought of at the start of every day, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal shone for thirty five years as the thirty fifth pontiff of the Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sharada Peetham. The holy life of this most illustrious one whose renown spread to the end of the quarters is an ideal for everybody.

This great soul took birth at Bangalore on *Āśvina-kṛṣṇa-caturdaśī* of the year *Pīngala* (November 13, 1917) as the eldest son of a virtuous couple, Kaipu Rama Sastry and Venkatalakshmi, and was named Srinivasa. He, who was endowed from childhood with devotion to God, detachment to sensory objects, fondness for noble people and with good conduct, became the recipient of the unlimited kindness of then pontiff of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, the pre-eminent Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal, who it was who arranged to bring Him to Sringeri.

His *upanayana* took place at Sringeri itself. Then, He learnt well from scholars the *Veda* and Sanskrit literature. When He was going on fourteen, the revered *Guru* graced Him with the *saṁnyāsa āśrama* and the *yogapatiṭṭha* of Abhinava Vidyatheertha and nominated Him as His successor to the Peetham. Commencing thereafter the study of the *Nyāya-śāstra*, He attained extraordinary proficiency in it in a few years and, even as He imparted it to students, His unique intellectual prowess was readily discernible. From the very words of the venerable *Guru*, who was continuously desirous of His rise, it can be unmistakably understood how much joy He experienced on learning about His mode of studying the *śāstra*. For instance, He has written as follows:

bhavadīyapatrikayā bhavaccharīre
nirāmayatāmadhyayanādhyāpanaprakriyāṁ ca

niṣpratyūham nirvartyamānāṁ viditvā nirargalamānandaṁ
samavāpi ॥¹

(I experienced unlimited happiness on learning from Your letter about the healthy condition of Your body and about the mode of Your study and teaching, which are proceeding without any impediments.)

Thereafter, diligently learning the *Vedānta-śāstra* from His *Guru*, He acquired excellent proficiency in it too. Having put in much effort to master Sanskrit literature, He was thoroughly versed in Sanskrit, being able to write well in it and to speak it flawlessly. Though not enamoured of composing poems, He did glorify His *Guru* in beautiful verses. By way of illustration, two of them are given below.

pādaprabhāvinirdhūtāvidyāndhatamasāya te |
yataye citinirviṣṭacittāyāstu namo mama ॥²

(My salutation to the ascetic whose mind is absorbed in consciousness and the lustre of whose feet destroys the blinding darkness of *avidyā*.)

Śrīmatāṁ deśikendrāṇāṁ pādāpadme namāmyaham |
mando'pi vandanādyeṣāṁ vindeta gurutulyatām ॥³

(I prostrate before the pair of lotus-like feet of the glorious king of preceptors by paying obeisance to whom even a dullard becomes akin to the *Guru*.)

Deeply scrutinising *Dharma-śāstra* texts, He resolved, with citations of authoritative passages and examples, the doubts of disciples on matters of *dharma*; He received the praise of His *Guru* for this. Able to speak fluently in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada, He also mastered Hindi. North-Indian scholars have been struck with awe on hearing Him discourse in chaste Hindi.

His *Guru* was generally thoroughly introverted; the *Guru*'s mind did not incline even a little towards the activities relating to the Math. In obedience to His *Guru*'s command, He safeguarded the fame of the Math by keeping an eye on all the activities of the Math, ensuring the proper conduct of its functions and granting audience to and communicating with the devotees. “With the *Guru*'s completion of sixty years as the occasion, some great *yāga* for the good of the world

should be conducted" - giving weight to this prayer of devotees, He conducted, in the year *Vijaya* (in 1953), a *Sahasracandī-yāga* in a grand manner.

The first president of independent India, the distinguished Babu Rajendra Prasad, came to Sringeri on August 24, 1954, to have the *darśana* of the *Guru*. At that time, His Holiness arranged for his audience with the *Guru*, conveyed to him in Hindi what the *Guru* spoke in Sanskrit and conveyed to the *Guru* in Sanskrit what he spoke in Hindi; He thus caused much joy to him and to the *Guru*. That very year, the *Guru* attained disembodied liberation. Conscious of His duty, though deeply pained, His Holiness performed the *Guru*'s *ārādhana* and the like in strict accordance with tradition. He was installed as the pontiff of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham on *Āśvayuja-kṛṣṇa-pañcamī* of the year *Jaya* (October 16, 1954).

After His coronation, He dwelt for about one and a half years in Sringeri itself, focussed on His revered *Guru*. Disciples variously requested His Holiness to undertake a *dhārmic-digvijaya*. Acceding to the requests, He set out from Sringeri on a tour in 1956; reaching Kalady, the place where Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda incarnated, He observed *cāturmāsyā* and *navarātri* there. Thereafter, He toured South India for six years. Right from the start, there has been the practice in the Sringeri Math of its pontiffs undertaking tours to bless disciples. However, it is hard to identify anyone in the annals of the Math who so extensively and repeatedly toured from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas as did our *Guru*.

He used to discourse in a beautiful and lucid manner. He made people easily comprehend even profound *Vedāntic* truths. The minds of people underwent a great transformation for the better on hearing His talks; the greatness of the talks was such that the listeners became dedicated to the performance of their duties. Through His discourses, common folk could understand topics of the *Śruti*s, *Smṛti*s, *Itihāsa*s and *Purāna*s that would have otherwise been difficult for them to comprehend. He was not in the least dogmatic. The ancients held that the earth is fixed while the modern scientists aver that it moves.

purāṇamityeva na sādhu sarvam na cāpi kāvyam
navamityavadyam i

santah parīkṣyānyataradbhajante mūḍhaḥ

parapratyayaneyabuddhiḥ ॥⁴

(*Malavikāgnimitra I.2*)

(All that is ancient is not good nor is a work censurable because it is modern. The wise accept an alternative after examination; the unwise are guided by the beliefs of others.)

In keeping with this statement of the pre-eminent poet Kālidāsa, His Holiness subscribed only to the position that the earth moves. He ignored, in this manner, the distinction of ancient and modern in numerous matters and gave weight only to that which was reasonable and accorded with evidence. Broadmindedness such as His was difficult to come by in anyone else.

I do not consider Myself competent enough to adequately speak about His total mastery over the senses, perfect character or high erudition.

śakunīnāmivākāśe jale vāricarasya ca i

padam yathā na dṛṣyeta tathā jñānavatāṁ gatiḥ ॥⁵

(*Mahābhārata*, Gita Press Edition, 12.181.19)

(Like the footprints of birds in the sky and of fishes in the water, the course of the knowers of the Truth cannot be discerned.)

Our *Guru* was the foremost of such knowers of the Truth. Having embraced *saṁnyāsa* at a young age like Bhagavatpāda, He was a stranger to passion; what He was conversant with was *mokṣa* (liberation).

He told people that while they were welcome to converse with Him on something worthwhile, He would not give room for idle gossip. He said, “Having studied the *Upaniṣads*, we know that they say:

nānudhyāyādbahūñchabdānvāco viglāpanam hi tat⁶

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* IV.4.21cd)

(One should not think of many words, for that is particularly fatiguing to the organ of speech.)

“So, it is better to remain silent than to waste time in idle speech. By keeping silent, we would at least not be taxing the organ of speech.”

He held the view that if we wish to speak, we must utter only what is useful. He loved to read and reflect on the teachings contained in Śāṅkara Bhagavatpāda's works. He directed Me, "One should ever contemplate, even when moving about, on the truths expounded by Bhagavatpāda. We have just returned from Śāradāmbā's temple. We prostrated before Her. That is a bodily activity. The inner activity should be the constant contemplation on the Truth taught by Bhagavatpāda. That indeed will make one's birth fruitful."

Kālidāsa has said in the *Raghuvamśa*:

dveṣyo'pi saṁmataśśiṣṭastasyārtasya yathauṣadham |

tyājyo duṣṭaḥ priyo'pyāśīdaṅgulīvoragakṣatā ||⁷ (I.28)

(A good person, though unfriendly, was acceptable to him (King Dilīpa) just as medicine (though distasteful) is to the sick: and even a friend, if wicked, was to be discarded, like a finger bitten by a cobra.)

"We should be like this," He told Me. Our *Guru* had such characteristics of Dilīpa. He was overflowing with compassion. He regarded life as meant to do good to others. In His natural kindness, He never kept in mind any wrong done to Him by others. He said to Me,

"krutasya pratikartavyam

(One should retaliate)"

— we should not entertain such a notion at all. That is for those of a *rājasik* nature. We are *saṁnyāsins*." He would immediately forgive any offender and bless him too. I have seen hundreds of such instances. He avoided wounding the feelings of anyone.

At Sringeri, His Holiness initiated numerous projects. There was, earlier, just a single guest-house for housing devotees. His Holiness constructed many buildings such as Shankara Kripa, Shankara Niketan, Jayashankara Niketan, Sharada Niketan and Bharathi Vihar and greatly benefited the devotees. He founded the Sharada Dhanvantari Charitable Hospital. For the protection of cows, He built a huge *gośālā* (cow-shed) and, for elephants, an elephant-shed. Due to His tireless efforts, various branch Maths, *dharmaśālās* and *pāṭhaśālās* came

into existence. Many of the already existing ones were developed.

His Holiness was intent on the dissemination of the *Vedas* and the *śāstras*. Every year, He organised a *vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars) during *Śamkara-jayantī* and *Vināyaka-caturthī* and honoured the *panditas*. To spread Sanskrit throughout the country, He started an institution called the *Surasaravatī-sabhā*. Many publications were launched by the Math during His pontificate. He initiated numerous religious activities at various places. For example, He effected the performance of many *Sahasracanḍī-yāgas*, *Atrirudra-yāgas* and *koti-kumkumārcanās* at Sringeri. Every work of His is an illustration and a reflection of His foresight and benevolence.

Even while I was a *brahmacārin*, He had great affection for Me. Once, during the early days of My stay in Sringeri, I went to the other side of the river on a *pradoṣa* day. That night, while seated for *pūjā*, He asked, “Did You go to the other side?” “Yes, I did,” I answered. He said, “It is enough if You stay in Narasimhavana itself. I will be observing You.” From this, I understood the concern and affection that He had for Me. He told Me that there must not be any distraction while studying. “If You develop distracting habits, Your learning will be impeded. Efforts put in by You at a much later stage will not suffice to enable You to become versed in the *śāstras*. If I missed My studies for even a while, My *Guru* would chide Me,” He said.

In this fashion, He narrated His experiences and advised Me about how I should conduct Mysel, the traditions of the Math and how to treat devotees. He often said, “Whatever be the attitude of the visitor, We, for our part, should show affection to all. We should not forget this. None should feel that his presence is not liked.”

ahameva mato mahīpateriti sarvah prakṛtiṣvapya cintyat ॥¹⁸

(*Raghuvarīṣa* VIII.8)

(*Every subject felt, “I am the favourite of the emperor (Aja).”*)

This statement of Kālidāsa, the foremost poet, about emperor Aja found fulfilment in His Holiness. Our revered *Guru*, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha, the repository of good qualities, the mine

of knowledge and the mount of courage, covered the world with His glory like the sun with its rays and attained disembodied liberation on *Bhādrapada-kṛṣṇa-saptamī* of the year *Śukla* (September 21, 1989).

jātaḥ piṅgalahāyane yatirabhūdyāśca prajāpatyabhi-
khye'bde pīṭhapatirbabhūva jayavarṣe yaśca śrṅgācale
kīrtim prāpya digantagām tanumimām yaśsuklavarṣe jahau
vidyātīrthagururjayatyabhinavo lokān sadā pālayan ॥⁹

(*Born in the year Piṅgala (1917), He became a sarīnyāśin in the year Prajāpati (1931) and the pontiff of Sringeri in the year Jaya (1954). Having attained fame that spread to the end of the quarters, He discarded the body in the year Śukla (1989). Triumphant is He, Guru Abhinava Vidyatheertha who ever protects all.*)



2. H.H. Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal

[*The following account about Paramacharyal wholly comprises selections from Acharyal's discourses, śrīmukhas and compositions.*] ¹

sṛīcandraśekharabhāratīti-prathita-prātassmarañyanāmadheyā
asmadācāryapādāḥ kṛtatapaścaryāḥ sarvatantra-svatantrāḥ
śāstropadiṣṭārthānuṣṭhāna-niṣṭhāgariṣṭhā aparokṣikṛtātmattattvā
jīvanmuktā abhūvan ¹

(Acharyal's preface to *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* with the commentary of Paramacharyal)

(*Our revered Acharyal, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi, whose name ought to be respectfully recalled at the start of every day, had accomplished penance, was beyond the confines of all schools of thought, was an adept at the performance of what is prescribed in the scriptures, had directly realised the Reality that is the Ātman and was a jīvanmukta (one liberated even while living).*)

asmad-ācāryapādāḥ brahmaṇiṣṭhā brahmaparā jīvanmuktāḥ
samastānām-āstikānām-ādarśacaritā abhūvan ¹²

(Śrīmukha to Śrī-Jagadgurucaritāṁṛta by Bhashya Swamigal)
(*Our revered Acharyal was ever focused on Brahman, held Brahman as the ultimate and was a jīvanmukta (person who is liberated even while living); His life was an ideal for all āstikas.*)

avidyādhvāntānāṁ dinamaṇiranantāntaragato
viṣīdad-vidvaddhṛt-kumudavanarākā-himakaraḥ ।
parādhvāmitrānāṁ viṣayagahanānāṁ hutavaho
gurustejorūpo jayati janatā"nandathurayam ¹³

(*To those in the darkness of ignorance, he is the sun that is infinite as also within. To the multitude of drooping lilies that are the hearts of scholars, he is the moon. To those trapped in the forest of sense objects and without a friend in the path to the Supreme, he is the flaming torch that lights the way. Victorious is the luminous Guru who confers joy*

on all.)

vande vandārumandāraṁ vandanīyaṁ budhottamaiḥ ।
ānandakandalāṁ tīrthavāridhim deśikottamam ॥⁴

(*I prostrate before the greatest Guru, who is a kalpavrķa (wish-fulfilling tree) to those who bow, who is worthy of being saluted by pre-eminent knowers of the Truth, who is the fresh sprout of bliss and who is the ocean of the śāstras (or, in other words, is fully conversant with the śāstras).*)

My *Guru* was a knower of *Brahman* and was not dependent on any effect or cause. In the case of My *Guru*, His introversion did not stem subsequent to His taking *samnyāsa*, studying the *śāstras* and practising spiritual disciplines. It manifested right from His birth. Detachment is said to be extreme, middling and mild. What is mild detachment? When some problem crops up, one feels, “What is the need for this world?” Extreme detachment is that in which, owing to the company of a sage, one feels, “The world must be renounced this very instant.” If a person has fire on his head, he would rush to put it out. My *Guru*’s detachment was of this kind. His detachment was so intense that though He dwelt as a pontiff in such a big Math, He did not even have the idea that He lived there.

karatalabhiķastarutalavāsaḥ⁵ (Mohamudgara 16)
(*He receives food as alms in his palms and lives at the bases of trees.*)

It was with this mental attitude that He abided in the Math. However, when it came to religious activities and activities relating to the welfare of the devotees, He acted in accordance with the following words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* :

na me pārthāsti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana ।
nānavāptam-avāptavyaṁ varta eva ca karmaṇi ॥⁶ (III.22)
(*O Pārtha, there is nothing in the three worlds that I must do; nor is there anything to be attained that has not been attained. Yet, I engage in actions.*)

yadi hyaḥ na varteyam jātu karmaṇyatandritah ।
mama vartmānuvartante manusyāḥ pārtha sarvaśah ॥⁷ (III.23)

utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryāṁ karma cedaham ॥¹⁸ (III.24ab)

(*O Pārtha, if I do not, without laziness, ever engage in action, men would, in all matters, follow My path. These worlds would be ruined if I did not perform action.*)

Keeping others in mind, He opined, “You have all labelled Me a big pontiff. Regardless of whether or not I should perform worship and obtain the fruit thereof, what would you say if I were to abstain from worship? ‘Even Swamigal does not perform any worship. Why should we engage in what He Himself is not interested in carrying out?’ Therefore, I must perform worship. You people will then act likewise, thinking, ‘The great one Himself engages in worship. It may or may not be necessary for Him but we need it. So, we must carry it out.’” That My *Guru* was a *Mahātman* (great soul) has been known by experience by those who were His contemporaries and beheld Him.

He was greatly devoted to Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal, My *Paramaguru*. His longing (when He was a boy) was, “How wonderful it would be if I could somehow have the *Guru’s pādukās* in My house and worship them!” If God is merciful and we have faith and devotion, then what we wish automatically becomes fulfilled. Likewise, by virtue of His faith, My *Guru* obtained the *pādukās*. He thought, “I was so desirous of the *pādukās* and they themselves came to Me.” Thereafter, He kept up the practice of worshipping them. My *Guru*’s characteristic was that He used to keep in memory, with great faith, whatever words came from the lips of His *Guru*.

(As a *brahmacārin*) My *Guru* got the opportunity to learn Sanskrit as a student of the Math *pāṭhaśālā*. He made it a point to secure a double promotion every year. If anything was taught to Him once, it was sufficient; He grasped it. After reaching the fourth class of the Math’s *pāṭhaśālā*, apart from studying, He began to teach students of the lower classes. His teacher used to tell Him, “You must take classes. You teach well.” Prior to sending Him to Bangalore (for studies while He was a *brahmacārin*), My *Paramaguru* initiated Him into a *mahāmantra*. He then told Him, “For You and for those whom

You will teach, this shall constitute the means of earning God's grace."

Before My *Guru* departed, My *Paramaguru* advised Him, "You are studying but it must not be for the sake of money. What for then? For the sake of acquiring knowledge. The prime knowledge is the realisation of the *Ātman*. That should accrue to You. That is why I am sending You for the advanced study of the *sāstras*. To acquire the realisation of the *Ātman*, hearing the Truth from a *Guru*, reflecting on what is taught and absorption of the mind on the Truth are very essential. However, for the hearing and reflection to bear fruit, the mind must be pure. For the mind to become pure, it is necessary to carry out the scripturally-ordained practices properly. The *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sāstra* is highly helpful in enabling one to understand the scripturally-ordained actions. Therefore, first study the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sāstra* well as a student at Bangalore."

Accordingly, My *Guru* spent long hours studying the *Mīmāṃsā* books, such as the *Bhāṭṭa-dīpikā*. He was taught by Vaidyanatha Sastry, a *Mīmāṃsaka-śiromāṇi* (crest-jewel amongst those versed in *Mīmāṃsā*). He subsequently (after becoming a *saṃnyāsin*) arranged for the foremost of *Nyāya* scholars, Virupaksha Sastry, to take lessons for Him. He learnt *Advaita-Vedānta* in the mornings and the *Nyāya-sāstra* in the afternoons. In three years itself, He completed His studies of both the *sāstras*. In the line of pontiffs of the Sringeri Math, there flowed a torrent of knowledge and austerity and He added to it.

When the (*Vedānta*) *sāstra* is taught, one way is to explain a text line by line. Another is to expound the lines along with one's experience. It was worth seeing this in His teaching; it gave great joy. Even though My *Guru* was a consummate scholar, He did not have the slightest egoism. However, when someone made a rebuttal imperative, He demonstrated His ability to respond appropriately. On the occasion of the enquiry into the import of *sāstraic* passages during the annual *vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars), if anyone spoke something new, He used to be immensely pleased. Even if He saw an iota of knowledge in another, He experienced supreme happiness.

My *Guru* was destined to become a *saṃnyāsin*. One day,

Markandeya Brahmachari, Sivananda and My *Guru* (who was then a *brahmacārin*) went for reverentially beholding their *Guru*. He asked them to accompany Him to the Kālabhairava temple. When seated in the temple, He looked at My *Guru*'s face and chanted three verses.

saṁśāraṁ makasarinnāthottaraṇe tavāsti yadi vāñchā |
 bālaka śṛṇu madvacanāṁ śruti mastakasāṁmatāṁ hitodarkam ||
 pravidhāya saśikhavapanāṁ chittvā yajñārthamādṛtam sūtram |
 svīkṛtāpāramahāṁsyāḥ sthiratarasādhanacatuṣṭayopetāḥ ||
 śraddhābhaktiyutātmā pravicāraya tattvamātmanāḥ suciram |
 sadguru-mukhāmbujātasravad-āgamaśīrṣavākyapīyūṣaiḥ ||⁹
(O child! If you have the desire to cross the ocean of transmigratory existence then listen to My utterance, which is in consonance with the Upaniṣads and is beneficial. Having shaven your head, together with the tuft, and, having broken the sacred thread donned for performing sacrifices, take up paramahāṁsa-saṁnyāsa. Very firmly endowed with the four spiritual means, faith and devotion, enquire for long about the Truth by recourse to the nectar-like utterances of the Upaniṣads flowing from the lotus-mouth of the Sadguru.)

While My *Paramaguru* did not tell My *Guru* about His wanting to give Him *saṁnyāsa* or of His wanting to choose Him as His successor, He chanted the verses containing valuable advice while looking at My *Guru*'s face. He thereby brought about ripeness in My *Guru*'s mind. When My *Paramaguru* felt that His body had served its purpose, He sent word for My *Guru* (who was at Bangalore for studies). He made the resolve, "I shall give *saṁnyāsa* to Him." My *Guru* asked no questions. "My *Guru* has commanded Me to come to Sringeri. Hence, I must go" - this was all that He felt. "What about My parents?", "What will be My future?" - no such thoughts arose in His mind.

When My *Paramaguru* was alive, numerous disciples were greatly devoted to Him. Seeing His learning, austerity and compassion, they wondered, "Will such a person ever be seen again? Will the glory of the Peetham remain?" Many had such doubts. However, on observing My *Guru*, their doubts were set at rest and they felt, "What a scholar! What a person established in the Truth! What a master of His

senses! What an inward-turned one!"

Kālidāsa has said:

pravartito dīpa iva pradīpā¹⁰ (Raghuvarīṣa V.37cd)
(Just as a lamp lighted from another does not differ from the latter.)

If one lamp were to light another lamp, what would be the difference between the two lamps? Only the one who lit the second lamp would know, "I lit it." To an observer, both would only appear to be lamps, with no distinction discernible. Similar was the case of My *Paramaguru* and My *Guru*. When people heard the discourses that My *Guru* gave while He toured, saw His worship of God and so on, they remembered the words of the *Mādhavīya-Śamkaravijaya*:

śāṁbhormūrtiścarati bhuvane śaṅkarācāryarūpā¹¹ (IV.60cd)
(The figure of Śiva, Dakṣināmūrti, moves about in the world in the form of Śaṅkarācārya.)

tamāṁsi dhvāṁsante pariṇamatī bhūyānupaśamaḥ
sakṛtsaṁvāde'pi prathata iha cāmutra ca phalam ।
atha pratyāsaṅgaḥ kamapi mahimānāṁ vitarati
prasannānām vācāḥ phalam-aparimeyāṁ prasuvate ॥¹²

(Mahavīra-carita 12)

(Ignorance is destroyed and great tranquillity results. Even a single conversation yields fruits here and in the world attained after death. Close association bestows some form of greatness. The words of the pure ones give rise to limitless fruit.)

I have seen in My *Guru*'s case all that has been mentioned in the above verse. On several occasions, even without the devotees saying anything about their problems, My *Guru* used to provide the answers concerned. One day, after He had given clarifications and permitted the devotees to leave, I asked Him, "How is it, O Mahaswami, that when people come to You to seek clarifications, You provide the answers even before they present their requests?" He replied, "There is nothing to it. God is the one who impels Me and I respond in accordance with His wishes. Such being the case, whatever is in His mind automatically comes to My mouth. I need to make no effort."

He was a *Mahātman* who had attained such perfection.

He eradicated the suffering of the distressed, imparted knowledge to the seeker of knowledge, graced the seeker of wealth with affluence and when it came to a knower of the Truth, He considered him as His own. There was no distinction at all between the knower of the Truth and Himself as far as He was concerned. His knowledge, qualities, such as mind control, establishment in the *Ātman* and compassion to beings serve as ideals. He led His life in such a way that there accrued the welfare of the world.

sadā"tmadhyānanirataṁ viṣayebhyah̄ parāṇmukham |

naumi śāstreṣu niṣṇātarṇ candraśekharabhāratīm ||¹³

(I extol Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi who is ever immersed in the contemplation of the *Ātman*, is withdrawn from sense objects and is well-versed in the śāstras.)

śrīmadviṣṇupadā"lambāṁ vedāntāṁṛtavarṣiṇam |

lokasaṁtāpaśamaṇam vande'bhrasadrśam gurum ||¹⁴

(I pay obeisance to the cloud-like Guru who abides in (the sky that is) the Supreme Brahman, pours forth the nectar of Vedānta and terminates the sufferings of people.)

guruvaracaraṇau bhaktyā nityam̄ praṇamāmi bhaktakaruṇālū |

yadbhānuleśapāto hṛdayadhvāntāni santatam̄ hanti ||¹⁵

(I daily prostrate with devotion before the pre-eminent Guru's feet, which are merciful to devotees and an infinitesimal exposure to whose lustre always destroys the entire darkness (of ignorance) of the mind.)



3. Childhood to *Samnyāsa*: The Spiritual Foundation

Sri Srinivasa Sastry, as Acharyal was known prior to His *saṁnyāsa*, was a helpful and considerate child. While other children of His age unconcernedly engaged themselves in play, He helped His mother. He performed various domestic chores, such as cleansing of vessels and sweeping. He often took care of His younger brother. When asked about this, He said, “My mother is busy in the kitchen and My elder sister is assisting her. Who will attend to this young one? If I do not do so, this task will add to my mother's strain.” He was a bright student who unhesitatingly spared time to clear the academic doubts of the students who sought His help.

Once, His friend did not fare well in the examinations. The boy's father resolved to punish his ward. So, he ordered his son to bend and placed a big stone on the lad's back. The boy deserved punishment but not to this extent. Unable to bear the load, he began weeping. Sri Srinivasa Sastry heard the piteous cries and arrived at the spot. Addressing the father, He said, “You are older than Me and wiser too. Your son is writhing in pain. Please let him rest for a while. You may place the stone on My back instead and I shall support it for him.” The father was moved by Sri Srinivasa Sastry's heartfelt concern and relieved his son of the burden imposed. He was always ready to put up with suffering for the sake of others.

One day, He and His friends unintentionally consumed a very pungent dish served to them at a house. The friends screamed for water and jaggery. Sri Srinivasa Sastry remained undisturbed. He advised His friends that such longing for jaggery was unnecessary. Their mouths were burning, as it were, and here He was adding fuel to the fire. “You speak thus,” they challenged, “Can you eat a handful of chillies without a murmur of protest?” “Yes,” was the reply. Immediately, a handful of chillies were brought. One by one the chillies disappeared into His mouth. The boys looked on, more astonished than disappointed. All the chillies were consumed without any trace of discomfort on His face. He then said, “It is not necessary to consume spices like this. You have

demanded it and so I ate them to convince you that it is possible to be contented with what food one gets.”

He was ever uncomplaining. One day, His friends decided to test the limits of His forbearance. Fetching a stick, they began to beat Him with it. He bore their unprovoked onslaught without a murmur. When the boys stopped, aghast at how far they had gone in testing Him, He won their hearts with kind words. He also told them the following story:

A Buddhist monk was unjustly tortured by a monarch. The king finally softened and, feeling ashamed, begged the monk's pardon. As an act of atonement, he catered to the subsequent needs of the monk. Thus, merely by forbearance, the monk was able to humble the emperor. Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s friends hung their heads in shame on hearing the tale.

While personally forbearing, He had the inclination and the courage to intervene to terminate the suffering being inflicted on another. He once beheld a boy catching flying insects, tearing out their wings and throwing the hapless creatures to a dog. Walking up to the boy, He quickly grasped his hands and twisted them. The boy screamed. Relaxing His vice-like grip, Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “The insects also must feel like this. Just as you have hands, the insects have wings. Abstain from torturing them hereafter.” He once had the following conversation with a friend:

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: Hunting of animals is improper.

Friend: Carnivorous animals prey on weaker creatures. Such being the case, they deserve to be killed.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: God has created some animals as food for the carnivores. This does not entitle man to poke his nose into the ways of nature and indulge in slaughter.

He and His friends used to assemble after play and relate stories. He narrated stories from the *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Nūticintāmaṇi*. When telling the story of Hariścandra, He stressed the importance of veracity and the advantages of being truthful. The dire consequences of attachment illustrated in the story of Jāḍabharata

and the soul-stirring devotion of Prahlāda were aptly driven home by Him in some of His presentations.

There was a tank that His friends feared to approach after sunset as it was believed to be infested by ghosts. Sri Srinivasa Sastry had no such fear. In response to a challenge from His friends, He boldly ran to it on a dark *amāvāsyā* evening, washed His hands and feet, rinsed His mouth and returned. On later being asked about His lack of fear, He said, “I was chanting the name of God. How could any evil spirit accost Me?”

One evening, on being asked what He would like to do when He grew up, He said that He would strive to realise God. When a friend asked Him why He opined thus, He said, “For that is what is good.” The friend then challenged His conviction that God exists on the ground that neither had He nor those He knew had seen God.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: Can you prove that there is no God? Would you say that something does not exist because you have not seen it? For instance, have you seen Bombay? No. Does it then follow that Bombay is non-existent?

Friend: I have not seen Bombay. But I have seen many who have. That is why I believe that Bombay exists.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: Very well. Likewise, our ancient sages who had seen the Lord have given clear indications to that effect. What is wrong if we unreservedly accept their words? Their experience cannot be set aside and so we must concede the existence of God.

He worshipped a small crystal idol of Lord Gaṇapati. One day, His mother had no eatable to give Him to offer to the Lord as *naivedya* and felt ill at ease about this. Discerning her predicament, He promptly conveyed to her that she need not bother and that He would manage. The Lord has said:

patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchatī |
tadaham bhaktyupahṛtam-aśnāmi prayatātmanah ||¹

(*Bhagavad-gītā* IX.26)

(*Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water -*

that devout offering made by the pure-hearted man, I accept.)

Sri Srinivasa Sastry satiated Lord Ganapati by offering a spoonful of water, with a heart full of love.

With the passage of time, He began to regularly express to His friends His desire to renounce the world. At first, His friends found His longing ridiculous but soon realised that He was firmly resolved. One boy asked Him, “What is the use of becoming a *sāmnyāśin*? By becoming a great king, one attains a very high position.” “Do not think thus,” He replied, “What long-lasting benefit is there in becoming a king? An emperor can enjoy only when he is at the helm of power. This state must come to an end sooner or later. If, however, I become a *sāmnyāśin*, I can constantly meditate and be without any worries. There will be a wonderful opportunity to behold God and I shall remain ever protected by Him.” He was just thirteen then.

[Shortly after this, Acharyal's upanayana was performed at Sringeri in Śāradāmbā's temple on 4.5.1930. With the express approval and the blessings of Paramacharyal, He stayed on at Sringeri as a student; His parents returned to Bangalore. At Sringeri, Sri Srinivasa Sastry was put up at Narasimhavana itself and not at the Math pāṭhaśālā on the northern side of the river Tungā. He had an orderly schedule and was constantly engaged in His studies. Some students had been selected to attend classes with Him. The following pertains to the year that He dwelt as a brahmacārin there.]

Paramacharyal sometimes asked the boys in general questions such as, “Was the food satisfactory today? What was the menu? Was the food tasty? Was it very salty or too pungent?” While the other students readily voiced their opinions, Sri Srinivasa Sastry invariably remained silent. Paramacharyal, who discerned this, asked Him one day, “Why is it that You make no comment?” Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “Whatever we get is Acharyal's *prasāda*. As such, it is always tasty.” On hearing this, Paramacharyal was pleased; it had been His intention to find out how far the boys were slaves of the tongue.

Paramacharyal found that Sri Srinivasa Sastry was a much better student than the others. He used to take the students with Him on

His evening walk to the Kālabhairava temple, situated atop a hill in Narasimhavana. On the way, He got them to chant *antādi* verses; herein, a verse commences with the syllable with which the previous verse ends. Srinivasa Sastry performed admirably. Further, on several occasions, His ability to interpret verses and to quickly conceive of and advance alternative explanations came to light. One evening, Paramacharyal spoke to the boys about the greatness of Sanskrit and then chanted:

dārā ime me tanayā ime me gr̄hā ime me paśavaśca me me |
 ittham naro meṣasamānadharmaṁ memekaraḥ kālavṛkeṇa nītaḥ ||²
(These wives are mine (me), these children are mine (me), these houses are mine (me) and these cattle are mine (me). The man who thus says “me, me” and has the same disposition as sheep (which bleat “me, me”) is taken away by the wolf, time.)

The next evening, Paramacharyal instructed the students to recite this verse and then asked them the reason for His having earlier recited it and got them to do so. Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “This verse illustrates the greatness of Sanskrit. The syllable “me” means “mine”. Thus, the verse portrays the play of the ego in man. The syllable also represents the sound made by sheep. Thus, the same sound gives rise to more than one sense.” This reply satisfied Paramacharyal.

On another evening, Paramacharyal recited the following verse:

sūte sūkarayuvatiḥ sutāśatam-atyantadurbhagaṁ jhaṭiti |
 kariṇī cirāya sūte sakalamahīpāla-lālitam kalabham ||³
(Śubhāśita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāra, Sthalācāra-nyāyokti, 66)

(A sow quickly gives birth to a hundred hapless piglets. After prolonged gestation, a she-elephant produces a single calf that is fondled by kings.)

He then asked the students what they thought was the reason for His chanting it. While the others were puzzled, Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “A big school may provide instruction to more than a hundred students. However, if they are unable to grasp the substance of the teaching, the instruction will be a wasted effort. A small school may have a single student. However, if that boy is endowed with intelligence and takes

maximum advantage of the instruction, he will bring name and fame to the institution.”

Paramacharyal was clearly happy to hear this. Nonetheless, He turned to Vaidyanatha Sastry, who taught the students Sanskrit, and asked him for his opinion. Sastry said, “It is given to only one mother to give birth to a child who becomes a Jagadguru worshipped by kings. Other mothers do not get this blessing.” The reason for his giving this interpretation was that Paramacharyal had chanted this verse just a few minutes after Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s mother had had *darśana* and left. Later, one of Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s classmates asked Him, “Was this verse not applicable to Your mother?” With His characteristic humility, He said, “I could not even think of advancing such a meaning. So, I thought of another one.”

About the *Gāyatrī-mantra* into which one is initiated during *upanayana*, it is said in the *Sūta-saṃhitā*:

bahunoktena kīm viprā jafenāsyāśca homataḥ |
abhīṣṭam sarvamāpnoti nātra sandehakāraṇam ||⁴ (IV.6.59)
(*What need is there, O Brāhmaṇas, to say much? By the performance of Gayatri-mantra japa and homa, a person gets all that he desires. There is no room here for doubt.*)

In the *Manu-smṛti*, it is said:

sahasrakṛtvastvabhyasya bahiretat attrikam dvijah |
mahato'pyenaso māsāttvacevāhirvimucyate ||⁵ (II.79)
(*He for whom the upanayana has been performed is freed from even a great sin, like a snake from its sloughed skin, by chanting the Gāyatrī-mantra, for a month, together with the Praṇava (Om) and the Vyāhṛtis (Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Suvaḥ), a thousand times at a place outside the village (such as on the bank of a river or in a forest).*)

Sri Srinivasa Sastry used to perform His *nityakarmā* (scripturally-ordained religious observances to be practised regularly) with meticulous care. Acharyal told me in 1982, “I felt a great fondness for the *Gāyatrī-mantra* and started chanting it mentally whenever I could, right from the day of My *upanayana*. In about a month’s time, I

was able to do so even while engaged in My regular activities. I was happy to find that I soon mentally repeated the *Gāyatrī* during My dreams too. I did not disclose My practice to anyone.”

Detachment to worldly and heavenly pleasures is vital for securing enlightenment and liberation. The *Mahānārāyaṇa-upaniṣad* teaches:

na karmaṇā na prajayā dhanena tyāgenaike amṛtatvamānaśuḥ¹⁶

(I.10.21)

(Not by work (rites), progeny or wealth did they attain immortality. It is by renunciation that some have attained immortality.)

The Lord has said:

ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkhayonaya eva te |
ādyantavantah kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ ||⁷

(*Bhagavad-gītā* V.22)

(Since enjoyments that result from contact between the organs and their objects are decidedly sources of sorrow and have a beginning and an end, O son of Kuntī, the wise one does not delight in them.)

śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīravimokṣaṇāt |
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ ||⁸

(*ibid.*V.23)

(One who can withstand here itself - prior to departing from the body - the impulse arising from desire and anger, that man is a Yogi; he is happy.)

asamśayaṁ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṇī calam |

abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate ||⁹ (*ibid.*VI.35)

(O mighty-armed one, undoubtedly, the mind is intractable and restless. But, O son of Kuntī, it can be brought under control through practice and detachment.)

Paramacharyal emphasised detachment to Sri Srinivasa Sastry. One evening, Paramacharyal was proceeding to the Kālabhairava temple

taking the students and Vaidyanatha Sastry with Him. Sastry submitted to Paramacharyal that he had noted down some verses uttered by Him when He had been in an inward-turned state. Paramacharyal directed him to recite one of them. In response, Sastry said:

nahi nahi manutāṁ svatvāṁ martyah svīye śarīre'pi |
pitrbhūmiśrgālaganāḥ svatvāṁ paricintayanti tatkāle ||¹⁰

(A mortal should never have the sense of “mine” with regard to even the body. The packs of jackals in the crematorium deem it to belong to them when the body lies there.)

Then, Paramacharyal proceeded to explain the worthlessness of attachment to the body. He finally chanted:

sīṁhāsanopaviṣṭam dṛṣṭvā yām mudamavāpa loko'yam |
tam kālākṛṣṭatanum vilokya netre nimīlayati ||¹¹

(Prabodha-sudhākara I.26)

(People shut their eyes on seeing him, whom they had felt joy on seeing seated on the royal throne, when he is taken away by Death.)

The following day, Paramacharyal directed Vaidyanatha Sastry to come to Him with just Sri Srinivasa Sastry. When His directive was complied with, He said, “Today, we shall discuss the comparative merits of being a householder and a *saṁnyāsin*. You first explain the advantages of family life.” In obedience to the command of Paramacharyal, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and Vaidyanatha Sastry spoke of the plus points of one being a householder. Paramacharyal then detailed the disadvantages of that stage of life. He gave many examples and chanted:

ko hi jānāti kasyādya mṛtyukālo bhaviṣyati |
yuvaiva dharmaśīlaḥ syādanityam khalu jīvitam ||¹²

(Mahābhārata 12.175.16)

bālye naṣṭaviveko viṣaya-sukhāsvāda-lampaṭastaruṇāḥ |
parato jātaviveko vṛddho'śaktāḥ kimāpnuyātsiddhim ||¹³

(Who indeed knows which day shall be his last? Even when young, one should practise righteousness; life is decidedly transient. During childhood, one is bereft of discriminative insight. While a youth, one is

engrossed in the experience of sensual pleasures. Later, what success can an infirm old man achieve after the dawn of discrimination?)

Finally, Paramacharyal asked, “Now, tell Me. Is it better to become a householder or a *saṁnyāsin*?” Bereft of any hesitation, Sri Srinivasa Sastry averred that taking up *saṁnyāsa* was, indeed, superior.

One day, He posed some queries to Vaidyanatha Sastry. These were:

(i) I have heard that the eldest son in the family must compulsorily get married. Is it so?

(ii) Our *Guru* embraced monasticism after becoming highly erudite. Is it obligatory that one acquire a deep knowledge of the scriptures prior to renouncing the world?

(iii) I have heard that when one is born, immediately a set of debts accrue to one. Some of these are repaid by serving one’s parents, some by worshipping the *devas* and yet others by begetting progeny. Is this indeed the state of affairs?

(iv) Is one permitted to enter another *āśrama* only after dwelling for long as a *brahmacārin* in the hermitage of the *Guru*?

(v) Can a young boy like Me take up *saṁnyāsa* if he desires to? Parents may not grant permission. Can *saṁnyāsa* be taken up without their approval?

Vaidyanatha Sastry was not in a position to reply satisfactorily to Him. Subsequently, Paramacharyal went on His usual evening walk to the Kālabhairava temple with both of them. On the way, He recited the following verse of the *Prabodha-sudhākara*:

loko nāputrasyāstīti śrutyāsyā kaḥ prabhāṣito lokaḥ ।

muktiḥ saṁsaraṇam vā tadanyaloko'tha vā nādyah ॥¹⁴ (II.35)

(The Veda says that “*loka*” is not there for one bereft of a son. What is that *loka*? Is it liberation or transmigration or another world? It cannot be the first one.)

Paramacharyal then asked Vaidyanatha Sastry to recite the next two *ślokas* of the *Prabodha-sudhākara* and give the meaning. The verses are:

sarve'pi putrabhājastanmuktau naiva saṁsmṛtir-bhavati ।

śravaṇādayo'pyupāyā mṛṣā bhaveyustṛtiye'pi ॥¹⁵ (II.36)

tatprāptyupāya-sattvād-dvitīyapakṣe'py-aputrasya ।

putreṣṭyādika-yāgapravṛttaye vedavādo'yam ॥¹⁶ (II.37)

Sastry gave the overall meaning on the following lines:

It cannot be said that begetting a son confers liberation. This is because not all people who have sons have attained the exalted state. Further, if mere procreation were to yield emancipation, then the cycle of transmigratory existence itself would cease since numerous people do have children. A son cannot necessarily be the cause of happiness in this world and the next. The reason is that to attain a higher world, the *Veda* prescribes the performance of special rites, such as the *jyotiṣṭoma*. It does not explicitly declare begetting of progeny as constituting the means. The *Veda* clearly proclaims that wealth, progeny and the like cannot serve to confer liberation. Only the realisation of the *Ātman*, by hearing the Truth, cogitating upon It and focusing one's mind on It, yields immortality.

Utterances of the *Śruti* to the effect that a son is essential should be understood as merely eulogising the performance of sacrifices, such as the *putreṣṭi*. The *putreṣṭi-yāga* serves to obtain a son. To induce people who have a desire for children to perform it, its importance is stressed. The *Veda*, which is like a mother, certainly does not intend to compel one without desires to perform such sacrifices.

After this, Paramacharyal proceeded to give a detailed exposition. He said that marriage is compulsory only for a person who wants to enjoy sensual pleasures. It is not obligatory on one who has strong dispassion to lead a householder's life. Further, there is no *Vedic* injunction that a dispassionate one should get married. The *Vedas* indicate remedies for the removal of desires and never exhort the gratification of longings or procreation. Just as fond parents would only try to save their child from falling into fire and would not induce it to tumble into it, so too do the *Vedas* indicate the means for people to abstain from bad ways and to proceed in the holy path. In fact, the moment one becomes extremely dispassionate, one can renounce and

become an ascetic. Thus, a man can become an ascetic regardless of whether he is a celibate or a householder or a forest-dweller.

Paramacharyal went on to explain the futility of begetting a child. He strengthened His explanations by various citations and firmly drove home His points. For instance, He said that only rarely one happens to get a son who is endowed with all good qualities. Even on such a son being born, if the lad were to be short-lived or diseased or were to later have no children, the parents would have to put up with mental suffering. If a young child were to suffer on account of diseases or planetary influences, the grief of the parents would know no end. If the child were to grow up a little but were to be stupid then too the parents would be far from happy. Further, if after *upanayana*, the boy were not to become learned or, if learned, he were to refuse to get married, then also the parents would suffer agony.

Paramacharyal explained that *śrāddha* (a rite performed for the deceased parents) is an obligatory duty that purifies the performer. He emphasised that the manes do not sustain themselves exclusively on the *piṇḍa* (ball of cooked rice) that is offered during the *śrāddha* ceremony. He went on to add that the stories found in texts like the *Mahābhārata* about the necessity of offspring are not meant for advanced spiritual aspirants who have strong dispassion. All the queries raised earlier by Sri Srinivasa Sastry were thus categorically answered by Paramacharyal; neither He nor Vaidyanatha Sastry had mentioned them to Paramacharyal.

At times, nature seemed to aid Paramacharyal's imparting of instructions about detachment. For instance, on one occasion, when Paramacharyal was proceeding to the Kālabhairava temple together with His students, a funeral procession was seen. On beholding the scene, Paramacharyal spontaneously identified the deceased one as a wealthy gentleman and gave out his name. He went on to say that that man was young and had been living in comfort. However, the Lord of Death, Yama, had not chosen to spare him.

At this juncture, Vaidyanatha Sastry cited the following verse that Paramacharyal had composed when in a state of seclusion.

dhanam vā dhānyam vā bhavatu bahuśo bhogymapi vā

virāme ko brūte nanu ciramahāṁ nirvṛta iti ।
 prakopa-prodbhinna-prakaṭayamadāṁśtrāṁ tu purataḥ
 prapaśyan kiṁ kuryāt prasabham-avasāne prabhurapi ॥¹⁷
(Though having much wealth, grains or objects of enjoyment, who says at the end of his life that he has been contented for long. On seeing in front of him the teeth of Yama bared in wrath, what can even a king do?)

On hearing this, Paramacharyal said, “There is a verse of Bhagavatpāda in the *Prabodha-sudhākara* that is appropriate to this occasion and worthy of being cited.” All but Sri Srinivasa Sastry remained silent. He chanted:

yo dehaḥ supto'bhit̄ supuṣpaśayyopāśobhite talpe ।
 saṁprati sa rajjukāṣṭhairnīyantritah kṣipyate vahnau ॥¹⁸ (I.25)
(The body that slept on a bed adorned with flowers is now taken, tied by ropes to logs, and consigned to fire.)

Paramacharyal explained the significance of the verse. He pointed out that the dead man had, even on the previous night, been in the midst of all comforts. His heart had suddenly collapsed while he was asleep and so he now lay tied by ropes to bamboos. He was about to be consigned to fire. This would be the fate of all and none was an exception.

nityam sannihito mṛtyuh kartavyo dharma-sañcayaḥ¹⁹
 (Nārada-purāṇa, Pūrvārdha 39.49)
(Death is ever at hand. Hence, one should accumulate dharma.)
 grhīta iva keśeṣu mṛtyunā dharmamācaret ॥²⁰
 (Hitopadeśa, Prāstāvikā 3)

(One should practise dharma (without delay) as if one's tuft were in the grip of death.)

We should perform our *dharma* and purify the mind so that we can obtain the realisation of the Ātman and become liberated from all misery. Only then will the goal of our lives have been reached. As He

spoke, Paramacharyal's gaze was constantly on Sri Srinivasa Sastry's face. At that juncture, a woman's wail was heard. Seeing the pitiful face of the dead rich man, his mother had given the cry of anguish. "Even the son that I gained after the observance of many a fast and vow has not lasted. Even if he had not been born, I would not have had to suffer my present deep anguish. Having got married, he has now left his young wife a destitute. Is this the only benefit of begetting progeny?" wailed the disconsolate mother. Sri Srinivasa Sastry noted all this. "Is this the worth of ephemeral existence? I do not want this at all," He muttered. These words were heard by Vaidyanatha Sastry. From His facial expression, Paramacharyal could readily comprehend His disciple's state of mind. He felt glad that His teachings were having the desired effect.

On several occasions, Paramacharyal spoke to Sri Srinivasa Sastry in private about detachment and *Brahmacarya*. What follows is a brief account of the advice given in some of the private sessions. [*They were narrated to me in detail by Acharyal, partly in 1977 and partly in 1984.*]

(i) No amount of learning, wealth or enjoyment can confer total freedom from sorrow and everlasting bliss. Only the realisation of the Truth can do so. Kingship, divine weapons, heavenly damsels and the power to even create a new universe did not, for instance, free Viśvāmitra from all unhappiness. In the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad*, it is narrated that though versed in the *Vedas* and various śāstras, Nārada continued to experience sorrow; he transcended all sorrows only when he received enlightenment from Sanatkumāra.

labdhā vidyā rājamānyā tataḥ kim
prāptā saṁpatprābhavādhyā tataḥ kim |
bhuktā nārī sundarāṅgī tataḥ kim

yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt ||²¹ (*Anātmaśrīvigarhaṇam* 1)
(*So what if learning respected by the sovereign himself has been acquired? So what if unsurpassed affluence has been obtained? So what if a belle has been enjoyed? What is there for him who has not realised his own Ātman?*)

Enlightenment dawns only in a very pure mind. Desires are impurities

that sully the mind. To render the mind pure and fit for enlightenment, they must be assiduously eradicated.

(ii) Sense objects are not the source of happiness. It is a mistake to think that they are. Were an object intrinsically a source of joy to a person, he ought not to ever find it to be a pain. However, it is well known that objects are sometimes liked and sometimes disliked. For instance, to a person who develops severe nausea during a meal, the very dishes he found delectable appear to be unappealing and a burden to consume. How can an object intrinsically be a source of happiness to a person when, though remaining just the same, it is at times a bane to the very same person?

When a desire for an object arises in the mind, the mind loses peace and the period of longing is not one of joy. When the desired object is obtained, the desire that agitated the mind becomes temporarily quieted. With the calming of the mind, there is joy. Thus, calmness gives happiness and not desire or a sensory object. In deep sleep, when no sensory object whatsoever is apprehended and the mind is in a state of latency, there is very great happiness. The sage whose mind is very calm and focused on the Supreme has unsurpassed happiness.

Stable mental calmness can never be had by the gratification of longings. Though briefly quieting a desire, gratification only leads to the growth of the desire; the desire manifests again later, with increased strength. Desiring and striving for sense objects constitute, therefore, the wrong approach to obtain happiness, which is what all want. By discerning that sense objects are never the cause of happiness, one should develop detachment towards them. The dispassionate one is calm and happy.

(iii) There is great benefit in observing perfect *Brahmacarya*. For this, complete control over the mind is important. To achieve such mastery, one should avoid thinking of sense objects. The reason is that as one thinks of sense objects, one gradually develops a degree of attachment to them. When attachment is allowed to grow, it becomes an intense desire. When a powerful longing is permitted to manifest, it becomes difficult to check and uproot. When a man strongly desires

some object or honour and a person or situation thwarts the consummation of his longing, he becomes irritated.

When a man gives way to anger, he loses his power of proper discrimination between right and wrong. It is well known that an irritated man may be disrespectful even to his *Guru*. From delusion, the recollection of what one has been taught regarding righteous conduct is lost. This destruction of memory disrupts the functioning of the *buddhi* and the man in this state is as good as destroyed. The seed of all this evil is thus thinking about sensory objects. So, if You wish to control Your mind, You must not allow Your mind to cogitate upon the objects of the organs.

(iv) Married life is a big source of bondage. A householder has to cater not only to his own requirements but also to those of his family. Hence, he cannot devote himself entirely to meditation and such spiritual practices. Many are the people who get married and think that that course of life is good for them. Actually, for a discriminating person, family life is so full of misery that it is better to stand on burning coal rather than to get married.

The body is made up of skin, blood, flesh, bones and so on. It contains within it urine and faeces. The body of even the female whom the undiscriminating consider to be extremely beautiful is only of this kind. Bhagavatpāda has taught:

nārīstanabhara-nābhīdeśam dṛṣṭvā mā gā mohāveśam |
etanmāṁsavasādi-vikāram manasi vicintaya vāram vāram ||²²

(*Mohamudgara* 3)

(Seeing the breasts and the navel region of a woman, do not fall a prey to delusion. The female form is but a modification of flesh, fat, etc. Reflect well thus in your mind, again and again.)

Such recourse to discrimination enables one to combat lust and be established in *Brahmacarya*.

{ Acharyal has told me, “My *Guru* was so kind that even when I was too young to be afflicted by passion, He emphasised the worthlessness of sensory pleasures and stressed the importance of dispassion and

thereby precluded any scope for even the seed of passion finding a place in My mind. He rendered Me fit for *samnyāsa*.”}

In 1931, Sri Srinivasa Sastry developed high fever one night and became delirious. He started to speak incoherently. When the matter was reported to Paramacharyal, He neither authorised medical attention nor did He give sacred ash as *prasāda* as He had done in the case of the other students when they had taken ill. He, however, specifically instructed Vaidyanatha Sastry to note whatever Sri Srinivasa Sastry uttered while delirious and inform Him. Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s words primarily comprised an unusual combination of a dedication to Paramacharyal and a declaration of the Truth. He kept saying:

sadguro śaraṇam śivo'ham śivo'ham²³
(*O Sadguru, You are the refuge. I am Śiva. I am Śiva.*)

Three days passed without His condition improving. He was awaiting *vibhūti-prasāda* from Paramacharyal. To assuage Him, Vaidyanatha Sastry told Him a lie to the effect that Paramacharyal would be gracing Him in person. Thereafter, He started to continuously chant:

sadguro pāhi sadguro pāhi²⁴
(*O Sadguru, protect Me. O Sadguru, protect Me.*)

When Paramacharyal was proceeding the next day, an *ekādasī*, to the river for His afternoon bath, He heard Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s chant. After ascertaining that only Vaidyanatha Sastry was around, He abruptly entered the room where Sri Srinivasa Sastry lay. On seeing His *Guru*, Sri Srinivasa Sastry got up and then prostrated in such a way that His forehead rested on His *Guru*’s feet. Vaidyanatha Sastry was shocked as it is not the custom for anyone to touch the *Jagadguru*. Paramacharyal, however, showed no signs of disapproval. Gently raising His disciple, He softly said, “Have You still got fever? Do not worry. Go and lie down.” Then, He left. Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s fever promptly vanished. Following Paramacharyal’s touch, He became relatively introverted and avoided casual conversations.

That night and on the succeeding ones, Paramacharyal prayed during His *Candramoulīśvara-pūjā*:

sarvajñam śrīnivāsam kuru śivadayite satvaram madvinamram²⁵
(O beloved of Śiva, quickly make Srinivasa, My disciple, omniscient.)

About a month later, Paramacharyal formally announced that impelled by the will of Śāradāmbā and His *Guru*, He had decided to initiate Sri Srinivasa Sastry into *saṁnyāsa* and nominate Him as His successor to the Peetham. The initiation into *saṁnyāsa* took place on May 22, 1931.

That evening, in keeping with the Math tradition, Paramacharyal and Acharyal were to be taken in golden and silver palanquins respectively through the streets of Sringeri. They were attired in royal robes. Paramacharyal held out His finger and Acharyal grasped it. Paramacharyal led the way till He reached the silver palanquin. Unexpectedly, He withdrew His finger and occupied it. Then, He asked Acharyal to sit in the golden palanquin. This was most unusual.

The scripture says that a disciple should follow his *Guru* and not go ahead of him. Paramacharyal's command required Acharyal to break this rule. The seat of the *Guru* is to be respected and not occupied by the disciple; the golden palanquin was the one that Paramacharyal had used for years. Further, people could not be expected to know the reason for Acharyal occupying the golden palanquin and could have censured Him, at least mentally, for this breach of propriety. Notwithstanding such considerations and though He was just thirteen and a half years old at that time, Acharyal experienced no confusion whatsoever. He sat in the golden palanquin. In 1973, I referred to this incident and asked Him, "What did Acharyal feel on receiving such a difficult instruction from Paramacharyal?" "What was there to feel? 'My *Guru*'s command is inviolable. As a disciple, it is My duty to carry it out.' That was My only thought then," replied Acharyal.



PART II



परब्रह्ममायेशकारुण्यसिन्धुं स्वमायाभृताङ्गं सदावन्पशून्तम् ।
कृताध्यात्मिकाभ्याससिद्ध्यासिलीलं भवाचार्यमत्कृत्स्नमेकं प्रपद्ये ॥

Parabrahma-māyeśa-kārunya-sindhur
Svamāya-dhṛtāngam sadābandha-śūnyam ।
Krtādh्यात्मिकाभ्यासा-siddhyāpti-līlām
Bhavācārya-matkṛtsnamekam prapadye ॥

I seek refuge in Him alone who is the Supreme Brahman, who is the Lord of Māyā, who is an ocean of mercy, who, by His own māyā, assumed a body, who is ever bereft of bondage, who enacted the divine play of attaining perfection through recourse to spiritual disciplines, who is the Guru of the world and who is my all.



In His infinite and unconditional kindness, Acharyal recounted to me the full details of His divine sport of practising spiritual disciplines and attaining enlightenment and Jīvanmukti. In this part, I have reproduced as faithfully as I could the various conversations during which my revered Guru did so. The account covers the period from May 1931, when Acharyal became a Paramahamsa-saṁnyāsin at the age of thirteen years and six months, to December 1935, when He attained perfection at the age of eighteen. When and where each dialogue took place and the context in which it did have been mentioned. The dialogues have been ordered to reflect the sequence in which the principal events occurred.



4. Hatha-yoga

[The following conversation took place at Sringeri, in May 1975. There was a prelude to it. I submitted to Acharyal that while at Madras I had, on successive nights, dreams of Acharyal gracing me by teaching me Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The class in one dream had continued in the next. Till that time, I had not studied Bhagavatpāda's *Gītā-bhāṣya*.

Acharyal asked, "Do you recall the clarifications that you heard?" "By Acharyal's grace, I remember them fully as also the words of the *bhāṣya* on the verses dealing with the practice and fruit of meditation," I replied. Acharyal sent for the *Gītā-bhāṣya*. He then asked me to recount the commentary on the "śanaiśśanairuparamet..." and "yato yato niścarati..." verses. I obeyed. Acharyal read out a passage from Bhagavatpāda's introduction to the chapter and asked me to explain it. Without making any comment on my response, He instructed me to resolve, according to what I had heard, an apparent contradiction in a verse. Finally, He asked me in which of two senses a word had been used in the *bhāṣya*.

When I finished replying, Acharyal was all smiles. Putting me on my shoulder, He said, "Your answers fully conform to what I would have told you if I were teaching you the *bhāṣya* now. There is no doubt that God graced you by teaching you through those dreams. Because of your devotion to Me you see Me having effected them but I am just an ordinary man. I can particularly appreciate your experience because I had a similar one when I was young." This is what preceded the conversation given below.]

Acharyal: Parameśvara (Śiva) instructed Me about *yoga* through seven dreams that occurred on successive nights. Each dream was a continuation of the preceding one. Do you want to hear about them?

I: Very much.

Acharyal: I was exhausted when I retired for the night on the day I was initiated into *saṁnyāsa*. As was usual, I fell asleep almost the moment I shut My eyes. That night I had a dream that I can vividly

recall even now. In it, I found Myself on the amazingly scenic summit of a tall, ice-clad mountain.

I: What was Acharyal clad in in the dream?

Acharyal: An ochre upper and lower garment like the one I am wearing now. Unlike the dress that I was wearing during the day, this had no *zarī* border. May be the dream reflected My personal preference for a simple ochre attire rather than the costly one that I was required to wear. Two days before taking *saṁnyāsa*, I had thought, “Dreams are not under My control. Mistakes committed in them do not result in sin. Nevertheless, My renunciation should be so sincere and firm that after being initiated into *saṁnyāsa*, I should not see Myself in any dream as clad in white as I am now. I love chanting the *Gāyatrī-mantra*. Yet, as *Gāyatrī-japa* is disallowed for *paramahamisa-saṁnyāsins*, I should not engage in it even in My dreams from the day after tomorrow.” By God’s grace, till today, this has come to pass.

Though the mountain was icy, I felt no cold. In front of Me, at a distance of about twenty feet, I saw a huge, crystal *Śivalīṅga*. A torrent of water was falling on it in a column from above. I could not see the source of the water. I could hear the chanting in chorus of the *Rudra* (*praśna*) but no chanter was visible. Suddenly, there was a great flash of light and from the *Liṅga*, Lord Śiva manifested.

{Here, Acharyal fell silent. He closed His eyes and remained motionless for some time. On opening His eyes, He took in and let out a deep breath. He then continued with His narration.}

As I saw Him then, the Lord had one face and two arms. He was extremely fair and radiant. His hair was matted and was tawny in hue. On beholding Him, I was so struck with awe that I stood unmoving. He smilingly looked at Me and raised His right hand in a gesture of blessing. I felt a great power entering into Me. Automatically, I began to chant the *Pranava* mentally. He gestured to Me to sit down. A seat of deer skin with an ochre cloth spread on it appeared where I was standing. I did *namaskāra* and, in obedience to Him, sat down, even though He was standing.

He came near Me. A big tiger skin appeared on the ground and He sat on it. He positioned His legs in the *padmāsana* and told Me to do the same. While I knew how to adopt the *padmāsana*, His approach was particularly graceful and I imitated it as best as I could. Then He assumed the *siddhāsana*. In response to His directive, I copied Him. With His hands, He corrected My posture.

I: What was the change?

{Acharyal demonstrated the way He had positioned His legs at first and the change made by the Lord. The correction consisted in adjusting the left heel to be in better contact with the perineum. About this, the authoritative text *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* says:

yonisthānakam-aṅghrimūlaghaṭitam kṛtvā¹ (I.35)

Having placed the (left) heel firmly against the region between the anus and the penis... }

Acharyal: Seated in the *siddhāsana*, the Lord demonstrated how to perform *prāṇāyāma*. Exhaling the air within, He began to smoothly inhale through the left nostril. On the completion of *pūraka* (inhalation), He blocked both His nostrils with His fingers and lowered His chin to His chest to form the *jālandhara-bandha*. At the close of *kumbhaka* (retention), I saw Him deeply pull in and upward His abdomen to adopt the *uddiyāna-bandha*. His body smoothly rose to about a foot above the ground. Raising His head, He exhaled smoothly through the right nostril. As He did so, His body gradually returned to the ground. He then repeated the process by inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril.

{The *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* defines the *jālandhara* and *uddiyāna bandhas* thus:

kaṇṭhamākuñcyā hr̥daye sthāpayeccibukarṇ dṛḍham ।

bandho jālandharākhyo'yaṁ jarāmr̥tyu-vināśakah ||² (III.70)

*Having contracted the throat, the chin should be held firmly at the chest. This is the bandha called *jālandhara*. It destroys old age and death.*

udare paścimam tānam nābherūrdhvam ca kārayet |

uddīyāno hyasau bandho mṛtyu-mātaṅgakesarī ||³ (ibid. III.57)

The abdomen above and below the navel should be drawn against the back. This is the uddīyāna-bandha. It is the lion that kills the elephant of death.

About when the *jālandhara* and *uddīyāna* *bandhas* should be practised during *prāṇāyāma*, the *Hathayoga-pradīpikā* says:

pūrakānte tu kartavyo bandho jālandharābhidhah |

kumbhakānte recakādau kartavyastūḍḍiyānakah ||⁴ (II.45)

*The bandha named *jālandhara* should be practised at the close of inhalation. The *uddīyāna* should be practised at the end of retention and before the start of exhalation.*

The commentary *Jyotsnā* on this verse clarifies:

uddīyānakastu kumbhakānte kumbhakasyānte kiñcit-
kumbhakašeṣe

recakasyādau recakādau recakātpūrvam kartavyah ||⁵

Uddīyāna should be practised at the 'end of kumbhaka', that is a little before the conclusion of kumbhaka, and prior to recaka.

The *Hathayoga-pradīpikā*'s description of these *bandhas* and the specification of when they are to be practised during *prāṇāyāma* tally with those contained in the *Upaniṣads*, such as the *Dhyānabindu*, *Yogaśikhā* and *Yogakuṇḍalī*.}

I: Did Bhagavān mention the names of the *bandhas*?

Acharyal: No. The Lord did not refer to the *padmāsana* and *siddhāsana* by name either.

I: Did the Lord speak of the relative duration of *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka*?

Acharyal: No. What need was there for Him to do so for I was able to time them Myself? By seeing the position of His fingers on His nostrils and by observing His midriff, I could judge when He was engaged in *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka*. As I had told you, following

the Lord's blessing, I had spontaneously begun chanting the *Praṇava*. With the number of *Praṇavas* as basis, I determined that the Lord's *kumbhaka* lasted four times His *pūraka*, while His *recaka* was twice His *pūraka*. I made this determination during His second round of *prāṇāyāma*. Having demonstrated the practice of *prāṇāyāma* in the *siddhāsana*, the Lord did it in the *padmāsana*.

When I first taught you *prāṇāyāma*, I felt that I should do so in imitation of what I had seen in this dream. That is why, I first performed *prāṇāyāma*, with the *bandhas*, twice in *siddhāsana* and then twice in *padmāsana*. The timings of My inhalation, retention and exhalation were the same as those noted by Me in this dream. Where I deviated from the dream was when I told you that you could skip the *uḍḍiyāna-bandha* and instead just pull in the abdomen to the extent that I then showed you. Can you tell Me what I said at that time about the role of *prāṇāyāma*?

I: cale vāte calam cittaṁ niścale niścalam bhavet ¹⁶

(*Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* II.2ab)

(*When breath is active, so is the mind. When the breath is still, the mind is calm.*)

Acharyal cited this half-verse. Acharyal then said that when the mind is agitated, breathing is not slow and rhythmic. On the other hand, the breathing is gentle and rhythmic when the mind is calm. This common observation suggests that there is a relationship between one's mental state and breathing. Not only does one's mental state influence one's breathing, the converse is also true. Breathing is a gross manifestation of the activity of *prāṇa*. The correlation is fundamentally between the activities of the mind and *prāṇa*. By controlling *prāṇa*, the mind can be controlled. Through the control of breath, the practitioner of *prāṇāyāma* checks the activity of *prāṇa* and thereby that of the mind.

dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasah ¹⁷

(*Yogasūtrā* II.53)

(*Then, the mind becomes fit for fixed attention.*)

Quoting this *sūtrā*, Acharyal said that *prāṇāyāma* facilitates the practice of meditation.

yathā parvata-dhātūnāṁ dāhyante dhāmanānmalāḥ ।
tathendriyakṛtā doṣā dāhyante prāṇadhāraṇāt ॥⁸

(Amrutanāda-upaniṣad 7)

(Just as the impurities of ores are burnt by the furnace-blast, the faults of the organs are singed by the restraint of prāṇa.)

Then, having cited this verse, Acharyal freely translated it into Tamil and said that *prāṇāyāma* is a great purifier.

Acharyal: Do you know why I asked you to recount what I had told you then?

I: I think it is because that teaching found a place in Acharyal's dream.

Acharyal: Your understanding is correct. After demonstrating the practice of *prāṇāyāma* in *siddhāsana* and *padmāsana*, Bhagavān cited the “cale vāte ...” passage. By His grace, even without His saying anything, the explanation that I gave you started to register in My mind. Till it did so, He was silent. Thereafter, He mentioned the *Yogasūtrā* and the *Śruti* passage.

Next, He demonstrated how *prāṇāyāma* can be done with breathing being suspended after exhalation rather than after inhalation. Finally, He showed Me the various kinds of restraint of *prāṇa* like *sūryabhedana*, *ujjāyī*, *sītkārī*, *sītalī* and *bhastrikā* in such a way that I could clearly understand and distinguish them.

{About *sūryabhedana*, *ujjāyī*, *sītkārī*, *sītalī* and *bhastrikā*, the *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* says:

atha sūryabhedanam
āsane sukhade yogī baddhvā caivāsanāṁ tataḥ ।
dakṣanāḍyā samākṛṣya bahiḥsthamāṁ pavanāṁ śanaiḥ ॥⁹ (II.48)

ā keśādā nakhāgrācca nirodhāvadhi kumbhayet ।
tataḥ śanaiḥ savyanāḍyā recayet pavanāṁ śanaiḥ ॥¹⁰ (II.49)

Now, *sūryabhedana* is spoken of. Seated in a firm āsana on a comfortable seat, the yogin should slowly draw in air from outside through the right nostril. He should retain it to the limit till he feels it right from the hair on his head to the tips of his nails. Then, he should

slowly exhale the breath through the left nostril.

athojjāyī

mukharṁ samyamya nāḍibhyāmākṛṣya pavanaṁ śanaiḥ ।

yathā lagati kaṇṭhāttu hrdayāvadhi sasvanam ॥¹¹ (*ibid.* II.51)

pūrvavat kumbhayet prāṇam̄ recayediḍayā tathā ।

Śleśma-doṣaharam̄ kaṇṭhe dehānala-vivardhanam ॥¹² (*ibid.* II.52)

Now, ujjāyī is described. Having closed the mouth, one should draw in air slowly through both the nostrils such that it is felt to be sonorous from the throat to the heart. Then, the breath should be retained as in sūryabhedana and exhaled through the left nostril. This eradicates the defect of phlegm in the throat and intensifies the fire of digestion.

atha sītkārī

sītkāṁ kuryāttathā vakte ghrāṇenaiva vijṛmbhikāṁ

evamabhyāsa-yogena kāmadevo dvitīyakah ॥¹³ (*ibid.* II.54)

Now, sītkārī is presented. One should inhale through the mouth, making a hissing sound (by placing the tongue between the teeth). Exhalation should be only through the nostril. By practising thus, one becomes attractive like the god of love.

atha śītalī

jihvāyā vāyumākṛṣya pūrvavat kumbhasādhanam

śanakairghrāṇarandhrābhyaṁ recayet pavanaṁ sudhīḥ ॥¹⁴

(*ibid.* II.57)

Now śītalī is spoken of. One should inhale air through the tongue (kept protruding and curled to resemble a bird's beak). Kumbhaka should be done as in sūryabhedana. Then, the wise one should slowly exhale the air through the two nostrils.

atha bhastrikā

samyakpadmāsanam̄ baddhvā samagrīvodaraḥ sudhīḥ ।

mukharṁ samyamya yatnena prāṇam̄ ghrāṇena recayet ॥¹⁵

(*ibid.* II.60)

yathā lagati hṛtkaṇṭhe kapälāvadhi sasvanam ।
 vegena pūrayeccāpi hṛtpadmāvadhi mārutam ॥¹⁶ (*ibid.* II.61)
 punarvirecayettadvat pūrayecca punah punah ॥¹⁷ (*ibid.* II.62ab)
Now bhastrikā is spoken of. Having properly adopted the padmāsana and kept the body and the neck erect, the wise man should close his mouth and forcefully exhale through the nostril such that there is sound from the heart and throat to the skull. Then, he should rapidly inhale air up to the region of the heart. He should repeatedly exhale and inhale in this fashion. }

(Acharyal:) With this, the dream ended and I awakened. The time was about two o'clock in the night. My mental chanting of the *Praṇava*, which began when the Lord blessed Me, persisted throughout the dream, inclusive of when I heard the passages voiced by the Lord. On waking up, I noticed that I spontaneously continued to recite in My mind the *Praṇava*.

Impelled by some force, I stood up, with My legs somewhat apart. I slightly bent forward and gripped My thighs with My hands. Then, I gradually exhaled and pulled My abdomen towards My back and upwards to adopt the *uddiyāna-bandha* in a standing posture. Though I could not understand why I was doing all this in the middle of the night, I felt amazed to see the extent to which a deep cavity had formed in the region of My abdomen. After some moments, I gradually exhaled and straightened up.

Directed further by the force, I sat down in the *siddhāsana* and started to perform *prāṇāyāma*. I inhaled for a shorter duration than had the Lord. This simplified the practice; however, it was not the result of any decision of Mine. At the end of *pūraka*, I adopted not only the *jālandhara-bandha* but also the *mūla-bandha*. I had not identified the Lord's performance of the *mūla-bandha* in My dream and was unfamiliar with it.

{The *Hathayoga-pradīpikā* describes the *mūla-bandha* thus:
 pārṣṇibhāgena saṁpīḍya yonimākuñcayed-gudam ।
 apāna-mūrdhvamākṛṣya mūlabandho'bhidhīyate ॥¹⁸ (III.61)}

Pressing the perineum with the heel, one should contract the anus and draw up apāna. This is called mūla-bandha. }

(Acharyal:) My having practised the *uddīyāna-bandha* in a standing posture facilitated My doing it during *prāṇāyāma*. Though My *pūraka* was shorter than the Lord's, as in His case, My *kumbhaka* and *recaka* lasted four times and twice the *pūraka*. Having performed two *prāṇāyāmas* in the *siddhāsana*, I did the same in the *padmāsana*. Throughout, there was no planning on My part and the mental chanting of the *Praṇava* proceeded without any interruption. After doing *prāṇāyāma* in the *padmāsana*, I lay down and fell asleep. I awoke very fresh, well before sunrise.

The dream and the events that followed were crystal clear in My mind. I had no words to express My gratitude to Bhagavān for having extraordinarily graced Me in spite of My being so unworthy and that too on the very day of My new life. I did not have an iota of doubt that the Lord would ever take care of and guide Me. All I needed to do was to not give room to egoism. After spending some minutes practising the different kinds of restraint of *prāṇa*, such as *sītalī*, I went for My ablutions. No one knew about My having done *prāṇāyāma* at night or before daybreak.

I: Did the mental chanting of the *Praṇava* persist spontaneously after Acharyal woke up?

Acharyal: No. The Lord had, by His blessing, initiated the chanting and given Me an understanding of how natural, uninterrupted and delightful it can be. I felt that the Lord intended that I should practise such chanting to the extent of it becoming effortless. Accordingly, I began to engage voluntarily in mental *Praṇava-japa* within a minute of My awakening. By Bhagavān's grace, within a year, such *japa* became as effortless and uninterrupted as in the special dream. It continued even in dreams and while I conversed.

I: Did Acharyal report the events to Paramacharyal that day?

Acharyal: No. On that and the next several days, Acharyal spared time to personally familiarise Me with My *āhnikā* and other duties. He also initiated Me into *mantras* such as the *Śrīvidyā*. I regarded it as

inappropriate to take any more of His time by reporting My experiences to Him.

The following night I had a dream in which the Lord continued His teaching. He first gave a demonstration of *kevala-kumbhaka*. His breathing stopped all of a sudden and He remained motionless for some time, with His eyes closed. I began to experience tremendous peace. I think that My breathing too stopped without any reference to the preceding state of inhalation or exhalation. Gradually, the Lord started to breathe again and opened His eyes. As He did so, I realised that this *kumbhaka* is superior to and is the fruit of the practice of restraint that considers *pūraka* and *recaka*.

{Maharṣi Patañjali describes *kevala-kumbhaka* thus in his *Yogasūtrāḥ*:

bāhyābhyanṭara-viṣayākṣepī caturthaḥ ||¹⁹ (II.51)

The fourth (kevala-kumbhaka) is that which follows when the spheres of the external and internal are transcended.

After detailing the practice of *prāṇāyāma* in which *kumbhaka* and *recaka* are respectively four and two times the *pūraka*, the *Yogatattva-upaniṣad* presents and eulogises *kevala-kumbhaka* thus:

tataḥ param yatheṣṭāṁ tu śaktaḥ syādvāyudhāraṇe ||²⁰ (49cd)
yatheṣṭā-dhāraṇādvāyoḥ sidhyetkevalakumbhakah |

kevale kumbhake siddhe recapūravivarjite ||²¹ (50)

na tasya durlabham kiñcitṛiṣu lokeṣu vidyate ||²² (51ab)

Thereafter, he acquires the capacity to restrain his breath for as long as he wishes. From such stoppage of breath, there accrues the attainment of kevala-kumbhaka. On his attaining kevala-kumbhaka, which is not associated with inhalation and exhalation, nothing in the three worlds is difficult for him to achieve. }

(Acharyal:) Then, during that dream and the ones on the succeeding nights, the Lord demonstrated numerous *yogāsanās* and *kriyās* such as *nauli*. There were no repetitions. He performed the *āsanās* very swiftly but with unmatchable grace and with each step

unmistakably clear. No human adept could have performed even a quarter of the number of āsanas in the same time. Bhagavān did not name any āsana. Also, He did not direct Me to do any āsana before His passing on to the next. However, whenever He performed one, I automatically understood whether this was just for My information or for My practice later. Purely by His grace, to this day, I can vividly recall His demonstration of any āsana that I wish to see.

On the seventh night, towards the close of His teaching, He threw light on the *khecarī-mudrā*. Sitting in the *padmāsana*, He stretched out His tongue. In moments, the membrane connecting it with the lower part of the mouth began to give way gradually as if it were being cut with a knife. Simultaneously, the tongue became thinner and longer. Soon, it resembled that of a dog. The Lord turned it upwards. It reached up to the head. I automatically understood that the normal procedure involved cutting the fraenum, little by little, over a long period and elongating the tongue by shaking and pulling it.

Having transformed His tongue into a thin long one, Bhagavān directed His gaze to between the brows. He then turned His tongue backwards and inserted it into the cavity at the back of the throat that leads to the nose. Thereafter, the Lord remained motionless and with no perceptible signs of breathing. At that time, My breathing too stopped. I felt something cool and very pleasant to taste descend into the back of My mouth. It greatly invigorated Me. The understanding dawned that this fluid obviates hunger, thirst, weakness and dullness. As the Lord lowered His tongue, My experience ended. The next moment, His tongue became normal.

{The *khecarī-mudrā* has been described and eulogised in the *Upaniṣads* such as the *Yogakuṇḍalī* and in *haṭha-yoga* texts. The *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* says:

chedanacālānadohaiḥ kalāṁ krameṇātha vardhayettāvat |
sā yāvadbhrūmadhyāṁ spr̄śati tadā khecarīsiddhiḥ ||²³ (III.33)
The tongue should be gradually lengthened by cutting, shaking and stretching till it reaches the middle of the eyebrows. Then khecarī is successfully accomplished.

kalāṁ parāṁmukhīṁ kṛtvā tripathe pariyojayed |

sā bhavetkhecarī mudrā vyomacakraṁ taducyate ||²⁴ (III.37)

Turning back the tongue, it should be put into the path of the three nādīs (that is, into the cavity in the roof of the palate). This is the khecarī-mudrā that is also known as vyomacakra.

na rogo maraṇam tandrā na nidrā na kṣudhā tṛṣā |

na ca mūrcchā bhavettasya yo mudrāṁ vetti khecarīm ||²⁵

(III.39)

He who knows the khecarī-mudrā is free from disease, death, dullness, sleep, hunger, thirst and clouding of the mind. }

(Acharyal:) Finally, Parameśvara taught Me *nāda-anusandhāna* (contemplation on the internal sound). With His fingers, He closed His nose, mouth and ears. Then He concentrated on the ocean-like sound heard in the right ear. I comprehended that He was doing so because, without any effort of Mine, My attention locked on to such sound in My right ear. I also got the feeling that with practice one can focus on this sound even without closing the ears. Soon, I heard different sounds in succession. Finally, all sounds ceased and I was overwhelmed with bliss. The next moment, My experience ended. I saw the Lord taking His hands away from His face.

The Lord raised His right hand in a gesture of blessing and got up. I promptly prostrated before Him, placing My head on His lotus feet. As I rose, He walked towards the crystal *Linga* from which He had manifested. A flash of light preceded His disappearance into that *Linga*. At this point, My dream ended. The Lord had not left His seat at the close of the preceding six extraordinary dreams. So, when I woke up at My usual time, I knew that this was the last of this series of dreams.

I: How many āsanas did the Lord teach?

Acharyal: Hundreds. These included all those described in the authoritative works such as *Hṛdaya-yoga-pradīpikā* and numerous others that I have not come across in any book. I do not think even an expert with a highly supple body can do more than a few of the many āsanas

of the latter kind.

I: After the first dream, Acharyal had been able to straightaway perform the *siddhāsana* and *padmāsana* and, while so seated, do *prānāyāma* with the *jālandhara*, *uḍḍiyāna* and *mūla-bandhas*. Was there any need for practice to accomplish the other *āsanas* and all the *kriyās*?

Acharyal: While I was able to perform the simple *āsanas* such as *śīrṣāsana* in the first attempt, the tougher ones such as *gheraṇḍāsana* and *mukhottānāsana* needed effort and practice. Among the *kriyās*, Bhagavān did not teach Me *vasti* and I did not practise it. I have, however, witnessed its performance and know how to do it. Mastering the other *kriyās* was easy. I practised *dhauti*, *neti* and *nauli* regularly.

{The six *kriyās* are *dhauti*, *vasti*, *neti*, *trāṭaka*, *nauli* and *kapālabhāti*. These serve to purify the body. The *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* describes their practice thus:

caturaṅgula-vistāraṁ hastapañcadaśāyatam
gurūpadīṣṭa-mārgeṇa siktāṁ vastraṁ śanairgraset
punah pratyāhareccaitaduditaṁ dhautikarma tat ||²⁶ (II.24)

One should slowly swallow, as taught by the Guru, a wet cloth that has the width of four fingers and is fifteen spans long. One should then draw out the cloth. This is the dhauti-kriyā.

nābhidaghna jale pāyau nyastanālotkaṭāsanaḥ
ādhārākuñcanāṁ kuryātkṣālanāṁ vastikarma tat ||²⁷ (ibid. II.26)
One should sit in utkaṭāsana in water reaching up to one's navel with a tube inserted into the anus. Then, one should contract the anus (draw in water and expel it). Such washing is the vasti-kriyā.

sūtraṁ vitasti susnidhāṁ nāsānāle praveśayet
mukhānnirgamayeccaīśā netih siddhairnigadyate ||²⁸ (ibid. II.29)
One should insert into a nostril, a smooth thread that is a span (or more) long and draw it out through the mouth. The siddhas call this neti.

nirīkṣenniścaladṛśā sūkṣmalakṣyam samāhitah ।

aśrusaṁpāt aparyantam-ācāryaistrāṭakarṁ smṛtam ||²⁹ (*ibid.* II.31)

One should gaze steadily with a focused mind at a minute object till tears fall. Teachers regard this to be trāṭaka.

amandāvartavegena tundam savyāpasavyataḥ ।

natāṁso bhrāmayedeśā naulih siddhaiḥ praśasyate ||³⁰

(*ibid.* II.33)

With shoulders lowered, one should rotate the abdomen to the left and right with the speed of a swift eddy. Siddhas reveal this to be nauli.

bhastrāvallo hakārasya recapūrau sasaṁbhramau ।

kapālabhātirvikhyātā kaphadoṣaviśoṣanī ||³¹

(*ibid.* II.35)

One should draw in and push out air rapidly like the bellows of a blacksmith. This is called kapālabhāti. It destroys phlegmatic defects.

About His mastering *dhauti*, Acharyal told me in 1973, “I took a long thin piece of muslin cloth, and swallowed some of it. Then, I gently pulled it out. I did this two or three times. The next day, I swallowed a much greater length. By the fourth day, I could comfortably put as much of the cloth as I wanted into the throat and stomach and slowly pull it out. I found that this *kriyā* helped to clear any phlegm in the throat.”

Describing His practice of *neti*, He said on the same occasion, “I used My index finger to push a soft cloth or thread into a nostril as far as I could. Closing the other nostril, I inhaled in jerks and exhaled through the mouth. By the suction and the guiding force from outside, the thread went well into the nostril and came down to the back of the mouth. In the initial stages of practice, I found the thread going slightly into the wind pipe or gullet and producing a funny sensation. However, I soon learnt the remedy.

“When the inserted material appeared at the back of My throat, I cleared My throat with a sound. At the same time, I inserted My index finger and thumb into the throat and, grasping the thread, pulled it to make it protrude from the mouth. The pulling should be done slowly to avoid damage to the nasal tissues. Thereafter, I oscillated the

cloth or thread by pulling and releasing its opposite ends. This too should be done slowly. After this, I pulled out the thread through the nostril and repeated the whole process through the other nostril. I found this *kriyā* to be quite useful in clearing the phlegm blocking the nostrils.”

After speaking of *neti*, Acharyal demonstrated how He did *nauli*. He stood with His legs separated and His palms pressed against His thighs. Having fully expelled air from the lungs, He deeply pulled in His abdomen. He then controlled His muscles to make the abdominal region resemble a cavity with a vertical tube in the middle. He then made the tube swing from side to side and execute a churning motion. Finally, He restored His abdomen to its normal form and said, “This used to be My favourite *kriyā*.” }

I: How many of the *āsanas* demonstrated by Śiva but not mentioned in books did Acharyal master?

Acharyal: Six. Close the door. I will show you one of them and you can see how tough it is.

{The conversation took place in the hall extending from east to west in the upper storey of Sacchidananda Vilas. As directed, I shut the door on the eastern side that led to the stairs. By the time I returned to Acharyal, He had removed His upper garment and was spreading His *dhoti* on the ground to serve as a mat. He was attired in just an ochre loin cloth. I watched thoroughly spellbound as, step by step, Acharyal assumed an extremely complex, inverted pose. Such was the tight knot into which He tied Himself that it appeared that His body was made of highly elastic rubber and comprised no bones. Having held the final pose for about a minute, Acharyal gradually unwound Himself and put on His lower and upper garments.}

(Acharyal:) The first two times that I tried to do this, I failed. The third time I succeeded only partially. On My next attempt, I somehow managed to adopt the final position but became stuck in it. I found that I was just unable to release the knot that bound My hands and legs. I called to mind Bhagavān's performance of this *āsana*. In imitation of what He had done, I emptied My lungs and used My middle fingers to release Myself a little. The rest was manageable. From the fifth try

onwards, I had no difficulty.

I: When teaching me *āsanas*, Acharyal had told me, “When I was young, I asked Kasi Swamigal if I could watch him perform *āsanas* in order to do them Myself. In those days, *bairāgīs* (wandering renunciants) used to come to Sringeri, stay for a time and go away. I saw them practising various *āsanas*. My curiosity was aroused and I carefully noted how they performed them. As My body was supple, I did not have difficulty in mastering the *āsanas* and *kriyās* that I had observed Kasi Swamigal and the *bairāgīs* do. Further, I enjoyed doing them and so the learning process was expedited. I used to get clarifications whenever necessary to ascertain that what I was doing was right.”

It is now clear to me that Bhagavān had taught Acharyal. I am, however, unclear as to how to reconcile this understanding with Acharyal’s earlier statement about Acharyal putting into practice what Acharyal had seen Kasi Swamigal and the *bairāgīs* do.

Acharyal: There is no *āsana* or Kriya that I ever performed that Śiva had not shown Me in the dreams. However, it is also a fact that I practised the *āsanas* and *kriyās* only after learning, as it were, a number of them from Kasi Swamigal and the *bairāgīs*. Further, I did come to know the names of *āsanas* from Kasi Swamigal and the *bairāgīs* and, later, from books.

{When interviewed in the 1980s, Kasi Swamigal said that when young Acharyal had approached him and watched him perform the *uddiyāna-bandha* and *āsanas*, such as *gorakṣa*. Acharyal did not do the *āsanas* in his presence. Regarding the *kriyās* such as *dhauti*, the Swamigal stated that he did not practise them. Presumably, it was only the *bairāgīs* who did the *kriyās* that Acharyal referred to.}

I: What was the reason for Acharyal postponing doing *āsanas* and *kriyās* till having seemingly learnt many of them from humans?

Acharyal: I felt that this is what God wanted Me to do. Because of this, there was no scope for the Math staff and others to wonder how I was abruptly able to practice *haṭha-yoga* without having been taught. As for *prāṇāyāma* and the *bandhas*, I initially did them secretly at about

three in the night and then went back to sleep. Subsequently, for some time, I did them privately during My *āhnika*. It is only after having supposedly learnt them from others that I practised them without being secretive. As for *nāda-anusandhāna*, I did it once a week along with My *āhnika*. I believe, I only did as God intended Me to when I started doing *prāṇāyāma* with the *bandhas* after the first dream and *nāda-anusandhāna* after the seventh dream.

I: Were there any *āsanas* and *mudrās* that are described in *haṭha-yoga* texts which Bhagavān did not teach Acharyal?

Acharyal: As far as I know, He did not omit any *āsana*. However, He skipped *mudrās* such as *vajroli*. I never did these.

{As described in the *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā*, the practice of *vajroli* begins with gradually inserting a tube into the penis. Having cleared the passage by blowing, one learns to draw water through it. An aim is to be able to draw ejaculated semen back into the penis.}

I: How many *āsanas* did Acharyal perform every day and how many cycles of *prāṇāyāma* with the *bandhas*?

Acharyal: The number of *āsanas* varied. Within a few years after *samnyāsa*, I began to devote half an hour exclusively for *āsanas* and *kriyās* and half an hour for *prāṇāyāma*. I performed some *āsanas*, such as *sīrsāsana*, *sarvāṅgāsana*, *matsyāsana*, *paścimottānāsana* and *ardha-matsyendrāsana*, and *kriyās* such as *nauli*, on all days. Apart from these, to the extent that I could accommodate within the available time, I did other *āsanas* from My repertoire. I ended with five minutes of *śavāsana*. I required a week to complete one cycle of all the *āsanas* that I practised.

After *śavāsana*, I took up *prāṇāyāma* with the three *bandhas*. I did 16 cycles with *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* lasting for 16, 64 and 32 seconds or eight cycles with the timings being 32, 128 and 64 seconds. Over the course of every week, I also briefly accommodated the forms of restraint of *prāṇa* such as *śītalī*. After *prāṇāyāma*, I spent about 15 minutes on stamina and strength building exercises before going for My morning bath.

I: Did Acharyal straightaway start doing *prāṇāyāma* with the retention

lasting for over two minutes?

Acharyal: No. Over the course of two weeks, I raised the retention time from about a minute to this. Within a month of practice, I could retain My breath comfortably for five minutes. However, the idea of performing *prāṇāyāma* regularly with so long a *kumbhaka* did not appeal to Me for, then, I could not have done even four cycles within My scheduled half an hour. Though it is many years since I casually retained My breath for five minutes, I shall demonstrate this to you now.

{A thought crossed my mind whether during such prolonged retention Acharyal would slow down His metabolism and lower His pulse rate. Immediately, Acharyal laughed and said, “You can note My pulse now and in the final minute.” I measured His pulse rate and found it to be 67 beats per minute. Then, Acharyal fully emptied His lungs, pressed His nostrils shut and performed the *jālandhara-bandha*. His eyes were open and there was a light smile on His face. At the end of the fourth minute, I began counting His pulse and did so till the end of the fifth minute. His pulse rate was just 29 beats per minute. As I withdrew my hand from Acharyal’s wrist, which He had held out to facilitate my measurement, He released the pressure on His nostrils and smoothly took a couple of deep breaths.}

I: When did Acharyal switch from the standard 1:4:2 ratio for the relative duration of *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* to the ratio 1:2:2 that Acharyal now favours?

Acharyal: That was after Acharyal’s return from Kalady (in early 1939). It was He who suggested the new ratio. I considered His hint a sacred directive and implemented it.

I: Were there other series of dreams of the kind that Acharyal just spoke of in which God taught Acharyal in depth about *yoga*?

Acharyal: Not a series but a single dream that occurred some months later. I shall tell you about it someday.

{After this, Acharyal went for His afternoon bath and *āhnika*. He later gave the following elucidation about guidance and directives received in dreams. It is certain that all that is seen in a dream is false.

na tatra rathā na rathayogā na panthāno bhavanti³²

(Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad IV.3.10)

There are no chariots, horses or paths there.

māyāmātram tu kārṣnyenānabhivyakta-svarūpatvāt ॥³³

(Brahmasūtra III.2.3)

But the dream creation is a mere illusion on account of its nature of not being manifest with the totality of the attributes (found in the waking state, such as adequate space, time and circumstances and not being nullified).

Nevertheless, what is encountered in a dream may, uncommonly, form a basis for spiritual practice. In the *Yoga-śāstra*, it is said:

svapnanidrā-jñānālambanam vā ॥³⁴

(Yogasūtra I.38)

Alternatively, the mind reaches the state of steadiness by having as its object of focus a perception had in dream or sleep.

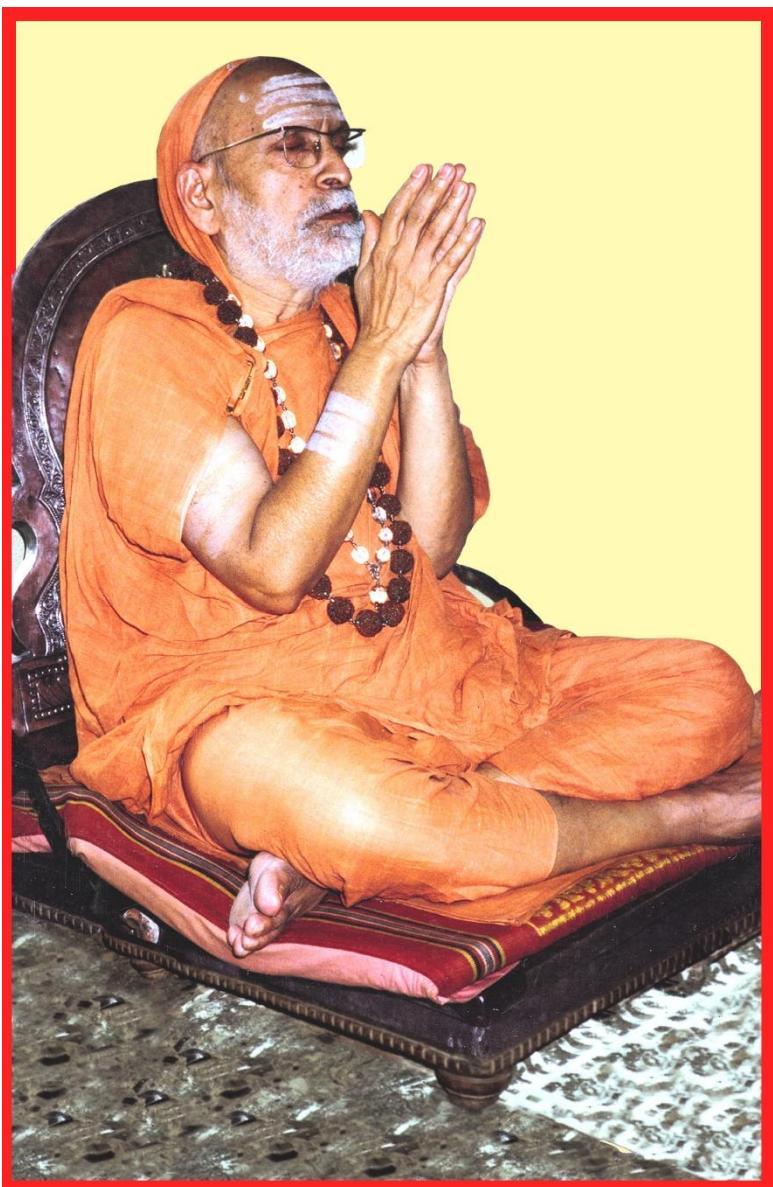
Explaining this, Vācaspati has said (in his gloss *Tattvavaiśāradī*) that a person may see in a dream an exquisite, well-decorated image of Śiva in a forest. After waking up, the person concerned can recall that image and meditate upon it.

Rarely, a person may have a dream in which he receives initiation from God or the *Guru* into a *mantra*. In the *Mahābhārata* [in chapters 80 and 81 of the *Drona-parvan*], there is an account of a dream in which Arjuna received instructions from Śiva. Having vowed to slay Jayadratha by sunset the next day, Arjuna was worried about how he could achieve success. When he fell asleep, he had a dream in which Kṛṣṇa came to him and led him on an aerial journey to the summit of the Kailāsa mountain. There, they beheld Śiva and eulogised Him. In response to Arjuna's prayer, the Lord directed them to fetch His bow, *pināka*, and His *pāśupata-astra* from a celestial lake. When they did so, a *brahmacārin* emerged from Śiva's side and taught Arjuna how to discharge the *pāśupata* arrow. The Lord also taught Arjuna the *mantras* for invoking the weapon. Arjuna's memory of the instructions about the use of the *pāśupata* that he had received much earlier from Śiva was thereby restored. On waking up, he was in a position to invoke with *mantras* and employ the irresistible *pāśupata*, if needed.

A dream in which one sees the *Guru* or God is good and can be viewed as a sign of divine grace. However, one ought not to indiscriminately assume that whatever instruction one has received in the dream is indeed the directive of the *Guru* or God and blindly carry it out. For instance, it would be a grave error for one to harm another because of having dreamt of being commanded to do so. One should not implement what is contrary to one's *dharma* nor give weight to a teaching that is discordant with the actual position of the scriptures and one's *Sadguru*.

Rare are the dreams in which one is actually blessed with the instructions of God or the *Sadguru*. A sceptic who hears of a dream of this kind would, perhaps, dismiss it as a fabrication of the narrator or seek to explain it in some other way such as that the apparently new information acquired is actually based on knowledge unwittingly gained earlier. The extraordinary nature of such dreams and the appropriateness and worth of the guidance received through them are, however, generally unmistakable to the one who has them. }





5. Devotion and Karma-yoga

[The following conversation took place in October 1987 at the Sringeri Shankara Math, Bangalore. When I went to Acharyal during His morning āhnika to offer my namaskāras, I saw Him wiping tears of joy.]

Acharyal: I just completed the *japa* of the *Narasimha-mantra*. Suddenly, I remembered what happened when Acharyal graced Me with initiation into the *Narasimha-mantra* subsequent to His giving Me *sarṇyāsa*. The memory brought tears of joy to My eyes. During the initiation, when Acharyal was about to start voicing the *dhyāna-śloka*, I found Myself spontaneously visualising Narasiṁha in My heart. As I heard and repeated the *dhyāna-śloka*, I realised with surprise and happiness that the form of Narasiṁha described therein and the one I was seeing matched.

{The *dhyāna-śloka* concerned is:

satyajñāna-sukhasvarūpam-amalam kṣīrābdhi-madhyayasthitam
yogārūḍham atiprasanna-vadanam bhūṣā-sahasrojjvalam |
tryakṣam cakrapināka-sābhayavarān-bibhrāṇamarkacchavim
chatrībhūta-phaṇīndram-indudhavalam lakṣmīnṛsiṁham bhaje ||¹
I worship Lakṣmī-nṛsiṁha whose essential nature is absolute existence, consciousness and bliss, who is immaculate, who is established in yoga, whose countenance is very pleasing, who is glorious with numerous ornaments, who has three eyes, who bears (in His four hands) the (sudarśana) cakra, the pināka (bow) and the signs of granting fearlessness and boons, who is lustrous like the sun, who is fair in complexion like the moon, who has (the set of hoods of) the king of snakes (Śeṣa) serving as an umbrella over Him and who dwells in the middle of the ocean of milk.

In 1976, in the course of His evening walk, Acharyal casually chanted this verse and then told me, “God who is formless and of the nature of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss (*saccidānanda-svarūpah*) appears as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Ambā and so on for the sake of His devotees. The form of Narasiṁha described in this

dhyāna-śloka is itself suggestive of the actual non-difference between Śiva and Viṣṇu. That Narasimha is an incarnation of Viṣṇu is well known. Here, He is spoken of as being with Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, as bearing the *cakra*, the weapon of Viṣṇu, and as having the hoods of Śeṣa as His umbrella, like Viṣṇu. Further, He is said to be in the middle of the ocean of milk. This too fits Viṣṇu. However, Narasimha is presented here, like Śiva, as three-eyed. He bears the *pināka*, the bow of Śiva. Further, like Śiva, and unlike Viṣṇu, Narasimha is described as very fair.”}

(**Acharyal:**) The words relating to the *pañcopacāra-pūjā* (following the *dhyāna-śloka*) took only some seconds for Acharyal to utter and for Me to repeat. Yet, I experienced no shortage of time in elaborately worshipping the Lord mentally in My heart with offerings of sandal paste, flowers, incense, lamp, food and so on. I can attribute only to divine grace the irresistible urge that led Me to begin the worship. During *naivedya*, I served the Lord a variety of dishes in a jewel-studded golden plate, put a little food into His mouth, waited for Him to masticate and swallow and only thereafter offered another morsel. It was as if the several seconds miraculously became extended to over half an hour from My perspective. Even while performing the worship with concentration and dedication, I was able to see Acharyal and repeat His words without delay.

{The words about the *pañcopacāra-pūjā* are:

laṁ - prthivyātmane gandham kalpayāmi ।

haṁ - ākāśātmane puṣparām kalpayāmi ।

yaṁ - vāyvātmane dhūpam-āghrāpayāmi ।

raṁ - agnyātmane dīpam darśayāmi ।

vaṁ - amṛtātmane amṛtopahāram nivedayāmi ।

sam̄ - sarvātmane sarvopacāra-pūjāssamarpayāmi ।²

Lam (*bija* of *prthvi*)! I present sandal paste to Him who is the essence of *prthvi* (earth). *Haṁ* (*bija* of *ākāśa*)! I offer flowers to Him who is the essence of *ākāśa* (space). *Yaṁ* (*bija* of *vāyu*)! I submit the fragrance of incense to Him who is the essence of *vāyu* (air). *Raṁ* (*the bija* of *agni*)! I show a lamp to Him who is the essence of *agni* (fire).

Vam (the bija of āpas)! I serve an offering of divine food to Him who is the essence of ambrosia. Saṁ (the bija of jagat)! I offer worship with all articles of homage to Him who is the essence of all.}

(Acharyal:) When Acharyal started to utter the *Narasimha-mantra* (after the *pañcopacāra-pūjā*), He placed His right palm on My head. He did not do this when He initiated Me into other *mantras* such as the *Medhā-dakṣināmūrti* and *Śrīvidyā*.

{The *Mantrarāja* of Narasiṁha is:

ugram vīram mahāviṣṇum jvalantam sarvatomukham |
nṛsimham bhīṣṇam bhadram mṛtyumṛtyum namāmyaham ||³
I salute Nṛsimha, the fierce, heroic, great one who pervades all (Mahā-viṣṇu), the lustrous one with faces everywhere, the fearsome one, the auspicious one and the destroyer of death.

Acharyal once told me, in 1976, ‘Every word of this *mantra* is deeply significant. I shall illustrate this by briefly considering three of the words. A term describing the Lord is ‘*jvalantam*’. That Narasiṁha is lustrous is a simple meaning. Consciousness is the light of lights; but for it, no luminary like the sun or a lamp would be visible. Narasiṁha ever shines as the light of consciousness. This is a deeper meaning.

‘Another term of the *mantra* is ‘*sarvatomukhah*’. This literally means that He has faces on all sides. The *Upaniṣads* teach that though devoid of all organs, the Supreme grasps everything everywhere. In this sense, Narasiṁha is ‘*sarvatomukhah*’.

The *mantra* speaks of the Lord as ‘*bhīṣṇam*’. The word literally means, ‘fearsome’. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* conveys that when Narasiṁha slew Hiranyakāśipu and continued to be fierce, the *devas* and even Lakṣmī feared Him. The term fits the Lord in another way too. The Supreme ordains and enforces order in the universe. The laws of nature are His. It is said, ‘Out of fear of this One, the wind blows. Out of fear of Him, the sun rises (*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* 2.8).’ In this sense, Narasiṁha is ‘*bhīṣṇam*’. The *Nṛsimha-pūrvatāpanīya* and *Nṛsimha-uttaratāpanīya upaniṣads* deal extensively with this *mantra*.”}

(Acharyal:) The moment Acharyal chanted the *mantra* once and, following Him, I too did so, an amazing event occurred. Acharyal abruptly withdrew His hand from My head, joined His palms and gazed at Me silently with deep reverence. My breathing stopped. The form of Lakṣmī-narasimha that I was seeing within Me vanished. However, I began to experience the Lord as My *Antaryāmin* (Inner Controller), refuge and intimate well-wisher as clearly as one can see a fruit in one's open palm. I ceased to regard the body, *prāṇa*, organs, mind and intellect as Mine; everything was just His. I do not know how long I remained thus, motionless and immersed in bliss. All along, I did see Acharyal keeping His palms joined and looking in My direction.

Then, the form of Narasimha reappeared and My breathing resumed. My mental state reverted to what it had been during My chanting of the *mantra* but with the difference that I now felt extremely intimate with Narasimha. At the same time, Acharyal lowered His hands. He then recited the *mantra* two more times, giving Me time to repeat His words. After completing the initiation, He said, "After You had said the *mantra* once, I saw just Narasimha in Your place. That is why I jerked back My hand from Your head and offered My salutation to Him. When His form disappeared and You reappeared, I proceeded with the initiation. Dedicate everything to Him." All this came to My mind a short while ago.

{Acharyal stopped speaking and continued with His *āhnika*. I prostrated before Him three times. As I did not wish to disturb Acharyal and take His time further, I did not ask Him about the short-term and long-term impacts of the experiences. As I was starting to leave, He smiled and Himself provided the answer.}

(Acharyal:) Throughout that day, offering everything to Narasimha was extremely easy. For instance, when I had My afternoon bath, I automatically felt that I was performing *abhiṣeka* to Narasimha who abided within Me. During *bhiksā*, I straightaway visualised Him as accepting from within and eating whatever I put into My mouth. When I read a book after *bhiksā*, He appeared to be listening from inside My heart as if I were reading to Him. As I walked, it spontaneously seemed that I was taking Him, who was within Me, for

a stroll. The next day onwards, however, I needed to consciously practise dedicating all My activities and their fruits to Him. I also started spending some time every day just for offering Him mental worship. The experiences of the day of initiation greatly facilitated both these and served as models. In a few months, *karma-yoga* became natural. From the time of initiation, Narasiṁha became very dear to Me. As I have told you on several occasions, He takes care of Me like a child, guides Me, provides clarifications and sets right all the foolish things I say and do.

Before My *samnyāsa*, Acharyal had told Me about the gracious role of Narasiṁha in the lives of Bhagavatpāda and Padmapāda and about the devotion of My *Paramestiguru* (H.H. Nr̥siṁha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) and My *Paramaguru* (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nr̥siṁha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) to Narasiṁha. He had also instructed Me to memorise some hymns on Narasiṁha such as Bhagavatpāda's "Lakṣmī-nṛsiṁha-karuṇārāsa-stotra". After *samnyāsa*, He extraordinarily initiated Me into the *Narasiṁha-mantra* as I just told you and then imparted to Me the *Narasiṁha-kavaca*. It is to Him that I owe My intimacy with Narasiṁha.

{In 1977, when I submitted a manuscript to Acharyal, He opened it at random and read the following verse, which is from Bhartrhari's *Vairāgya-śataka*:

maheśvare vā jagatām-adhiśvare janārdane vā jagadantarātmani
na vastubheda-pratipattirasti me tathāpi bhaktistarunēndu-
śekhare ॥⁴ (84)

I have no conception of difference between Maheśvara (Śiva), the Lord of the universe, and Janārdana (Viṣṇu), the inmost Self of the universe. Nevertheless, I am attached to the One who bears the moon in His crest (Śiva).

Then, Acharyal conveyed that Śiva was the *iṣṭa-devatā* of Paramacharyal by saying, "This verse applied to My Guru. Because of My fondness for Narasiṁha, He sometimes humorously remarked to Me, 'You are a Vaiṣṇava!', " added Acharyal.}



APPENDIX

[The following is an exposition of karma-yoga by Acharyal through parables. It had been penned and included by me in “Edifying Parables” published by the Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation in 1995.]

Three brothers went on a vacation to a hill station and stayed there in a cottage booked by them. One night, when they were fast asleep, a powerful earthquake wreaked havoc in the region. The roof of the cottage fell and would have crushed them to death had not a portion of the roof-beam come to rest on a piece of wooden furniture in the bedroom. From the creaking sounds that the brothers heard, they realised that, in moments, the roof would descend on them. There was simply no question of their remaining where they were till help arrived.

They turned towards the two doors that led out of the room. Due to an electric short-circuit, a fire had started near one of them. The flames were spreading. The way to the other door was strewn with glass pieces from the shattered window panes. One of the brothers ran towards the door where the fire was. He managed to escape through it but suffered severe burns and had to be hospitalised for weeks. The second brother recognised the danger of passing through the flames and so moved as swiftly as he could to the second door. His soles were pierced at several spots by the glass pieces on the way. He had to be hospitalised for two days.

The third brother thought, “It is madness to remain here. Heading towards the spreading flames is foolish, for severe burns will be inevitable. So, I must escape through the other door. However, I must first do something to protect my feet from the glass pieces.” He tore his bed-spread and wrapped a piece of cloth on each foot. He worked fast and so the whole process took only seconds. Then, he headed for the door chosen by him. He escaped unhurt.

A person cannot remain without performing some action or the other just as the brothers were not in a position to remain where they lay in the bedroom. All his acts do have consequences. If he engages in *adharma*, he will experience much suffering in future, in hell or on earth. His behaviour would be on par with that of the brother who

headed towards the door engulfed by fire. He who performs meritorious deeds experiences happiness for some time in heaven or acquires a good birth on the earth. In any case, he has to be reborn. Thus, even the acquirer of *punya* does suffer the bondage of transmigration. His conduct is comparable to that of the second brother. The path to the fiery door was easy to tread as is the path of evil; the way to other door was difficult as is the path of *dharma*, to go along which one has to restrain the mind and the senses.

The Lord has explained how a person may perform actions but avoid being bound by them. A person should dedicate all his actions and their fruits to God and discharge his duties without hankering for the results. This means of performing actions but escaping bondage is called *karma-yoga*. The performer of *karma-yoga* is like the third brother, who escaped through the very door through which the second brother had left (without suffering any injury). The most intelligent of the brothers protected his feet with bandages; the *karma-yogin* protects himself by dedicating his actions and their fruits to God.

A person had the practice of performing *pūjā* to God and offering Him fruits and other eatables. After his worship, he used to partake of an offered fruit as God's *prasāda*. An agnostic friend of his mockingly told him, "Your practice of performing *naivedya* is silly. The fruit that you place before your God remains exactly at the same spot where it was kept. It undergoes no physical change either. Further, it is not the God you worship but you who consumes it."

The devotee responded with a smile, "I submit a fruit to God with the firm conviction that, in keeping with His statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, He will accept it. Having received it, He is free to do whatever He pleases with it. Since He is omnipotent, He is perfectly capable of making it vanish or leaving it behind in its entirety after having consumed it. I believe that it is He who leaves behind the fruit for me after partaking of it in a humanly-inconceivable way. As far as I am concerned, what I consume after *naivedya* is the remnant of what God has eaten."

"Recently, when your political leader came to your town, you and numerous others received him and offered him garlands. He

certainly did not and could not wear all of them. He then gave you one of the garlands that he had received and you accepted it joyfully. As he walked through the large crowd of his supporters, he tossed some garlands to them and the crowd cheered. It is possible that a supporter got back the very garland that he had given. Just because your leader does not retain the garlands presented to him, you people do not abstain from the practice of garlanding him; you derive joy in honouring him and do not tell him what he should do with the garlands that you give him. Why then are you uncomfortable with my sincerely offering God fruits and feeling happy? When your leader can return a garland to you, why should God not be free to give me back the submitted fruits with His blessings? A *karma-yogin*, in fact, offers to God not just eatables but all his thoughts, words and deeds.”

A man had two servants. One of them was particular about eulogising his employer but not in executing his master’s instructions. The other sincerely carried out the tasks assigned to him; he also held his master in high esteem. The employer obviously preferred the second servant to the first. A devotee who, like the second servant, sincerely performs the duties ordained for him by God and specified in the scriptures and, further, does so in a spirit of dedication, pleases God greatly and receives His grace in abundance. By the Lord’s grace, his mind becomes very pure. In due course, he realises the Truth and gets liberated.

A woman doted on her young son and took great care of him. One day, she woke up with an intense headache, fever and nausea. Nevertheless, she attended to the child’s morning requirements without any laxity. That day, she found the rice prepared by her to be slightly overcooked. Promptly, she started to cook some more. Her husband noticed this and told her, “You are sick and in pain. Why do you want to strain yourself? The rice that is ready is quite eatable.” “I want to give my son only the kind of rice that he is used to and likes. As for the overcooked rice, I shall consume it,” replied the wife. Out of deep love for her child, the woman did her very best for him. Likewise, a *karma-yogin*, by virtue of his devotion to God, performs his duties to the very best of his ability and refrains from *adharma*.

Two students appeared for an examination. In spite of having

prepared well, they fared badly because the questions were very tough and some of them fell outside the scope of the prescribed syllabus. One of them, who did not practise *karma-yoga*, became highly dejected because of his inept performance. When he went home and sat down to prepare for the next day's subject, his mind kept reverting to that day's question paper. His worry greatly hampered his preparation. The other boy, being a practitioner of *karma-yoga*, did not experience the least anxiety. This is because, in the examination hall itself, he had dedicated his performance and its fruit to God. After returning home, undisturbed by worry, he focused his attention on the next day's subject.

On the following day, the first boy became flabbergasted on encountering a tough question. The *karma-yogin* read the question carefully and answered it to the best of his ability without getting perturbed in the least. It is hardly surprising that the first boy secured a lower rank than his friend. This example shows that the efficiency of a *karma-yogin* exceeds that of a person who acts with a longing for the fruits of his actions.

The Lord has declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Perform your prescribed duties, for action is superior to inaction. Moreover, even the maintenance of your body will not be possible through inaction. Man becomes bound by all his actions except those done by him for the sake of God. O son of Kuntī, perform actions for the sake of God, without being attached... By performing his duty without attachment, a person attains liberation (through the purification of his mind).”



6. Exposure to Kūndalinī-yoga

[*The following conversation took place in May, 1978 at Sringeri. Acharyal sent for me in the afternoon. He was seated alone upstairs in the eastern side of Sacchidananda Vilas. He gave me two books in English in which the authors had written about experiences associated with the arousal and ascent of the kūndalinī-śakti. Acharyal had first enlightened me about kūndalinī-yoga in 1973 and had subsequently thrown further light on it on some occasions. He asked me to read the books and give Him my comments on the contents. Then He queried, “Is there anything you would like to ask?”]*

I: Would Acharyal please tell me about Acharyal's first experience of the *kūndalinī* and the *cakras*?

Acharyal: This took place a few months after My being initiated into *sarīnyāsa* (on May 22, 1931). I had just finished My morning *āhnika* and was about to get up. Without premeditation, I joined My palms and said,

“śrī śāradāyai namaḥ¹
(*Obeisance to the glorious Śāradā.*)”

Abruptly, I felt an upsurge of joy and stopped being aware of My surroundings. It began to seem that My body was becoming transparent and that I was seeing My backbone from some vantage point in front of My chest.

I: Did Acharyal apprehend the backbone together with the rib cage, internal organs and so on?

Acharyal: No. It was the backbone that stood out, whitish in colour, with the silhouette of the body appearing dark like a shadow. The backbone then seemed to become translucent to reveal a canal in its interior. In moments, the canal's width became greatly magnified. I could then see a tube, red and bright like fire, traversing the length of the canal. A mellifluous female voice announced,

“iyam suṣumnā nāḍī¹
(*This is the suṣumnā-nāḍī.*)”

I: Could Acharyal perceive the speaker of the words?

Acharyal: No. I just heard the words. The width of this fiery canal then expanded and a section along the length vanished to reveal another canal within. This one was coloured like the sun half an hour after sunrise. I heard the words,

“iyam vajrā nādī ।³

(This is the vajrā-nādī.)”

The width of this canal too abruptly increased and a section along the length faded away. A pale tube looking like the moon seen through a thin layer of cloud became visible within the earlier tube. At this juncture, the words that I heard were,

“iyam citriṇī nādī । atra brahmanādī vartate । sā suṣumnyapi
vyapadiṣyate ।⁴

(This is the citriṇī-nādī. The brahma-nādī is here. It is even termed suṣumnā.)”

The meaning that flashed in My mind was that the pale tube was called *citriṇī*, its hollow interior formed the *brahma-nādī* and that the name *suṣumnā* has been employed even to denote the *citriṇī* or *brahma-nādī*. The fiery, sun-like and pale canals did appear to form a unit.

The scene underwent a change. I could then discern that the triad of *nādīs* stretched from between the anus and the penis on the lower side to above the level of the eyebrows, into the head, on the upper side. Next, there appeared a moon-like tube that was distinctly coupled to the triad both at the base of the latter and between the eyebrows. On its upper side, this tube continued from the junction between the eyebrows to the left nostril. On its lower side, it ended at the right testicle. Between the two junctions, it formed arches on the triad's left and right sides, with the crossovers occurring at the levels of the throat, chest, navel and genital. For a moment, this shape was replaced by one in which the tube formed a bow-like arch between the lower and upper junctions and towards the body's left side. I felt that both the forms may be met with.

After the earlier shape was restored, I heard the words,

“iyāṁ iḍā nāḍī¹⁵
(This is the iḍā-nāḍī.)”

Something appeared to be moving through this tube in synchrony with My breathing, which, I somehow felt, was taking place through just the left nostril. Also, the flow within this tube seemed to have a cooling effect.

In moments, this tube disappeared. Instead, another tube manifested that was red and bright. This too was clearly coupled to the triad between the brows and at the lower end of the triad but, unlike the *iḍā*, continued to the right nostril and the left testicle. Between the upper and lower junctions, it formed arches on the sides of the triad, with crossovers at the levels of the throat, chest, navel and genital. However, wherever the previous tube traversed from left to right this crossed from right to left and vice versa. Then, for a moment, the shape changed and the tube resembled a bow between the upper and lower junctions, lying on the right side of the triad.

The words I then heard were,

“iyāṁ piṅgalā nāḍī¹⁶
(This is the piṅgalā-nāḍī.)”

I began to feel that My breathing was taking place through just the right nostril. In synchrony with the breathing, I could apprehend something moving through this tube. The flow seemed to have a heating effect.

A few moments later, the moon-hued tube that had disappeared again came to sight. I could then see both the arching tubes simultaneously. Next, My breathing shifted from the right nostril to the left nostril and, with this, I noticed the activity in the reddish tube giving way to that in the moon-hued tube. Shortly, I felt that breathing was taking place through both the nostrils; I could then apprehend activity in both the tubes.

{Later, Acharyal said, “Three shapes of the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā* have been spoken of. The first is characterised by each of the two *nāḍīs* forming arches alternately on the left and right of the *suṣumnā*. The second form is that of a near straight line from the base of the *suṣumnā*

to the middle of the brows; the *iḍā* remains on the left, while the *piṅgalā* lies on the right of the *suṣumnā*. The third shape is roughly like that of a bow in the chest lying on one side of the *suṣumnā*. The first and the third shapes are the ones that are poles apart: the second can be regarded as a variant of the third in which the bow's curve is negligible with respect to its length.” Acharyal then read the following portion of Kālicaraṇa’s commentary on the first verse of the *Saṭcakra-nirūpana*.

taduktam yāmale-
iḍā ca *piṅgalā* caiva tasya vāme ca dakṣiṇe |
 ṛvībhūte śire te ca vāma-dakṣiṇa-bhedataḥ |
 sarvapadmāni saṁveṣṭya nāsārandhragate śubhe || iti ||
 atra śire te ca ityatra cakāro vārthaḥ | etenānayoḥ sthityāṁ
 dvividhaḥ kalpo darśitah | anyatrānayordhanurākāreṇa
 sthitiruktā | tadyathā - viddhi te dhanurākāre nāḍīḍāpiṅgale
 pare || iti ||⁷

*It is said in the Yāmalā, “The *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* are on its left and right. These two either proceed straight up to the nostrils, or do so by alternating from the left to right and from the right to left and going round all the cakras.” By this, two positions of the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* have been shown. The occurrence of a shape resembling the curvilinear part of a bow has been stated elsewhere. For instance, it is said, “Know the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* nādīs to be shaped like a bow.”}*

(Acharyal:) The scene soon underwent a change and centred on the lower end of the triad of tubes. There, I could see a beautiful lotus with four petals that were deep red in colour. The voice announced,

“idaṁ mūlādhāra-cakram ||⁸
 (*This is the mūlādhāra-cakra.*)”

At the pericarp of the lotus, there was a *Śivaliṅga*. A cobra lustrous like lightning lay with its body making about three and a half turns around the *Liṅga*. The serpent’s hood rested on the upper end of the *Liṅga* and its mouth effectively blocked the passage to the triad of

tubes.

The serpent was motionless and appeared to be fast asleep. Yet, it was somehow unmistakable that it was the embodiment of unbounded power. I was told that this was the *kunḍalinī*.

Then, for a few moments, I saw on each of the four red petals, a distinct, bright golden letter; the letters were *vam*, *śam*, *ṣam*, and *sam*. Simultaneously, I could apprehend a yellow, square region enclosing the pericarp. Inside this yellow square was an inverted red triangle; the *kunḍalinī* lay in the red triangle. The letter *lam* appeared in the square accompanied by the smell of the earth at the start of a spell of rain.

I: Did Acharyal feel that the lotus itself smells like freshly wet earth?

Acharyal: No. From the appearance of the *prthvī-bīja* (*lam*) and the smell, I just understood that the *mūlādhāra-cakra* is associated with the element *prthvī* (earth), which is characterised by the quality of smell.

Then, there manifested within the yellow square a white elephant with multiple tusks. On it was seated a *deva* with four arms, holding a thunderbolt in one of them. I further saw a swan on which sat a *deva* with four heads. A red-eyed *devī* with four arms was also visible. From the voice, I learnt that the elephant was Airāvata and the divinity on it was Indra; the other *deva* was Brahma, while the *devī* was Dākinī. The divinities then disappeared and I could see just the lotus with the *Liṅga* and *kunḍalinī*.

I: What was the overall impression that formed in Acharyal's mind?

Acharyal: I got the feeling that the *kunḍalinī* was primary and that a way of contemplating on the *mūlādhāra-cakra* was in association with the letters and divinities as seen by Me.

Thereafter, the scene shifted up the *suṣumnā* to around the level of the root of the penis. There, I beheld a lotus with six vermillion-hued petals. The voice said,

“*idaṁ svādhiṣṭhāna-cakram* ¹⁹
(This is the svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra.)”

The central region of the lotus was white and comprised a figure resembling the crescent-moon. Then, the letter *vam* manifested briefly in that region and, simultaneously, I felt the taste of water. The *āpo-bīja* (*vam*) and the taste led Me to understand that the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra* is associated with the element *āpas* (water) characterised by the quality of taste.

Simultaneously, there appeared on the six vermillion petals, one bright letter each; the letters were *bam*, *bham*, *mam*, *yam*, *ram* and *lam*. In the white zone, I could see a crocodile on which was seated a *deva* with a noose. Further, I beheld the figure of Viṣṇu seated on an eagle and bearing in His four hands, a conch, *cakra*, mace and lotus. A dark, three-eyed *devī* was also visible. The voice informed Me that the *deva* on the crocodile was Varuṇa and that the *devī* was Rākinī.

The scene shifted farther up the *sūṣumnā*. At the level of the navel, I could see a lotus with ten petals that were dark like rain-bearing clouds. In the interior region, there was an inverted red triangle. The words I heard were,

“*idam maṇipūra-cakram* ¹⁰
(*This is the maṇipūra-cakra.*)”

On the ten petals flashed blue letters *dam*, *dham*, *ṇam*, *tam*, *tham*, *daṁ*, *dhaṁ*, *naṁ*, *paṁ* and *phaṁ*. The appearance of the *agni-bīja*, *ram*, within the red triangle together with a sensation of heat led Me to understand that this *cakra* is associated with the element fire that is characterised by heat and form. I also saw in the red region a *deva* with four arms seated on a ram, Rudra smeared with ashes and seated on a bull and a dark *devī* with three faces wearing a yellow dress. I was told that the *deva* on the ram was Agni (Fire) and that the *devī* was Lākinī.

I: Was there anything explicit to convey that the *kundalinī* can rise from the *mūlādhāra* to the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and then to the *maṇipūra*?

Acharyal: No, but there was the hint provided by the shift of focus up the *sūṣumnā* from one *cakra* to the next. At any rate, of its own accord, a conviction arose on beholding the *svādhiṣṭhāna* that this was a

centre to which the *kunḍalinī* could ascend through the *brahma-nādī*. A similar certitude arose about the *maṇipūra*.

From the *maṇipūra*, the scene shifted up the *suṣumnā* to the level of the chest. I could see a lotus with twelve red petals. The voice informed Me,

“*idam anāhata-cakram*¹¹
(*This is the anāhata-cakra.*)”

In the interior, there was a smoke-coloured, hexagonal region formed by an upright and an inverted triangle. An inverted triangle lay within this and contained a lustrous *Liṅga*. This *cakra* with a *Liṅga* seemed to be a pure and sacred place. A non-vocal, internal sound became audible. I spontaneously felt that sound that was in an undifferentiated form in the *mūlādhāra* passed on to a slightly less subtle state in the *maṇipūra* and then reached the stage prior to spoken and heard speech here.

After this, the letters *kam*, *khaṁ*, *gam*, *gham*, *nam*, *cam*, *cham*, *jam*, *jhaṁ*, *ñam*, *ṭam* and *thaṁ* manifested for a few moments on the petals. In the hexagonal region, I saw the *vāyu-bīja*, *yam*, and simultaneously felt a slight breeze. This led Me to understand that the *anāhata-cakra* is associated with *vāyu* (air) characterised by the quality of touch. I further saw in the hexagonal region, a four-armed *deva* of a smoky hue seated on an antelope, a very attractive three-eyed *deva* displaying the *abhaya* and *varada-mudrās* (symbols of granting fearlessness and boons) and a *devī*. The voice announced that the *deva* on the antelope was Vāyu, the other *deva* was Iśa (Śiva) and that the *devī* was Kākinī.

The focus shifted farther up the *suṣumnā* to the level of the throat. There, I beheld a lotus with sixteen petals that were smoky in hue. The voice stated,

“*idam viśuddha-cakram* ¹¹²
(*This is the viśuddha-cakra.*)”

In the interior, there was a white circular region. For a few moments, the vowels manifested in red on the petals. The appearance of *haṁ*, the *bīja* of *ākāśa*, in the circular region accompanied by the

feeling of My being in vast expanse led Me to comprehend that this *cakra* is associated with *ākāśa* (space).

In the interior region, I also beheld a *deva* seated on a white elephant, Śiva with five faces and ten arms together with Pārvatī, and a *devī* clad in a yellow dress. The voice announced that the *deva* was Ambara, that the Lord was here as Sadāśiva and that the *devī* was Śākinī. This *cakra* gave the impression of being an exalted centre.

The scene moved even farther up the *suṣumnā* to the level of the eyebrows. I could see a glorious lotus with two white petals. The voice informed Me,

“*idam ājñā-cakram*”¹³

(*This is the ājña-cakra.*)”

In the central region, there was an inverted triangle wherein there was a *Liṅga*. Above the triangle was a crescent. Then, the letters *haṁ* and *kṣaṁ* manifested in the two petals and the *Praṇava* in the interior region. The *m* of the *Praṇava* was above the crescent, in *bindu* form. I could also see a *devī* with six faces. I was told that she was Hākinī. Beholding this *cakra* itself gave great joy.

Then, above the end of the *suṣumnā* and within the head, I saw a lotus with very many white petals hanging downward and arranged in multiple layers. All the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet could be seen here. The voice told Me that this was the thousand-petalled *sahasrāra*. At the pericarp of the lotus was a region that resembled the full moon and shed nectarine rays. Inside this was a bright triangle. I heard the words,

“*atra paramaśivah sthitah*”¹⁴

(*Herein abides Paramaśiva.*)”

While I could somehow sense the presence of a few zones between the *ājña* and the *sahasrāra*, I did not directly apprehend them. Even without hearing any words to that effect, I felt certain that the ascent of the awakened *kundalinī-śakti* ended at the *sahasrāra*, wherein Śakti united with Paramaśiva.

At this point, My experience ended. As I opened My eyes, I was a

bit bewildered whether I had been dreaming or vividly hallucinating or had had a divine experience. Without giving the matter any further thought, I got up and left for Acharyal's presence as it was time for Me to offer My obeisance to Him.

I: How long did the experience last?

Acharyal: What do you think would have been the duration?

I: Between half and one hour.

Acharyal (*laughing*): It lasted less than five minutes.

{Clearly amused at my surprise on hearing this, Acharyal asked, "What is the time now?" Looking at my wrist watch, I said, "4.43." I was seated cross-legged in front of Acharyal with my arms resting on my legs and with my palms joined. Acharyal leaned forward and grasped my joined palms in His right hand. Closing His eyes, He said, "Ambā (Mother)!" Suddenly, all that Acharyal had described began to unfold before me with great clarity. I even heard the voice that Acharyal had spoken of. My experience ended where Acharyal's had.

I regained awareness of my body and surroundings and saw Acharyal withdrawing His hand from mine. "What is the time now?" He asked. After checking, I reported that it was 4.46. "As you can see, less than five minutes has passed," remarked Acharyal, with a smile. He then instructed me, "Describe what you saw in the hands of Hākinī in the ājña-cakra." As the vision had been very clear and the memory fresh, I promptly said, "The *abhaya-mudrā*, the *varada-mudrā*, a book, a skull, a *ḍamaru* (small drum) and *rudrākṣa* rosary."

With a nod, Acharyal said, "Yes, that is just what I saw then. I asked you about what I had not described earlier to confirm the similarity of our visions. They being similar, it would be reasonable to take it that both lasted for the same time rather than that your vision lasted for three minutes and Mine for half to one hour."}

I: Had Acharyal read about the *kunḍalinī* and the *cakras* before this experience? Had Paramacharyal spoken to Acharyal about them?

Acharyal: Neither. I was thoroughly unfamiliar with *kunḍalinī-yoga* at that time. If someone had asked Me then, "What do You know

about the *kundalini*?" perhaps I would have just said that it is a name occurring in the *Lalitā-sahasranāma*!

{For the next 45 minutes, He granted audience to and blessed the devotees who had come for His *darsana*. He would have thereafter started for His evening walk but as it was raining, He did not do so. He indicated that if I wished to ask Him anything, I could do so. }

I: Did Acharyal narrate what transpired to Paramacharyal? What did He say?

Acharyal: While I performed My *namaskāras* to Acharyal, He continued with His *āhnika*. He gave no indication of having noticed My presence. Not wanting to disturb Acharyal, I started to leave quietly. Abruptly, He looked up at Me and said, "Yes, tell Me." I submitted, "A few minutes ago, I had an unexpected experience that seems to be of the nature of a divine teaching. However, I am not certain that it was not a day-dream or hallucination." Acharyal's gaze was upon Me but He said nothing. So, I proceeded to give the details. When I finished, He said, "All right," and readied Himself to perform *dānda-tarpana*. Feeling happy that Acharyal had graced Me with the opportunity of making My submission, I left.

That day, the morning *Candramoulīśvara-pūja* was performed by Acharyal, not the *arcaka*. In the afternoon, after *bhikṣā*, Acharyal sent for Me. When I went to Acharyal's presence and paid obeisance, He gestured to Me to sit down. He said, "You had sensed something moving in the *idā* and *pingalā nādīs* in association with breathing through the left and right nostrils. The movement was that of *prāṇa*. Your feeling that sound that is in an undifferentiated state in the *mūlādhāra* acquires a less subtle state as it reaches the *manipūra* and then attains a stage prior to articulated speech at the *anāhata* was correct.

"Śabda is said to have four forms; *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*. Each form is grosser than the preceding one. Articulated speech is of the fourth kind. The *Veda* instructs us:

catvāri vākparimitā padāni tāni vidurbrāhmaṇā ye manīṣināḥ ।
guhā trīṇi nihitā neṅgayanti turīyam vāco manusyā vadanti ॥¹⁵

(*Rg-Veda* I.164.45)

(Four are the definite grades of speech. Those brāhmaṇas who are wise know them. Three are deposited in secret and are motionless. Men speak the fourth grade of speech.)

“*Vāyu* arising from the *mūlādhāra* ascends through the levels of the navel, heart and throat and produces audible sound. At these four levels, it has the appellations *parā*, *paśyanti*, *madhyamā* and *vaikhari*. The *mūlādhāra* and the other *cakras* that You saw have been spoken of in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Tantras*. For instance, the *Yogacūḍāmaṇi-upaniṣad* teaches:

caturdalaṁ syādādhāraṁ svādhiṣṭhānaṁ ca ṣaḍdalaṁ ॥¹⁶ (4 cd)
nābhau daśadalaṁ padmaṁ hṛdayaṁ dvādaśārakam ।

ṣoḍaśāraṁ viśuddhākhyām bhrūmadhye dvidalaṁ tathā ॥¹⁷ (5)

sahasradala-saṅkhayātaṁ brahmarandhre mahāpathi ॥¹⁸ (6 ab)

(In the brahma-nādī, the great path, there are the mūlādhāra with four petals, the svādhiṣṭhāna with six petals, the ten-petalled lotus at the navel, the twelve-petalled lotus of the heart, the six-petalled one called viśuddha, the one with two petals between the eyebrows and the one with thousand petals.)

Then He picked up a book and told Me, “This is the *Saṭcakra-nirūpana*, a chapter in a work authored by a *tāntrika* named Pūrnānanda. As is discernible from the title, it delineates the *cakras*. I shall read out and briefly explain the three verses about the *maṇipūra*. You will find that what You saw is in conformity with what is described here.”

{Having narrated these words of Paramacharyal, Acharyal read to me the verses He had heard from Paramacharyal and succinctly clarified them. About His explanation, He remarked, “This is what Acharyal told Me that day.” The verses are:

tasyordhve nābhimūle daśadalalasite pūrṇameghaprakāśe
nīlāmbhojapratikāśairupahitajaṭhare ḍādiphāntaiḥ sacandraiḥ ।

dhyāyed-vaiśvānarasyāruṇa-mihirasamāṁ maṇḍalam
 tattrikoṇam tadbāhye svastikākhyatribhirabhilasitam tatra
 vahneḥ svabījam ||¹⁹ (19)

Above the svādhiṣṭhāna, at the root of the navel is a lotus with ten petals having the colour of dense rain-bearing clouds and containing blue-lotus-hued letters beginning with ḍaṁ and ending with phaṁ. One should meditate there on the triangular region of fire that is like the rising sun. Outside this is a triad of svastikā signs and within it is Fire's bīja (raṁ).

dhyāyenmeṣādhirūḍhaṁ navatapananibhaṁ
 vedabāhūjjvalāṅgaṁ
 tatkrōde rudramūrtirnivasati satataṁ śuddhasindūrarāgaḥ ।
 bhasmāliptāṅga-bhūṣābharaṇa-sitavapurvṛddharūpī trinetro
 lokānāṁ-iṣṭadātā'bhaya-lasitakarāḥ sṛṣṭisarṇhārakārī ||²⁰(ibid.20)

One should meditate on Fire, who is like the sun at dawn, has a lustrous body with four arms and is seated on a ram. Ever abiding in his bosom is Rudra, whose complexion is that of pure vermilion, who is smeared with ashes and appears white, who is fully grown, has three eyes, displays with His hands the varada and abhaya mudrās and is the destroyer of creation.

atrāste lākinī sā sakalaśubhakarī vedabāhūjjvalāṅgī
 śyāmā pītāmbarādyairvividha-viracanālāṅkṛtā mattacittā ।
 dhyātvaitannābhipadmarī prabhavati nitarām saṁhṛtau pālane vā
 vāṇī tasyānanābje nivasati satataṁ jñānasandohalakṣmīḥ ||²¹

(ibid. 21)

Lākinī, who does good to all, has a bright body with four arms, is dark in complexion, wears yellow clothing, is adorned with various ornaments and is ecstatic, dwells here. By meditating on this lotus at the navel (manipūra), a person gets the power to protect and to destroy. Sarasvatī, with the wealth of the totality of knowledge, ever abides in his mouth. }

(Acharyal:) I could realise that what I had seen of the *manipūra-cakra* tallied with the description contained in the text. Two doubts arose in

My mind. Are the *cakras* actual constituents of the gross body that can be seen within it, by surgeons, like flesh and bones? Have some aspects of the *cakras* and the forms of the divinities to be contemplated therein been described in authoritative texts in more ways than one? What prompted the second doubt was that I had perceived the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* in two forms each. Even without My asking anything, Acharyal Himself said, “The *cakras* are subtle and cannot be seen with our eyes. They and the *kunḍalinī* can, however, be apprehended in meditation by adepts. There do exist some differences in the descriptions of the *cakras* and the *devatās* therein. It is not necessary to consider them now.”

I: Did Paramacharyal say anything about the cause of Acharyal’s unexpected experience and its having the nature of a teaching?

Acharyal: Since you want to know, I will tell you even about this. After clearing My unvoiced doubts, He lightly patted Me on My left cheek and said, “You are blessed. Śāradāmbā has directly taught You today and that too of Her own accord. I am reminded of the fact that She had Herself expounded *yoga* to Acharyal (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal). Paramacharyal (H.H. Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal) had earlier told Him that She would do so. Acharyal (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal) has explicitly stated in His ‘Śrī-Śāradā-śataślokiṣtavah’:

ajñāsīdgauravī me tava khalu karuṇāvāridhi śāradāmbā¹²²
sāṣṭāṅgam yogamārād-upadiśati bhavānurasah sūnurasyāḥ

(25ab)

(*My Guru's authoritative utterance to Me was, “Your Mother Śāradā, the ocean of mercy, will definitely instruct You soon about yoga, which has eight limbs. You are Her own child.”*)

“You are Her very own. So, it is but fitting that She chose to instruct You. She will teach You further. Acharyal (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal) used to receive Her guidance not only when awake but also in dreams. You too shall do so.”

{While Paramacharyal did not make any mention of even His having been directly taught by Śāradāmbā, this fact is clear from the following verse of His own composition, “Śrī-śāradā-stuti-mañjari”:

āgacchantī sadanamadasiyam̄ purā śāradāmbā²³
 tātaṅkāḍhyā muditavadanā svapna evam̄ hyapaśyam̄ |
 kāle kāle bahulakṛpayā śabdayantī svanāmñā
 hvāyam̄ hvāyam̄ sakalamapi me bodhayāmāsa devī || (13)

Earlier, I beheld Śāradāmbā in a dream as coming to My abode adorned with earrings and with a joyful face. At all times, the Goddess has, with great compassion, again and again called Me, uttering My name, and made known everything to Me. }

I: Was there anything else Paramacharyal said pertaining to Acharyal's experience?

Acharyal: No, I have told you everything.

I: Paramacharyal stated that Ambā would teach Acharyal further and even made a reference to guidance in dreams. Was there any such sequel to the experience of that morning?

Acharyal (*laughing*): Just as I had guessed, this has not missed your attention. Yes, there was such a sequel. I will tell you about it tomorrow.

{The rain had stopped a few minutes earlier. Acharyal got up and, gesturing to me to follow, went for a walk. The following conversation took place the next day prior to Acharyal going for His afternoon bath. }

Acharyal: In the night following the experience that I spoke of yesterday, I had a dream. It began with My being alone in the sanctum of Śāradāmbā. Ambā manifested in the place of the idol and She seated Me on Her lap. Then in front of Us, I saw a boy who looked like Me. He was seated in the *padmāsana* and was wearing just an ochre loin cloth. Somehow, I could see his *kundalinī*, in the form of a coiled serpent, asleep in his *mūlādhāra-cakra*. Ambā lightly touched him with Her right hand on his back in the region of the *mūlādhāra-cakra*.

Immediately, the sleeping *kundalinī* awoke and, hissing, raised her hood. The four petals of the *cakra* that were drooping earlier turned upward. The lotus now appeared to be in full bloom, with the letters

on the petals bright and visible. Abruptly, the scene changed. I again saw the *kunḍalinī* asleep. This time Ambā touched the boy between the eyebrows. The *kunḍalinī* awakened as before. I understood that the *kunḍalinī* can be awakened by the touch of the *Guru* and that the portion of the back corresponding to the *mūlādhāra* and the region between the eyebrows are among the places where such touch is particularly effective in doing so.

As this understanding dawned on Me, I could again see his *kunḍalinī* lying asleep. Ambā now raised Her right hand in a gesture of blessing. She did not touch the boy. This time also his *kunḍalinī* awakened. I realised that the *Guru* can arouse the *kunḍalinī* even by a mental blessing. Next, the boy began to perform *prāṇāyāma*, together with the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas*.

I: By looking at the boy's neck and abdomen, Acharyal could have readily made out that he was performing the *jalandhara* and *uddiyāna bandhas*. How did Acharyal conclude that he was contracting his anus and thereby performing the *mūla-bandha*?

Acharyal: This is a legitimate question. At that time, I found Myself spontaneously performing the *mūla-bandha* and there simply arose a conviction in My mind that the boy was doing the same. I saw a fire building up in the boy's *susumnā* and its flames beginning to lick his sleeping *kunḍalinī*. I could feel the heat of that fire. As the flames heated her, the *kunḍalinī* abruptly woke up and hissed fiercely. Then, she began to ascend the *susumnā*. I understood that the practice of *prāṇāyāma* together with the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas* serves to awaken the *kunḍalinī*.

The scene underwent a change and I saw the *kunḍalinī* asleep yet again. It seemed to Me that I could now experience whatever was going on in the boy's mind. I sensed that he was visualising the *mūlādhāra* and contemplating on the *devatās* therein. Then, he mentally worshipped the *kunḍalinī*. Thereafter, he conceived of the *kunḍalinī* being reverentially led by him to the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra*. There, he clearly visualised the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and concentrated on the *devatās* therein. Having done so, he offered worship to the *kunḍalinī*. This worship was patently a continuation of the worship that he had

commenced at the *mūlādhāra*. The conviction arose in My mind that such visualisation of the *cakras*, meditation on the *devatās* in them and worship of the *kundalinī* help to awaken and raise the *kundalinī*. The whole process delighted Me.

The scene changed once again. I saw the *kundalinī* on the verge of moving up the *suṣumnā*. There appeared to be some obstruction to the ascent. The *kundalinī*, however, forced her way up. I heard Ambā telling Me,

“brahma-granthim bhitveyamūrdhvam gacchati ¹²⁴
(Having pierced the brahma-knot, she is moving upwards.)”

It seemed to Me that the boy was willing the *kundalinī* to rise and that this exercise of will power was making a positive contribution. As the *kundalinī* reached the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra*, that lotus fully bloomed. She soon reached the *manipūra-cakra*. Then, instead of moving upwards, she gradually descended to the *mūlādhāra-cakra* and remained inactive there. I comprehended that it is possible for the awakened *kundalinī* to travel partially up the *suṣumnā*, descend and become dormant.

In a few moments, I again witnessed the arousal and ascent of the boy’s *kundalinī*. This time there appeared to be no obstacle to her upward movement from the *mūlādhāra* to beyond the *manipūra*. It was at the region of the *anāhata-cakra* that she seemed to encounter an obstruction. She, however, burst her way through it and caused the *anāhata-cakra* to bloom. Ambā told Me,

“viṣṇu-granthiśchinnaḥ ¹²⁵
(The viṣṇu-knot has been cut.)”

Continuing through the *viśuddha-cakra*, the *kundalinī* came to the *ājñā-cakra*. Here too, she overcame some obstacle and moved upwards. Ambā stated,

“rudragranthibhedo jātah ¹²⁶
(The piercing of the rudra-knot has occurred.)”

Finally, the *kundalinī* reached the pericarp of the *sahasrāra*. Ambā said,

“kuṇḍalinī paramaśivena yuktā ॥²⁷
(Kuṇḍalinī is united with Paramaśiva.)”

The boy’s face showed signs of his being in a state of bliss. His body was motionless and from My position on Ambā’s lap, I could not discern his breathing. At this point, My dream ended and I woke up.

{ About the locations of the triad of *granthis* (knots), Acharyal has stated as follows. There is some direct evidence in the minor *Upaniṣads* that the *brahma*, *viṣṇu* and *rudra* *granthis* are at the lower end of the *suṣumnā*, the chest and between the brows, which is where the *mūlādhāra*, *anāhata* and *ājñā cakras* are located. As the *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā* unite at the *mūlādhāra* and at the *ājñā cakras*, it is understandable that the first and third of the triad of *granthis* be associated with these *cakras*. The *Yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣad* says:

prasārya svaśarīram tu suṣumnāvadanāntare ॥²⁸ (I.66cd)
 brahmagrānthim tato bhītvā rajoguṇa-samudbhavam ।

suṣumnāvadane śīghram vidyullekheva saṁspuret ॥²⁹ (I.67)

Straightening her (coiled) body into the mouth of the suṣumnā and then piercing the brahma-granthis, which stems from rajas, the kuṇḍalinī quickly shines within the mouth of the suṣumnā like a streak of lightning.

The opening of the *suṣumnā* is at the *mūlādhāra*. The other *cakras* are higher up the interior of the *suṣumnā*. So, according to the *Upaniṣad*, the *brahma-granthis* is at the *mūlādhāra* and not at or near some higher *cakra*.

viṣṇugrānthim prayātyuccaiḥ satvaraṁ hṛdi saṁsthitā ।
 ūrdhvam gacchatī yaccāste rudragrānthim tadudbhavam ॥³⁰ (I.68)
 bhruvormadhyam tu saṁbhidya yāti śītāṁśu-maṇḍalam ॥³¹

(I.69ab)

*The kundalinī then rapidly moves upwards to the viṣṇu-granthis and becomes positioned at the heart. She proceeds upwards to where the rudra-granthis, which has that (the *ājñā-cakra*) for its root, is located, to the middle of the brows, and splitting this goes to the region*

of the moon.

What the *Brahmavidyā-upaniṣad* says is:

brahma-granthirakāre ca viṣṇugranthirhṛdi sthitah ||³² (70cd)

rudragranthir-bhruvormadhye bhidyate'kṣaravāyunā |³³ (71ab)

The *brahma-granthi* is in 'A' (in the *mūlādhāra*). The *viṣṇu-granthi* is located in the heart. The *rudra-granthi* is in the middle of the brows (in the *ājñā-cakra*) and is pierced by means of the *haṁsa-wind*.

However, the *Hathayoga-pradīpikā* hints and the commentary *Jyotsnā* on it [on verses 4.70, 4.73 and 4.76] explicitly states that the *brahma*, *viṣṇu* and *rudra granthis* are in the *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājñā cakras* respectively. As for Bhāskararāya, he contends, in his commentary on the *Lalitā-sahasranāma* [on the names 100-104], that associated with each *cakra* is a pair of *granthis*, one below and the other above the *cakra*, and that the *brahma*, *viṣṇu* and *rudra granthis* are the pairs of knots associated with the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *manipūra* and *anāhata cakras* respectively.

A practitioner of *kundalinī-yoga* should strive to arouse the *kundalinī* and raise her all the way to the *sahasrāra*, overcoming any obstruction in her path regardless of where it may be encountered. He does not have to take radically different steps to pierce a *granthi* than to raise the *kundalinī* from one *cakra* to the next. Further, the way to deal with a particular *granthi*, say the *viṣṇu-granthi*, does not change regardless of whether it be associated with the *anāhata*, *viśuddha* or *manipūra cakras*. Hence, the lack of uniformity in the specification of the locations of the *granthis* is not of practical consequence to a spiritual aspirant.}

I: Some years ago, Acharyal had told me about the series of seven dreams had by Acharyal when young in which Śiva expounded *hatha-yoga*. At that time, Acharyal had mentioned having experienced a single dream also of such a kind. Is this that dream?

Acharyal: Yes, it is. I remember having said then that I would tell you about this someday.

I: Did Acharyal feel that Ambā wanted Acharyal to practice *kundalinī-*

yoga as a principal spiritual practice?

Acharyal: No. Even during the dream, I unambiguously realised that though Ambā was Herself making known this form of *yoga* to Me, She did not intend that this be My principal *sādhanā* at all. It was, however, not as though I looked upon what I had been taught as having no practical relevance to Me.

Prior to these two experiences itself, I had been practising *praṇāyāma* with the three *bandhas*. After the dream, I started the practice of visualising the *mūlādhāra-cakra*, contemplating on the deities therein as they had been shown to Me and then worshipping the *kundalinī*. Next, I conceived that in response to My request, the *kundalinī* was rising to the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra*. I visualised that *cakra* clearly, focused on the *devatās* there and continued My mental worship of the *kundalinī*. In this fashion, I carried forward the worship in the higher *cakras*. Wherever appropriate, I saw the *kundalinī* in the form of Goddesss Pārvatī.

I: In which *cakra* did Acharyal mentally adorn Śakti with ornaments and in which *cakra* did Acharyal offer *dīpārādhanā* ?

Acharyal: The *manipūra* and the *ājña cakras*. At the *sahasrāra*, I just imagined that Śakti and Śiva had become one.

I: Did Acharyal engage in the new practice with any specific aim, such as the arousal and raising of the *kundalinī*?

Acharyal: No. I was not motivated by the desire for any result. The contemplation and worship that I had partially witnessed in the dream appealed to Me. Hence, I started to devoutly perform these.

I: How much time did Acharyal spend on such contemplation and worship?

Acharyal: Fifteen to twenty minutes a day, on Tuesdays and Fridays.





7. Contemplation on the Ātman

[The following is a translation made by me of a portion of Acharyal's benedictory address delivered in Kannada at the Sringeri Shankara Math, Bangalore, on September 5, 1987. This discourse was the last of a series of six by Acharyal on Paramacharyal. The occasion was a "Smaraṇa-Saptāha (A week of Recollection)" organised at the Math in which various speakers talked about Paramacharyal.]

When staying in Narasimhavana with My Guru, I used to go every evening to behold Śāradāmbā and remain there for up to an hour. On My return, He once asked Me, "You have crossed the river and come. What thought arose in Your mind?"

"What thought?" I wondered and replied, "There were various objects which I saw."

"What was new?"

"Nothing. I saw what was visible."

"Must You see whatever is in the range of Your vision?"

"If the eyes are kept closed, it is not possible to walk."

"You must see and yet not see."

"How is that possible?"

To this, He said, "This is how we should ever conduct ourselves:

ātmāmbhodhes-taraṅgo'smyahamiti gamane¹

{This occurs in Bhagavatpāda's *Śataslokī*. The complete verse is:

ātmāmbhodhestaraṅgo'smyahamiti gamane

bhāvayannāsanasthāḥ

saṁvitsūtrānuviddho maṇirahamiti vā'smīndriyārthapratītau

draṣṭā(drṣṭo)'smyātmāvalokāditi śayanavidhau magna

ānandasindhau

antarniṣṭho mumukṣuḥ sa khalu tanubhṛtāṁ yo

nayatyevamāyuh ॥²

(12)

When Acharyal first told me, in 1980, about the advice He had received based on this verse, He said that “*draṣṭā'smi*” and “*drṣṭo'smi*” were alternative readings. Paramacharyal had Himself referred to them.}

“When we get up from a seated position and start walking, the feeling should not be, ‘We are walking and going somewhere.’ In the big ocean - the *Ātman* - a wave has arisen. That wave is moving forward. This is the supposition. There is no difference between the wave and the ocean. Yet, because one walks (and thus moves forward like the wave), one should think of oneself as the wave. When the occasion to walk arises, one should contemplate, ‘I am a wave in the ocean of the bliss, in the ocean of the *Ātman*.’” His advice surprised Me. He went on, “At all times - even when You talk to someone - repeat this idea in the mind.” With practice, one uninterruptedly carries on this repetition even while speaking. Experience confirms this.

What should be the thought when one is seated? He advised:

... bhāvayannāsanasthaḥ
saṁvitsūtrānuviddho maṇirahamiti vā'smī³

In the thread of knowledge, a gem has been strung. The gem cannot be removed; the thread is made of unbreakable consciousness. I am that gem. Contemplation must be done in this manner.

...indriyārthapratītau!
draṣṭā(drṣṭo)'smyātmāvalokāditi⁴

Whenever some object is seen, the reflection should not be, “This object is now visible.” One must think, “Aha! Objectless consciousness has now become associated with objects. The *Ātman* was manifest earlier but now its manifestation has increased.” On receiving a blow, we become markedly aware of the body; do we not? We normally do have awareness of the body but this awareness increases when we are beaten. Similar is the case here. Accordingly, even when perceiving some external object, one should cogitate that apprehension of the *Ātman* has occurred.

śayanavidhau magna ānandasindhau⁵

Do not just fall asleep. When lying down, contemplate, “I am now immersed in an ocean of bliss” and, with this feeling, begin to sleep. It is very good. Whoever wants can test the difference between simply lying down and going to sleep and sleeping after voluntarily eradicating all thoughts from the mind while lying down, generating a feeling of bliss and retaining it for some minutes till sleep overtakes one. The great joy that this approach to sleep yields becomes apparent once it is experienced for a few days.

*antarniṣṭho mumukṣuḥ sa khalu tanubhṛtāṁ yo
nayatyevamāyuh ॥⁶*

He who spends his life in this fashion is, amongst people, the firmly inward-turned one desirous of liberation. Therefore, when walking, sitting, standing and even when lying down, this is how we must conduct our life. This is the advice My *Guru* gave Me.

[*When Acharyal told me, in 1980, about this advice of Paramacharyal, He gave the following additional information.]*

Acharyal: I was seated in front of Acharyal when He gave this explanation. No sooner had He completed His instruction about the attitude to be maintained when seated than I strove to put this teaching into practice. I did not think it appropriate to delay doing so even slightly. However, though I promptly generated the thought, “I am a gem strung in the thread of consciousness,” the intensity of My contemplation was poor. A reason was that I was then primarily concentrating on what Acharyal was telling Me about the attitudes relating to perception and sleep. Further, while *karma-yoga* and *japa* had become effortless for Me at that time, such contemplation was new to Me. As I walked to My room after Acharyal had finished, I contemplated, “I am a wave in the blissful ocean that is the Ātman.” The intensity of this contemplation was much better.

While I sincerely strove to practice what Acharyal had taught Me, I did experience a couple of difficulties. This contemplation clashed now and then with My *karma-yoga* (involving dedicating all actions and their fruits to God). Acharyal resolved this difficulty by telling Me two days later, “The time has come for You to go beyond the stage of *karma-yoga*, which You have mastered. Now, direct Your efforts to

contemplating on the *Ātman*.”

Another difficulty I had was that this contemplation partially came in the way of My enjoying the presence of Ambā in the temple, mentally worshipping Narasimha and the like. This is because I did these while seated and now I had been advised to contemplate when seated that I am a gem strung in the thread of consciousness. Acharyal Himself clarified, “While the knowledge of the *Ātman* of a *jīvanmukta* (one liberated while living) remains undisturbed by any thoughts and bodily activity, the case of contemplation by a spiritual aspirant is different. So, for the present, do Your mental worship and the like as before and practice contemplation on the *Ātman* at other times.”

Though I no more had any fundamental problems, My contemplation suffered from occasional discontinuities. Such breaks mainly occurred when I was speaking and when I got carried away by the beauty of the river and the surroundings. One evening when I went to Acharyal’s presence, He asked, “Where are You coming from?” “From Ambā’s temple,” I replied. “What did You see on the way?” He queried. A break had occurred in My contemplation while crossing the Tuṅgā. Understanding the thrust of His question, I said that I beheld fish playing in the Tuṅgā. “Did You contemplate correctly at that time?” was Acharyal’s next query. “I was contemplating before and after that but for a few moments, the process became disrupted,” I admitted. Acharyal said, “Never give room for such breaks.”

I hung My head in shame and resolved that I should not be such a useless disciple. Thereafter, by Acharyal’s grace, such discontinuities in contemplation did not occur. In a few months, the four forms of contemplation became effortless.

{About the difference between the knowledge of the Truth and contemplation on the Truth, it is said in the *Pañcadaśī*:

vastutantro bhavedbodhaḥ kartṛtantram-upāsanam ॥⁷

(IX.74cd)

Knowledge is dependent upon the thing to be known; contemplation is dependent upon the person who contemplates.

vicārājjāyate bodho'nicchā yaṁ na nivartayet |

svotpattimātrāt saṁsāre dahatyakhila-satyatām ||⁸ (*ibid.* IX.75)

Knowledge is born of enquiry; not wishing for it will not prevent it. By just its dawn, knowledge (of the Truth) burns away (the delusion of) any reality in the phenomenal world.

puruṣasyecchayā kartum-akartum kartum-anyathā |

śakyopāstirato nityaṁ kuryātpratyaya-santatim ||⁹ (*ibid.* IX.80)

Depending upon the wish of a person, contemplation can be done, not done or done in some other way. Therefore (to contemplate), he must constantly repeat the thought (of the object of contemplation) so as to maintain continuity.

brahmajñānāyate sākṣānnirguṇopāsanam śanaiḥ ||¹⁰

(*ibid.* IX.122cd)

Contemplation on the unqualified Brahman gradually turns into the direct knowledge of Brahman. }

I: In which year did Paramacharyal teach Acharyal about the “ātmāmbhodhe....” verse?

Acharyal: *Āngīrasa* (April 7, 1932 to March 27, 1933).

I: When did the contemplation become natural?

Acharyal (after a few moments of thought): It was some time before My birthday (*Āśvina-kṛṣṇa-caturdaśī*) in the year *Śrīmukha*.

{Acharyal completed 16 years of age in the year *Śrīmukha* (1933-34) on October 18, 1933.}

[*In the course of the benedictory address cited earlier, Acharyal went on to detail the following teaching of Paramacharyal. I learnt from Acharyal, in 1988, that this teaching was also given in the year Āngīrasa.]*

My Paramaguru had great faith in reading *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* on every *pradoṣa* day. My Guru too had that practice. Contemplation on the verses of that poem gives, to a great extent, the experience of the Ātman.

(The *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* is an ecstatic outpouring in the *āryā* metre of the great *jīvanmukta* and *yogin*, Śrī Sadāśiva Brahmendra.)

During My *Guru*'s lifetime, if I failed to read *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* on any *pradoṣa*, He would ask whether I had read it and would then tell Me to do so. Once, He asked Me to give the meaning of:

Janiviparīta-kramato buddhyā pravilāpya pañcabhūtāni |
pariśiṣṭam-ātmatattvam paśyannāste muniśāntah ||¹¹ (11)

(After dissolving, by the intellect, the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ākāśa) in the sequence that is the reverse of that of their origination, the sage remains calm, beholding the Ātman, which is the residue.)

pravilāpya pañcabhūtāni¹²

This means, “Having dissolved the five elements.” Sugar (which is a modification of the element “earth”) can be dissolved (in water), but stone, mud, cloth and so on (which, like sugar, are modifications of earth) cannot be so dissolved. This is what is superficially discernible. Recognising this, My *Guru* Himself explained the purport. He quoted the following verse (of Bhagavatpāda's *Brahmānucintana*):

prthivyapsu payo vahnau vahnirvāyau nabhasyasau |
nabho'pyavyākṛte tacca śuddhe śuddho'smyaharṇ hariḥ ||¹³ (12)
(Earth is to be dissolved in water, water in fire, fire in air and air in ākāśa. Ākāśa, in its turn, has to be merged in the unmanifest cause of the five elements and that unmanifest must be merged in the pure Absolute. I am that pure Absolute, the One who dissolves all.)

Mud does not dissolve in water. However, this is not the dissolution that is spoken of. What else? In the reverse order of the origination of the five elements of the universe, an effect merges into its cause; that cause, in its turn, merges into its cause.

{Acharyal has further clarified as follows. Earth has no existence apart from its cause, water, just as a pot has no existence apart from its cause, mud. This understanding is what characterises the dissolution of earth in water that is spoken of in the *Brahmānucintana* verse and indicated in the *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* verse. Water, in its turn, has no

existence apart from its cause, fire. This recognition marks the dissolution of water in fire.}

Finally, only the *Ātman*, which is the ultimate cause, remains as the residue of the dissolution process. It is such understanding of the *Ātman* that is referred to in the words:

*pariśiṣṭamātmatattvarṁ paśyan*¹⁴

One should think of the *Ātman* as the ultimate residue. What is the consequence of thinking in this fashion?

{It is said in the *Brahmānucintana*:

kṣaṇaṁ brahmāhamasmīti yaḥ kuryād-ātmacintanam ||¹⁵ (9cd)

tanmahāpātakam hanti tamaḥ sūryodayo yathā ||¹⁶ (10ab)

(*If, even for an instant, a man thinks of his Ātman as, “I am Brahman,” that thought destroys his greatest sin, just as sunrise dispels darkness.*)

He advised Me, “Think in the way taught (in the *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa*).” By His explanation, He created interest in it.





8. Initiating Deep Meditation

[The following conversation took place at Sringeri, in June 1976. Referring to a procedure to facilitate meditation that Acharyal had taught me three years earlier, I asked whether it could be used to advantage by all practitioners of meditation. Acharyal replied in the negative. He said that in His opinion, it ought to be practised only if advocated by the Guru. Those for whom it is unsuited would not derive benefit from it. Moreover, they may even experience negative effects, such as poorer meditation and headache. Acharyal added that when He was young Paramacharyal had taught the method to Him.]

I: Would Acharyal please tell me the details of Paramacharyal's teaching and of Acharyal's putting it into practice?

Acharyal: One morning, when I went to offer My *namaskāras* to Acharyal during His *āhnika*, He asked Me, "When performing various *japas* during Your *āhnika*, You contemplate in accordance with the *dhyāna-ślokas*. Do You not?" I answered that I did. "How do You begin?" He questioned. The significance of the question was not clear to Me as I was not aware of any special prelude to imagining a divine form in the heart-lotus. I replied, "I take up the rosary and commence a *japa*, keeping My eyes partially or fully open. Simultaneously, I just imagine the form described in the *dhyāna-śloka* concerned as present in My chest in a red lotus with eight petals."

Acharyal said, "Your mind does not wander when You contemplate. However, You are aware of Your body and surroundings. Am I correct?" I answered in the affirmative. "Independent of the requirements of Your *āhnika*, would You like to practice deep meditation on divine forms?" He queried. I expressed My keenness on doing so.

Having instructed Me to sit down, Acharyal told Me, "I will tell You a simple method that will help You to start any meditation that You wish to do. During meditation, there is no need for You to use a rosary. Instead of straightaway picturing a *devatā* in Your heart, first direct Your gaze to the middle of Your eyebrows. While doing so, You could chant a *mantra* such as the *Praṇava*." Acharyal then focused His eyes

on the space between His brows. He remained thus for a few moments.

{At this point, Acharyal demonstrated what Paramacharyal had done.}

(Acharyal:) He then said, “Turning the eyes upwards can well be done with the eyelids partially closed. I have found this to be more convenient, but equally effective. You will experience a tingling sensation between the brows. After You mentally apprehend a light in that region for some time, picture the divine form that You wish to meditate on. Then, focus on that form. You can, when You feel like it, use this method even in connection with the visualisation of a form during Your usual *japa*.” A question that arose in My mind was, “What is the difference between picturing a form before and after directing the eyes to between the brows for some time?” Other queries were about what kind of light I would see between the brows and why. However, as Acharyal had commenced a *japa*, I did not pose them.

Deciding to try out what Acharyal had taught Me, I went a little later to Śāradāmbā’s temple. There, I sat next to the sanctum, facing Her. As I looked at the idol, a jewel on the face glittered in the light of the oil lamps. From My position, it appeared bluish. When I shifted My face a little, it appeared green. Many would have come across Śāradāmbā’s jewels shining in various colours. After seeing the blue light for a short while, I half-closed My eyelids and directed My eyes towards the space between My brows. Simultaneously, I mentally chanted the *Praṇava* repeatedly in a slow, lengthened manner.

In a matter of seconds, I could feel a tingling sensation between My brows. This gradually increased in intensity. I also began to see an attractive, blue disc of light. This resembled the light from the jewel on the Mother’s face. The main difference was that this was diffused. I then visualised a diminished version of Her idol emerging from the disc and occupying the lotus of My heart. The great clarity of the image in My heart and the readiness with which I had been able to visualise it pleasantly surprised Me. I focused on the form. My chanting of the *Praṇava* stopped.

Moments later, I opened My eyes. Actually, about half an hour had passed. During this time, I was unaware of the surroundings and

My body. I realised that while it is perfectly possible to picture a form without adopting the procedure taught by Acharyal, the latter facilitates the visualisation of, and focus on, the form. Further, I understood that the light apprehended mentally can be related to the light seen before gazing at the space between the brows.

That evening, I went to the Kālabhairava temple. After prostrating before the idol, I sat down facing east. In front of Me, I could see the clear blue sky. I directed My eyes, with partially closed eyelids, to the middle of the brows. Simultaneously, I mentally chanted the *Bālā-mantra*. This time, following the onset of a tingling sensation, I beheld a luminous expanse of blue. I first visualised in My chest the heart-lotus, in bloom. Then, I imagined the form of Bālā described in the ‘*arunakiranjälaih...*’ *dhyāna-śloka* condensing from the blue light and entering My heart. The form was clear. As for My *japa*, it automatically stopped. This time too, I lost awareness of My body and surroundings. I remained in meditation for about 45 minutes.

{The *Bālā-Tripurasundarī-mantra* is:

aim klīm sauḥ sauḥ klīm aim¹

The *dhyāna-śloka* referred to by Acharyal is:

arunakiranjälairāñcitāśāvakāśā
vidhṛtajapapāṭīkāpustakābhītihastā ।
itarakaravarāḍhīyā phullakalhārasamsthā
nivasatu hṛdi bālā nityakalyāṇaśīlā ॥²

May Bālā, the ever-auspicious one abiding in a blooming lotus, who spreads golden rays and bears in Her hands a rosary, a book and the signs of granting fearlessness and boons, ever abide in the heart.}

On both these occasions, the light mentally apprehended between the brows had semblance to that seen outside earlier. I decided to test whether I would mentally apprehend any light and, if so of what kind, if I were to begin My meditation in a dark place. So, that night, I woke up at about two o’clock. In a seated posture, I directed My gaze to between the brows, while mentally chanting the *Praṇava*. I promptly felt a tingling sensation there. In a few seconds, I could see a disc of blue light akin to what I had perceived in Śāradāmbā’s temple. I did

not proceed further. I reasoned that one's earlier experience can well serve as a basis for the apprehension of light between the brows. An extraneous light is not a requirement. I then lay down and went back to sleep.

The next day, I examined whether I would necessarily apprehend a light of the colour seen before meditation. For this, I sat facing the evening sun and began My meditation. The light that made its appearance then was not orange, but blue. I understood that past experience can be an overriding factor. I assumed that a person may, on the first occasion, even see a colour that he expects to see and thereafter this experience can influence the succeeding ones. Over the next few days, I perceived not only a blue light but also a green one. The size, shape and intensity were not always the same. However, such differences did not affect My subsequent visualisation of a divine form and concentration on it.

In this period, I also reflected on the possible reasons why the new procedure facilitated concentration. I knew, from experience and observing others, that the eyes move not merely when one deliberately shifts one's gaze but also involuntarily when one is looking at an object that is not minute and when one thinks. Prior to *samnyāsa*, I had noted that the eyeballs of even a person whose eyelids are closed and who is asleep may move, and quickly too. I conjectured that such movement is associated with dreams. I now know that eye movements have been recorded by scientists in persons who are dreaming. I reasoned that as eye movement is associated with shifting of attention, arresting of eye movement by looking fixedly at the middle of the brows could help in arresting attention. The analogy that came to My mind was the checking of the mind through the control of breath.

When an ant or mosquito bites, one's attention is drawn to the site of the bite. The rest of the body is momentarily ignored to a greater or lesser extent. Likewise, the tingling or slightly painful sensation arising between the brows could help in drawing attention away from the surroundings and the rest of the body. This was another reason that came to My mind.

One can comfortably do *japa* with the eyes open. However, it takes

some practice to keep repeating a *mantra* mentally while talking to someone. This suggests that a verbal activity especially interferes with a concomitant verbal, rather than visual, activity. So, mental chanting of a *mantra* while looking at the space between the brows ought not to disrupt the apprehension of a light there. However, it should impede one's thinking about some conversations or mentally talking to oneself and thereby becoming distracted. Likewise, the apprehension of a light between the brows should act against one becoming distracted by recollecting or imagining some visual situations. I thought that in these two ways also, the procedure could favour meditation.

At that time, I did not think of whether it is relevant that the *ajñā-cakra* is located in the region towards which the eyes are directed. At any rate, I was certain that in My case the primary reason for the effectiveness of the method was that Acharyal had, with His blessings and grace, taught it to Me.

I: Did Acharyal start using this method prior to every one of the usual *japas* performed by Acharyal during the morning *āhnika*?

Acharyal: Not with all but with two or three. I regularly resorted to it before commencing the *japa* of the *Nārāyaṇa-aṣṭakṣarī*. In the case of the other *mantras*, I used it before one *mantra* on one day and before another *mantra* on another day.

{The *Nārāyaṇa-aṣṭakṣarī-mantra* is:

om̄ namo nārāyaṇāya³

Om. Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.

This *japa* of this *mantra* forms a part of the *āhnika* of not merely the pontiffs of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham but also other *paramahaṁsa-samnyasins*.}

I: What advantage did this method give in such cases where Acharyal rolled a rosary to keep count of the *japa*?

Acharyal: The visualisation of the forms described in the *dhyāna-slokas* concerned was facilitated. However, because of the need to use a rosary, I did not focus on the forms with such intensity as to forget

the body and the surroundings. Further, I ensured that there was not even a temporary pause in My chanting of the *mantras*.

{In 1980, Acharyal told me, as recorded earlier, that Paramacharyal instructed Him about contemplation on the *Ātman* in the year *Āngirasa*. He also said that such contemplation became effortless some time before His Vardhanti in the year *Śrīmukha* (October 18, 1933, on which day He completed sixteen). Subsequently, I asked Acharyal whether Paramacharyal taught Him the procedure involving gazing at the space between the brows before or after the contemplation had become natural. Acharyal replied, “He taught Me this some months afterwards, a month or two before the close of *Śrīmukha*.” The year *Śrīmukha* ended on March 15, 1934.}



9. Meditation and Samādhi on Divine Forms

[The following conversation took place in March 1981, at Sringeri. It started at the Kālabhairava temple, continued on the way back from there to Acharyal's abode, Sacchidananda Vilas, and ended at Sacchidananda Vilas when Acharyal went for His evening bath. One evening Acharyal walked to the secluded Kālabhairava temple, situated on the top of a hill in Narasimhavana. He took me with Him, as He often did. There, after prostrating before the deity, He sat down facing east. The sky was visible through the open door. Having directed me to sit, He said, "Let us remain in nirvikalpa-samādhi (the acme of yoga) for some time."

Acharyal then started to meditate. As had happened in the past, purely by the power of His presence and grace, I automatically became thoroughly absorbed in indescribable, non-dual bliss. When I regained awareness of the body and opened my eyes, I saw Acharyal opening His. In the past too, whenever He had asked me to meditate with Him, He had compassionately ensured that I emerged from samādhi at the same time as He did. Acharyal remained silent for some time. Then, He said, "This is where I first started meditating in the evenings. This is also where I first attained savikalpa-samādhi (the exalted stage of yoga preceding nirvikalpa-samādhi)." I requested Acharyal to tell me about His attaining savikalpa-samādhi and the meditative practices that led up to this. Acharyal condescended to do so.]

Acharyal: After Acharyal taught Me the way to begin meditation, I started meditating every day. On the day I learnt about directing the gaze to between the brows, I focused on Śāradāmbā in the morning and on Bālā-Tripurasundarī in the evening. Śāradāmbā's temple being very sacred, I started My serious practice of meditation next to Her sanctum. At that time, other than My attendant and the temple staff, there happened to be no one else in the temple. From then on, I normally meditated in solitude.

For about a fortnight prior to Acharyal's teaching, I had, in response to an inexplicable urge, been doing prolonged *japa* of the Bālā-mantra

in the mornings. While engaged in such *japa* with My eyes open, I had, on some days, imagined Her form as remaining in My heart facing in the same direction as Myself. On others, I had imagined a bigger version of the same form as present in front of and facing Me. The special attention that I had been paying to Bālā's *mantra* and form motivated Me to meditate on Her on My first engaging in meditation here (the Kālabhairava temple).

Initially, I meditated twice a day; in My room in the afternoon and here (the Kālabhairava temple) in the evening. The idea of meditating just before or immediately after My morning āhnika and of going for My bath earlier than usual to facilitate this appealed to Me. However, I did not implement it for a couple of weeks. The reason was that I was not in a position then to predict or regulate the duration of meditation. I used to go to Acharyal's presence after My morning āhnika to offer *namaskāras* and I did not want to take the risk of becoming delayed because of unintentionally meditating for too long.

With regard to the estimation and regulation of the duration of meditation, I reflected, "Once I lose awareness of the body and the surroundings and My mind locks on to the divine form, I have no awareness of the passage of time. So, I am not in a position then to decide how long more I am to continue meditating. Even during deep sleep, I am unaware of the passage of time and am in no position to determine how long more to remain in that state. Yet, it is not as though the duration of My sleep is quite unpredictable. Further, it is not that I cannot, on My own, alter the time for which I normally sleep.

"Habit influences how long a person sleeps at night. Other factors being the same, he is likely to sleep at night for as many hours as he usually does. Moreover, if he has the habit of sleeping for half an hour every afternoon, he is likely to awaken on his own after a half-an-hour siesta. Presumably, if I were to regularly meditate for fixed periods in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, My mind will spontaneously emerge from deep meditation at the end of these periods. Just as one can choose to go back to sleep, I should be able to revert to a state of deep concentration. By doing so for some days, I should be able to increase the time before which My meditation tends to lighten.

“When, on some night, I decide before sleeping that I must get up at a particular time, I awaken at that time on My own notwithstanding My having slept much less that night than usual. In like manner, I should be able to influence the duration of a session of meditation by making a resolve about the duration before beginning to meditate.”

My experiences of the first two weeks accorded with this analysis. Confident that I could now estimate and regulate the duration of My meditation, I ceased to have any inhibition about having a session of deep meditation even before going for Acharyal’s *darśana*. So, I began to regularly meditate before starting My morning *āhnika* procedures; apart from this, I continued to meditate in the afternoon and evening, as before.

Before I became a *saṁnyāsin*, I had heard a person say, “I went to get my eyes tested. At some distance in front of me, there was a chart with letters of different sizes. I found that the letters in the bottom were hazy and unreadable. The doctor put a spectacle frame on me. I immediately felt that I could see the chart better and told him so. I was surprised when the doctor smilingly said that he was yet to put any lens into the frame.” A little later, for the fun of it, I had thought, “Let Me try to imagine that there is a leaf in front of Me on the road.” Having done so for a few seconds, I had told Myself, with as much conviction as I could muster, “There is a leaf there that I am seeing.” This had somehow facilitated the visualisation.

Recalling all this, I reasoned “It should be better to regard the form meditated upon in the heart as present there and visible like an external object rather than as something that one has to try to imagine and keep conceiving. God is indeed present in the heart of every one and, though intrinsically formless, can manifest there with a form for the sake of His devotee. *Mantras* have the power to reveal their *devatās*. The *dhyāna-ślokas* describe the divine forms associated with the *mantras*. Sages have chanted *mantras*, meditated on the prescribed divine forms and thereby obtained, in due course, the direct vision of God in such forms. There is thus additional justification for one to feel, ‘God is indeed present in my heart in the scripturally-prescribed form in which I meditate on Him.’ Moreover, one would feel more drawn to a form deemed divine and real than to one regarded as fanciful.”

Having thought on these lines, I adopted two means to facilitate My viewing the form meditated upon as realistic and divine. I sought to see the form as emerging from the light apprehended by Me on My directing My gaze to between the brows. Even when I initiated My practice of meditation at Śāradāmbā's temple, I deliberately visualised a small version of Her idol as manifesting from the blue disc of light that I perceived between My brows. Another practice I resorted to was to deem that My eyes were looking inwards and perceiving the form as it emanated from the light and as it entered and abided in the lotus of My heart. I incorporated this in My meditation on the day following the one on which Acharyal instructed Me about meditation.

I: Did Acharyal have any difficulty in regulating the mind, with dullness or wandering acting as an obstacle?

Acharyal: No. Right from the start, I was able to concentrate very easily and awareness of the body and surroundings invariably faded away.

I: What would Acharyal attribute that to?

Acharyal (smiling): Acharyal's grace was on Me and I suppose that I must have acquired suitable tendencies by My practices in My previous births. What else can I say other than that meditation progressed without any problem whatsoever?

I: Would Acharyal please tell me further about the first few months of meditation?

Acharyal: All right. After meditating here in the evenings for over a month, I started doing so on the top of a nearby hill. (Acharyal gestured to indicate the direction in which that hill, which was not visible, was situated.) From there, the Malahānikareśvara temple (situated atop a hill in the town of Sringeri) can be seen.

On the day I first went there to meditate, it was about half an hour before sunset. As I sat down facing west, I thought, "I have been meditating on Narasiṁha as shining just by His own lustre. I could try to see Him today in the light of the setting sun." I started by first focusing on Him as usual. I then pictured Him graciously curtailing His brightness. He now resembled the moon seen through a thin cloud.

After this, I visualised Him being bathed in the orange glow of sunset. The meditation went on smoothly and lasted an hour. This experience led Me to understand that at the commencement of deep meditation, the luminosity of the divine form focused upon and the intensity and colour of the background lighting, if any, can be comfortably adjusted. I confirmed this in My subsequent sessions of meditation.

A few days later, after perusing a text, I reflected, “At any instant, the portion of the page that I focus on appears far clearer than the portion distant from it. While meditating, I seek to apprehend a divine form as if I were seeing it with My eyes. So, the portion towards which My attention is particularly directed, such as the face, is presumably clearer to Me than a portion that is removed from it.” In the next session of meditation, I found that such was actually the case. It was not as though any portion was unclear; only, a portion was clearer. When I tried to remedy the situation by simply trying to see every part of the form equally clearly, I experienced difficulty in doing so.

I completed that session by meditating as I usually did. I then thought, “Rather than forcefully attempt to grasp the complete form with uniform clarity, let Me expand the particularly clear zone in stages. To facilitate this, I could rid Myself of the notion that during meditation My vision is subject to the same limitations as when perceiving an external object. Next, I could increase the intensity of My concentration. This should enhance the clarity of the other portions of the form.” Over the next three sessions, by implementing what I had planned, I learnt to see the entire divine form in the heart with total clarity.

It then occurred to Me, “I have so far been meditating only on a *devatā*’s full form. I can now try to meditate not just on the complete form but also on parts of it, such as the feet. This should be straightforward because I am already used to thinking of just Narasimha’s feet when I wash them while mentally worshipping Him every day.”

The next time I meditated, I first visualised Narasimha as I normally did. I then focused exclusively on His feet. Promptly, they occupied the entire range of My vision. As I had already learnt to see the full

form with uniform clarity, seeing the feet in the same manner required no special effort. Though I saw just the feet, I did not forget that they were a part of Narasimha. Towards the end of My meditation, I again visualised Narasirinha's full form. Thereafter, the session ended. Following this, I sometimes meditated on parts of a *devatā*'s form too. However, whenever I chose to do so, I always started and ended with the complete form.

All these days, I had been meditating only on the forms of Bālā and Lakṣmī-Narasimha and that too in keeping with the *dhyāna-ślokas* of their *mantras*. This is because I felt that it would be inadvisable for Me to take up other divine forms till I acquired proficiency in meditation by repeatedly concentrating on these two. I was sure that when My preparations were adequate, God would, in some way, make this known to Me. I received such a sign soon. One evening, without any premeditation or effort on My part, the form of Kṛṣṇa emerged from the light that I apprehended between My brows and entered My heart. Clad in a yellow vestment, He wore the *vaijayanī* garland. Peacock feathers adorned His crest and flowers His ears. He held a flute to His lips and was breathtakingly attractive.

I felt, "The charming form would be even more attractive, if it were bigger." So, I promptly imagined that His feet rested not in a lotus in the chest but in one at the level of My navel. Then I pictured the Lord's body as expanding till His crest was at the level of My neck. As the intensity of My concentration increased, I beheld His complete form with uniformly great clarity and much joy.

{Later that year, I asked Acharyal whether the form beheld by Him tallied with that described in the following verse of the *Bhāgavata* that I had come across in an essay penned by Him in the 1950s:

barhāpīḍam naṭavaravapuh karṇayoḥ karṇikāram
bibhradvāsaḥ kanakakapiśām vaijayanīm ca mālām |
randhrān veṇoradharasudhayā pūrayan gopavīndai-
rvīndāraṇyām svapadaramaṇām prāviśadgītakīrtih ||¹ (X.21.5)

With peacock feathers forming a head ornament, karṇikāra flowers on His ears and wearing a golden yellow vestment and the vaijayanī

garland, He (Kṛṣṇa), whose body is like that of an excellent dancer and whose glories are sung by the throng of cowherds, entered Vrindavan, made lovely by His footprints, while filling the openings of His flute with the nectar of His lips.

Acharyal said, “Yes, it did.”}

(Acharyal:)

karārvindena padārvindam mukhārvinde viniveśayantam ।
vaṭasya patrasya puṭe śayānam bālam mukundam manasā
smarāmi ॥²

(I call to mind the child Mukunda (Viṣṇu) who is lying in the concavity of a fig-leaf, putting His lotus-like foot into His lovely mouth by means of His beautiful hand.)

The next morning, I spontaneously beheld the form described in this verse emerging from the light between the brows and occupying My heart-lotus. The Lord as a child filled Me with *vātsalya* (parental love). That afternoon too, a divine form manifested without any volition on My part. It was that of Viṣṇu with eight, rather than four, arms. The Lord displayed in His four right hands the *sudarśana-cakra*, a rosary, the *kaumodakī* mace and the symbol of granting fearlessness. In His four left hands, I saw the *pāñcajanya* conch, the *śārṅga* bow, the *nandaka* sword and the symbol of granting boons. He was adorned with various ornaments, such as a diadem, armlets and bracelets, and wore a garland.

For some time, I found Myself mentally chanting the *Nārāyaṇa-aṣṭakṣarī*. Thereafter, My mind locked on to just the form. By the time I regained some awareness of My body, over an hour had passed. Even after I got up, I continued to see the form in My heart. That evening, I meditated on this form itself. The next morning, as I started My meditation, I found this form, which I had been perceiving since the previous day, replaced by one in which the Lord held just a rosary. His visage was extremely calm and He radiated peace. I continued to apprehend the new form in My heart even after My meditation ended.

That afternoon, at the start of meditation, the form underwent a change

and I now saw Him not merely without weapons but also without ornaments, such as a diadem. My evening meditation began with My focusing on this form. Abruptly, My attention was drawn to just His smiling face. Up to almost the close of the hour-long session, My focus was exclusively on this. Till I completed My bath the next morning, I could see in My heart, the Lord as bereft of ornaments and weapons and holding just a rosary. The form then vanished.

When I reported My experiences with the forms of Viṣṇu to Acharyal, He said nothing. However, a little later, He sent Me a copy of the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* in which He had kept an empty sheet of paper. In the portion indicated, I found verses describing the very forms that I had seen and advising meditation on them.

{Later, in response to my request, Acharyal read out the verses concerned of the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*. They are part of the advice given by sage Keśidhvaja to Khāndikya. The verses are:

kirīṭahārakeyūrakaṭakādivibhūṣitam ॥³ (VI.7.84)

śārṅga-śāṅkha-gadā-khaḍga-cakrākṣavalayānvitam ।

varadābhayahastarṁ ca mudrikā-ratnabhūṣitam ॥⁴ (VI.7.85)

cintayettanmayo yogī samādhāyātmamānasam ।

tāvadyāvaddṛḍhībhūtā tatraiva nṛpa dhāraṇā ॥⁵ (VI.7.86)

vrajatastiṣṭhato'nyaddhā svecchayā karma kurvataḥ ।

nāpayāti yadā cittātsiddhāṁ manyeta tāṁ tadā ॥⁶ (VI.7.87)

The yogin should, O king, concentrate His mind thoroughly on the Lord as adorned with a diadem, garland, armlets, bracelets and the like, as having in His (eight) hands, the śārṅga (bow), conch, mace, sword, discus, rosary and the signs of granting boons and fearlessness and as wearing rings of gems in His fingers till his attention becomes steady there. Success is to be understood as achieved when this thought does not leave the mind even when walking, standing or engaging in some activity of choice.

tataḥ śāṅkha-gadā-cakra-śārṅgādi-rahitam budhaḥ ।

cintayed-bhagavadrūpam praśāntam sākṣasūtrakam ॥⁷

(*ibid.* VI.7.88)

Thereafter, the wise man should contemplate the form of the Lord as tranquil, with a rosary, and bereft of a conch, mace, discus, śārṅga and so on.

sā yadā dhāraṇā tadvad-avasthānavatī tataḥ ।

kirīṭa-keyūra-mukhairbhūṣṇai rahitam smaret ॥⁸ (ibid. VI.7.89)

tadekāvayavam devam cetasā hi punarbudhah ॥⁹ (ibid. VI.7.90ab)

After that focus becomes as firm as before, he should think of God as devoid of adornments, such as the diadem and armlets. Next, the wise man should fix his mind on a prominent part of the Lord.

The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* records that after telling Uddhava that one should meditate on the full form of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa said:

tatsarvavyāpakaṁ cittamākṛṣyaikatra dhārayet ।

nānyāni cintayedbudhah susmitam bhāvayenmukham ॥¹⁰

(XI.14.43)

Then one should concentrate the mind that is distributed all over My body on one part and think of nothing else but the smiling face. }

(Acharyal:) After these experiences, I did not deliberately limit My meditation, as I had done earlier, to just the forms of Bālā and Narasimha. I started meditating on other divine forms too. For example, I focused on Śiva as seated with Pārvatī, as Ardhanarīśvara, as Dakṣināmūrti and as Natarāja; on Viṣṇu with four hands bearing the *sudarśana-cakra*, *pāñcajanya* conch, *kaumodakī* mace and a lotus; on Rāma; and on Gaṇapati.

I found that short *mantras* such as the *Pranava* are more convenient to chant mentally while directing the eyes to between the brows than long ones like the *Śrīvidyā*. The length of a *mantra* hardly made any difference after My conceiving a divine form. Hence, I often commenced My meditation with the *Pranava* and then switched to the *mantra* of the *devatā* meditated upon. The chanting of the *mantra* occasionally persisted till the end of a session of meditation but generally it automatically stopped after a short while and, thereafter, only the form remained.

Whenever I did not go in the evening for meditation to the

Kālabhairava temple or to the nearby hill, such as during the *Śaṅkara-jayantī* celebrations and *cāturmāsyā*, I largely compensated by meditating more in the mornings and afternoons. It was during the *cāturmāsyā* that I gained proficiency in readily setting, at the time of beginning to visualise a form, the level of My concentration.

{In the year *Bhava*, the *Śaṅkara-jayantī* celebrations were from 14.5.1934 to 18.5.1934 and the *cāturmāsyā* was from 26.7.1934 to 23.9.1934. Acharyal was then going on seventeen.}

(Acharyal:) Let Me give you an example. I could adjust the intensity to block out the sound of a loud peal of thunder or to allow it to be heard but not the sound of rain or a not-so-loud peal of thunder. If I felt like chanting a *mantra* throughout a session of meditation, I pegged the intensity of concentration on the form at a lower level than otherwise. I did not, however, normally curtail the depth of My meditation.

I had heard people say that their minds wander when they perform *japa* or when they try to meditate on a form. Since the time I began meditating, I had not experienced this difficulty. To appreciate the problem of mental wandering, I once experimented, during the *cāturmāsyā*, with progressively lowering My level of concentration on the form. I found that when the concentration fell to a level far below that during My normal meditation, My mind started to wander a little to extraneous sounds. By deliberately keeping the intensity of focus low enough to allow some distractions, I determined, during a couple of sessions, over a dozen aids to deal with the disturbances. Chanting the *mantra* with greater vigour, temporarily holding the breath and stressing the importance of meditation were some of them.

About a year passed. One morning, when I was about to visualise the form of Lakṣmī-Narasimha, the form of Bālā made its appearance. I meditated on Her. That afternoon, I felt a strong urge to meditate upon Her as remaining in front of and facing Me and did so. It was months since I had focused on Her in this fashion. After the session, I thought, “Today, God is especially and explicitly determining the form I am to meditate upon just as He had done nearly a year ago when He had caused Me to focus on Kṛṣṇa with the flute, child Mukunda and Viṣṇu with eight arms.” I somehow felt sure that the evening session

would be extraordinary.

When I commenced My evening meditation at the Kālabhairava temple, in response to a powerful urge, I thought of Bālā in the same way as I had done in the afternoon. That day, when I was focusing as usual on the full form of Ambā, My mind suddenly locked on to Her feet. I had always been seeing Her form clearly. However, the experience of that day was quite extraordinary. I saw Her feet throbbing with life. I beheld Ambā Herself and not merely the form that I was visualising earlier. The sense of reality of the vision was highly profound and left no room for doubts. This was My first experience of *savikalpa-samādhi*. During the *samādhi*, I almost totally forgot Myself and that I was meditating; Ambā's feet alone manifested.

{Maharshi Patañjali has aphorised in his *Yogasūtras*:

deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā ||¹¹ (III.1)

Dhāraṇā (concentration) is the binding of the mind to one place.

tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam ||¹² (III.2)

Dhyāna (meditation) is the continuance there of the presented idea.

Tadevārtha-mātra-nirbhāsam svarūpa-śūnyamiva samādhiḥ ||¹³

(III.3)

The same (dhyāna) when shining forth as the intended object alone and, as it were, devoid of itself is samādhi.

Explaining the scriptural position, Acharyal has said, “As the name implies, *savikalpa-samādhi* is *samādhi* with *vikalpa*. *Vikalpa* here refers to the triad of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration. In this *samādhi*, while the object of concentration manifests clearly and steadily, an awareness of the form, ‘I am meditating’ is almost, but not totally, absent. The awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration is thus not fully obliterated. On the other hand, in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, the object alone shines and there is then no awareness of form, ‘I am meditating.’”}

(Acharyal:) After about one and a half hours, I regained awareness of the body and opened My eyes. I could literally see Ambā in front

of Me within the temple. I reached out and touched Her feet with My hands. A few moments later, She disappeared.

Such was the will of God that the forms that constituted the objects of the four *savikalpa-samādhis* following this one were those of Lakshmi-Narasimha, Kṛṣṇa with a flute, child Mukunda and Viṣṇu with eight arms. The significance of this order should be obvious to you. Thereafter, I was easily able to attain *savikalpa-samādhi* with any form of My choice as the object.

{ Acharyal's first *savikalpa-samādhi* as also the next four *savikalpa-samādhis* occurred months before Acharyal completed eighteen on October 26, 1935. }

I: Did Acharyal try out anything novel in the weeks following the first *savikalpa-samādhi*?

Acharyal: Yes, I did. I was used to meditating in only a seated posture. One morning, I thought of testing whether I could readily experience *savikalpa-samādhi* while lying down. So, when doing *śavāsana* (in the course of which one lies flat on one's back), I pictured My heart-lotus as facing upwards rather than towards My head and then visualised Lakṣmī-Narasimha as seated in it. Thus, while I lay supine, I saw Him as seated with His back vertical. I concentrated on Him and quickly went into *savikalpa-samādhi*.

The next day, while performing *śavāsana*, I conceived of the heart-lotus and Narasimha's back as being in line with My body, as usual, but to avoid any sense of oddity, I deliberately ignored My horizontality. I kept in mind only the position of Narasimha relative to My head. In moments, I was in *savikalpa samādhi*. These two experiences convinced Me that, by God's grace, I was in a position to readily experience *savikalpa-samādhi* even while lying down.

A few days later, I thought, "While I am in *samādhi*, My back and neck remain erect. It is likely that even if I were to enjoy *samādhi* while in *śirsāsana* (wherein one stands on one's head), My back and neck will remain in a line." I performed *śirsāsana* near a wall to arrest a fall, if it occurred during meditation. Then, I visualised Narasimha as seated normally in an upward-facing lotus in My chest and attained

savikalpa-samādhi. When I regained awareness of the body after some time, I found that I remained in *śīrṣāsana* exactly as before.

On the next day, without any precaution to cater for a fall, I performed the *śīrṣāsana*. Then, I deliberately ignored My being inverted and meditated on Narasimha as seated in My heart-lotus with His head towards Mine, as usual. In moments, I was in *savikalpa-samādhi*. I did not bother to go into *samādhi* in *śīrṣāsana* in the future.

I: Did Acharyal keep Paramacharyal regularly posted about the various experiences and experiments with meditation?

Acharyal: I reported to Him on several occasions. In the periods when He was in His state of seclusion, I did not disturb Him by talking about My meditation.

I: How did Paramacharyal respond to Acharyal's reports?

Acharyal: He normally expressed His satisfaction and approval.

{That meditation on the Supreme as possessed of attributes such as a form leads to the realisation of the Supreme bereft of the superimposition of attributes is clear from scriptural declarations such as:

umāsahāyāṁ parameśvaraṁ prabhūṁ trilocanaṁ nīlakanṭhaṁ
praśāntam |

dhyātvā munirgacchatī bhūtayonīṁ samastasākṣīṁ tamasaḥ
parastāt ||¹⁴ (Kaivalya-upaniṣad 7)

Having meditated on the highest Lord (Śiva) who is powerful, has three eyes and a blue neck and is allied to Umā, the sage reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and beyond avidyā.

In the *Vedānta-kalpataru*, it is said:

vaśīkṛte manasyeṣāṁ saguṇabrahmaśīlanātī
tadevāvirbhavet sākṣād-apetopādhī-kalpanam ||¹⁵

(Gloss relating to *Brahmasūtra* I.1.20)

When their minds are brought under control by meditation on Brahman as possessed of qualities, that very Brahman will directly manifest Itself divested of the superimposition of limiting adjuncts. }



10. Ascent of the Kuṇḍalinī and Descent of Nectar

[The following conversation took place at Sringeri, in March 1981, a few days after Acharyal graced me with the details of His first attainment of *savikalpa-samādhi*.]

I: Some years ago, Acharyal told me about the dream that Acharyal had a few months after *saṁnyāsa* in which Śāradāmbā threw light on the arousal and ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī*. When did Acharyal first experience the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī* to the head in the waking state?

Acharyal: It was some time during the *cāturmāsyā* of the year *Yuva* (1935-36), few months after My first experience of *savikalpa-samādhi*. As you know, even without any explicit experience of the arousal and ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī*, it is quite possible for a *vedāntin* or for a practitioner of *pātañjala-yoga* to attain *samādhi*. He may or may not have an explicit experience of the ascent on some later occasion. In My case, I did.

{In 1935, the year in whose first half Acharyal's first *savikalpa-samādhi* occurred, the *cāturmāsyā* was from July 16 to September 12.}

I: Would Acharyal please tell me about the experience?

Acharyal: One morning, I sat in the *siddhāsana* and did four *prāṇāyāmas* with the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas*. Then, I began My meditation as usual by directing My gaze to between My eyebrows and mentally chanting the *Pranava*. As happened generally, a blue hue manifested. Before I visualised any form, I felt something like an electric shock at the middle of My soles. As the sensation started to move upwards, diffusing through the body, I felt intense heat. My body jerked sharply. Then, My breathing abruptly stopped. In moments, the sensation travelled up My back and into My head. I plunged deeply into *savikalpa-samādhi*.

I: How did the legs feel after the sensation started to move up the back?

Acharyal: I stopped being aware of them. I ceased to be conscious of the portion of the body below whatever level the sensation reached in

My back.

I: Was the ascent swift or slow?

Acharyal: The movement from the soles to the base of the back was very quick. It was almost instantaneous. From the base of the back to a little below the navel, the ascent was slower but, nonetheless, swift. Thereafter, it was like that of an ant.

I: Did Acharyal apprehend the *cakras*?

Acharyal: Yes. When the sensation arrived at the base of the back, I momentarily beheld the lotus of the *mūlādhāra* in bloom. Very shortly thereafter, I had a fleeting view of the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Just before the sensation ascended My back to the level of My navel, I beheld the lotus of the *manipūra* facing downwards, with the petals almost fully closed. The lotus became upright and bloomed when the sensation reached it. Similar was the case with the *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājñā cakras*.

I: What experience preceded Acharyal's *savikalpa-samādhi* and what constituted its object?

Acharyal: After I had briefly seen the *ājñā-cakra* in bloom, I experienced a bright flash of light like lightning. Next, I saw a charming, luminous, tiny blue orb. My attention locked on to it and as I could then behold only that orb, its smallness was no more apparent. Thereafter, within it, I apprehended the forms of Śiva and Pārvatī. The blue orb with the forms of Śiva and Pārvatī constituted the object of My *savikalpa-samādhi*.

I: Would Acharyal please describe the descent from *samādhi*?

Acharyal: Śiva and Pārvatī disappeared and, subsequently, so did the blue orb. I then felt as though I was moving downwards together with a divine power. Leaving behind the *ājñā*, *viśuddha*, and *anāhata cakras* one after the other, I came to the *manipūra-cakra*. Without sensing any further descent of the power, I gained partial awareness of the body; the portion below the level of the navel was, as it were, missing. As I became aware of the rest of the body too, I realised that I had adopted the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas*. I had no idea when I had done so, involuntarily. I released the *bandhas* and started to breathe normally. When I opened My eyes, I noticed that My

legs were bluish. In moments, they became normal.

{ Acharyal has clarified, “Some hold that the arousal of the *kundalinī* and its ascent to the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra* are likely to be accompanied by a temporary manifestation of intense sexual desire. It is also contended that the piercing of the *brahma*, *viṣṇu* and *rudra granthis* by the *kundalinī* on its way from the *mūlādhāra* to the *sahasrāra* is accompanied by much pain and even sickness. The laudable course is for one to first cultivate intense dispassion and to purify the *nādīs*. Only *Sattvik* food should be consumed. Further, *kundalinī-yoga* should be practised under the guidance of an adept and not by just referring to books. For one who ensures all this, the arousal and ascent of the *kundalinī* are definitely not accompanied by lust, pain and sickness.”}

I: When did Acharyal’s next direct experience of the ascent of the *kundalinī* to the head occur? Was that experience the same as this one?

Acharyal: It took place the very next day and differed from this in some ways. Since a few months after My *sāmnyāsa*, I used to mentally offer worship to the *kundalinī* in the various *cakras*. I continued the worship done in one *cakra* in the next higher *cakra* after conceiving that I reverentially led the *kundalinī* there. I performed such worship on Tuesdays and Fridays, in the mornings. The day following the one on which I had the experience I spoke of was a Tuesday. I began My worship as usual in the *mūlādhāra-cakra* and continued it in the *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra*. When I imagined that the *kundalinī* ascended to the *manipūra-cakra*, My breathing spontaneously stopped and I automatically adopted the *jālandhara*, *uḍḍiyāna* and *mūla bandhas*.

I then experienced an upward movement of the *kundalinī*. Simultaneously, I felt that the elements *prthvī* (earth), *āpas* (water) and *agni* (fire) had become sequentially absorbed into the *kundalinī* together with the divinities of the *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna* and *manipūra cakras*. I also felt a great infusion of power into Me. In a serpentine manner, the *kundalinī-śakti* soon reached the *anāhata-cakra*. The element *vāyu* (air) and the *devatās* of the *anāhata* appeared to become absorbed into the *kundalinī*.

From the *anāhata-cakra* to the *viśuddha-cakra*, the ascent of the

kundalinī was not serpentine but instantaneous. I felt that the element *ākāśa* (space) and the *devatās* of the *viśuddha-cakra* became merged into the *kuṇḍalinī*. The next moment, the *śakti* was at the *ājña-cakra*. I got the feeling that all the organs became absorbed into the *kuṇḍalinī* there. Then, I had a vision of Śiva as Dakṣināmūrti.

The upward movement of the *kundalinī* from the *ājña-cakra* to the *sahasrāra* was not instantaneous but was swift. I obtained just a fleeting, indistinct, view of some centres in between and felt that the mind and intellect were absorbed by the *kuṇḍalinī en route*. At the pericarp of the *sahasrāra*, I had the vision of a nectar-shedding, moon-like region. This contained a triangular zone, lustrous like lightning, with a minute, apparently empty, space within. I then spontaneously went into *saṁādhi*. The object of My focus was God as inhabiting the tiny space.

As I emerged from *saṁādhi*, I felt Myself descending rapidly with the *kuṇḍalinī*. At the *ājña*, *viśuddha* and *anāhata cakras*, what had merged into the *kuṇḍalinī* during the *kuṇḍalinī*'s ascent through these *cakras* reappeared. When the *anāhata-cakra* was reached, I gained mild awareness of the body. I noticed that My tongue was folded backwards and felt the descent of a few cool drops of a uniquely tasty fluid into the back of My throat. Finally, I opened My eyes.

I: On Acharyal's doing so, what was the condition of Acharyal's body below the level of the *anāhata-cakra*?

Acharyal: It was normal. Unlike on the previous occasion, My legs were not bluish for a while. Also, this time, I straightaway regained awareness of the full body and not merely of its upper half.

I: Did Acharyal recognise the fluid descending into the back of the throat to be nectar from the *sahasrāra*?

Acharyal: Yes, and without any delay. I remember telling you some years ago about the series of seven extraordinary dreams in which the Lord taught *hatha-yoga* to Me. During Śiva's demonstration of the *khecarī-mudrā*, I had experienced the descent of a fluid into the back of My mouth and understood that this removes hunger, thirst and dullness. You would remember My having told you about this. The

taste that I experienced became imprinted in My mind. The taste of the fluid that I noticed on becoming mildly aware of the body was the same as that taste. The invigorating effect too tallied with what I had experienced in the dream; this one lasted for two days.

In the dream in which Śāradāmbā taught Me about the arousal and ascent of the *kundalinī*, I saw the moon-like region at the pericarp of the *sahasrāra* shedding nectar. What I beheld in that dream matched what I apprehended in My meditation. So, I had no difficulty in identifying the fluid as one stemming from the *sahasrāra*. An experience that I had three days later supported My conclusion.

That morning, as I was about to visualise and focus on a divine form in My heart, My tongue folded backwards. Then, for a moment, I saw the form of Ambā as seated in the *sahasrāra* and pouring down nectar. I decided to meditate on Her in this very fashion. So, I conceived of Her as I had glimpsed Her and focused on Her. I was soon in *savikalpa-samādhi*. When I regained awareness of the body, I felt a few drops of fluid descending into the back of My throat. The taste, coolness and invigorating effect were the same as on the previous occasion.

{The *Lalitā-sahasranāma* of the *Brahmānda-purāṇa* speaks as follows of the Mother being present in the *sahasrāra* and raining nectar.

sahasrāmbujārūḍhā sudhā-sārābhivarṣinī ॥¹ (II.39 cd)
She who has ascended the sahasrāra lotus; She who rains torrents of nectar.

In a benedictory address to a mammoth gathering on December 21, 1982 at Paramahamsi-Ganga-Ashram in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Acharyal spoke of how people can achieve their various cherished ends by suitably concentrating on the Mother. Concerning the desire of people to have a long life, He cited the following authoritative verse:

*śīrṣāmbhoruhamadhye śītala-pīyūṣavarṣinīṁ bhavatīm |
 anudinam-anucintyatām-āyuṣyām bhavati puṣkalam-avanyām ॥²*

(Āryā-dviśatī 211)

The life-span on earth of those who contemplate every day on You (Mother) as present within the lotus of the head and raining cool nectar becomes great.

Acharyal then said, “The scripture and even our experience reveal that there is a lotus in the head; just as there is nectar in a common lotus, there is nectar in this (*sahasrāra*) lotus too. Its nectar is savoured in *lambikā-yoga*. *Lambikā-yoga* involves making one’s tongue very thin and long, inserting it into the passage at the back of the mouth and taking it upwards to the head. When one remains with the tongue thrust up to the head, one tastes the nectar that flows there. Long life is acquired by those given to drinking nectar thus. This is a means taught in the *Yoga-Śāstra*.”

Acharyal went on to explain, in the light of the cited verse, a course that can be adopted by a devotee of the Mother who is unfamiliar with *lambikā-yoga* but who seeks to transcend phenomenal existence or to have a long life. He said, “The Mother is meditated upon in the six *cakras* (*mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipūra*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājñā*) and in the *sahasrāra*. The *sahasrāra* is the topmost of these centres.

Śīrṣāmbhoruhamadhye³
Within the lotus of the head.

Mother, You are seated there. With both Your hands, You are pouring down nectar. That is descending to and filling My stomach.

Śītalapīyūṣavarṣiṇīṁ bhavatīm¹⁴
You who rain cool nectar.

The nectar is cool. You are indeed raining the ambrosia of the gods. I contemplate on You in this fashion.”

Having presented the meditation specified in the first half of the verse from a practitioner’s perspective, Acharyal did so in the form of a teaching. He said, “Close the eyes. Think of the *sahasrāra* lotus. Then, conceive of the Mother as seated there and pouring down nectar. Feel that the nectar is descending and filling the stomach.

“What is a fruit of contemplating thus?

anudinam-anucintyatām-āyuṣyāṁ bhavati puṣkalam-avanyāṁ ॥⁵

The life-span of those who meditate thus every day becomes great.

“You can attain long life.”

Shortly after delivering the half-an-hour-long benedictory discourse, Acharyal told me in private, “When I cited the ‘śīrṣāmbhoruhamadhye...’ verse, I was reminded of the related experience that I had as a boy. That was one reason for My mentioning that the scripture as also experience reveal the presence of the *sahasrāra* lotus and the nectar there.”}

(Acharyal:) As I engaged in My morning *āhnika* after the *samādhi*, it seemed to Me that something was beginning to ooze from the crown of My head. This caused Me no discomfort. I pushed back My upper garment from over My head and felt the spot concerned. I determined that a fluid was indeed slowly emerging from there. It looked like pure water and flowed down the side of My head. In about a minute, the oozing stopped. About a spoonful of liquid had come out by then.

On the preceding few days, Acharyal had been somewhat withdrawn. However, that day, when I had His *darśana* after My *āhnika*, He gave Me an opportunity to briefly report My experiences. He confirmed that what I had felt at the back of the throat was nectar from the *sahasrāra*. He then revealed to Me that, at times, He had spontaneously experienced the descent of this nectar and that in His case its effect had lasted for one to three days.

He further said, “Some water oozed from the crown of My head either before or after the descent of nectar. The descent of nectar and the oozing of water are not related as cause and effect. The water can be perceived and accessed by others. However, though the descent, taste, coolness and invigorating effect of the nectar can be clearly experienced by one, it is impossible for another to perceive or collect it. No examination of the interior of the head, throat or stomach will show up the presence of any nectar.”

{Acharyal had graced me with clarifications about *lambikā-yoga*, the descent of nectar and the oozing of water some years earlier. At that

time, while He stated that Paramacharyal had direct experience of nectar, He did not mention that He too had a similar experience. In September 1979, during Navaratri, Acharyal sent for me one morning at 6.30; I normally had His *āhnika-darsana* after 8 o'clock. He, who was about to commence a *japa*, told me, "I have a feeling that water will ooze from My head in a few minutes. I thought that you would like to see it." I completed my *namaskāras* and waited.

Acharyal pushed back His upper garment from His head. Less than a minute thereafter, I saw a drop of liquid make its appearance at the crown of His head. The rest of Acharyal's head was dry. The weather was cool and Acharyal was not sweating. Slowly, some more liquid oozed out at that very spot. Acharyal bent forward and neatly collected the entire quantity in His *uddharanī* (spoon for taking up water). I saw that the amount collected was about 10 ml. It was colourless.

Acceding to my request, He poured the liquid into my cupped right palm. I noted that it was odourless and seemed to be water. Regarding the fluid as sacrosanct, I wanted to drink it after leaving. However, Acharyal said, "Throw it away and wash your hands. It has come out like sweat. Being impure, it is unfit to be drunk." He did not mention nectar on this occasion. }



11. From Divine Forms to the Formless Reality

[*The following conversation took place at Sringeri in August 1989. Of His own accord, Acharyal told me, "Over the years, either on My own or in response to your questions, I have given you the details of My spiritual life. If there is anything else about it that you would like to know, ask Me without any hesitation. I do not want to keep any aspect of it a secret from you." Acharyal shed His human form the following month.*]

I: In 1935, Acharyal was enjoying *dhyāna* and *samādhi* on several forms of *Īvara*. Yet, Acharyal suddenly switched from meditation on forms to that on the Formless and quickly attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Was there anything special that prompted Acharyal to make the change?

Acharyal: Yes. I have not given even a hint about this to anybody so far. Now, I shall tell you everything. This shall be the first and the last time that I shall be doing so. So long as I am alive, nothing of this should be mentioned by you to anybody.

It was a *śukla-dasamī*. That day, I felt like spending some more time than usual in meditation on the hill. As I was preparing to set out for My meditation spot so as to begin My meditation about one and a half hours before sunset, I was informed that Acharyal had summoned Me. I promptly went to Acharyal. He was seated alone. I prostrated before Him. He gestured to Me to sit down. On My doing so, He asked, “Were You about to leave for meditation?” I answered in the affirmative. He smiled. Then, for a minute, He said nothing but looked fixedly at My face. Smiling again, He said, “I am glad. You can start.” I prostrated. As I did so, He leaned forward and placed both His hands on My head. He then uttered the *mantra*,

“*om̄ namaḥ śivāya*”¹¹
(Obeisance to Śiva)”

somewhat loudly, three times while His hands were still on My head. This was unusual. As I got up, I strongly felt, “Today, I must meditate on Śiva.”

I went to My room, picked up My *āsana-vastrā* (cloth spread on seat) and started for the hill. My attendant followed. I was only a short distance away from Sacchidananda Vilas when I heard Acharyal's clap. It sounded as if it was coming from outside the building. I turned around and noticed that Acharyal was standing in front of Sacchidananda Vilas and looking in My direction. I was about to run towards Him when He gestured that I should proceed as I was doing before. He, however, beckoned to My attendant. I walked rapidly - in those days My walk was almost like a run - and soon reached the base of the hill. I turned to see if the attendant was trying to catch up with Me but he was nowhere around.

The idea of meditating in complete solitude appealed to Me. I quickly climbed the hill. There, as usual, I sat down, facing west. The Malahānikareśvara temple was directly in the line of My sight. The sky was clear, without even the trace of a cloud. Both the sun and the moon were clearly visible. The whole scene was very pretty. Charmed by it, I chanted the “*bhūrambhāṁsi..*” verse of the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra*.

{The verse concerned is:

*bhūrambhāṁsyanalo'nilo'mbaramaharnātho himāṁśuḥ pumā-
nityābhāti carācarātmakam-idam yasyaiva mūrtyaṣṭakam |
nānyatkiñcana vidyate vimṛśatāṁ yasmāt parasmādvibho-
stasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idam śrī-dakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||²* (9)

Obeisance to Him whose eight-fold form is all this moving and unmoving universe, appearing as earth, water, fire, air, space, the sun, the moon and the soul; beyond whom, Supreme and All-pervading, nothing else exists for the discerning; to Him who is incarnate in the glorious form of the Guru; to that resplendent Dakṣiṇāmūrti (Śiva.)}

(Acharyal:) Having adopted the *siddhāsana*, I mentally offered My *namaskāras* to Acharyal and Śiva before commencing My meditation. I directed My gaze to the space between My eyebrows. Keeping My eyes fixed, I mentally chanted “*om namah śivāya*” That day, I did not chant just the *Praṇava*. As usual, I felt a strong tingling sensation between My eyebrows. I soon began to behold an attractive and soothing moon-like disc of light within Me in that region. Such a disc had made its appearance only on a few earlier occasions. What

manifested often was a blue hue; much less frequently, a green hue used to manifest. With the mind having become very calm and attentive, I imagined my heart-lotus in full bloom. In it, I visualised, in accordance with the “śāntam padmāsanastham” dhyāna-ślokā, Śiva in association with Pārvatī and possessed of five heads and ten arms.

{The complete verse is:

Śāntam padmāsanastham śaśadharmaṇuktaṁ pañcavaktraṁ
trinetrāṁ

śūlam vajram ca khaḍgam paraśumabhayadaṁ dakṣabhāge
vahantam ।

nāgaṁ pāśaṁ ca ghanṭāṁ pralayahutavahaṁ sāṅkuśaṁ
vāmabhāge

nānālāṅkārayuktam sphatikamaṇinibham pārvatīśaṁ namāmi ॥³
I salute the Lord of Pārvatī who is tranquil, seated in padmāsana, has the moon in His crest, has five faces (four in the four directions and one upward-turned), has three eyes (per face), bears a trident, thunderbolt, sword, axe and the symbol of granting freedom from fear (open upraised palm) in the (five hands on the) right side and bears a snake, noose, bell, the fire of cosmic dissolution and a goad in the (five hands on the) left side, is variously adorned and resembles (in complexion) a crystal gem. }

(Acharyal:) As I focused on the form, My awareness of the surroundings and the body vanished. Soon, My mental chanting of the *Pañcakṣarī-mantra* (*om̄ namah śivāya*) came to a stop and My mind thoroughly locked on to the divine form in the heart. Suddenly, the form became extraordinarily vivid. No effort to concentrate was needed any more. I could then literally experience the immediate presence of Śiva. The affection and smile that I beheld in the Lord's *īśāna-mukha* (upward face) in particular still enthrall Me. I was overwhelmed with joy.

After about one and a half hours, as I discerned later but what then seemed to Me to be just a moment, I became lightly aware of the body. I opened My eyes. I could see the sun close to the horizon and feel a gentle breeze. I could, at the same time, clearly apprehend the Lord associated with Ambā in My heart-lotus. The Lord appeared to be

emerging from within and expanding. A deep long sound of *Om* was audible. I then definitely beheld Śiva in front of and facing Me. Oh, what a glorious sight that was!

{At this point, Acharyal fell silent for a while, His face flushed with happiness. After over a minute, Acharyal continued but His voice dropped to a whisper and showed unmistakable signs of His entrancement with delight.}

(Acharyal:) Tears of joy flowed from My eyes and My hairs stood on end. The Lord's lips moved and I heard His very sweet voice. His words were:

vatsa śvāḥprabhṛtyatra nirākāre pare tattve manah
samādhatsva | acireṇa brahmaśamastho bhaviṣyasi |⁴

(O, child, from tomorrow, fix Your mind on the Formless, Supreme Reality here. You will soon become established in Brahman.)

Then Śiva blessed Me by placing His hand on My head. Having done so, He disappeared. How compassionate He is to grace in such abundance one so insignificant and lacking in devotion as I!

No sooner had He vanished than there was a drizzle. In a matter of seconds, the sun set; simultaneously, the light rain stopped. As I have already stated, the sky was quite clear when I sat for meditation. Even when the sun set, clouds were not apparent. The sun having been quite visible when it rained there, to Me it appeared that the Lord was blessing Me with a light bath in the Gaṅgā.

{In 1975, one evening, when Acharyal was taking a walk in the fields of Narasimhavana, it started to drizzle. Acharyal broke into a smile and exclaimed, “Gaṅgā-snāna”. He then explained to me that it has been said that getting wet in rain that falls when the sun can be seen is like bathing in the holy Gaṅgā.}

(Acharyal:) In a state of ecstasy, I began to pay obeisance to and extol Parameśvara through verses that occurred to Me spontaneously. My voice kept choking and had any musician been around, he would have been appalled at My unmusical singing. (Acharyal laughed as He said this.)

I: Would Acharyal grace me with those verses?

Acharyal: I never bothered to put down those verses in writing and do not remember them either. Not attaching any importance to them, I did not subsequently think of and memorise them. They were, after all, just the prattle of an ignorant boy and not the compositions of any *mahātman* or of literary value. All I am in a position now to tell you about the verses is that there were ten of them and that they were in the *bhujanga-prayāta* metre. (The *bhujanga-prayāta* metre comprises four *pādās* of 12 letters each. The letters of every *pādā* occur in the repeating sequence “short syllable, long syllable, long syllable”.)

After uttering the verses, I felt an urge to meditate again. As the Lord had directly instructed Me as a *Guru*, I thought of meditating on Him as Dakṣināmūrti, the Teacher. Mentally chanting the *Medha-Dakṣināmūrti-mantra*, I visualised Him, in My heart-lotus, with four hands bearing a rosary, a vessel of nectar, a book and the symbol of knowledge.

{The *Medha-Dakṣināmūrti-mantra* is:

om namo bhagavate dakṣināmūrtaye mahyam medhām prajñām
prayaccha svāhā ॥⁵

The *Dakṣināmūrti-upaniṣad* gives the following *dhyāna-śloka* for this:
 sphatika-rajatavarṇam muktikīm-akṣamālā-
 mamṛtakalaśa-vidyā-jñānamudrāḥ karābjaiḥ ।
 dadhatam-uragakakṣyam candracūḍam trinetram
 vidiṛṭa-vividhabhūṣam daksināmūrtim-īde ॥⁶ (3)

I adore Dakṣināmūrti who is of crystal and silver complexion, holds in His lotus-like hands a rosary of pearls, a vessel of nectar, a book and the symbol of knowledge (characterised by the tips of the thumb and index fingers touching and the other three fingers held straight), has a serpent for His girdle, has the moon in His crest, is three-eyed and has donned various ornaments.

Kakṣam appears in place of *kakṣyam* in the third *pāda* of the same *śloka* as given in verse 31 of chapter 19 of the *Śāradā-tilaka*, an

authoritative *Tantric* treatise. The meaning of the verse does not change because of this. }

I: Did Acharyal commence the meditation on Dakṣināmūrti by first directing the eyes to between the eyebrows?

Acharyal: No. I directly visualised His form in My heart-lotus. Awareness of the surroundings and the body ceased. Subsequently, the mental chanting of the *mantra* automatically came to a stop and My focus was just on the form. There were no distracting thoughts of any kind. The meditation was deep, with the form quite clear. When I regained consciousness of the body and opened My eyes, I found no trace of sunlight. The place was, however, illumined by the light of the moon. Stars were visible.

It was only a few moments later that I realised that there was something on My neck. A big cobra had loosely coiled itself around My neck. Its upraised hood was near My right shoulder, facing away from Me. I had meditated on Bhujaṅga-bhūṣana (an epithet of Śiva meaning, “He who has a snake for an ornament”) and now a snake was on My body as an ornament. Taking this as a sign of the Lord’s grace, I felt very happy. I stroked the cobra gently. It seemed to like this and rested its head against My right cheek. After some time - maybe five minutes - the snake slowly uncoiled itself and went away. I got up and walked down the hill, seeing My way in the light of the moon.

At the base of the hill, I found My attendant waiting with a lamp. This was unprecedented, for, on earlier occasions, I was followed up the hill without any lamp by the attendant on duty. On My way back, in response to My question, he said that after calling him, Acharyal had instructed him to wait for Me, with a lamp in hand, at the base of the hill, after two and a half hours. He had been waiting only for some minutes when I descended. It was obvious to Me that Acharyal had accurately foreseen the time I would be spending on the hill. I also discerned that My second session of meditation, which was totally unplanned, must have lasted for almost an hour.

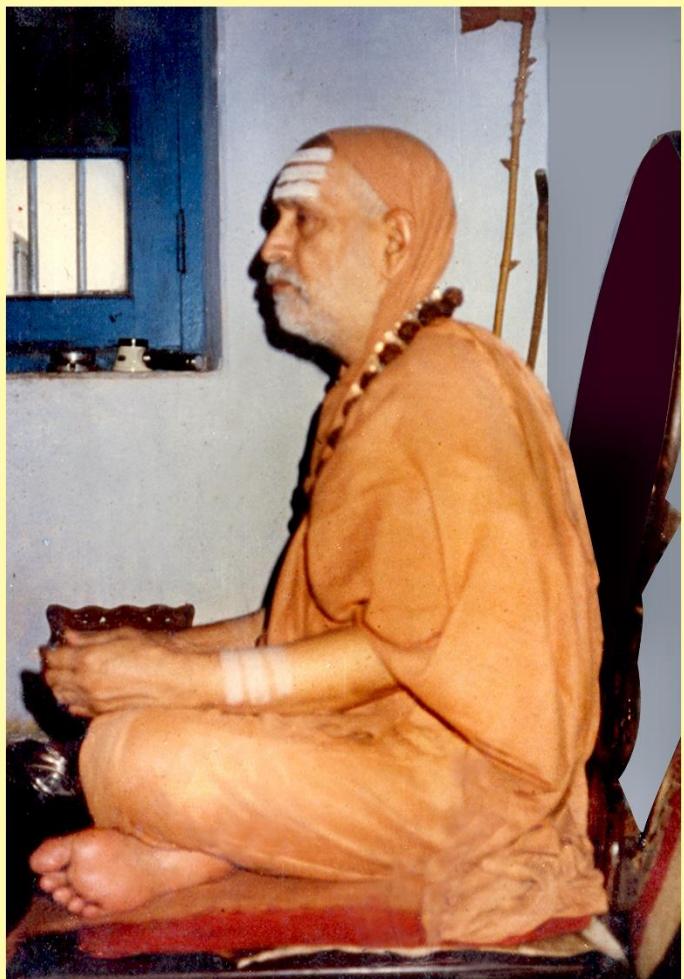
I desired to report the events to Acharyal but since the normal time for My having His *darśana* would only be the next day after My morning *āhnika*, I returned to My room. However, in a few moments, I

received the message that Acharyal was calling Me. I learnt that Acharyal was engaged in His evening *āhnika*. I went to His presence and prostrated. After that, I stood silently. He was midway through the performance of a *japa*. On completing it, He looked at Me with a smile and said, “Today, You have received the very special grace and instruction of Parameśvara. Finally, for a while, You were a *bhujangi-bhūṣanya*. Is it not?” I answered in the affirmative and added that all this was the consequence of Acharyal’s blessing bestowed before I had left.

As Acharyal had just unmistakably revealed that He was quite aware of what had transpired at the hill, it would have been unwarranted for Me to give any details. Acharyal said, “It is getting late for Your evening bath. You can go for it now and proceed with Your *āhnika*.” I prostrated and went straight for My bath.

That night, I had a dream in which I beheld Śiva dancing magnificently as Natarāja, with Ambā looking on. After some time, this scene was replaced by one in which Śiva appeared in conjunction with Ambā as Ardhanārīswara. In the dream itself, I venerated Śiva-Śaktī by chanting Bhagavatpāda’s *Ardhanārīśvara-stotra*. Thereafter, the scene changed and I lay prostrate before the Lord as Dakṣinamūrti seated at the base of a big fig tree. I found Myself merging into the Lord. With My becoming one with the Lord, the dream ended and I woke up. The time was 4.30 in the morning. In the evening of that *ekādaśī*, I commenced My meditation on the Formless in accordance with the command that I had received from the Lord.





12. Intense Reflection and Focus on Brahman

[During His camp at Mysore in the last week of October 1981, Acharyal told me, "Some months ago, I told you all that I could recall about My attainment of samādhi on the saguṇa (with- qualities) aspect of the Supreme. With that, as far as I know, I have completed revealing to you practically everything about My ādhyātmika-sādhanā (spiritual practices to attain the Truth), except for the details of its final phase. I had not thought of those events of My boyhood for so many years. I feel that God wanted Me to recall them and used you as an instrument to induce Me to do so.

“I know how very much you have enjoyed receiving such information from Me on every occasion. I shall, on My own, tell you about the final phase too. Before that, for the fun of it and to clarify My recollection, I would like to duplicate what I did then. After hearing the details from Me, you too do so and report to Me.”

In January 1982, while at Chennai (then Madras), Acharyal detailed much of the final phase of His divine drama of ādhyātmika-sādhanā. As He had a very tight schedule, He did so in short private sessions. The dialogues relating to the sādhanā up to the final three days have been merged and given in the sequel.]

Acharyal: One evening, I went to the hill, about an hour before sunset. Till then, I had been meditating there on the Supreme as possessed of a form, such as that of Śiva, Viṣṇu or Ambā. That evening, however, I intended to focus My mind on the Supreme without superimposed forms and activities. I sat down in the *siddhāsana*, facing west. Then, with the words of the scripture as basis and reasoning as an aid, I readied Myself to meditate on the Supreme.

brahmavidāpnoti param¹ (Taittirīya-upaniṣad II.1.1)
(He who knows Brahman attains the highest.)

ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān | na bibheti kutaścaneti |²

(*ibid.* II.9.1)

(On realising the bliss of Brahman, the enlightened man is not afraid of anything.)

yadā hyevaiṣa etasminnudaramantaram kurute ।

atha tasya bhayaṁ bhavati ॥³ (ibid. II.8.1)

(For, when this (ignorant) man perceives even the slightest variety in Brahman, then (because of that perception of difference) fear arises in him.)

I recalled these passages and reflected on the following lines. From these scriptural declarations, it follows that on realising *Brahman*, I will attain unity with *Brahman*, the highest. On the other hand, as long as I do not realise *Brahman* and I perceive duality, bondage will not cease. Knowledge does not actually make or modify an object. It only removes the ignorance relating to the object. So, even now, I am indeed *Brahman* and the world has no existence apart from It. It is only because of ignorance that I seem to be otherwise and perceive duality. Else, there is no question of My realisation of *Brahman* leading to My becoming *Brahman* and to the cessation of diversity as declared by the scripture.

This body, made up of skin, blood, flesh, bones and the like, is dependent on food and is inert. It is perceptible like an external object, such as a stone. What is inert and perceptible is different from that which is conscious and perceives it. I am conscious and perceive the body; as for My consciousness, that is self-evident. So, I am not the body. Likewise, I am not the *prāṇas*. The organs are, in themselves, inert and are merely the instruments of perception and activity. As such, the possibility of My being the organs does not arise.

The mind is changeful and comprises thoughts and emotions that arise and disappear. I am aware of the thoughts and emotions. How can I be the mind, for it is but an object of consciousness, as is a stone? It cannot be that a second thought, and not consciousness other than the mind, is necessary or sufficient to reveal a thought. This is because another thought would be needed to reveal the thought that reveals the first one; yet another thought would be needed to reveal that thought and so on. There would be the fallacy of infinite regress.

Sāttvik food conduces to mental purity and calmness, while *rājasik* and *tāmasik* food affect the mind adversely. It is well known that the thinking of a person heavily under the influence of liquor is impaired.

Affected by what is ingested, the mind is a material entity, notwithstanding its subtlety. Though it appears to be conscious, the mind, which is material, is inert. I who am patently not inert cannot be the inert mind.

The agent denoted by ‘I’ in notions such as, “I see this,” “I feel dull” and “I do this” manifests in the states of waking and dream but disappears with the onset of deep sleep. One would not be in deep sleep at all if one were to have any notion at that time like, “I am fast asleep.” I, however, do exist not only in the states of waking and dream but also in deep sleep. This is confirmed by the ready recognition on awakening, “During deep sleep, I slept happily. I did not know anything at that time.” As the agent disappears during deep sleep but I persist therein, I cannot be this agent marked by the I-thought.

Agency involves change and pertains to the intellect. Though reflecting the light of the sun and appearing bright, a mirror is intrinsically not a source of light. Likewise, though appearing to be intrinsically conscious, the intellect, being a material entity like the organs, is inert. I am the witness of even the intellect and, so, distinct from it.

mahābhūtānyahaṅkāro buddhiravyaktameva ca |

indriyāṇi daśaikam ca pañca cendriyagocarāḥ ||⁴

(*Bhagavad-gītā* XIII.5)

icchā dveṣah sukham duḥkham saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ |

etatkṣetram samāsena savikāramudāhṛtam ||⁵ (*ibid.* XIII.6)

(*The great elements (space, air, fire, water and earth), egoism, intellect, the Unmanifest itself; the ten organs and the mind; the five objects of the senses (sound, touch, form, taste and smell); desire, aversion, happiness, sorrow, the aggregate (of the body and organs), sentience and fortitude – this is a brief account of the field, together with its modifications.*)

From these words of the Lord, it is clear that the body, senses, mind and intellect are all inert objects of knowledge. Characterised by consciousness and being the one who illuminates them, I am surely distinct from them.

The states of waking, dream and deep sleep are neither natural to Me nor absolutely real. This is because while I persist unchanged in all these three states, the state of waking is absent during the states of dream and deep sleep; the dream state is absent during the states of waking and deep sleep; and deep sleep is absent during waking and dream. What appears and disappears like a mirage cannot be absolutely real. Being subject to annulment, the states of waking, dream and deep sleep are false. I am unstained by them like the desert by mirages.

Various objects are illumined by the sun, which is distinct from them and is one. Likewise, the objects encountered in the waking state are diverse and undergo changes but the consciousness that illuminates them is distinct from them and is one. As in the waking state, the changeable, diverse objects seen in the dream state are revealed by consciousness that is constant and one. In deep sleep, consciousness reveals ignorance. There is no ground to presume either that there is any difference in the consciousness that shines in the three states or that it is subject to any change. Certainly, the objects revealed cannot establish any change in what reveals them. Further, consciousness cannot witness any change in itself. This unchanging consciousness cannot be other than Myself. On the authority of the *Śruti*, I am the Supreme *Brahman*.

About *Brahman*, the *Śruti* says:

satyaṁ jñānam-anantaṁ brahma¹⁶ (*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.1.1)
(Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinite.)

Only that which never gets annulled at any time, past, present or future, is *sat* or *satya*. What is subject to change cannot be defined as being *satya*. *Brahman*, thus, ever was, is and will be changeless. It is absolute Existence. *Brahman* is said here to be *jñāna*, knowledge, rather than to be *jñātṛ*, a perceiver. It is thus of the very nature of consciousness. What is delimited by time, space or objects is not unconditionally *ananta*, infinite. As the *Śruti* declares that *Brahman* is *ananta*, It cannot be conditioned by time, space or objects. Thus, there is no time when It is absent, there is no place at all where *Brahman* is not present and there is no object whatsoever that exists apart from

Brahman.

That everything is rooted in *Brahman* is clear from the words:

tasmādvā etasmādātmana ākāśah saṁbhūtaḥ | ākāśādvāyuh |
vāyoragnih | agnerāpah | adbhyah prthivī |⁷ (ibid. II.1.1)

(From that *Brahman* indeed, which is this *Ātman*, was produced space. From space emerged air. From air was born fire. From fire was created water. From water sprang up earth.)

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | yena jātāni jīvantī |
yatprayantyabhisamvīśanti | tadviijñāsasva | tadbrahmeti |⁸ (ibid. III.1.1)

(Seek to know well that from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born and to which they go and into which they merge. That is *Brahman*.)

As *Brahman* is changeless, there is no question of It actually becoming transformed into the element space or of It actually producing space like a potter making a pot. Space and the other elements ought, therefore, to be appearances in *Brahman*, like a mirage in the desert. They have no existence apart from *Brahman*.

sa yaścāyāṁ puruṣe | yaścāsāvāditye | sa ekaḥ |⁹ (ibid. II.8.5)
(He that is here in the human person and He that is there in the sun are one.)

Sarvabhūtastha-mātmānam sarvabhūtāni cātmani |
īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanah ||¹⁰ (Bhagavad-gītā VI.29)

yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvam ca mayi paśyati |
tasyāham na praṇāśyāmi sa ca me na praṇāśyati ||¹¹ (ibid. VI.30)
(He whose mind is absorbed in yoga and who has the vision of sameness everywhere sees the *Ātman* as abiding in all beings and all beings as abiding in the *Ātman*. He who sees Me in everything and sees all things in Me – I do not go out of his vision and he also is not lost to My vision.)

Accordingly, *Brahman*, which is absolute existence, pure

consciousness and infinite, shines as the self of every being. Though appearing as the world, It is non-dual and unaffected in any way. As taught by the scripture, I am indeed the Supreme *Brahman*, the *Ātman* of all. I never was, am or will be otherwise. By the grace of Acharyal and God, My reflection that day resulted in great clarity of understanding, freedom from doubts and conviction regarding this.

ahameva paraṁ brahma vāsudevākhyam-avyayam ¹²

(*Brahmānuśīcintāna* 1ab)

(*I am indeed the Supreme Brahman, the One free from decay and known as Vāsudeva (He who resides in and shines in all).*)

These words that accurately portrayed the conclusion I had arrived at came to My mind. I felt ready to deeply focus on the Supreme.

{The term Vāsudeva has been used in the scripture with reference to the Supreme as has been done in the verse of Bhagavatpāda recalled spontaneously by Acharyal. The Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

bahūnāṁ janmanāmante jñānavānmāṁ prapadyate |

vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ ||¹³ (VII.19)

At the end of many births the man of knowledge attains Me, (realising) that Vāsudeva is all. Such a great one is very rare.

In the introduction of His *Gītā-bhāṣya*, Bhagavatpāda writes:

paramārthatattvāṁ ca vāsudevākhyam

parabrahmābhidheyabhūtaṁ

višeṣato'bhiṣyañjayat gītāśāstram ¹⁴

The Gītā scripture specially expounds the subject that is the absolute Reality, the Supreme Brahman known as Vāsudeva..

In the *Mokṣadharma* of the *Mahābhārata*, there occur the following words of the Lord:

chādayāmi jagadviśvarāṁ bhūtyā sūrya ivāṁśubhiḥ |

sarvabhūtādhivasaśca vāsudevastataḥ smṛtaḥ ||¹⁵ (XII.328.36)

Like the sun with its rays, I cover the entire universe with My glory. Also, I reside in all beings. Hence, I am known as Vāsudeva.

In the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, it is said:

sarvāṇī tatra bhūtāni vasanti paramātmāni |
 bhūteṣu ca sarvātmā vāsudevastataḥ smṛtaḥ ||¹⁶ (VI.8.80)
All beings abide in the Supreme Ātman and He, the Ātman of all, abides in all beings. Therefore, He is called Vāsudeva. }

I: Had Paramacharyal expounded the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* and Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on it to Acharyal before this?

Acharyal: No. I, however, knew the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* by rote, having learnt it along with the *Rudram*, *Camakam*, *Sūktas* and the *Mahānārāyana-upaniṣad*. Acharyal took classes for Me on the *Upaniṣad*, *Gītā* and *Brahmasūtra bhāṣyas* only years later.

I: Why, then, did Acharyal base the reflection on the *mantras* of the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad*?

Acharyal: I just felt impelled and guided to do so. Though I was conversant with Sanskrit, it was primarily because of divine grace that at that time I correctly understood the import and implications of the teachings of the *Upaniṣad*. Only when Acharyal taught Me the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, I fully recognised that My understanding of the passages had been in strict accordance with the *bhāṣya*.

I: How long did the reflection preceding the meditation last?

Acharyal: Perhaps for about 45 minutes. During that time, though I did specifically keep My eyes closed, I hardly noticed the surroundings. I had come to the hill about an hour before sunset. Before starting My meditation, I looked towards the Malahānikareśvara temple and the sun. It seemed that the sun would set in about 15 minutes.

I initiated My meditation as usual by gazing at the space between the brows and chanting the *Prāṇava*. I apprehended a blue hue, just as I often did. At this point, instead of conceiving any divine form, I mentally uttered once the words:

ahameva param brahma vāsudevākhyamavyayam |¹⁷
 (Brahmānucintana 1ab)

(I am indeed the Supreme Brahman, the One free from decay and known as Vāsudeva (He who resides in and shines in all).)

Then, without repeatedly chanting the words like a *mantra*, I strongly held on to the idea conveyed. Immediately, I felt Myself expanding and becoming pervasive like space. A great wave of joy arose and submerged Me. After what seemed a trice, I gained mild awareness of the body; actually, about 30 to 45 minutes had passed.

I: What effect did the sense of becoming pervasive have on Acharyal's contemplating as specified in the *Brahmānucintana* verse?

Acharyal: By countering the notion of My being limited by the body and the like, it greatly intensified My contemplation. While feeling omnipresent like space, I did not have any apprehension of either darkness or light. Such was the intensity of the focus that ensued that I remained, as it were, as just objectless consciousness and bliss.

I: Would Acharyal classify the state attained as *samādhi*?

Acharyal: No. The state was only that of deep meditation. The need for effort to hold on to the idea of being *Brahman* did not vanish. Further, I did continue to have some awareness that I was meditating. Though it was not *samādhi*, the experience did have the effect of strengthening the conviction produced by My earlier reflection.

I mentally repeated the enquiry of the evening twice in the course of the next day. That evening, after sitting down at My meditation spot on the summit of the hill, I pondered, "Thoughts of objects and the 'I' thought arise in the mind and highlight objects and the agent respectively. Happiness, sorrow and the like too are only mental modifications as are the transformations of the mind in the form of external objects. The agent and the 'I' thought are relatively fundamental and not characterised by the great diversity of the thoughts of objects. Nonetheless, even agency and the sense of 'I' pertain to the mind and not to the *Ātman*.

"The *Ātman* is pure consciousness and is ever changeless. Being of this kind, the *Ātman* can neither be the mind nor be affected in any way by the mind. Yet, having falsely identified the *Ātman* with the mind, one deems oneself to be an agent and treats as valid notions such

as, ‘I see this,’ ‘This is mine,’ ‘I am happy’ and ‘I am unhappy.’ Decidedly, only right knowledge can annul ignorance and misunderstanding. Yesterday, to gain right knowledge, I recalled the words of the scripture and used reasoning to rid Myself of doubts and clarify My understanding. Then, I voluntarily thought of My true nature as discerned by Me and retained that notion. Fortunately, no other thought cropped up and impaired My meditation.”

At this juncture, it struck Me that like using a thorn to remove a thorn that has pierced one’s sole, I could well use even unwanted mental activity as a means to direct My attention to the *Ātman*. I reflected, “Per se, the *Ātman* is objectless, absolute consciousness and is none other than *Brahman*. With respect to the ‘I’ thought as also other thoughts, It is their witness. So, instead of giving importance to any thought that arises or actively quelling it, I could contemplate on the *Ātman* as being the witness of that thought. The thought would then serve as a pointer to the *Ātman* rather than as a distracter.

“If I stand back from a thought as a disinterested witness, the thought would be deprived of stimulation and should soon die out. Hence, My using a thought to turn to the *Ātman* ought not to have the undesirable consequence of making the thought persist. It is not as though the meditation would grind to a halt when the mind becomes completely still. This is because My aim is not to watch thoughts but to abide as the *Ātman*, which shines on Its own without any dependence on the mind.”

I thought in this fashion for two or three minutes. To try out what I had planned, I needed some thought in the mind in the early phase of My meditation. However, My mind was simply not given to wandering during meditation. I decided that instead of voluntarily generating some thought, I would employ My eagerness to meditate without delay as the requisite prop. Just as when one eats, one’s desire to have a meal becomes quieted, the desire to meditate would automatically disappear with My engaging in meditation. So, I would just not be faced with the problem of the thought persisting. I reminded Myself that I am pure consciousness unlimited by space, time and objects and started My meditation.

I: Did Acharyal skip directing the gaze to the space between the brows and allowing a hue to be apprehended there?

Acharyal: Yes, for I wanted to make immediate use of the desire to meditate that I had willingly entertained at that time. I experienced no difficulty in initiating contemplation on the *Ātman* as the witness of this desire. Almost immediately thereafter, the mental activity serving as the object vanished. An essentially isolated ‘I’ thought remained. I maintained the attitude of being a witness characterised by pure, unlimited consciousness. Very soon, even the sense of ‘I’ almost completely faded away. The mind was then quite still and no effort was needed to keep it so.

Consciousness shone clearly without any object and without limitations. I was overwhelmed by bliss, which was far greater than on the previous evening. The awareness of any distinction between the bliss and Myself was almost absent. About an hour passed thus but I was totally oblivious of the passage of time. I then emerged from *savikalpa-samādhi* and gradually became aware of the body.

{The *Muktika-upaniṣad* defines *savikalpa/saṃprajñāta samādhi* on the *Ātman-Brahman* as:

Brahmākāra-manovṛtti-pravāho'haṅkṛtiṁ vinā |
 saṃprajñāta-samādhiḥ syāddhyānābhya-asa-prakarṣataḥ ||¹⁸ (53)
The flow, without egoism, of mental transformations (vṛttis) of the form of Brahman constitutes saṃprajñāta-samādhi. It stems from excellence in the practice of meditation.

In the *Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* attributed to Bhagavatpāda, it is said:

jñātrādyavilayenaiva jñeye brahmaṇi kevale |
 tadākārākāritayā cittavṛtteravasthitih ||¹⁹ (820)

sadbhiḥ sa eva vijñeyah samādhiḥ savikalpakah |
 mṛda evāvabhāne'pi mṛṇmayadvipabhānavat ||²⁰ (821)

sanmātravastubhāne'pi tripuṭī bhāti sanmayī |
 samādhirata evāyam savikalpa itīryate ||²¹ (822)

The continuance of the transformation of the mind in the form of Brahman, the Absolute, without the dissolution of the distinction of the one who knows, the act of knowing and the known is indeed known by the wise as savikalpa-samādhi. Because, though Brahman of the nature of absolute existence manifests, the awareness of the distinction of the one who knows, knowing and the known is present, this samādhi is termed savikalpa. }

(Acharyal:) When I opened My eyes, I noticed that it was about half an hour before sunset. After remaining mentally quiet for a few minutes, I thought, “I am now in a position to take advantage of the presence of some thought or feeling at the start of meditation to focus on the *Ātman* and attain *samādhi*. There is, however, no necessity for Me to rely upon what is basically a source of distraction. Instead, I could commence My meditation by directly generating and intensifying the notion that I am not the body and the like but am *Brahman*, which is of the nature of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. This is what I did yesterday. Further, the pertinent notion is indeed in keeping with the teaching of the scripture and My conviction.”

I decided to implement the procedure right then. So, I repeated what I had done on the previous evening, inclusive of employing the words:

ahameva param brahma vāsudevākhyam-avyayam¹²²

(Brahmānucintana 1ab)

(I am indeed the Supreme Brahman, the One free from decay and known as Vāsudeva (He who resides in and shines in all).)

This time, I promptly attained *savikalpa-samādhi*. The experience was essentially the same as that of the preceding *savikalpa-samādhi*. This one also lasted about an hour. After getting up, I returned to Narasimhavana.

{Here, Acharyal told me, “Try imitating, as closely as possible, what I had done. This will enable you to have a better idea of My experience than you have now based on My account. Report to Me tomorrow. Take care to see that you limit the intensity of your focus to stop at the level of *savikalpa-samādhi*. Else, you will pass on

into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.” By His grace, I had no difficulty at all in carrying out His command.}

(Acharyal:) The next morning, on apprehending a green hue, instead of conceiving a divine form as had been My practice, I directed My attention to the *Ātman* as being the witness of this hue. The hue soon faded away. Next, the sense of ‘I’ well-nigh vanished and *savikalpa-samādhi* ensued. At the end of the session, I recognised that I could comfortably use the hue rather than a voluntarily stimulated thought or feeling to initiate contemplation on the *Ātman* as a witness and attain *samādhi*.

That afternoon, I reflected on the Truth by deeply considering the passages of the *Pañcikarana*. Perhaps that is why the words that came to My mind that evening, on the summit of the hill, after the manifestation of the hue, were:

nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasatyasvabhāvam
paramānandādvayam

pratyagbhūtacaitanyam brahmaivāhamasmi ॥²³ (*Pañcikarana*)
(*I am none other than Brahman, which is eternally pure, ever enlightened, eternally free, absolute existence, absolute bliss, non-dual and the innermost consciousness.*)

I had barely recalled these words when, effortlessly and without any delay, I was in *savikalpa-samādhi*. I remained in that state for about 45 minutes.

I: Would Acharyal attribute the ease and swiftness in the attainment of *samādhi* to the intensity of the conviction that had developed about the Truth and to the earlier abidance in *samādhi* thrice?

Acharyal: Yes. This is what I did on that day too. I, however, had no doubt that the divine grace rather than My effort or competence was primarily responsible for the conviction and all the *samādhis*.

A few minutes after emerging from *samādhi*, I thought as follows. With the aid of a mental *vṛtti* (modification of the mind) in the form of a desire to meditate or a hue, I have earlier focused on the Supreme. I should be able to become absorbed in the Supreme even by

considering any external object. After all, the Supreme is not merely the witness of mental states but is also the real substratum of everything.

yacca kiñcijjagat-sarvam drśyate śrūyate'pi vā |
antarbahiśca tatsarvam vyāpya nārāyaṇah sthitah ||²⁴

(*Mahānārāyaṇa-upaniṣad* XIII.5)

(*Whatsoever there is in the entire world that is seen or heard of, all that is pervaded by Nārāyaṇa, within and without (like a bracelet and other golden ornaments by gold, their material cause).*)

An earthen pot has a rotund form, has the name, ‘pot’, and is made of mud. It is apprehended as something that exists, as “is”; it is the object of the notion of existence (*sadbuddhiḥ*). What is responsible for the pot’s being or existence? Decidedly, its name and form do not lend any being to it. Other than as clay, its material cause, the pot has no existence; it has existence only as clay.

vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam ||²⁵

(*Chāndogya-upaniṣad* VI.1.4)

(*A modification (of clay, such as a pot or jar,) has speech as its origin and exists only in name; as clay alone, it is real.*)

Can clay, per se, account for the being of the pot? No, for clay has no existence apart from the particles of which it is made; the name and form of clay do not make it existent. Nothing that is an effect has existence apart from its material cause; only as the cause, does an effect exist. Thus, no intermediary member of the causal chain headed by the pot, clay and particles can account for the pot’s being. Only the ultimate cause, if it be intrinsically existent, can adequately do so. The scripture teaches that *Brahman* is the ultimate cause, the substratum of all, and that It is of the very nature of absolute existence.

Thus, in the final analysis, a pot has existence only as *Brahman*; apart from *Brahman*, it is simply non-existent. The name and form of the pot are but its false or illusory aspects. Similarly, every object has existence only as *Brahman*; the name and form of the object are its illusory aspects. Were such not to be the case, the scripture would

not have emphatically taught that on knowing *Brahman*, everything becomes known, just as on knowing clay, all products of clay become known.

In the past, whenever I have wanted to, I have been able to readily ignore the name and form of an object, such as an earthen pot or a golden vessel, and to apprehend the object as being just the substance of which it is made, such as clay or gold. Now, I should go much further. I should thoroughly discriminate the name and form of any selected object from its being, disregard them, and understand that the object is actually just its ultimate basis, absolute existence.

Having reflected in this manner, I started My meditation, taking the sun as the object of relevance. I gazed at the sun, which was to set in about half an hour and was pleasant to behold. With effort, I increasingly ignored everything about the sun, such as its shape, size and brightness, and focused on just its being. Soon, nothing mattered except the bare existence of the sun; indifference to the illusory aspects became well established and effortless. I cannot say whether thereafter My eyes were fully open, partially closed or fully closed. Abruptly, I almost totally forgot Myself. Just unqualified being, unrelated to space, time and objects, remained and that too not as an inert entity but as objectless consciousness.

When My mind descended from this *savikalpa-samādhi*, I found that the sun had already set and that the place was illumined by the moon. I estimated that My *saṁadhi* would have lasted for nearly an hour. I then left for Narasimhavana.

The next morning, the external object I considered to facilitate My meditation on the Supreme was the wall in front of Me. With hardly any effort, I was able to disregard all illusory aspects and focus on just the being of the selected object. I attained *savikalpa-samādhi* in moments; the experience was the same as what I had had on the previous occasion.

{Here, Acharyal instructed me, who was seated in front of Him, to move to His side and face the same direction as Him. He then said, “In the evening, use the sun as an object and focus on the Truth, the way I did. Right now, let us both enter *savikalpa-samādhi* for some time with

the wall in front serving as the object to initiate the meditation.” Such was the power of Acharyal’s presence and grace that, even without any effort, I went into, experienced and emerged from *savikalpa-samādhi* in the same manner as and together with Acharyal. Acharyal Himself confirmed that what I had experienced was similar to what He Himself had experienced. Acharyal then said that He would continue His account the next day.}

(Acharyal:) In the evening, I went to My usual place of meditation. After taking My seat, I reflected, “*Brahman* is of the nature of absolute existence and is the substratum on which this illusory world of names and forms is superimposed. Even as I perceive what is external, I could, instead of considering a specific external object, use words to this effect to direct My attention fixedly to the Truth. This would be equivalent to My earlier using, when inward-turned, words of the *Brahmānucintana* and the *Pañcikarana* to become absorbed in the Supreme.”

Without shutting My eyes, I mentally said to Myself:

sarvādhiṣṭhānabhūta-sammātra-brahmāsmi |²⁶

(*I am Brahman of the nature of absolute existence, the substratum of everything.*)

I intensified the resulting notion by disregarding names and forms in general. As I proceeded to do so, the diversity, rooted in names and forms, of the world seemed more and more to be superficial and irrelevant. Everything appeared to become stripped to bare being, without attributes. My sense of individuality faded. An upsurge in the intensity of concentration resulted in *savikalpa-samādhi* that was akin to the preceding ones. About one and a half hours passed before My mind descended from *samādhi*.

I: Was Acharyal familiar at that time with the scriptural account of the two *drśyānuviddha* (associated with a perceptible object) and two *śabdānuviddha* (associated with a sound) kinds of *savikalpa-samādhis*?

Acharyal: No. I read the verses concerned of the *Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad* and the *Drg-drśya-viveka* much later. Only when I did so did

I come to know that there were these varieties of *savikalpa-samādhi* and that I had properly practised all of them.

{ dr̄śyaśabdānu-vedhena savikalpah punardvidhā ||²⁷

(*Drg-dr̄śya-viveka* 3cd)

Savikalpa-samādhi is of two kinds by virtue of its association with a perceptible object or a sound.

kāmādyāścittagā dr̄śyāstat-sākṣitvena cetanam |

dhyāyed-dr̄śyānuviddho'yaṁ samādhissavikalpakah ||²⁸ (*ibid.* 24)

Desire and the like, which are located in the mind, are perceptible objects. One should thoroughly concentrate on consciousness as their witness. This constitutes savikalpa-samādhi associated with a perceptible object.

asaṅga-saccidānandassvaprabho dvaitavarjitaḥ |

asmīti śabdānuviddho'yaṁ samādhissavikalpakah ||²⁹ (*ibid.* 25)

I am unattached, of the nature of absolute existence, pure consciousness and ultimate bliss, self-luminous and free from duality. Meditating thus constitutes savikalpa-samādhi associated with sound.

hṛdīva bāhyadeśe'pi yasmin kasmīmśca vastuni |

samādhirādyassanmātrān-nāmarūpapr̄thakkṛtiḥ ||³⁰ (*ibid.* 27)

Savikalpa-samādhi associated with a perceptible object can occur with regard to any external object just as it can with regard to what is in the mind. In this, name and form are separated from pure being.

akhaṇḍaikarasam̄ vastu saccidānanda-lakṣaṇam |

ityavicchinnacinteyarām samādhirmadhyamo bhavet ||³¹ (*ibid.* 28)

There is just Brahman, the indivisible, homogeneous entity of the nature of absolute existence, pure consciousness and ultimate bliss. Such an uninterrupted thought constitutes savikalpa-samādhi associated with a sound. }

(Acharyal:) The next morning, after the apprehension of a hue, I did not explicitly recall any passage about the Truth. I did not select the hue or any feeling to initiate My meditation either. Since the previous

evening, attention to the Truth had been persisting effortlessly. Even during dreams, this had been uninterrupted. I just intensified it. Promptly, I became absorbed in the Supreme and was in *savikalpa-samādhi*.

When I regained awareness of the body and opened My eyes, I could see My *āhnika* room. However, apart from bare being, nothing else seemed to be of any consequence. I ignored names and forms further. Straightaway, I was once more in *savikalpa-samādhi*. That evening I transcended the stage of *savikalpa-samādhi* and attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.





13. Enlightenment and Establishment in Brahman

[The sequel comprises the conversations covering the culmination of Acharyal's divine drama of sādhanā. They took place at Chennai (then Madras), in January 1982, at Paramahamsi Ganga Ashram, Madhya Pradesh, in December 1982 and at Sringeri, in April 1984. The conversations have been combined.]

Acharyal: Based on the words of the scripture and with the aid of reasoning, I had developed the conviction that I am not the body, organs, mind and intellect and that I am *Brahman* apart from which the world has no existence. The two forms of *savikalpa-samādhi* experienced by Me on that *pournamī* morning significantly enhanced it. In the afternoon, I read and pondered on the verses of the *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa*. They made a greater impact on Me that day than before. I recalled the words:

Vigalita-sarvavikalpah śuddho buddhaścakāsti paramātmā ॥¹

(4cd)

(*The Supreme Ātman shines pure, enlightened and devoid of all variety.*)

Considering the word
“*vigalitasarvavikalpah*²
(*Devoid of all variety*)”,

I reflected as follows. Even in *samādhi*, I have not realised the *Ātman* as shining totally free from diversity. After all, the sense of “I” and the awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration also shine, no matter how feebly. I do understand from the words of the scripture, supportive reasoning and My *savikalpa-samādhis* that I am pure consciousness. Were the appearance of even the vestige of duality to vanish during *samādhi*, leaving just the *Ātman* as residue, that would greatly facilitate the ripening of My present understanding and conviction into firm realisation.

A weary traveller may hear from a trustworthy person familiar with the region that the water he is seeing in the desert is a mirage. He may then reason that such should be the case. Yet, his wanting to assuage his thirst may impede his firmly realising that only desert sand stretches in front of him. Were he to move on to a new position and the sun were to be temporarily blocked by a thick layer of clouds, he might see just sand where he once saw the mirage. He might begin to perceive the mirage again a little later. Nonetheless, the temporary disappearance of the mirage would highly facilitate his firmly realising the truth of what he had been told and reflected upon. The thorough vanishing of duality during *samādhi* would, for Me, be helpful, like the temporary disappearance of the mirage for this hypothetical traveller.

Further, while I almost become identified with bliss in *samādhi*, nonetheless, I do, to a minute degree, stand apart from it as the one who enjoys it. Infinite bliss is, on the authority of the scripture, My very nature. What is My very nature cannot, undoubtedly, be known objectively by Me. It is *avidyā* that conjures diversity in the Truth, which is non-dual. Thus, no matter how great it may be, bliss that is experienced by Me as an object lies in the realm of *avidyā*. It must not be savoured but transcended.”

{It is taught in the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad*:

yo vai bhūmā tatsukham³ (VII.23.1)

That alone which is Infinite is happiness.

yatra nānyatpaśyati nānyacchṛṇoti nānyadvijānāti sa bhūmā'tha
yatrānyatpaśyaty-anyacchṛṇoty-anyadvijānāti tadalpam ||⁴

(*ibid.* VII.24.1)

The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else, does not hear anything else and does not understand anything else. Hence, the finite is that where one sees something else, hears something else and understands something else.

Gaudapādācārya has said in His *karikas* on the *Māndūkya-upaniṣad*:

nāsvādayet sukham tatra niḥsaṅgah prajñayā bhavet ॥⁵

(III.45ab)

One should not enjoy happiness in that state but should become unattached through the use of discrimination. }

(Acharyal:) I should, during My meditation this evening, prevent Myself from being overwhelmed by the bliss of *savikalpasamādhi*. Then, by impressing upon Myself that I am bliss itself and not one who enjoys it, I should focus My mind more thoroughly on the *Ātman*. Once My mind were to become fully established on the *Ātman* and devoid of every transformation of a form other than that of the *Ātman*, how can any distinction between bliss and the one experiencing bliss or, for that matter, any other subject-object distinction and the sense of individuality show up at all? By establishing the mind on the *Ātman* and remaining without any thought, I would be acting in accordance with the instruction:

śanaiśśanair-uparamed-buddhyā dhṛtigr̥hitayā ।
ātmasamsthām manah kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayet ॥⁶

(*Bhagavad-gītā* VI.25)

(One should gradually withdraw with the intellect endued with firmness; making the mind established in the Ātman, one should not think of anything.)

{Bhagavatpāda has concluded His commentary on the above verse by writing that this is the highest instruction about *yoga*.

The *Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad* teaches:

yathā nirindhano vahniḥ svayonāv-upaśāmyati ।

tathā vṛttikṣayāccittam svayonāv-upaśāmyati ॥⁷ (IV.4.1)

Just as a fire bereft of fuel disappears into its source, on the termination of vṛttis, the mind disappears into its basis (the Ātman).

layavikṣeparahitam manah kṛtvā suniścalam ।

yadā yātyamanībhāvam tadā tatparamam padam ॥⁸

(*ibid.* IV.4.7)

When, having made the mind free from sleep and distractions and very steady, one attains the condition of mindlessness, then one reaches the supreme state.

tāvadeva niroddhavyaṁ hṛdi yāvatkṣayaṁ gatam ॥⁹

(*ibid.* IV.4.8ab)

The mind should be restrained only till it wanes away in the Ātman. }

(Acharyal:) I then opened the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* at random. My eyes fell on a verse in which *nirvikalpa-samādhi* is spoken of. I read it as also the succeeding three verses; they too deal with *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. My reading enhanced My keenness on going beyond the stage of *savikalpa-samādhi*.

{At this point, Acharyal picked up the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and chanted the following verses. }

nirantarābhyaśa-vaśāttadittharṁ
pakvam̄ mano brahmaṇi līyate yadā ।
tadā samādhiḥ sa vikalpavarjitaḥ

svato'dvayānanda-rasānubhāvakah ॥¹⁰ (363)

(When thus purified (of misunderstanding and the like about the Truth) by continuous practice, the mind merges in Brahman (by remaining without any thought, in the form of Brahman), then there is nirvikalpa-samādhi, which brings about the effortless experience of non-dual bliss.)

samādhinānena samastavāsanā-granthervināśo'khila-karmanāśaḥ ।
antarbahiḥsarvata eva sarvadā svarūpa-visphūrtirayatnataḥ syāt ॥¹¹

(*ibid.* 364)

(By this samādhi, there occurs the destruction of the knot of impressions (rooted in ignorance), the annihilation of all one's actions (leading to rebirth) and the manifestation, without effort, of one's true nature, within and without, everywhere and for ever.)

śruteḥ śataguṇaṁ vidyānmananam̄ mananādapi ।
nididhyāsaṁ lakṣaguṇam-anantam̄ nirvikalpakaṁ ॥¹² (*ibid.* 365)

(Reflection (on the Truth) is a hundred times superior to hearing (the Truth). Meditation (on the Truth) is a hundred thousand times greater than reflection. Nirvikalpa-samādhi is infinitely superior to that.)

nirvikalpakaśamādhinā sphuṭarṁ
brahmatattvam-avagamyate dhruvam |
nānyathā calatayā manogateḥ

pratyayāntara-vimiśritaṁ bhavet ||¹³

(ibid. 366)

(Brahman, the Reality, is realised clearly, with steady certitude, by means of nirvikalpa-samādhi but not otherwise, for, then, because of the inconstancy of mental activity, the realisation would be mixed up with other notions.)

I reached My place of meditation on the hill around one and a half hours before sunset. Sitting in the *siddhāsana*, I performed two cycles of *prāṇāyāma* together with the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas* to promote mental tranquillity. Then, as usual, I directed My gaze towards the centre of My brows and chanted the *Prāṇava*. That day, I beheld an unbounded expanse of blue, resembling the sky.

The notion, “I am the non-dual *Brahman* apart from which nothing whatsoever exists” that was prominent and naturally persistent since the previous evening had been intensified by My *savikalpa-samādhis* of the morning and by My reading and reflection of the afternoon. So, I did not have to cultivate it. I had barely seen the soothing expanse of blue when it vanished. I felt Myself expanding and becoming like space. The sense of ‘I’ nearly vanished and My mind entered *savikalpa-samādhi*.

The bliss was very great. However, with effort, I restrained Myself from being overwhelmed by it and thought, “I am not the one experiencing bliss but am bliss itself.” In a trice, a sharp change occurred. Awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration completely disappeared. No more was there any sense of individuality or of space, time and objects. Only *Brahman*, of the nature of absolute existence, pure consciousness and ultimate bliss, shone bereft of

the superimposition of even a trace of duality.

After about two hours, the mind descended to the level of *savikalpa-samādhi* and mild awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration reappeared. Though the bliss of *savikalpa-samādhi* was by far greater than the joy of any worldly enjoyment, it was nothing compared to the absolute, non-dual bliss of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Gradually, I became lightly aware of the body and of the build up of breathing that must have almost totally stopped earlier.

{The *Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad* declares:

samādhi-nirdhūta-malasya cetaso niveśitasyātmani yatsukham
 bhavet |
 na śakyate varṇayitum girā tadā svayaṁ tadantaḥkaraṇena
 grhyate ||¹⁴ (IV.4.9)

The bliss that is had by the mind that has been cleansed of impurities by samādhi and which is absorbed in the Ātman cannot be described in words. It is experienced by the mind itself at that time.

About the highest *samādhi*, the Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* :

yatroparamate cittāṁ niruddhaṁ yogasevayā |
 yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyannātmani tuṣyati ||¹⁵ (VI.20)
 sukhamātyantikāṁ yattadbuddhigrāhyamatīndriyam
 vetti yatra na caivāyāṁ sthitaścalati tattvataḥ ||¹⁶ (VI.21)

At the time when the mind restrained through the practice of yoga gets withdrawn, and just when, by seeing the Ātman by the purified mind, one remains contented in the Ātman alone; when one experiences absolute bliss, which can be intuited by the intellect and which is beyond the senses, and being established thus, this person does not swerve from the Reality...

Anandagiri differentiates *saṁprajñāta/savikalpa* and *asam-prajñāta/nirvikalpa samādhis* thus in his gloss on Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on verse (VI.20) of the *Bhagavad-gītā* :

dvividhaḥ samādhiḥ samprajñāto'samprajñātaśca
 dhyeyaikākārasattvavṛttirbhedenā kathañcijñāyamānā
 samprajñātaḥ samādhiḥ kathamapi pṛthagajñāyamānā saiva
 sattvavṛttirasamprajñātaḥ samādhiḥ¹⁷

Samādhi is of two kinds; samprajñāta and asamprajñāta. The pure vṛtti (modification of the mind) of the form of just the object meditated upon constitutes samprajñāta-samādhi if it is somehow apprehended apart from its object. That very vṛtti constitutes asamprajñāta-samādhi when it is, in no way, apprehended apart from its object.

In the *Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-sangrahaḥ* attributed to Bhagavatpāda, it is said about *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on *Ātman-Brahman*:

Jñātrādibhāvam-utsṛjya jñeyamātra-sthitirdrḍhā ।
 manaso nirvikalpaḥ syāt samādhiryogasamjnītaḥ ॥¹⁸ (823)

jale nikṣipta-lavaṇāṁ jalāmātratayā sthitam ।
 pṛthaṇ na bhāti kintvambha ekamevāvabhāsate ॥¹⁹ (824)

yathā tathaiva sā vṛttirbrahma-mātratayā sthitā ।
 pṛthaṇ na bhāti brahmaivādvitīyam-avabhāsate ॥²⁰ (825)

jñātrādikalpanā'bhāvānmato'yāṁ nirvikalpakah ॥²¹ (826ab)

That is nirvikalpa-samādhi, which is termed yoga, wherein the mind, bereft of the modes of the knower, knowing and the object of knowledge, remains firmly established as the object (Brahman). Salt put in water remains as one with the water and does not manifest separately. Only water manifests. In like manner, the mental vṛtti (of the form of Brahman) remains as one with Brahman and does not manifest separately. The non-dual Brahman alone manifests. Due to the absence of the conception of the knower, known and object of knowledge, this samādhi is called nirvikalpa. }

(Acharyal:) When I opened My eyes, I could see the scene in front of Me and yet did not see it, for I was quite indifferent to the apparent diversity rooted in names and forms. So clear was the realisation that I was of the very nature of absolute existence that I apprehended nothing whatsoever as existing apart from Me.

Everything was like bubbles on the ocean that was Myself. When I rose after some time, My body felt light like cotton wool and as I walked down the hill, it seemed as if I were on a moving canoe.

After about an hour the apprehension, “I am the Supreme *Brahman* other than which there is nothing” started to slowly weaken from being on par with perceiving a fruit in one’s open palm. However, even when its attenuation stopped, it was much stronger than it had been when I had sat down to meditate.

That night, when it was time for Me to go to sleep, I readied Myself to meditate. Even before a hue manifested, the notion, “I am *Brahman*” became greatly intensified. Without any effort, I shot past the stages of deep meditation and *savikalpa-samādhi* and entered *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. By divine grace, attaining *nirvikalpa-samādhi* had become very easy for Me. I remained in it for over three hours. Then, though I felt fresh, I lay down and slept for a while. I got up at My usual time of awakening.

In the last of the seven dreams in the course of which I received instructions about *yoga* from Śiva, the Lord had taught Me *nāda-anusandhāna*. After that, I began to practice it for some minutes, once a week. I have told you about this. That morning, as usual, I closed My ears, nose and mouth with My hands to commence My contemplation on the sound heard in the right ear. The ocean-like sound that I heard abruptly grew in intensity. Then, in quick succession, I heard a variety of sounds. These included those of a drum, a flute and a *vīṇā*.

{The *Nādabindu-upaniṣad* teaches:

ādau jaladhi-jīmūta-bherī-nirjhara-saṁbhavaḥ ।
madhye mardala-śabdābho ghaṇṭā-kāhalajastathā ॥ (34)

ante tu kiṁkiṇī-varṇā-vīṇā-bhramara-niḥsvanaḥ ॥²² (35ab)

At first, the sounds are like those proceeding from the ocean, clouds, kettle-drum and a waterfall. In the middle stage, they are like those from a mardala (a musical instrument), bell and horn. In the final stage, the sounds are like those of tinkling bells, a flute, a vīṇā and bees.

vismṛtya sakalam bāhyam nāde dugdhāmbuvanmanah ।

ekībhūyātha sahasā cidākāśe vilīyate ॥²³ (ibid. 39)

Having become insensible to everything external, the mind unites with the sound focused on, like water with milk. Then, it quickly dissolves in the space that is consciousness. }

Each sound lasted for only a few moments before being replaced by the next. I had heard the same sounds, in the same sequence, when the Lord had demonstrated *nāda-anusandhāna* in the dream. When the last of the sounds ended, there was just silence. My mind became extremely tranquil and suffused with bliss. The sense of “I” rapidly faded away completely and *nirvikalpa-samādhi* ensued. Only non-dual, objectless consciousness remained. About an hour passed before the mind descended from *samādhi*.

I: Did Acharyal keep the ears, nostrils and the mouth closed for the entire duration?

Acharyal: No. After having practised *nāda-anusandhāna* a few times, I had started using My hands to block My ears, nose and mouth for only less than a minute. Once I heard the internal sound and focused on it, I was able to continue to hear it clearly even if I lowered My hands. On this occasion, I must have, by force of habit, stopped closing My ears and nose shortly after beginning My meditation. When I emerged from *samādhi*, My hands were not in contact with My face at all; they were resting on My lap.

I: Before this, had Acharyal attained *samādhi* with some internal sound as the object just as Acharyal had with a divine form as object?

Acharyal: No. Only months later, for the fun of it, I engaged in such *samādhi* and also experimented with *nāda-anusandhāna* the way I had done with focusing on a divine form.

I: Such being the case, what was the reason for Acharyal resorting that day to *nāda-anusandhāna* to attain *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on the Absolute?

Acharyal: There was no premeditation on My part in this regard. The Lord had demonstrated *nāda-anusandhāna* to Me and it was His

will that I experience the culmination of this form of *laya-yoga* that day. I do not have any other explanation.

{The *Yogatattva-upaniṣad* teaches:

yoga hi bahudhā brahmanbhidyate vyavahārataḥ ।
mantrayoga layaścaiva haṭho'sau rājayogataḥ ॥²⁴ (19)

O Brahma, with regard to practice, yoga is diverse; there is mantra-yoga, laya-yoga, hatha-yoga and rāja-yoga.

²⁵ layayogaścittalayah koṭisah parikīrtitah (ibid. 23ab)

Laya-yoga is characterised by the absorption of the mind. Myriad forms of it are spoken of.

Bhagavatpāda says in His *Yogatārāvali*:

sadāśivoktāni sapādalakṣalayāvadhānāni vasanti loke |
nādānusandhāna-samādhimekaṁ manyāmahe mānyatamaṁ
layānām ||²⁶

There are, in the world, a lakh and a quarter forms of laya (absorptive) attentions that have been spoken of by Sadāśiva. We regard only samādhi stemming from contemplation on nāda to be the worthiest among the layas. }

(Acharyal:) That afternoon itself, I once again attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on the Supreme, this time through *kundalinī*-centred *laya-yoga*. I have told you about all My experiences related to the *kundalinī* that took place earlier. You would have discerned that they were unpremeditated and occurred with almost no effort of Mine. This one too was like them. I believe that Ambā, who had Herself taught Me about the *kundalinī* a few months after My *samnyāsa*, straightaway vouchsafed those experiences and, that afternoon, their culmination.

I had just apprehended a hue between My brows when, involuntarily, I adopted the *jālandhara*, *uddiyāna* and *mūla bandhas* and My attention turned to the *anāhata-cakra*. I apprehended the *kundalīnī* there. It seemed that the elements earth, water and fire had become absorbed in the *kundalīnī*. As the divine *Śaktī* headed rapidly to the

sahasrāra, leaping, as it were, from one *cakra* to the next higher one, air, space and the organs too duly merged into her.

When the *kundalinī* reached the *sahasrāra*, all duality, inclusive of the sense of "I" and awareness of the distinction of the agent of meditation, meditation and the object of meditation, thoroughly vanished. Just objectless consciousness of the very nature of bliss shone. This *nirvikalpa-samādhi* lasted for about an hour. As the mind lightly came out of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, the descent of the *kundalinī* from the *sahasrāra*, through the *ājñā-cakra*, to the *viśuddha-cakra* was discernible. I regained mild awareness of the body without sensing any further descent of the *Śaktī* and opened My eyes.

Though the approaches were different, there was no difference between the state I attained then and those I attained on the previous evening at the hill, at night and in the morning through *nāda-anusandhāna*. On all these occasions just the non-dual Truth remained, without any appearance of duality. It was now quite clear to Me that consciousness does shine in all its glory without any object whatsoever and that the *Ātman* is of the nature of consciousness.

Shortly after My *nirvikalpa-samādhi* of that afternoon, I reflected on the following lines. Suppose the *Ātman* were knowable like an object. The question would then arise as to who can know the *Ātman*. The answer cannot be that the *Ātman* is known objectively by Itself, for it is impossible for any entity to be both the subject and the object of a cognition. The *Ātman* cannot be known by the intellect, mind, organs, body and objects, for they are all inert. Moreover, the *Ātman* is the unchanging witness of the presence and the absence of thoughts. When the intellect and mind are themselves just objects witnessed by the *Ātman*, how could they be the perceivers of the *Ātman*? The scripture declares that the *Ātman* is *Brahman* and there is no knower other than the *Ātman-Brahman*. Thus, the *Ātman* is just not knowable like some external object.

{The *Kena-upaniṣad* teaches:

anyadeva tadviditāt²⁷

(I.3)

It is surely different from the known.

It is said in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*:

yenedam sarvam vijānāti tam kena vijānīyāt²⁸ (II.4.14)

Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known.

na vijñātervijñātāram vijānīyāḥ²⁹ (*ibid.* III.4.2)

You cannot know That which is the knower of (mental) knowledge.

nānyadato'sti vijñātr̥³⁰ (*ibid.* III.8.11)

There is no other knower but This. }

Though not knowable like an inert object by any means of knowledge, the *Ātman*, which is none other than *Brahman*, is not unknown either. What is other than oneself and inert may be unknown. The *Ātman*, however, is one's very self and is of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is what reveals objects and never needs to be revealed by anything else. It is presupposed in every act of knowing and is ever self-established.

The agent of even the act of knowing, which has a beginning and an end, cannot but be subject to change. Further, only an entity subject to change can experience pleasure and pain. As the *Ātman* is changeless, It is neither the agent of any act, inclusive of that of knowing, nor is It subject to pleasure and pain. Agency, suffering, enjoyment of pleasure and the like belong to the changeful intellect. However, owing to *avidyā*, one mistakenly superimposes these that belong to the intellect on the *Ātman*. Also, though the intellect is inert, the consciousness of the *Ātman* is wrongly ascribed to it and the intellect-centred “I” passes off as a conscious agent and experiencer.

The scripture advocates realisation of *Brahman* not in the sense of knowing what is unknown but in the sense of getting rid of the *avidyā*-based superimposition on It. Whether focused on the *Ātman* or distracted, the mind is but an inert entity illumined by the *Ātman*. However, the mental *vṛtti* of the form of *Brahman* destroys, as declared by the scripture, *avidyā* that rests in and veils *Brahman* and presents It wrongly.

{Bhagavatpāda writes in His *bhāṣya* on verse (XVIII.50) of the

Bhagavad-gītā :

...avidyādhyāropaṇa-nirākaraṇamātram brahmaṇi kartavyaṁ
natu brahmajñāne yatno'tyanta-prasiddhatvāt | avidyā-kalpita-
nāmarūpa-viśeṣākārāpahṛta-buddhitvād-atyanta-prasiddham
suvijñeyam-āsannataram-ātmabhūtam-apy-aprasiddham
durvijñeyam-atidūram-anyadiva ca pratibhāty-avivekināmī
bāhyākāra-nivṛttabuddhīnām tu labdha-gurvātma-prasādānām
nātah param sukham suprasiddham suvijñeyam svāsannamasti |³¹

What is to be undertaken is only the elimination of the superimposition on Brahman through avidyā, but no effort is needed for knowing Brahman, for It is quite self-evident. It is because the intellect is distracted by particular appearances of name and form imagined through avidyā that Brahman, even though self-evident, easily realisable, nearer than all else and identical with oneself, appears to be concealed, difficult to realise, very far and different. But to those whose intellect has become freed from external appearances and who have obtained the grace of the Guru and serenity of the mind, there is nothing more blissful, manifest, well known, easily realised and nearer than this.

In His *bhāṣya* on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* (III.5.10), Bhagavatpāda writes:

etāvaddhi brāhmaṇena kartavyaṁ yaduta sarvānātma-pratyaya-
ti raskaraṇam-etatkṛtvā kṛtakṛtyo yogī bhavati |³²

All that one who has understood Brahman from the words of Guru and the scripture needs to do is to eliminate all notions of the non-Ātman. Having done so, he becomes a yogin who has accomplished his task. }

(Acharyal:) I went on to reflect as follows. Suppose a person, who is adept at *yoga*, feels he is established in the Ātman when he is in *samādhi* but that he deviates to some extent from the Reality when he emerges from *samādhi* and engages in activity. Such a person is not free from *avidyā*.

Samādhi and distraction are conditions of the mind and not of the Ātman. The Ātman is ever changeless and of the nature of

consciousness. *Samādhi* and distraction do not affect it in any way. It is because this *yogin* is not free from identification with the mind that he sees himself as influenced by changes in the state of the mind. He who has fully realised that he is the changeless Reality remains established in the Reality and unaffected regardless of whether his mind is in a focused, agitated or dull condition.

prakāśāṁ ca pravṛttiṁ ca mohameva ca pāñḍava ।
na dveṣṭi saṁpravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati ॥³³

(*Bhagavad-gītā* XIV.22)

(*O son of Pāṇḍu, he (who has gone beyond the three Gunas) neither dislikes illumination, activity and delusion (the effects of sattva, rajas and tamas respectively) when they appear, nor does he long for them when they disappear.*)

I should conform to these words of the Lord and not become attached to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* under the delusion that for its duration I become one with *Brahman*.

{Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on the *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* (II.38) runs, in part, as follows:

..yathā'tattvadarśī kaściccittam-ātmatvena
pratipannaścittacalanam-anucalitam-ātmānam
manyamānastattvāccalitam dehādibhūtam-ātmānam
kadācinmanyate pracyuto'ham-ātmatattvādīdānīm-iti । samāhite
tu manasi kadācit-tattvabhūtaṁ prasannātmānam manyata
idānīmasmi tattvībhūta iti । na tathā"tmavidbhavet । ātmana
ekarūpatvāt-svarūpa-pracyavanāsambhavācca । sadaiva
brahmāsmīty-apracyuto bhavet³⁴...

He who has not realised the Reality accepts the mind as the Ātman and thinks the Ātman to be changing in accordance with the states of the mind, or, at times, accepts the body and the like to be the Ātman and thinks, "I am now alienated from the reality that is the Ātman." When at times the mind becomes concentrated, he thinks himself to be united with the Reality and in peace under the belief, "I am now identified with the Reality." The knower of the Ātman should

not be like that because the nature of the Ātman is ever the same and because it is impossible for anything to change its nature. He should for ever be unwavering from the Reality, with the conviction, “I am Brahman.”}

(Acharya:) Perception of the world could affect the vision of the Truth of one who ascribes reality to duality but not of one to whom names and forms are illusory. He who firmly knows that what lies in front of him is dry sand is not affected by the appearance or disappearance of a mirage there. Likewise, he who knows that there is nothing whatsoever apart from *Brahman* cannot be affected either by the appearance of the mirage-like world of names and forms or its disappearance during *samādhi* or deep sleep.

Jīvabhāva-jagadbhāva-bādhe svātmaiva śisyate ||³⁵

(*Pañcadasī* VI.12cd)

nāpratītistayorbādhaḥ kintu mithyātvaniścayaḥ

no cet-suṣupti-mūrcchādau mucyetāyatnato janah ॥³⁶ (ibid.)

VI.13)

paramātmāvaśeṣo'pi tatsatyatva-viniścayaḥ

³⁷ na jagad-vismṛtirno cejjīvanmuktirna sambhavet || (ibid.VI.14)

When the existence of the Jīva (individual self) and the existence of the universe are negated, one's Ātman alone remains. Their negation is not their non-perception but only a firm conviction that they are unreal. If it were not so, people would attain liberation without any effort in the states such as of deep sleep and unconsciousness. The realisation of the residuary nature of the Supreme Ātman is also only the firm conviction about Its Reality. It is not forgetfulness of the world. If this were not the case, jīvanmukti (liberation from bondage even while living) would not be possible. }

(Acharyal:) In support of My conviction about the illusory nature of the world and that there exists nothing apart from the non-dual Reality, I reflected on the similarity between the states of waking and dream. I also thought of how the states of waking, dream and deep sleep rule each other out and of the persistence in all of them of

consciousness, their witness.

In the evening, at about the same time as on the previous evening, I went to My place of meditation on the hill. There, I entered *nirvikalpa-samādhi* exactly as on the previous night. After about an hour, I opened My eyes. The falsity of names and forms was crystal clear and so was the certainty that there was nothing that was other than consciousness. Shortly, even without My shutting My eyes or making any effort, I plunged once again into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. This time too the *samādhi* lasted for about an hour.

{The *Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad* speaks of two kinds of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, one related to the external and the other to the internal. The verses concerned appear in identical form in the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*.

svānubhūti-rasāveśād-dṛśya-śabdāvupekṣya tu |
nirvikalpassamādhissyānnivātasthita-dīpavat ||³⁸ (26)

Nirvikalpa-samādhi is that in which the mind becomes steady like a lamp kept in a windless place and in which one becomes indifferent to (internal) objects and sounds on account of complete absorption in bliss.

sthabdībhāvo rasāsvādāt-tṛtīyah pūrvavanmataḥ ||³⁹ (*ibid.* 29ab)
 The insensibility, on account of bliss, of the mind (to external objects), akin to that in *savikalpa-samādhi*, is designated as *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. }

(Acharyal:) Except for an hour, during which I slept, I spent the rest of the night in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. It was not as though I was particular about doing so, for, by then, there was essentially no difference for Me between *samādhi* and the perception of the world as regards My abidance in *Brahman*. As I was feeling very fresh, instead of lying down, I casually sat cross-legged. Suddenly, My mind plunged into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

The next day, I went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* in the morning and in the afternoon for an hour each. The conviction about the falsity of duality and of My being of the nature of changeless

consciousness was so strong and steady that almost no *avidyā*-based notions of the non-Ātman cropped up. Those few that did were neutralised swiftly. The knowledge that *Brahman* alone is all this had almost fully fructified. This was My state when I went in the evening to the summit of the hill one and a half hours before sunset.

I directed My gaze to between the brows and, without any premeditation, chanted, “*om namah śivāya*” rather than just the *Prānava*. Soon, I beheld a moon-like disc of light between My brows. The mind became increasingly quiet, the sense of “I” faded away and, effortlessly, *nirvikalpa-samādhi* ensued. When I opened My eyes, the sun was about to set. Two birds were seated on My shoulders.

That *Brahman* is all was as clear as a fruit in one’s palm. My mind automatically went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* once again a few minutes later and remained in that state for nearly an hour. Shortly after I regained awareness of the body and the surroundings, a big monkey bounded up to Me and positioned itself on My lap. After being cuddled for a while by Me, it left. I walked down the hill and found My attendant waiting there with a lamp.

By the grace of Acharyal and God, the

“*svanubhavo brahmātmānaḥ saṁsthitiḥ*⁴⁰

(*direct realisation of Brahman and firm establishment in Brahman*)”,

spoken of in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (in verse 2) occurred at one stroke that evening. To this day, there has been no deviation from the Reality.

{Bhagavatpāda has said in His *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*:

...sarvaduhkha-vinirmuktaikacaitanyātmako'ham-ityeṣa

ātmānubhavaḥ na caivamātmānam-anubhavataḥ kiñcid-

anyatkṛtyam-avaśiṣyate ¹⁴¹

(IV.1.2)

“*I am of the nature of consciousness, one and free from all miseries*” - such is the realisation of the Ātman. There is nothing else that needs to be done by the one who realises the Ātman thus.

About *svanubhavah* (realisation of *Brahman*) and *brahmātmanā saṁsthitiḥ* (firm establishment in *Brahman*), which characterises *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living), occurring at one stroke for a renunciant, it is said in the *Vāsanākṣayaprarakarana* of the *Jīvanmukti-viveka*:

tatropāsy-a-sākṣātkāraparyantām-upāstīm kṛtvā yadi jñāne
pravarteta tadā vāsanākṣaya-manonāśayordhataratvena
jñānādūrdhvam vidvatsaṁnyāsa-jīvanmuktī svata eva sidhyataḥ
tādṛśa eva śāstrābhimato mukhyo vidyādhikārī ॥⁴²

In the case of the person who has performed meditation to the extent of realising the prescribed object of meditation [such as a form of God] and thereafter strives for the knowledge of the Truth, by virtue of his firm obliteration of mental tendencies and dissolution of the mind, the renunciation of a knower and jīvanmukti occur automatically on the dawn of the realisation of the Truth. Such indeed is the person who is pre-eminently fit for enlightenment and considered by the scripture.

About *jīvanmukti* being a fact, Bhagavatpāda has written in His *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* on *sūtra* (IV.1.15):

api ca naivātra vivaditavyaṁ brahmavidā kañcitkālaṁ śarīraṁ
dhriyate na vā dhriyata iti । katham hyekasya svahṛdaya-
pratyayaṁ brahmavedanaṁ dehadhāraṇaṁ cāpareṇa
pratikṣeptum ūkyeta? śrutismṛtiṣu ca sthitaprajña-lakṣaṇa-
nirdeśenaitadeva nirucyate ॥⁴³

Furthermore, no difference of opinion is possible here as to whether or not the body is retained for some period (after enlightenment) by the knowers of Brahman. For, when somebody has the conviction in his heart that he has realised Brahman and yet retains the body, how can this be denied by anybody else? This very fact is elaborated in the Upaniṣads and Smṛtis in the course of determining the characteristics of a sthitāḥ-prajña (the man of steady knowledge of the Truth).

Bhagavatpāda has said in His *Upadeśasāhasrī*:

ārabdhasya phale hyete bhogo jñānaṁ ca karmaṇaḥ ।
avirodhastayoryukto vaidharmyaṁ cetarasya tu ॥⁴⁴

(Metrical part IV.4)

It is reasonable that, being the consequences of actions of past births that have begun to fructify and yielded the present body, knowledge of Brahman and the experience of pleasure and pain are not incompatible. Other kinds of actions (of the past that have yet to begin to yield results and those done after enlightenment) are different (and are destroyed by knowledge).

dehātmajñānavajjñānam dehātmajñānabādhakam ।
ātmanyeva bhavedyasya sa necchannapi macyate ॥⁴⁵

(Metrical part IV.5)

He who has the knowledge of the Ātman that negates the erroneous notion that the body is the Ātman and is as firm as the erroneous notion of the common folk that the body is the Ātman is liberated even without his wishing for it.

The Lord has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* :

kāmakrodha-viyuktānām yatīnām yatacetasām ।

abhito brahmanirvāṇaṁ vartate vidiṭātmanām ॥⁴⁶ (IV.26)

For the monks who have control over their mind, who are free from desire and anger and who have realised the Ātman, there is absorption in Brahman (liberation) whether they are living or dead.

In the *Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad*, the *jīvanmukta* is eulogised thus:

sa brāhmaṇaḥ kena syādyena syāttenedreṣa eva ॥⁴⁷ (III.5.1)

How does that knower of Brahman behave? Howsoever he may behave, he is just such.

Further,

eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya na vardhate karmaṇā no
kanīyān ॥⁴⁸ (ibid. IV.4.23)

This is the eternal glory of a knower of Brahman; it neither increases nor decreases through (good or bad) action. }

{Dates of the major events of the final phase of Acharyal's *sādhanā*

Vision and blessing of Śiva :

5.12.1935, Thursday, *Yuva-mārgaśira-śukla-daśamī*

Commencement of *nirguna-dhyāna* after scripture-based reflection:

6.12.1935, Friday, *Yuva-mārgaśira-śukla-ekādaśī*

Attainment of *savikalpa-samādhi* on Brahman:

7.12.1935, Saturday, *Yuva-mārgaśira-śukla-dvādaśī*

Attainment of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on Brahman

10.12.1935, Tuesday, *Yuva-mārgaśira-pournamī*

Final realisation of and establishment in Brahman

12.12.1935, Thursday, *Yuva-mārgaśira-kṛṣṇa-dvitiyā}*



14. The Divine Drama that Followed

[The following conversation took place in August 1989. It is a continuation of the one recorded earlier in which Acharyal revealed about His vision of Siva; Siva told Acharyal to focus on the formless Absolute and blessed that Acharyal would soon become established in Brahman.]

I: Did Acharyal inform Paramacharyal about the consummation of Acharyal's *sādhanā* as foretold by the Lord?

Acharyal: No. Being My *Guru* and an excellent *śrotriya-brahmaniṣṭha* (sage versed in the scriptures and established in Brahman), He had the authority and the competence to decide upon not only the initiation and form of My *sādhanā* but also its progress and culmination.

esa brahma-loka-h samrādenam prāpito'siti hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ¹

(Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad IV.4.23)

(This is the world of Brahman, O Emperor. You have attained this. Thus said Yajñavalkya.)

Yajñavalkya, the *Guru*, was the one who confirmed that Janaka, his disciple, had realised *Brahman* and become a *jīvanmukta*. It is possible for a disciple to have the delusion that he has realised the Truth though he is yet to do so. Did not Nārada mistakenly take it on knowing *prāṇa* that he had known the Truth and stop requesting Sanatkumāra for further instructions about the *Ātman*? As a worthy *Guru* would, Sanatkumāra corrected Nārada and led his disciple to the Truth.

yadi manyase suvedeti² (Kena-upaniṣad II.1)
(If you think that you have known Brahman well ...)

The *Guru* may even challenge the disciple's understanding like this so as to ensure firm, flawless realisation of the Truth.

{Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on the segment of the dialogue between Sanatkumāra, the *Guru*, and Nārada, the disciple, referred to by Acharyal and occurring in the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* is:

sa esa nāradaḥ sarvātiśayam̄ prāṇam̄ svamātmānam̄
 sarvātmānam̄ śrutvā nātah paramastītyupararāma । na
 pūrvavatkimasti bhagavaḥ prāṇādbhūya iti papraccha ।
 yatastamevaṁ vikārāṇta-brahmavijñānena parituṣṭam-
 akṛtārthaṁ paramārtha-satyātivādinam-ātmānam̄
 manyamānam̄ yogyam̄ śiṣyam̄ mithyāgrahaviśeṣād-
 vipracyāvayannāha bhagavān-sanatkumāraḥ ।³

(*Bhāṣya* on the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* VII.16.1)

Having heard of that prāṇa which transcends everything, which is to be seen as one's self and which is the self of all, Nārada stopped as he thought "There is nothing superior to this." He did not ask, on the lines of his having done earlier, "O venerable sir, does anything exist that is greater than prāṇa?" Having found Nārada satisfied thus with this Brahman (prāṇa) that is a modification and is unreal and regarding himself as having realised the highest Truth and so transcendent in speech but actually not having accomplished the highest end, Sanatkumāra spoke to his competent disciple and drew him away from his specific false notion.

Introducing the passage of the *Kena-upaniṣad* cited by Acharyal, Bhagavatpāda has written in His *Vākyabhbāṣya*:

viditāviditābh्याम् nivartya buddhim̄ śiṣyasya svātmāny-
 avasthāpya tadeva brahma tvām̄ viddhīti svārājye'bhiṣicyopāsya-
 pratishedhenāthāsyā buddhim̄ vicālayati yadi manyase
 suvedāham̄ brahmeti । sā punarvicālanā kimarthetyucyate
 pūrvagrhitē vastuni buddheḥ sthiratāyai ।⁴

(*Vākyabhbāṣya* on *Kena-upaniṣad* II.1)

Having turned away the mind of the disciple from what is known (such as a pot) and what is unknown, fixed it upon his own Ātman and crowned him in the kingdom of his Ātman by negating Brahman's being an object of contemplation with the words, "Know that to be Brahman ... ", the teacher shakes the understanding of the disciple by saying, "If you think that you know Brahman well ..." What, then, is the purpose of such shaking? The answer is, "For ensuring firm realisation of the Truth grasped earlier."}

I: When and how did Paramacharyal react to Acharyal's establishment in the Absolute?

Acharyal: As I was returning from the hill, I saw Acharyal standing outside Sacchidananda Vilas and looking in My direction. He beckoned to Me and went inside. When I went to His presence, He was alone. Even before I could prostrate before Him, He rushed to Me and embraced Me. Then, holding Me by My shoulders, He said, "I am so very happy."

bhidyate hṛdayagranthiśchidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ ।
kṣiyante cāsyā karmāṇī tasminindrṣṭe parāvare ॥⁵

(Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad II.2.8)

(When the supreme Ātman, which is both high and low, is realised, the knot of the heart (comprising the host of tendencies and impressions of ignorance in the form of desires) is destroyed, all doubts come to an end and one's actions become dissipated.)

atha martyo'mṛto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute⁶

(Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad IV.4.7)

(Then, he who was subject to death, becomes deathless and attains identity with Brahman while living in this very body.)

yastvātmaratireva syādātmatrptaśca mānavāḥ ।

ātmanyeva ca saṁtuṣṭastasya kāryam na vidyate ॥⁷

(Bhagavad-gītā III.17)

(But that man who rejoices only in the Ātman, is satisfied with just the Ātman and who is contented in just the Ātman - for him, there is no duty to perform.)

Acharyal cited these passages and said, "Such declarations of the Śruti and Smṛti are applicable to You who abide as the Supreme Brahman." Altering the words of Gauḍapādācārya a little, He told Me:

tattvam-ādhyātmikāṁ dṛṣṭāṁ tattvāṁ dṛṣṭāṁ tu bāhyataḥ ।

tattvībhūtastadārāmasti tattvād-apracyuto bhavān ॥⁸

(The Reality has been seen (by You) in the context of the individual and in the external world. You have become identified with the Reality. You rejoice in the Reality. You are undeviating from the Reality.)

{The original verse of Gauḍapādācārya, which is in the form of a teaching, is:

tattvam-ādhyātmikam drṣtvā tattvam drṣtvā tu bāhyataḥ ।

tattvībhūtastadārāmastattvādapracyuto bhavet॥⁹

Having examined the Reality in the context of the individual and in the external world, one should become identified with the Reality, should have one's delight in the Reality and should not deviate from the Reality.}

(Acharyal:) On Acharyal's letting go of My shoulders, I prostrated before Him for long, placing My hands and head on His feet. Such was Acharyal's greatness that He highly appreciated anything positive in another. His instructions, blessings and grace were responsible for My *sādhanā* and whatever I achieved. Yet, Acharyal did not take any credit. He was so thoroughly free from egoism. Where can one now find the likes of Him?

[*The following conversation took place at Sringeri, in August 1989 a day after the preceding one.*]

I: Were Acharyal's firm establishment in *Brahman* and confirmation of the same by Paramacharyal on that evening followed, in the next few days, by major behavioural changes?

Acharyal: Yes, but they were not the consequences of the knowledge of the Truth. Since that evening, *samādhi* ceased to have any role as an aid to realise *Brahman*. However, I had been repeatedly abiding in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* since *pournamī* (the day of the full moon). *Nirodha-saṁskāras* (impressions stemming from the interception of the mind) had, consequently, become intense. Because of this and utter indifference to names and forms, My mind subsided readily and on its own into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Such abidance in *samādhi* made the mind even further disposed to reposing in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and disinclined towards everything else.

{In the *Pañcadasī*, it is said:

niścitya sakṛdātmānam yadāpekṣā tadaiva tam ।

vaktum mantum tathā dhyatum śaknotyeva hi tattvavit ॥¹⁰

(IX.95)

upāsaka iva dhyāyan laukikam vismaredyadi |

vismaratyeva sā dhyānādvismṛtirna tu vedanāt ||¹¹ (IX.96)

dhyānam tvaicchikametasya vedanān-muktisiddhitah |¹²

(IX.97ab)

Having once acquired firm knowledge of the Ātman, the knower of the Truth is certainly able to talk about It, think about It and to meditate upon It whenever he wants to do so. If it be said that he would forget worldly dealings while meditating like a practitioner of meditation, the response is that he indeed does so but that forgetting is the consequence of meditation and not that of knowledge. Meditation is, however, optional for him since liberation has already been secured by knowledge.

About the *nirodha-saṁskāras* referred to by Acharyal, Vyāsa writes in his *bhāṣya* on *Yogaśūtra* (I.51):

nirodhasthiti-kālakramānubhavena nirodhacittakṛta-saṁskārāstītvam-anumeyam |¹³

The existence of nirodha-saṁskāra generated by the interception of the mind is to be inferred by the experience of increase in the duration for which the state of interception persists.

Vacaspati Miśra clarifies in his gloss, *Tattva-Vaiśāradī*:

etaduktaram bhavati-vairāgyābhyaśa-prakarṣānurodhī
nirodhaprakarśo muhūrtārdhayāmādi-vyāpitayā'nubhūyate
yoginā¹⁴

What is said is that the intensity of the interception of the mind is in accordance with the intensity of detachment and practice and is experienced by the yogin by the extension of interception for increasing periods of time, such as for a muhūrta (48 minutes), ardha-yāma (96 minutes) and so on.}

(Acharyal:) That night, no sooner did I lie down than I went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. By the time I emerged from it, the night had passed. When I completed performing My āsanas and readied Myself to start *prāṇāyāma*, My mind again plunged into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. It remained in that state for about half an hour. Another

session of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, which occurred spontaneously during My *āhnika*, preceded My usual Friday-visit to the temples.

I: Did Acharyal experience the same indifference towards Śāradāmbā as towards names and forms in general?

Acharyal: No. As I silently stood before Her, tears of joy flowed from My eyes.

{It is recorded in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*:

śaunaka uvāca
sa vai nivṛttinirataḥ sarvatropekṣako muniḥ ।
kasya vā bṛhatīmetām-ātmārāmaḥ samabhyaṣat ॥¹⁵ (I.7.9)
Śaunaka asked, “Decidedly, that sage (Śuka) was intent on withdrawal, indifferent to everything and revelled in only the Ātman. How then did he master this voluminous work?”

sūta uvāca
ātmārāmāśca munayo nirgranthā apyuruukrame ।
kurvantyahaitukīṁ bhaktim-itthambhūtaguṇo hariḥ ॥¹⁶ (ibid. I.7.10)

harerguṇākṣiptamatirbhagavān-bādarāyaṇih ।
adhyagānmahadākhyānam nityam viṣṇujanapriyah ॥¹⁷ (ibid. I.7.11)

Sūta said, “Even sages who revel in only the Ātman and are without any bond (or, have given up even the study of texts) are devoted, without any expectation whatsoever, to the Lord. Such is the excellence of God. The heart of the blessed sage, the son of Vyāsa, was captivated by the glories of the Lord and he ever loved devotees of God. So, he learnt this great work.}

I: How did Acharyal’s deep introversion affect Acharyal’s attending to Sri Ramachandra Sastry’s *Tarka* lessons that day?

Acharyal: Though it was not *anadhyayana* (the period when traditional classes are not conducted), I had no classes on that day; this was the case even on the preceding day and on the next three days. That afternoon, I did make an attempt to revise what I had been taught but failed because My mind soon went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

By the evening, I was in a position to perform only what I was habituated to doing and which did not involve fresh application of the mind. Also, emerging from *samādhi* became difficult. The *nirvikalpa-samādhi* of the night stretched on to cover even the period when I would have normally performed My *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma*. Had it lasted any longer, My morning bath would have become delayed. While I omitted nothing of My morning *āhnika*, because of introversion, My performance was like that of a sleepy person doing *pūjā*.

By the afternoon, the impact of the *samādhis* had become so much that I succeeded in doing My *āhnika* only poorly and was hardly aware of partaking *bhikṣā*. After *bhikṣā*, I remained in My room in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* till My evening bath, to complete which I needed some assistance. The mind was so intoxicated with bliss that the evening *āhnika* fared far worse than the afternoon one. I did not partake of anything before retiring to My room that night as I felt too disinclined to do so. There, I sat down and straightaway went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

I descended from *samādhi* on becoming vaguely aware of the intonation of the *Praṇava* in Acharyal's voice. When I opened My eyes, I beheld Acharyal Himself. He was seated next to Me and was gently stroking My head with His hand. "Taking care to avoid any further *samādhi*, finish Your bath and *āhnika* and come to Me," He said and immediately left. I obeyed.

I: Did Acharyal have much difficulty in doing so?

Acharyal: No. Acharyal's word was final for Me. There was no way that the tendency to repose in *samādhi*, no matter how powerful, could stand against the tendency to obey Acharyal. When I went to Acharyal and offered *namaskāras*, He directed Me to sit down. Then, He said, "I knew that Your mind was becoming more and more absorbed in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Though You have transcended any need for *samādhi*, I did not interfere. Last night, however, the Lord made it clear to Me that Your *samādhi* had become so intense that You would not emerge from it on Your own. Unless aroused from *samādhi*, You would remain in it till physical death."

“As impelled by Him, I came to Your room before the night ended. Telling Your attendant to remain outside, I entered alone. The Math staff have been under the impression that You have been unwell since yesterday. So, the attendant assumed that I had come to check on Your condition. I found You seated motionless, deep in *samādhi*. With great difficulty, I succeeded in awakening You. Regulate Your *samādhi* and the introversion of the mind. Else, today itself, Your *nirvikalpa-samādhi* will become such that You cannot be aroused from it at all by anybody. Do not leave Me by entering irreversible *samādhi* and discarding Your human form. There is so much to be done by You for Me, for others and for the Math.”

{The *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* delineates seven *jñāna-bhūmikās* (planes of knowledge). About these, Śrī Vidyāraṇya has written in the *Svarūpasiddhiprayojana-prakaraṇa* of the *Jīvanmukti-viveka*:

atra bhūmikā-tritayāṁ brahmavidyāyāḥ sādhanameva na tu
vidyākoṭāvantarbhavati ॥¹⁸

Herein, the first three planes are only the means to the realisation of Brahman and do not belong to the class of realisation.

...brahmātmaikya-sākṣātkāraścaturthī bhūmikā phalarūpā
sattvāpattiḥ ॥...so'yaṁ caturthīṁ bhūmikāṁ prāpto yogī
brahmavid-ityucyate ॥ pañcamyādayastisro bhūmaya
jīvanmukteravāntara-bhedāḥ ॥ te ca nirvikalpasamādhyabhyāsa-
kṛtena viśrānti-tāratamyena saṁpadyante ॥ pañcamabhūmau
nirvikalpakāt svayameva vyuttiṣṭhate ॥ so'yaṁ yogī brahmavid-
varaḥ ॥ ṣaṣṭhabhūmau pārśvasthairbodhito vyuttiṣṭhate ॥ so'yaṁ
brahmavidvarīyān ॥...turīyābhidhāṁ saptamīṁ bhūmiṁ
prāptasya yogināḥ svataḥ parato vā vyutthānameva nāsti ॥ ...
so'yamīḍrśo yogī...brahmavidvariṣṭha ityucyate ॥¹⁹

The fourth plane termed sattvāpatti (attainment of sattva) is of the form of the fruit of the first three and is characterised by the direct realisation of the unity of the self and Brahman... The yogin who has reached the fourth plane is termed a brahmavid (knower of Brahman). The fifth

plane onwards are variants of jīvanmukti. They stem from the gradations in repose effected by engagement in nirvikalpa-samādhi.

In the fifth plane [called asaṁśakti (detachment)], one emerges from nirvikalpa-samādhi on one's own. This yogin is called a brahmavidvara (great knower of Brahman). In the sixth plane [termed padārthābhāvanā (absence of objects)], one emerges from nirvikalpa-samādhi only when awakened by the persons nearby. Such a yogin is termed a brahmavidvarīyān (greater knower of Brahman)... The yogin who has reached the seventh plane called turiya never emerges from nirvikalpa-samādhi either on his own or in response to the efforts of another. Such a yogin is called a brahmavidvariṣṭha (best knower of Brahman).

The *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* records that Vasiṣṭha told Rāma that, after enlightenment, Prahlāda went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and continued to remain in it for long. So deep was his *saṁādhi* that he could not have descended from it on his own. Finally, for the good of the world, the Lord aroused him from it by blowing His *pāñcajanya* conch. After hearing the story of Prahlāda, Rāma asked Vasiṣṭha how it was possible for Prahlāda to be aroused from his state of absorption in *Brahman*. Vasiṣṭha replied:

bhraṣṭa-bījopamā bhūyo janmāṅkuravivarjitā ।

hṛdi jīvadvimuktānāṁ śuddhā vasati vāsanā ॥²⁰

(*Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha* V.4.132)

There is in the mind of jīvanmuktas pure vāsana (latent impression of past experience, seed of thoughts and feelings) that is akin to a burnt seed and which does not give rise to the sprout of rebirth.

api varṣasahasrānte tayaivāntaravasthayā ।

sati dehe prabudhyante kuto'tyucchūnayā śanaiḥ ॥²¹

(*ibid.*V.4.134)

It is through the gradual waxing, by some means, of this indwelling vāsanā that, even after the passage of a thousand years, subject to the survival of the body, jīvanmuktas become awakened (from nirvikalpa-samādhi). }

(Acharyal:) I eschewed *samādhi* in its entirety that day and slept during the night. By the next morning, I was once more in a position to determine the duration of My *samādhi* and, as intended, remained in it for an hour. When I had Acharyal's darśana after My morning *āhnika*, He said, "It was in obedience to the directive of Paramacharyal (H.H. Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) that Acharyal (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) checked the overpowering urge to be absorbed in *yoga*. I am happy that, in deference to My wish, You have regulated Your *samādhi* and can emerge from it by Yourself after a predetermined duration.

"While You can now manage to perform Your routine activities, Your mind is still too introverted to engage in the serious study of the *Tarka* and other *śāstras*. Only tranquillity and happiness can be seen in Your face. Even if I, to whom You are deeply devoted, were to cast off My body right now, Your facial expression would not change. No matter how much You be provoked, not a trace of anger would be visible. Nothing of the world interests You at all. Such readily noticeable, rock-like imperturbability and disinterestedness in everything would be unexceptionable if You were an independent *saṁnyāsin*. On You, however, rests the future of this great Peetham.

"Acharyal (H.H. Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) was ever established in *Brahman*. He had nothing whatsoever to gain or lose by anything. Yet, enacting His role to perfection, He wept when Paramacharyal (H.H. Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal) shed the body, rejoiced when the *Candramoulīsvaraliṅga* was recovered, evinced deep interest in promoting the study of the *Vedas* and *śāstras*, appreciated the good efforts of people and expressed disapproval of their straying to the path of *adharma*. He captivated the hearts not merely of spiritual aspirants and *mahātmans* but of all. He was an unmatched master of the *śāstras* whom even the most erudite looked upon with awe. He brought immeasurable glory to the Peetham. It is like Him that You must be.

"Accordingly, though unswervingly established in *Brahman*, You should study diligently and master the *śāstras*. Further, You should learn to show, whenever appropriate, interest, appreciation, concern, anger, curiosity and the like in Your dealings with devotees, Math

staff and others.”

antaḥ saṁtyaktasarvāśo vītarāgo vivāsanaḥ ।
vahiḥ sarvasamācāro loke vihara rāghava ॥²²

(*Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha* V.2.56)

(*Sport in the world, O Rāghava, internally bereft of all longing relating to the future, without attachment to anything current and devoid of tendencies born of the past, but externally conforming to all the observances.*)

bahiḥ kṛtrima-saṁrambho hṛdi saṁrambha-varjitah ।

kartā bahirakartāntarloke vihara rāghava ॥²³ (ibid. V.2.57)

(*Sport in the world, O Rāghava, with assumed attachment, anger, etc., on the outside but without any turbulence in the heart, as a doer externally but internally not a doer.*)

bahistapto'ntarā śīto loke vihara rāghava ॥²⁴ (ibid. V.2.60 cd)

(*Sport in the world, O Rāghava, hot without and cool within.*)

Citing these verses, Acharyal said, “These verses occur in the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* and constitute the advice given by Vasiṣṭha to Rāma. Be as prescribed in them. You must be an ideal for others. Appreciate the condition of others, conduct Yourself suitably and do good to them.”

{That the great serve as ideals for others is stated by the Lord as follows:

yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janaḥ ।
sa yatpramāṇaṁ kurute lokastadanuvartate ॥²⁵

(*Bhagavad-gītā* III.21)

Whatever a great person does, that is what another does. Whatever he upholds as authority, the world follows.

About the advisable conduct of a *jīvanmukta* towards the ignorant, it is said:

avidvadanusāreṇa vṛttir buddhasya yujyate ।

stanandhayānusāreṇa vartate tatpitā yataḥ ॥²⁶

(Pañcadasī VII.287)

It is but appropriate that the enlightened one behaves in conformity with the ignorant just as a father of a babe in arms behaves in conformity with it.

yenāyam naṭanenātra budhyate kāryameva tat ॥²⁷

(ibid. VII.290ab)

That acting ought certainly to be done by which the ignorant man will get enlightenment.

In the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, it is reported that after Vasiṣṭha enabled Rāma to become established in the Truth and then advised Him to avoid remaining for ever in *samādhi* and, instead, strive to make people happy, Rāma said:

na vidhirna niṣedhaśca tvatprasādādahaṁ punaḥ ।
tathāpi tava vākyam̄ tatkaranīyam̄ ca sarvadā ॥²⁸

(Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha VI.18.74)

vedāgamapurāneṣu smṛtiṣvapi mahāmune ।
guruvākyam̄ vidhiḥ prokto niṣedhastadviparyayaḥ ॥²⁹

(ibid. VI.18.75)

By your grace, I am beyond injunctions and prohibitions. Nevertheless, your word should always be carried out by Me. In the Vedas, Āgamas, Purāṇas and Smṛtis, it is said, O great sage, that the word of the guru is what should be carried out and what is opposed to it must be eschewed. }

(Acharyal:) To implement Acharyal's directives, I ignored the prevailing disinterest and revised My *Tarka* lessons. Over the next week, I gradually regenerated the interest in śāstraic studies that had vanished. Acharyal graciously expedited the process by intensely examining My progress and chiding Me on any inadequacies. Displaying emotional responses proved tougher to achieve. The mind felt just peace and bliss and the emotions that had been so readily experienced in the past seemed no more than a vague, distant dream.

Laughable though it sounds, the *sādhanā* that followed the vision of Śiva was simpler and smoother than learning afresh to display anger or anxiety. (Pointing to Himself and laughing:) This short-tempered tiger was a very gentle cow at that time!

It was clear to Me that Acharyal did not intend that I learn to pretend to be pleased, concerned and the like, without such feelings arising in the mind at all. I recognised that I would be a deceiver if, while being thoroughly disinterested, I were to make a person think that I wish that he come again soon or that I am interested in what he is showing Me or that I am displeased that he has not done something important. Moreover, consistently and adequately exhibiting the physical signs associated with strong emotions, such as a flushed face with wrath, would be very difficult when the mind is thoroughly tranquil and unconcerned. I could also see that such deception, even if diligently practised, would undoubtedly come to light sooner or later. In any case, there was no question of Acharyal advocating hypocrisy and deceit.

To facilitate interpersonal dealings, the mind could learn to accommodate fleeting emotions as opposed to gaining proficiency in deceiving others. Appearance of thoughts and feelings merely when necessitated by and as appropriate to situations would enable effective and totally unpretentious functioning while leaving the mind basically silent. Further, such mental activity would be powerless to cause any bondage as misidentification of the *Ātman* with the mind had already ceased once and for all and there was no forgetfulness of the falsity of the mind either. I did not have any difficulty in clearly comprehending thus the thrust and mode of implementation of Acharyal's directives.

{ Śrī Vidyāraṇya has written in the *Vāsanākṣayaprakarana* of the *Jīvanmukti-viveka*:

nanu jñānino rāgādyabhyupagame dharmādharmadvareṇa
janmāntara-prasaṅga iti cenmaivam adagdhabījavad-
avidyāpūrvaka-kāmādereva mukhyarāgāditvena punarjanma-
hetutvāt | jñāninastu dagdhabījavad-ābhāsamātrā eva
rāgādayaḥ¹³⁰

Objection: If attachment and aversion are admitted in a knower of the Truth, then, on account of the resulting merit and demerit, there would arise the contingency of his being reborn after death. Answer: Such is not the case. Likes and dislikes that are akin to uncooked seeds (capable of sprouting) and foreshadowed by avidyā (and, so, by the erroneous identification of the Ātman with the mind) are the ones that, by virtue of their constituting the primary variety of attachment and aversion, cause rebirth. The attachment and the like of the knowers of the Truth are, however, like burnt seeds (which are incapable of sprouting) and merely have the appearance of the primary ones.

Acharyal referred not only to the cessation of the misidentification of the Ātman with the mind but also to the absence of forgetfulness about the falsity of the mind. About the latter, it is said in the Jīvanmukti-viveka, subsequent to the passage cited earlier:

...tatkāle mukhyavadevābhāsamānānāṁ bādhakatvā³¹
 rajjusarpo'pi mukhya-sarpavadeva tadānīṁ
 bhīṣayannupalabhyate tadvat |
 tarhyābhāsatvānusandhānānuvṛttau na ko'pi bādha iti ceccirāṁ
 jīvatu bhavānī iyamevāsmadabhimatā jīvanmuktih |

Though they be mere appearances of the primary likes and dislikes of the ignorant and incapable of contributing to rebirth) the likes and dislikes of the knower would, while they last, cause trouble like the primary likes and dislikes. A false snake seen in the place of a rope causes, for the time being, fear just like a real snake. The case of the apparent likes and dislikes is like this. Objection: There would be no trouble at all (even temporarily) if the falsity of the apparent likes and dislikes were kept in mind. Answer: May you live long! This (keeping in mind the falsity) is what we regard as marking jīvanmukti.

The possibility of apparent erroneous notions causing transient delusion in a knower of the Truth is stated by Bhagavatpāda as follows in His Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad-bhāṣya on the passage (I.4.10):

...na ca viparītapratyayo vidyāvata utpadyate | ...kvacittu
 vidyāyāḥ pūrvotpanna-viparītapratyaya-janita-saṁskārebhyo
 viparīta-pratyayāvabhāsāḥ smṛtayo jāyamānā viparītapratyaya-

bhrāntim-akasmāt kurvanti | yathā vijñātadigvibhāgas�āpy-
akasmāddigviparyaya-vibhramah |³²

Erroneous notions (such as that one is an agent and that one experiences pleasure and pain) cannot arise in the knower of the Truth...Sometimes, however, recollections that stem from the impressions formed by the erroneous notions that arose prior to enlightenment and which have the appearances of erroneous notions crop up and suddenly delude him as to their being actual erroneous notions just as even one who knows the directions well sometimes suddenly becomes confused about them.

In the *Pañcadaśī*, it is said:

bhogakāle kadācittu martyo'hamiti bhāsate ||³³ (VII.245cd)
naitāvatā'parādhena tattvajñānam vinaśyati |
jīvanmukti-vratarūp nedam kintu vastushtitih khalu ||³⁴

(VII.246)

Sometimes, during the period of enjoyment, the idea, "I am a man" may seem to be. By this much defect, the knowledge of the Truth will not perish. This (the eradication of such notions) is not any vow of jīvanmukti (to be observed by the enlightened one without any slip whatsoever). On the other hand, this is actually how the matter stands. }

I: Over the years, has intense anger, worry or grief appeared in Acharyal's mind unaccompanied, even for a while, by the awareness of its falsity.

Acharyal: No, never. Even during excruciating pain, there has been the clear awareness that it pertains only to the illusory mind and that I am the changeless witness of the nature of pure consciousness. All this is solely due to the grace of Acharyal and God. Else, where was the question of even one so ordinary as I becoming unswervingly established in *Brahman* and functioning in the world as I was directed to?

Though Acharyal was the one who uplifted Me, because of His total freedom from egoism and extraordinary fondness for Me, He went to the extent of averring, prior to sending Me to Bangalore (in 1936), "I

know that You are God Himself and ever perfect. Your engaging in *sādhanā* and apparently attaining enlightenment were only a part of Your divine sport. Your vision of Śiva and Your receiving His blessings and instruction a few days before Your taking Your *sādhanā* to its culmination were on the same footing as the vision, blessings and instruction of Śiva obtained by Krṣṇa.”

{At this point, Acharyal’s face became flushed with emotion, Joining His palms, He turned towards a photograph of Paramacharyal.}

(Acharyal:) Who can be like Him? I am so fortunate to be His disciple.

{The following are three of the verses composed by Paramacharyal about Acharyal; the period of composition is given by Him as the month of *Aśvina* of the year *Subhānu* (30.9.1943 - 29.10.1943}.

dayāsāndram bālam nikhilajagatīrakṣaṇacaṇam
harantam vighnādrim vimalavimalairvīkṣaṇacayaiḥ ।
parabrahmākāraṁ praṇavaviditarām śāntamanasām
guruṁ vidyātīrthaṁ kalayata budhāścittakamale ॥³⁵

O, Wise people! Hold in the heart-lotus the Guru, Vidyatheertha, the young one with tranquil mind, who is exceedingly compassionate, who destroys the mountain of impediments by His extremely pure glances, who is skilled in protecting the whole world, who is known by means of the Praṇava, Om, and who is the manifestation of the Supreme Brahman.

śarīrendriyacittānām śuddhaye kalpitā mahāḥ ।
bahavo gurudevānām tatphalaṁ bhavatām tanuh ॥³⁶

Numerous rites and festivals relating to the Gurus and the Divinities have been created to purify the body, the organs and the mind. Your body is their fruit.

vāṇī lakṣmīstathā gaurī tiṣṭhantam nidrayā yutam ।
gacchantam-upaviṣṭañca pāntu tvām guruśekharam ॥³⁷

May Vāṇī, Lakṣmī and Gaurī guard You, the foremost Guru, while You sleep, sit, stand and walk.

After giving the verses to Acharyal, Paramacharyal said, “I have written only what I definitely know to be true about You. There is no

encomium here.”

Paramacharyal explicitly told some devotees that Acharyal was God Himself and that they should not think that He was just a young *sāmnyāsin.*}





15. Appendix – List of Sanskrit references

1. H.H. Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal

¹ भवदीयपत्रिकया भवच्छरीरे निरामयतामध्ययनाव्यापनप्रक्रियां च
निष्ठत्यूहं निर्वर्त्यमानां विदित्वा निर्गलमानन्दं समवापि ।

(Letter from Paramacharyal to Acharyal)

² पादप्रभाविनिर्धूताविद्यान्धतमसाय ते ।

यतये चितिनिर्विषचित्तायास्तु नमो मम ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

³ श्रीमतां देशिकेन्द्राणां पादपद्मे नमाम्यहम् ।

मन्दोऽपि वन्दनाद्येषां विन्देत गुरुतुल्यताम् ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

⁴ पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवद्यम् ।

सन्तः परीक्ष्यान्यतरद्धजन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥ (Malavikāgnimitra I.2)

⁵ शकुनीनामिवाकाशे जले वारिचरस्य च ।

पदं यथा न दृश्येत तथा ज्ञानवतां गतिः ॥

(Mahābhārata, Gita Press Edition, 12.181.19)

⁶ नानुव्यायाद्वृज्जब्दान्वाचो विग्लापनः हि तत्

(Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad IV.4.21cd)

⁷ द्वेष्योऽपि संमतशिशाश्तस्यार्तस्य यथौषधम् ।

त्याज्यो दुष्टः प्रियोऽप्यासीदङ्गुलीवोरगक्षता ॥ (Raghuvamīsa I.28)

⁸ अहमेव मते महीपतेरिति सर्वः प्रकृतिष्वप्यचिन्तयत् । (Raghuvamīsa VIII.8)

⁹ जातः पिङ्गलहायने यतिरभूद्यश्च प्रजापत्यभि-

रव्येऽव्दे पीठपतिर्बभूव जयवर्षे यश्च शृङ्गाचले ।

कीर्तिं प्राप्य दिग्नन्तगां तनुमिमां यशशुक्लवर्षे जहौ

विद्यातीर्थगुरुजयत्यभिनवो लोकान् सदा पालयन् ॥

(Verse composed by H.H. Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha

Mahaswamigal on Acharyal in the year 1989)

2. H.H. Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal

¹ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरभारतीतिप्रथितप्रातस्स्मरणीयनामधेया अस्मदाचार्यपादाः कृततपश्चर्याः
सर्वतत्त्वस्वतत्त्वाः शास्त्रोपदिष्टार्थानुष्ठाननिधागरिषा अपरोक्षीकृतात्मतत्त्वा जीवन्मुक्ता
अभूवन् ।

(Acharyal's preface to *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* with the commentary of Paramacharyal)

² अस्मदाचार्यपादाः ब्रह्मनिधा ब्रह्मपरा जीवन्मुक्ताः समस्तानामास्तिकानामादर्शचरिता
अभूवन् ।

(Śrīmukha to Śrī-Jagadgurucaritāmr̄ta by Bhashya Swamigal)

³ अविद्याघान्तानां दिनमणिरनन्तान्तरगतो
विषीदद्विद्वृत्तुमुदवनराकाहिमकरः ।
पराच्चामित्राणां विषयगहनानां हुतवहो
गुरुस्तेजोरूपो जयति जनताऽनन्दथुरयम् ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

⁴ वन्दे वन्दारुमन्दरं वन्दनीयं बुधोत्तमैः ।
आनन्दकन्दलं तीर्थवारिधिं देशिकोत्तमम् ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

⁵ करतलभिक्षस्तरुतलवासः (Mohamudgara 16)

⁶ न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवास्मवास्वं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā III.22)

⁷ यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तत्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā III.23)

⁸ उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् । (Bhagavad-gītā III.24ab)

⁹ संसारनामकसरिज्ञाथोत्तरणे तवास्ति यदि वाज्ञा ।

वालक्ष शृणु मद्वचनं श्रुतिमस्तकसंसंतं हितोदर्कम् ॥

प्रविधाय सशिखवपनं छिन्चा यज्ञार्थमादृतं सूत्रम् ।
स्वीकृतपारमहंस्यः स्थिरतरसाधनचतुष्टयोपेतः ॥
श्रद्धाभक्तियुतात्मा प्रविचारय तत्त्वमात्मनः सुचिरम् ।

(Composed by His Holiness Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal)

सद्गुरुमुखाम्बुजातस्वदगमशीर्षवाक्यपीयूषैः ॥

¹⁰ प्रवर्तितो दीप इव प्रदीपात् (Raghuvamīsa V.37cd)

¹¹ शंभोर्मूर्त्तश्चरति भुवने शङ्कराचार्यस्तुपा

(Mādhavīya-Śamkaravijaya IV.60cd)

¹² तमांसि ध्वंसन्ते परिणमति भूयानुपशमः

सकृत्संवादेऽपि प्रथत इह चामुत्र च फलम् ।

अथ प्रत्यासङ्गः कमपि महिमानं वितरति

प्रसन्नानां वाचः फलमपरिमेयं प्रसुवते ॥

(Mahavīra-carita 12)

¹³ सदाऽऽत्मध्याननिरतं विषयेभ्यः पराञ्जुखम् ।

नौमि शास्त्रेषु निष्णातं चन्द्रशेखरभारतीम् ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

¹⁴ श्रीमद्विष्णुपदाऽऽलम्बं वेदान्तामृतवर्षणम् ।

लोकसंतापशमनं वन्देऽभ्रसदृशं गुरुम् ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

¹⁵ गुरुवरचरणौ भक्त्या नित्यं प्रणमामि भक्तकरुणालू ।

यद्गानुलेशपातो हृदयध्वान्तानि सन्ततं हन्ति ॥

(Verse composed by Acharyal on Paramacharyal)

3. Childhood To Sarṇyāsa: The Spiritual Foundation

¹ पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्वामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā IX.26)

² दारा इसे मे तनया इसे मे गृहा इसे मे पशवश्च मे मे ।

इत्थं नरो मेषसमानधर्मा मेमेकरः कालवृक्षेण नीतः ॥

³ सूते सूकरयुवतिः सुतशतमत्यन्तदुर्भगं ज्ञाटिति ।

करिणी चिराय सूते सकलमहीपाललालितं कलभम् ॥

(*Śubhāśita-ratna-bhāndāgāra, Sthalācāra-nyāyokti*, 66)

⁴ वहुनोक्तेन किं विप्रा जपेनास्याश्च होमतः ।

अभीष्टं सर्वमाप्नोति नात्र सन्देहकारणम् ॥ *(Sūta-samhitā IV.6.59)*

⁵ सहस्रकृत्वस्त्वभ्यस्य बहिरेतत्तिंकं द्विजः ।

महतोऽप्येनसो मासात्त्वचेवाहिर्विमुच्यते ॥ *(Manu-smṛti II.79)*

⁶ न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।

(*Mahānārāyaṇa-upaniṣad I.10.21*)

⁷ ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते ब्रुधः ॥ *(Bhagavad-gītā V.22)*

⁸ शकोतीहैव यः सोऽुं प्राक् शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ *(Bhagavad-gītā V.23)*

⁹ असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निश्चरं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ *(Bhagavad-gītā VI.35)*

¹⁰ नहि नहि मनुतां स्वत्वं मर्त्यः स्वीये शरीरेऽपि ।

पितृभूमिश्वगालगणाः स्वत्वं परिचिन्तयन्ति तत्काले ॥

(Verse uttered by Paramacharyal in His state of seclusion)

¹¹ सिंहासनोपविष्टं दद्वा यं मुदमवाप लोकोऽयम् ।

तं कालाकृष्टनुं विलोक्य नेत्रे निमीलयति ॥ *(Prabodha-sudhākara I.26)*

¹² को हि जानाति कस्याद्य मृत्युकालो भविष्यति ।

युवैव धर्मशीलः स्यादनित्यं खलु जीवितम् ॥ *(Mahābhārata 12.175.16)*

¹³ बाल्ये नष्टविवेको विषयसुखास्वादलम्पटस्तरुणः ।

परतो जातविवेको वृद्धोऽशक्तः किमाप्यात्सिद्धिम् ॥

¹⁴ लोको नापुत्रस्यास्तीति श्रुत्यास्य कः प्रभाषितो लोकः ।

मुक्तिः संसरणं वा तदन्यलोकोऽथ वा नाद्यः ॥ *(Prabodha-sudhākara II.35)*

¹⁵ सर्वेऽपि पुत्रभाजस्तन्मुक्तौ नैव संस्मृतिर्भवति ।

श्रवणादयोऽप्युपाया मृषा भवेयुस्तुतीयेऽपि ॥ *(Prabodha-sudhākara II.36)*

¹⁶ तत्प्राप्युपायसत्त्वाद्वितीयपक्षेऽप्युपत्रस्य ।

पुत्रेष्ठादिक्यागप्रवृत्तये वेदवादोऽयम् ॥ *(Prabodha-sudhākara II.37)*

¹⁷ धनं वा धान्यं वा भवतु बहुशो भोग्यमपि वा

विरामे को ब्रूते ननु चिरमहं निर्वृत इति ।

प्रकोपप्रोद्धिन्नप्रकटयमदंष्ट्रां तु पुरतः

प्रपश्यन्किं कुर्यात्प्रसभमवसाने प्रभुरपि ॥

(Verse uttered by Paramacharyal in His state of seclusion)

¹⁸ यो देहः सुसोऽभूत्सुपुष्पशश्योपशोभिते तत्ये ।

संप्रति स रज्जुकाशैर्नियन्त्रितः क्षिप्यते वहौ ॥ *(Prabodha-sudhākara I.25)*

¹⁹ नित्यं सन्निहितो मृत्युः कर्तव्यो धर्मसञ्चयः

(Nārada-purāṇa, Pūrvārdha 39.49)

²⁰ गृहीत इव केशेषु मृत्युना धर्ममाचरेत् ॥

(Hitopadeśa, Prāstāvikā 3)

²¹ लब्ध्या विद्या राजमान्या ततः किं

प्राप्ता संपत्याभवाढ्या ततः किम् ।

भुक्ता नारी सुन्दराङ्गी ततः किं

येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ *(Anātmaśrīvigarhaṇam 1)*

²² नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशं दद्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।

एतन्मांसवसादिविकारं मनसि विच्छिन्न्य वारं वारम् ॥ *(Mohamudgara 3)*

²³ सद्गुरो शरणं शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम्

(Words uttered by Sri Srinivasa Sastry when delirious)

²⁴ सद्गुरो पाहि सद्गुरो पाहि

(Words uttered by Sri Srinivasa Sastry when delirious)

²⁵ सर्वज्ञं श्रीनिवासं कुरु शिवदयिते सत्वरं मद्दिनग्रम्

(Prayer of Paramacharyal to Sharadambal)

4. Hatha-yoga

- ¹ योनिस्थानकमद्विमूलघटितं कृत्वा... (Hathayoga-pradīpikā I.35)
- ² कण्ठमाकुञ्च हृदये स्थापयेच्चिबुं दृढम् ।
- वन्धो जालन्धरारब्योऽयं जरामृत्युविनाशकः ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.70)
- ³ उदरे पश्चिमं तानं नाभेरूर्ध्वं च कारयेत् ।
- उड्डीयानो द्व्यसौ वन्धो मृत्युमातङ्गकेसरी ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.57)
- ⁴ पूरकान्ते तु कर्तव्यो वन्धो जालन्धराभिः ।
- कुम्भकान्ते रेचकादौ कर्तव्यस्तद्विद्यानकः ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.45)
- ⁵ उड्डीयानकस्तु कुम्भकान्ते कुम्भकस्यान्ते किञ्चित्कुम्भकशोषे
रेचकस्यादौ रेचकादौ रेचकात्पूर्वं कर्तव्यः ।
- (Jyotsnā, commentary on the Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.45)
- ⁶ चले वाते चलं चित्तं निश्चले निश्चलं भवेत् । (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.2ab)
- ⁷ धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः । (Yogasūtrā II.53)
- ⁸ यथा पर्वतधातूनां दद्यन्ते धमनान्मलाः ।
- तथेन्द्रियकृता दोषा दद्यन्ते प्राणधारणात् ॥ (Amrutanāda-upaniṣad 7)
- ⁹ अथ सूर्यभेदनम्
- आसने सुखदे योगी बद्धा चैवासनं ततः ।
- दक्षनाड्या समाकृञ्च वहिःस्थं पवनं शनैः ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.48)
- ¹⁰ आ केशादा नखाग्राच्च निरोधावधि कुम्भयेत् ।
- ततः शनैः सव्यनाड्या रेचयेत्पवनं शनैः ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.49)
- ¹¹ अथोजायी
- मुखं संयम्य नाडीभ्यामाकृञ्च पवनं शनैः ।
- यथा लगति कण्ठात् हृदयावधि सस्वनम् ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.51)
- ¹² पूर्ववत्कुम्भयेत्प्राणं रेचयेदिड्या तथा ।
- श्लेष्मदोषहरं कण्ठे देहानलविवर्धनम् ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.52)
- ¹³ अथ सीत्कारी
- सीत्कां कुर्यात्तथा वक्रे ग्राणेनैव विजृम्भिकाम्

एतमभ्यासयोगेन कामदेवो द्वितीयकः ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.54)

¹⁴ अथ शीतली

जिह्या वायुमाकृष्ण पूर्ववत्कुम्भसाधनम्

शनकैर्प्राणरस्याभ्यां रेचयेत्पवनं सुधीः ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.57)

¹⁵ अथ भस्त्रिका

सम्यक्पद्मासनं बद्धा समग्रीवोदरः सुधीः ।

मुखं संयम्य यलेन प्राणं ग्राणेन रेचयेत् ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.60)

¹⁶ यथा लगति हृत्कण्ठे कपालावधि सस्वनम् ।

वेगेन पूर्येच्चापि हृत्पद्मावधि मारुतम् ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.61)

¹⁷ पुनर्विरचयेत्तद्वृत्त्युर्येच्च पुनः पुनः ।

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.62ab)

¹⁸ पार्षिंभागेन संपीड्य योनिमाकुञ्जेदुदम् ।

अपानमूर्खमाकृष्ण मूलबन्धोऽभिधीयते ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.61)

¹⁹ बाह्याभ्यन्तरविषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः ॥

(Yogasūtrā II.51)

²⁰ ततः परं यथेष्टं तु शक्तः स्याद्वायुधारणे ॥

(Yogatattva-upaniṣad 49cd)

²¹ यथेष्टधारणाद्वायोः सिद्ध्येत्केवलकुम्भकः ।

केवले कुम्भके सिद्धे रेचपूरविवर्जिते ॥

(Yogatattva-upaniṣad 50)

²² न तस्य दुर्लभं किञ्चित्तिषु लोकेषु विद्यते ।

(Yogatattva-upaniṣad 51ab)

²³ छेदनचालनदोहैः कलां क्रमेणाथ वर्धयेत्तावत् ।

सा यावद्भूमध्यं स्पृशति तदा खेचरीसिद्धिः ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.33)

²⁴ कलां पराङ्मुखीं कृत्वा त्रिपथे परियोजयेत् ।

सा भवेत्वेचरी मुद्रा व्योमचकं तदुच्यते ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.37)

²⁵ न रोगो मरणं तन्द्रा न निद्रा न क्षुधा तृष्णा ।

न च मूर्छा भवेत्स्य यो मुद्रां वेत्ति खेचरीम् ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā III.39)

²⁶ चतुरझुलविस्तारं हस्तपञ्चदशायतम् ।

गुरुपदिष्टमार्गेण सिक्तं वस्त्रं शनैर्घसेत् ।

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.24)

पुनः प्रत्याहरेचैतदुदितं धौतिकर्म तत् ॥

²⁷ नाभिदग्धजले पायौ न्यस्तनालोत्कटासनः ।

आधाराकुञ्जनं कुर्यात्क्षालनं वस्तिकर्म तत् ॥

(Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.26)

-
- ²⁸ सूत्रं वितस्ति सुक्षिग्धं नासानाले प्रवेशयेत् ।
मुखान्निर्गमयेद्यैषा नेति: सिद्धैर्निर्गद्यते ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.29)
- ²⁹ निरीक्षेन्निश्चलदशा सूक्ष्मलक्ष्यं समाहितः ।
अश्रुसंपातपर्यन्तमाचार्यैस्त्राटकं स्मृतम् ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.31)
- ³⁰ अमन्दावर्तवेगेन तुन्दं सव्यापसव्यतः ।
नतांसो भ्रामयेदेषा नौरिः सिद्धैः प्रशस्यते ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.33)
- ³¹ भस्त्रावल्लोहकारस्य रेचपूरौ सरसंब्रमौ ।
कपालभातिर्वस्याता कफदोषविशोषणी ॥ (Hathayoga-pradīpikā II.35)
- ³² न तत्र रथा न रथयोगा न पन्थानो भवन्ति
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad IV.3.10)
- ³³ मायामात्रं तु कात्स्वर्येनानभिव्यक्तस्वरूपत्वात् ॥ (Brahmasūtra III.2.3)
- ³⁴ स्वप्रनिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा ॥ (Yogasūtra I.38)

5. Devotion and Karma-yoga

- ¹ सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूपममलं क्षीराब्दिमध्ययस्थितं
योगारूढमतिप्रसन्नवदनं भूषासहस्रोज्ज्वलम् ।
त्यक्षं चक्रपिनाकसाभयवरान्विभ्राणमर्कच्छविं
छत्रीभूतफणीन्द्रमिन्दुधवलं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं भजे ॥
(Dhyāna-śloka of Mantrarāja of Lakṣmī-Narasimha)
- ² लं पृथिव्यात्मने गन्धं कल्पयामि ।
हं आकाशात्मने पुष्ठं कल्पयामि ।
यं वाव्यात्मने धूपमाग्रापयामि ।
रं अमृतात्मने दीपं दर्शयामि ।
वं अमृतात्मने अमृतोपहारं निवेदयामि ।
सं सर्वात्मने सर्वोपचारपूजास्समर्पयामि । (Words of pañcopacāra-pūjā)
- ³ उं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥ (Mantrarāja of Lakṣmī-Narasimha)

⁴ महेश्वरे वा जगतामधीश्वरे जनार्दने वा जगदन्तरात्मनि ।
न वस्तुभेदप्रतिपत्तिरस्ति मे तथाऽपि भक्तिस्तरुणेन्दुशोखरे ॥

(Bhartṛhari's *Vairāgya-śataka*)

6. Exposure to Kunḍalinī-yoga

¹ श्री शारदायै नमः ।

² इयं सुषुमा नाडी ।

³ इयं वज्रा नाडी ।

⁴ इयं चित्रिणी नाडी । अत्र ब्रह्मनाडी वर्तते । सा सुषुम्नेत्यपि व्यपदिश्यते ।

⁵ इयम् इडा नाडी ।

⁶ इयं पिङ्गला नाडी ।

⁷ तदुकं यामले-

इडा च पिङ्गला चैव तस्य वामे च दक्षिणे ।

ऋज्ज्वीभूते शिरे ते च वामदक्षिणभेदतः ।

सर्वपद्मानि संवेष्ट नासारन्ध्रगते शुभे ॥

इति । अत्र 'शिरे ते च' इत्यत्र चकारो वार्थः । ... एतेनानयोः स्थित्यां द्विविधः कल्पो दर्शितः । अन्यत्रानयोर्धनुराकारेण स्थितिरुक्ता । तद्यथा - विद्वि ते धनुराकारे नाडीडापिङ्गले परे ॥ इति ।

(*Yāmalā* - Kālicaraṇa's commentary on the first verse of the
Saṭcakranirūpaṇa)

⁸ इदं मूलाधार-चक्रम् ।

⁹ इदं स्वाधिष्ठान-चक्रम् ।

¹⁰ इदं मणिपूर-चक्रम् ।

¹¹ इदम् अनाहत-चक्रम् ।

¹² इदं विशुद्ध-चक्रम् ।

¹³ इदम् आज्ञा-चक्रम् ।

¹⁴ अत्र परमशिवः स्थितः ।

¹⁵ चत्वारि वाक्परिमिता पदानि तानि विदुर्ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिणः ।

-
- गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेङ्यन्ति तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति ॥ (Rg-veda I.164.45)
- ¹⁶ चतुर्दलं स्यादाधारं स्वाधिष्ठानं च षड्लम् ॥ (Yogacūḍāmaṇi-upaniṣad 4cd)
- ¹⁷ नाभौ दशदलं पद्मं हृदयं द्वादशारकम् ।
- पोऽशारं विशुद्धाख्यं भ्रूमध्ये द्विदलं तथा ॥ (Yogacūḍāmaṇi-upaniṣad 5)
- ¹⁸ सहस्रदलसङ्घयातं ब्रह्मरन्धे महापथि । (Yogacūḍāmaṇi-upaniṣad 6 ab)
- ¹⁹ तस्योर्ध्वं नाभिमूले दशदललसिते पूर्णमेघप्रकाशे
नीलाभ्योजप्रकाशैरुपहितजठरे डादिफान्तैः सचन्द्रैः ।
- ध्यायेद्वैश्वानरस्यारुणमिहिरसमं मण्डलं तत्त्विकोणम्
तद्वाह्ये स्वस्तिकारव्यैस्थिभिलसितं तत्र वह्नः स्वबीजम् ॥ (Saṭcakranirūpana 19)
- ²⁰ ध्यायेन्मेषाधिरूढं नवतपननिभं वेदवाहूज्ज्वलाङ्गं
तत्कोडे रुद्रमूर्तिर्निवसति सततं शुद्धसिन्दूररागः ।
भरस्मालिप्ताङ्गभूषाभरणसितवपुर्वद्वरूपी त्रिनेत्रो
लोकानामिष्ठदाताऽभयलसितकरः सुषिसंहारकारी ॥ (Saṭcakranirūpana 20)
- ²¹ अत्रास्ते लाकिनी सा सकलशुभकरी वेदवाहूज्ज्वलाङ्गी
श्यामा पीताम्बराद्यैर्विविधविरचनालङ्कृता मत्तचित्ता ।
ध्यात्वैततन्नाभिपद्मं प्रभवति नितरां संहृतौ पालने वा
वाणी तस्याननाब्जे निवसति सततं ज्ञानसन्दोहलक्ष्मीः ॥ (Saṭcakranirūpana 21)
- ²² आज्ञासीद्वैरवी मे तव खलु करुणावारिधि शारदाम्बा
साशाङ्गं योगमारादुपदिशति भवानौरसः सूनुरस्याः ।
- (Śrī-śāradā-śataslokistavah 25ab)
- ²³ आगच्छन्ती सदनमदसीयं पुरा शारदाम्बा
ताटङ्गाङ्गा मुदितवदना स्वप्न एवं ह्यपश्यम् ।
काले काले बहुलकृपया शब्दयन्ती स्वनाम्ना
ह्यायं ह्यायं सकलमपि मे वोधयामास देवी ॥ (Śrī-śāradā-stuti-mañjarī 13)
- ²⁴ ब्रह्म-ग्रन्थिं भित्तेयमूर्धं गच्छति ।
- ²⁵ विष्णु-ग्रन्थिशिष्ठन्नः ।
- ²⁶ रुद्रग्रन्थिभेदो जातः ।
- ²⁷ कुण्डलिनी परमशिवेन युक्ता ।

²⁸ प्रसार्य स्वशरीरं तु सुषुम्नावदनान्तरे ॥ (Yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣad I.66cd)

²⁹ ब्रह्मग्रन्थं ततो भित्वा रजोगुणसमुद्धवम् ।

सुषुम्नावदने शीघ्रं विच्छुलेखेव संस्कुरेत् ॥ (Yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣad I.67)

³⁰ विष्णुग्रन्थं प्रयात्युच्चैः सत्वरं हृदि संस्थिता ।

उर्ध्वं गच्छति यच्चास्ते रुद्रग्रन्थं तदुद्धवम् ॥ (Yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣad I.68)

³¹ भ्रुवोर्मध्यं तु संभिद्य याति शीतांशुमण्डलम् ।

(Yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣad I.69ab)

³² ब्रह्मग्रन्थिरकारे च विष्णुग्रन्थिर्हृदि स्थितः ॥ (Brahmavidyā-upaniṣad 70cd)

³³ रुद्रग्रन्थिर्भ्रुवोर्मध्ये भिद्यतेऽक्षरवायुना । (Brahmavidyā-upaniṣad 71ab)

7. Contemplation on the Ātman

¹ आत्मामोघेस्तरङ्गोऽस्म्यहमिति गमने

² आत्मामोघेस्तरङ्गोऽस्म्यहमिति गमने भावयन्नासनस्थः

संवित्सूत्रानुविद्धो मणिरहमिति वाऽस्मीन्द्रियार्थप्रतीतौ ।

द्रष्टा(दृष्टे)ऽस्म्यात्मावलोकादिति शयनविद्यौ मम आनन्दसिन्धौ

अन्तर्निष्ठो मुमुक्षुः स खलु तनुभृतां यो नयत्येवमायुः ॥ (Śatasloki 12)

³ ... भावयन्नासनस्थः

संवित्सूत्रानुविद्धो मणिरहमिति वाऽस्मी

⁴ ... इन्द्रियार्थप्रतीतौ ।

द्रष्टा(दृष्टे)ऽस्म्यात्मावलोकादिति

⁵ शयनविद्यौ मम आनन्दसिन्धौ

⁶ अन्तर्निष्ठो मुमुक्षुः स खलु तनुभृतां यो नयत्येवमायुः ॥

⁷ वस्तुतत्रो भवेद्वोधः कर्तृतत्रमुपासनम् ॥ (Pañcadasī IX.74cd)

⁸ विचाराजायते बोधोऽनिच्छा यं न निवर्तयेत् ।

स्वोत्पत्तिमात्रात्संसारे दहत्परिलसत्यताम् ॥ (Pañcadasī IX.75)

⁹ पुरुषस्येच्छ्या कर्तुमकर्तुं कर्तुमन्यथा ।

शक्योपास्त्रिरतो नित्यं कुर्यात्पत्ययसन्ततिम् ॥ (Pañcadasī IX.80)

¹⁰ ब्रह्मज्ञानायते साक्षात्तिर्गुणोपासनं शनैः ॥ (Pañcadasī IX.122cd)

- ¹¹ जनिविपरीतकमतो बुद्धा प्रविलाप्य पञ्चभूतानि ।
परिशिष्टमात्मतत्त्वं पश्यन्नास्ते मुनिश्शान्तः: (Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa 11)
- ¹² प्रविलाप्य पञ्चभूतानि
- ¹³ पृथिव्यप्सु पयो वहौ वहिर्वर्यौ नभस्यसौ ।
नभोऽप्यव्याकृते तच्च शुद्धे शुद्धोऽस्यहं हरिः ॥ (Brahmānucintana 12)
- ¹⁴ परिशिष्टमात्मतत्त्वं पश्यन्
- ¹⁵ क्षणं ब्रह्माहमस्मीति यः कुर्यादात्मचिन्तनम् ॥ (Brahmānucintana 9cd)
- ¹⁶ तन्महापातकं हन्ति तमः सूर्योदयो यथा । (Brahmānucintana 10ab)

8. Initiating Deep Meditation

- ¹ ऐं क्लीं सौः सौः क्लीं ऐं (Bālā-Tripurasundarī-mantra)
- ² अरुणकिरणजालैरच्छिताशावकाशा
विघृतजपटीकापुस्तकाभीतिहस्ता ।
इतरकरवराढ्या फुल्कल्हारसंसंथा
निवसतु हृदि बाला नित्यकल्याणशीला ॥ (Dhyāna-sloka of Bālā-Tripurasundarī-mantra)
- ³ ओं नमो नारायणाय (Nārāyaṇa-aṣṭākṣarī-mantra)

9. Meditation and Samādhi on Divine Forms

- ¹ वर्हापीडं नटवरवपुः कर्णयोः कर्णिकारं
विश्रद्धासः कनककपिशं वैजयन्तीं च मालाम् ।
रन्धान्वेणोरधरसुधया पूरयन्नोपवृन्दै-
र्वृन्दारण्यं स्वपद्रमणं प्राविशद्वीतकीर्तिः ॥ (Bhāgavata X.21.5)
- ² करारविन्देन पदारविन्दं मुखारविन्दे विनिवेशयन्तम् ।
वटस्य पत्रस्य पुटे शयानं बालं मुकुन्दं मनसा स्मरामि ॥ (Balamukundāṣṭakam 1)
- ³ किरीटहरकेयूरकटकादिविभूषितम् ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.84)
- ⁴ शार्ङ्गशार्ङ्गगदारवज्ञचक्राक्षवलयान्वितम् ।
वरदाभयहस्तं च मुद्रिकारात्मभूषितम् ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.85)

- ⁵ चिन्तयेत्तन्मयो योगी समाधायात्ममानसम् ।
 तावद्यावहृष्टीभूता तत्रैव नृप धारणा ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.86)
- ⁶ ब्रजतस्तिष्ठतोऽन्यद्वा स्वेच्छया कर्म कुर्वतः ।
 नापायाति यदा चित्तात्सद्वां मन्येत तां तदा ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.87)
- ⁷ ततः शाङ्खगदाचकशार्जादिरहितं बुधः ।
 चिन्तयेद्द्वयवद्वूपं प्रशान्तं साक्षसूत्रकम् ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.88)
- ⁸ सा यदा धारणा तद्वद्वस्थानवती ततः ।
 किरीटकेयूरमुखैर्भूषणौ रहितं स्मरेत् ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.89)
- ⁹ तदेकावयवं देवं चेतसा हि पुनर्बुधः ॥ (Viṣṇu-purāṇa VI.7.90ab)
- ¹⁰ तत्सर्वव्यापकं चित्तमाकृच्येत्र धारयेत् ।
 नान्यानि चिन्तयेद्द्वुधः सुस्मितं भावयेन्मुखम् ॥ (Bhāgavata-purāṇa XI.14.43)
- ¹¹ देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ (Yogaśūtra III.1)
- ¹² तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ (Yogaśūtra III.2)
- ¹³ तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥ (Yogaśūtra III.3)
- ¹⁴ उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम् ।
 ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनि समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ (Kaivalya-upaniṣad 7)

¹⁵ वशीकृते मनस्येषां सगुणब्रह्मशीलनात् ।
 तदेवाविर्भवेत्साक्षादपेतोपाधिकल्पनम् ॥

(Cited in *Kalpataru*, gloss relating to *Brahmasūtra* I.1.20)

10. Ascent of the Kundalini and Descent of Nectar

- ¹ सहस्राराम्बुजारूढा सुधासाराभिवर्षिणी ॥ (Lalitā-sahasranāma II.39 cd)
- ² शीर्षाम्भोरुहमध्ये शीतलपीयूषवर्षिणीं भवतीम् ।
 अनुदिनमनुचिन्तयतामायुष्यं भवति पुष्कलमवन्याम् ॥ (Āryādviśatī 211)
- ³ शीर्षाम्भोरुहमध्ये
- ⁴ शीतलपीयूषवर्षिणीं भवतीम् ।
 अनुदिनमनुचिन्तयतामायुष्यं भवति पुष्कलमवन्याम् ॥

11. From Divine Forms to the Formless Reality

¹ ओं नमः शिवाय।

² भूरभ्मास्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर्नाथो हिमांशुः पुमा-

नित्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्यष्टकम्।

नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभो-

स्तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

(*Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra* 9)

³ शान्तं पद्मासनस्थं शशधरमकुटं पञ्चवक्त्रं त्रिनेत्रं

शूलं वत्रं च खड्गं परशुमध्यदं दक्षभागे वहन्तम्।

नागं पाशं च घण्टां प्रलयहुतवहं साङ्कुशं वामभागे

नानालङ्घारयुक्तं स्फटिकमणिनिभं पार्वतीशं नमामि ॥

(*Dhyāna-slokā* of *Śiva-pañcākṣari-mantra*)

⁴ वत्स, शःप्रभृत्यत्र निराकारे परे तत्त्वे मनः समाधत्स्व । अचिरेण ब्रह्मसंस्थो भविष्यसि ।

(Īśvarā's words to Acharyal)

⁵ ओं नमो भगवते दक्षिणामूर्तये मह्यं मेघां प्रज्ञां प्रयच्छ स्वाहा ।

(*dhyāna-sloka Medha-Dakṣiṇāmūrti-mantra*)

⁶ स्फटिकरजतवर्णं मौक्तिकीमक्षमाला-

ममृतकलशविद्याज्ञानमुद्राः कराब्जैः।

दघतमुरगकक्ष्यं चन्द्रचूडं त्रिनेत्रं

विघृतविविघभूषं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

(*Dhyāna-sloka of Medha-Dakṣiṇāmūrti-mantra found in Dakṣiṇāmūrti-upaniṣad* 3)

12. Intense Reflection and Focus on Brahman

¹ ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.1.1)

² आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न विभेति कुतश्चनेति ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.9.1)

³ यदा ह्यैवैष एतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.8.1)

⁴ महाभूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā* XIII.5)

⁵ इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सङ्घातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā* XIII.6)

⁶ सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.1.1)

⁷ तस्माद्ब्रा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः । आकाशाद्ब्रायुः ।

वायोरग्निः । अग्नेरापः । अज्यः पृथिवी ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad*. II.1.1)

⁸ यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति ।

यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसर्विशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्विद्यति । (*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* III.1.1)

⁹ स यशायं पुरुषे । यशासावादित्ये । स एकः ।

(*Taittirīya-upaniṣad* II.8.5)

¹⁰ सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā* VI.29)

¹¹ यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā* VI.30)

¹² अहमेव परं ब्रह्म वासुदेवाख्यमव्ययम् ।

(*Brahmānucintana* 1ab)

¹³ ब्रह्मानां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā* VII.19)

¹⁴ परमार्थतत्त्वं च वासुदेवाख्यं परब्रह्माभिधेयभूतं विशेषतोऽभिव्यञ्जयत्... गीताशास्त्रम् ।

(*Bhagavatpāda's introduction to Gītā-bhāṣya*)

¹⁵ छाद्यामि जगद्विश्वं भूत्या सूर्यं इवांशुभिः ।

सर्वभूताधिवासश्च वासुदेवस्ततः स्मृतः ॥

(*Moksadharma of Mahābhārata* XII.328.36)

¹⁶ सर्वाणि तत्र भूतानि वसन्ति परमात्मनि ।

भूतेषु च सर्वात्मा वासुदेवस्ततः स्मृतः ॥

(*Viṣṇu-purāṇa* VI.8.80)

¹⁷ अहमेव परं ब्रह्म वासुदेवाख्यमव्ययम् ।

(*Brahmānucintana* 1ab)

¹⁸ ब्रह्माकारमनोवृत्तिप्रवाहोऽहङ्कृतिं विना ।

संप्रज्ञातसमाधिः स्याच्यानाभ्यासप्रकर्षतः ॥

(*Muktika-upaniṣad* 53)

¹⁹ ज्ञात्राच्यविलयेनैव ज्ञेये ब्रह्मणि केवले ।

तदाकारकारितया चित्तवृत्तरवस्थितिः ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 820)

²⁰ सद्गुरः स एव विज्ञेयः समाधिः सविकल्पकः ।

मृद् एवावभानेऽपि मृन्मयद्विषभानवत् ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 821)

²¹ सन्मात्रवस्तुभानेऽपि त्रिपुटी भाति सन्मयी ।

समाधिरत एवायं सविकल्प इतीर्यते ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 822)

²² अहमेव परं ब्रह्म वासुदेवारव्यमव्ययम् ।

(*Brahmānucintana* 1ab)

²³ नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तसत्यस्वभावं परमानन्दाद्वयं

प्रत्यग्भूतचैतन्यं ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मि ।

(*Pañcikaraṇa*)

²⁴ यच्च किञ्चिजगत्सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ।

अन्तर्बहिंश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥

(*Mahānārāyaṇa-upaniṣad* XIII.5)

²⁵ वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ॥

(*Chāndogya-upaniṣad* VI.1.4)

²⁶ सर्वाधिष्ठानभूतसन्मात्रब्रह्मास्मि ।

²⁷ दृश्यशब्दानुवेधेन सविकल्पः पुनर्दिधा ॥

(*Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* 3cd)

²⁸ कामाद्याश्चित्तगा दृश्यास्तत्साक्षित्वेन चेतनम् ।

ध्यायेदृश्यानुविद्धोऽयं समाधिस्सविकल्पकः ॥

(*Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* 24)

²⁹ असङ्गसच्चिदानन्दस्त्वप्रभो द्वैतवर्जितः ।

असमीति शब्दानुविद्धोऽयं समाधिस्सविकल्पकः ॥

(*Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* 25)

³⁰ हृदीव वाद्यदेशोऽपि यस्मिन् कस्मिंश्च वस्तुनि ।

समाधिरायस्सन्मात्रान्नामरूपपृथकृतिः ॥

(*Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* 27)

³¹ अखण्डैकरसं वस्तु सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् ।

इत्यविच्छिन्नचिन्त्येयं समाधिर्घमध्यमो भवेत् ॥

(*Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* 28)

13. Enlightenment and Establishment in Brahman

¹ विगलितसर्वविकल्पः शुद्धो बुद्धश्वकास्ति परमात्मा ॥ (*Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* 4cd)

² विगलितसर्वविकल्पः

³ यो वै भूमा तत्सुखम् (Chāndogya-upaniṣad VII.23.1)

⁴ यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमाऽथ

यत्रान्यत्पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पम् ॥

(Chāndogya-upaniṣad VII.24.1)

⁵ नास्वादयेत्सुखं तत्र निःसङ्गः प्रज्ञया भवेत् । (Māndūkya-upaniṣad III.45ab)

⁶ शनैश्चनैरुपरमेद्वच्छा धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्॥ (Bhagavad-gītā VI.25)

⁷ यथा निरिन्धनो वह्निः स्वयोनावुपशाम्यति ।

तथा वृत्तिक्षयाच्चित्तं स्वयोनावुपशम्यति ॥ (Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad IV.4.1)

^८ लयविक्षेपरहितं मनः कृत्वा सुनिश्चलम् ।

यदा यात्यमनीभावं तदा तत्परमं पदम् ॥ (Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad IV.4.7)

⁹ तावदेव निरोद्धव्यं हृदि यावत्क्षयं गतम् । (Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad IV.4.8ab)

¹⁰ निरन्तराभ्यासवशात्तदित्थं पकं मनो ब्रह्मणि लीयते यदा।

तदा समाधिः स विकल्पवर्जितः स्वतोऽद्वयानन्दरसानुभावकः ॥

(Vivekacūdāmaṇi 363)

¹¹ समाधिनानेन समस्तवासनाग्रन्थैर्विनाशोऽखिलकर्मनाशः ।

अन्तर्बहिः सर्वत एव सर्वदा स्वरूपविस्फूर्तिरयत्तिः स्यात् ॥ (Vivekacūdāmaṇi 364)

¹² श्रुतेः शतगुणं विद्यान्मननं मननादपि ।

निदिध्यासं लक्षणुमनन्तं निविकल्पकम् ॥ (Vivekacūdāmaṇi 365)

¹³ निविकल्पकसमाधिना स्फुटं ब्रह्मतत्त्वमवगम्यते ध्रुवम् ।

नान्यथा चलतया मनोगतेः प्रत्ययान्तरविमिश्वितं भवेत् ॥ (Vivekacūdāmaṇi 366)

¹⁴ समाधिनिधूतमलस्य चेतसो निवेशितस्यात्मनि यत्सुखं भवेत् ।

न शक्यते वर्णायितुं गिरा तदा स्वयं तदन्तःकरणेन गृह्णते ॥

(*Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad* IV.4.9)

¹⁵ यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā VI.20)

¹⁶ सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धियाद्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्वलति तत्त्वतः ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā VI.21)

¹⁷ द्विविधः समाधिः संप्रज्ञातोऽसंप्रज्ञातश्च, ध्येयैकाकारसत्त्ववृत्तिर्भेदेन कथञ्जिज्ञायमाना

संप्रज्ञातः समाधिः, कथमपि पृथगज्ञायमाना सैव सत्त्ववृत्तिरसंप्रज्ञातः समाधिः

(Anandagiri's gloss on Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on verse (VI.20) of the *Bhagavad-gītā*)

¹⁸ ज्ञात्रादिभावमुत्सृज्य ज्ञेयमात्रस्थितिर्द्वा ।

मनसो निर्विकल्पः स्यात्समाधिर्योगसंज्ञितः ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 823)

¹⁹ जले निक्षिसलवणं जलमात्रतया स्थितम् ।

पृथङ् न भाति किन्त्वम् एकमेवावभासते ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 824)

²⁰ यथा तथैव सा वृत्तिर्बह्यमात्रतया स्थिता ।

पृथङ् न भाति ब्रह्मैवाद्वितीयमवभासते ॥

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ* 825)

²¹ ज्ञात्रादिकल्पनाऽभावान्मतोऽयं निर्विकल्पकः ।

(*Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgraha* 826ab)

²² आदौ जलधिजीमूतभेरीनिर्झरसंभवः ।

मध्ये मर्दलशब्दाभो घटाकाहलजस्तथा ॥

अन्ते तु किंकिरीवंशवीणान्नमरनिःस्वनः । (Nādabindu-upaniṣad 35ab)

²³ विस्मृत्य सकलं बाह्यं नादे दुग्धाम्बुवन्मनः ।

एकीभूयाथ सहसा चिदाकाशे विलीयते ॥ (Nādabindu-upaniṣad 39)

²⁴ योगो हि बहुधा ब्रह्मन्मिद्यते व्यवहारतः ।

मन्त्रयोगो लयश्चैव हठोऽसौ राजयोगतः ॥ (Yogatattva-upaniṣad 19)

²⁵ लययोगश्चित्तलयः कोटिशः परिकीर्तिः । (Yogatattva-upaniṣad 23ab)

²⁶ सदाशिवोक्तानि सपादलक्षलयावधानानि वसन्ति लोके ।

नादानुसन्धानसमाधिमेकं मन्यामहे मान्यतमं लयानाम् ॥ (Yogatārāvali 2)

²⁷ अन्यदेव तद्विदितात् (Kena-upaniṣad I.3)

²⁸ येनेदः सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात्

(Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad II.4.14)

²⁹ न विज्ञातेर्विज्ञातारं विजानीयाः (Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad III.4.2)

³⁰ नान्यदतोऽस्ति विज्ञात् (Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad III.8.11)

³¹ ... अविद्याध्यारोपणनिराकरणमात्रं ब्रह्मणि कर्तव्यं न तु ब्रह्मज्ञाने यतोऽत्यन्तप्रसिद्धत्वात् ।

अविद्याकल्पितनामरूपविशेषाकारापहृतवृद्धित्वा-दत्यन्तप्रसिद्धं

सुविज्ञेयमासन्नतरमात्मभूतमप्यप्रसिद्धं दुर्विज्ञेयमतिदूरमन्यदिव च

प्रतिभात्यविवेकिनाम् । बाह्याकारनिवृत्तवृद्धीनां तु लब्धगुरुत्मप्रसादानां नातः परं सुखं

सुप्रसिद्धं सुविज्ञेयं स्वासन्नमस्ति ।

(Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on verse (XVIII.50) of the
Bhagavad-gītā)

³² एतावद्वि ब्राह्मणेन कर्तव्यं यदुत सर्वानात्मप्रत्ययतिरस्करणमेतत्कृत्वा कृतकृत्यो योगी
भवति । (Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad)

³³ प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā XIV.22)

³⁴ ... यथाऽतत्त्वदर्शी कथश्चित्तमात्मत्वेन प्रतिपन्नश्चित्तचलनमनुचलित-मात्मानं
मन्यमानस्तत्त्वाचलितं देहादिभूतमात्मानं कदाचिन्मन्यते
प्रच्युतोऽहमात्मतत्त्वादिदानीमिति । समाहिते तु मनसि कदाचित्तत्त्वभूतं प्रसन्नात्मानं मन्यत
इदानीमस्मि तत्त्वीभूत इति । न तथाऽत्मविद्धवेत् । आत्मन
एकरूपत्वात्स्वरूपप्रच्यवनासम्भवाच । सदैव ब्रह्मास्मीत्यप्रच्युतो भवेत् ...

(Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya* on the *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* (II.38))

³⁵ जीवभावजगद्भावबाधे स्वात्मैव शिष्यते ॥ (Pañcadasī VI.12cd)

³⁶ नाप्रतीतिस्तयोर्बाधः किन्तु मिथ्यात्वनिश्चयः ।

नो चेत्सुपुस्मूर्च्छादौ मुच्येतायतो जनः ॥ (Pañcadasī VI.13)

³⁷ परमात्मावशेषोऽपि तत्सत्यत्वविनिश्चयः ।

न जगद्विस्मृतिर्नां चेजीवन्मुक्तिर्न संभवेत् ॥ *(Pañcadaśī VI.14)*

³⁸ स्वानुभूतिरसावेशाहशब्दावेष्यतु ।

निर्विकल्पस्समाधिस्स्यान्निवातस्थितदीपवत् ॥ (*Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad* 26)

³⁹ स्थब्धीभावो रसास्वादात्तृतीयः पूर्ववन्मतः ।

(Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad 29ab)

⁴⁰ स्वनुभवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः *(Vivekacūḍāmaṇi 2)*

⁴¹ सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मकोऽहमित्येष आत्मानुभवः । न

चैवमात्मानमनुभवतः किञ्चिदन्यत्कृत्यमवशिष्यते

(Bhagavatpāda's Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya IV.1.2))

⁴² तत्रोपास्यसाक्षात्कारपर्यन्तामुपासितं कृत्वा यदि ज्ञाने प्रवर्तते तदा

वासनाक्षयमनोनाशयोर्दृढतरत्वेन ज्ञानादूर्ध्वं विद्वत्संन्यासजीवन्मुक्ती स्वत एव सिद्ध्यतः ।

तादृश एव शास्त्राभिमतो मुख्यो विद्याधिकारी ।

(Vāsanākṣayaprakaraṇa of the Jivanmukti-viveka)

⁴³ अपि च नैवात्र विविदितव्यं ब्रह्मविदा किञ्चित्कालं शरीरं ध्रियते न वा ध्रियत इति । कथं

ह्येकस्य स्वहृदयप्रत्ययं ब्रह्मवेदनं देहधारणं चापरेण प्रतिक्षेप्तुं शक्यते ? श्रुतिस्मृतिषु च

स्थितप्रज्ञलक्षणनिर्देशेनैतदेव निरुच्यते ।

(Bhagavatpāda's Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya on sūtra (IV.1.15))

⁴⁴ आरब्धस्य फले ह्येते भोगो ज्ञानं च कर्मणः ।

अविरोधस्तयोर्युक्तो वैधर्म्यं चेतरस्य तु ॥ (*Upadeśasāhasrī* Metrical part IV.4)

⁴⁵ देहात्मज्ञानवज्ञानं देहात्मज्ञानवाधकम् ।

आत्मन्येव भवेद्यस्य स नेच्छन्नपि मुच्यते ॥

(Upadeśasāhasrī Metrical part IV.5)

⁴⁶ कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।

अभिमतो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ *(Bhagavad-gītā IV.26)*

⁴⁷ स ब्राह्मणः केन स्याद्येन स्यात्तेनदृश एव ।

(Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad III.5.1)

⁴⁸ एष नित्यो महिमा ब्राह्मणस्य न वर्यते कर्मणा नो कनीयान् ।

(*Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* IV.4.23)

14. The Divine Drama that Followed

¹ एष ब्रह्मलोकः सम्राटेन प्रापितोऽसीति होवाच याज्ञवल्क्यः

(*Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* IV.4.23)

² यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति (Kena-upaniṣad II.1)

³ स एष नारदः सर्वातिशयं प्राणं स्वमात्मानं सर्वात्मानं श्रुत्वा नातः

परमस्तीत्युपरराम । न पूर्ववत्किमस्ति भगवः प्राणाद्यूय इति

पप्रच्छ । यतस्तमेवं विकाराननृतब्रह्मविज्ञानेन पीरतुष्मकृतार्थं

परमार्थसत्यातिवादिनमात्मानं मन्यमानं योग्यं शिष्यं

मिथ्याग्रहविशेषाद्विप्रच्यावयन्नाह भगवान्सनत्कुमारः ।

(*Bhāṣya* on the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* VII.16.1)

⁴ विदिताविदिताभ्यां निवर्त्य बुद्धिं शिष्यस्य स्वात्मन्यवस्थाप्य तदेव

ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धीति स्वाराज्येऽभिषिच्योपास्यप्रतिषेधेनाथास्य बुद्धिं

विचालयति यदि मन्यसे सुवेदाहं ब्रह्मेति... । सा पुनर्विचालना

किमर्थेन्तुच्यते पूर्वगृहीते वस्तुनि बुद्धेः स्थिरतायै ।

(*Vākyabhaṣya* on *Kena-upaniṣad* II.1)

⁵ भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थश्चिछयन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्मणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥ (Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad II.2.8)

⁶ अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्वुते (*Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* IV.4.7)

⁷ यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृपश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā III.17)

⁸ तत्त्वमाध्यात्मिकं दृष्टं तत्त्वं दृष्टं तु बाह्यतः ।

तत्त्वीभूतस्तदारामस्तत्त्वादप्रच्युतो भवान् ॥ (Paramacharyal's utterance)

⁹ तत्त्वमाध्यात्मिकं दृष्ट्वा तत्त्वं दृष्ट्वा तु बाह्यतः ।

तत्त्वीभूतस्तदारामस्तत्त्वादप्रच्युतो भवेत् ॥ (Gauḍapāda kārikā II.38)

¹⁰ निश्चिन्त्य सकृदात्मानं यदापेक्षा तदैव तम् ।

वरुं मन्तुं तथा ध्यातुं शकोत्पेव हि तत्त्ववित ॥ (Pañcadasī IX.95)

- ¹¹ उपासक इव ध्यायँस्त्रौकिकं विस्मरेद्यदि ।
विस्मरत्वेव सा ध्यानाद्विस्मृतिर्न तु वेदनात् ॥ *(Pañcadasī IX.96)*
- ¹² ध्यानं तैच्छिकमेतस्य वेदनान्मुक्तिसिद्धितः । *(Pañcadasī IX.97ab)*
- ¹³ निरोधस्थितिकालकमानुभवेन निरोधचित्तकृतसंस्कारास्तित्वमनुमेयम् ।
(Vyāsa's *bhāṣya* on *Yogasūtra* (I.51))

¹⁴ एतदुक्तं भवति - वैराग्याभ्यासप्रकर्षानुरोधी निरोधप्रकर्षे
मुहूर्तार्धयामादिव्यापितयाऽनुभूयते योगिना

(Vacaspati Miśra's gloss, Tattva-Vaiśāradī)

- ¹⁵ शौनक उवाच
स वै निवृत्तिनिरतः सर्वत्रोपेक्षको मुनिः ।
कस्य वा वृहतीमेतामात्मारामः समभ्यसत् ॥ *(Bhāgavata-purāṇa I.7.9)*
- ¹⁶ सूत उवाच
आत्मारामाश्च मुनयो निर्गन्था अप्युरुक्मे ।
कुवन्त्यहैतुर्की भक्तिमित्यभूतगुणो हरिः ॥ *(Bhāgavata-purāṇa I.7.10)*
- ¹⁷ हरेर्गुणाक्षिसमतिर्भर्गवान्वादारायणिः ।
अध्यगान्महदाख्यानं नित्यं विष्णुजनप्रियः ॥ *(Bhāgavata-purāṇa I.7.11)*
- ¹⁸ अत्र भूमिकात्रितयं ब्रह्मविद्यायाः साधनमेव, न तु विद्याकोटावन्तर्भवति ।

(Śrī Vidyāraṇya's Svarūpasiddhiprayojana-prakaraṇa of Jīvanmukti-viveka)

¹⁹ ... ब्रह्मात्मैक्यसाक्षात्कारश्चतुर्थीं भूमिका फलरूपा सत्त्वापत्तिः ।... सोऽयं चतुर्थीं भूमिकां प्राप्तो योगी ब्रह्मविदित्युच्यते । पञ्चम्यादयस्तिस्त्रो भूमयो जीवन्मुक्तेरवान्तरभेदाः । ते च निर्विकल्पसमाध्यासकृतेन विश्वान्ति तारतम्येन संपद्यन्ते । पञ्चमभूमौ निर्विकल्पकात् स्वयमेव व्युत्तिष्ठते । सोऽयं योगी ब्रह्मविद्वरः । षष्ठभूमौ पार्श्वस्थैर्वाधितो व्युत्तिष्ठते । सोऽयं ब्रह्मविद्वरीयान् ।... तुरीयाभिधां सप्तमीं भूमिं प्राप्तस्य योगिनः स्वतः परतो वा व्युत्थानमेव नास्ति ।... सोऽयमीदशो योगी...ब्रह्मविद्वरिष्ठ इत्युच्यते ।

(Śrī Vidyāraṇya's Svarūpasiddhiprayojana-prakaraṇa of Jīvanmukti-viveka)

²⁰ भ्रष्टवीजोपमा भूयो जन्माङ्करविवर्जिता ।

हृदि जीवद्विमुक्तानां शुद्धा वसति वासना ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha V.4.132)

²¹ अपि वर्षसहस्रान्ते तयैवान्तरवस्थया ।

सति देहे प्रबुद्ध्यन्ते कुतोऽत्युच्छूलया शनैः ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha V.4.134)

²² अन्तः संत्यक्तसर्वाशो वीतरागो विवासनः ।

वहिः सर्वसमाचारो लोके विहर राघव ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha V.2.56)

²³ बहिः कृत्रिमसंरभमो हृदि संरभवर्जितः ।

कर्ता वहिरकर्तान्तलोके विहर राघव ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha V.2.57)

²⁴ बहिस्तसोऽन्तरा शीतो लोके विहर राघव ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha V.2.60 cd)

²⁵ यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ (Bhagavad-gītā III.21)

²⁶ अविद्वद्दनुसारेण वृत्तिर्बुद्धस्य युज्यते ।

स्तनन्धयानुसारेण वर्तते तप्तिप्राय यतः ॥ (Pañcadaśī VII.287)

²⁷ येनायं नटनेनात्र बुध्यते कार्यमेव तत् ।

(Pañcadaśī VII.290ab)

²⁸ न विधिर्निषेधश्च त्वत्प्रसादादहं पुनः ।

तथापि तव वाक्यं तत्करणीयं च सर्वदा ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha VI.18.74)

²⁹ वेदागमपुराणेषु स्मृतिष्वपि महामुने ।

गुरुवाक्यं विधिः प्रोक्तो निषेधस्तद्विपर्ययः ॥ (Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha VI.18.75)

³⁰ ननु ज्ञानिनो रागाद्यभ्युपगमे धर्माधर्मद्वारेण जन्मान्तरप्रसङ्ग इति चेन्मैवम्,

अद्गंधवीजवदविद्यापूर्वककामादेव मुख्यरागादित्वेन पुनर्जन्महेतुत्वात् । ज्ञानिनस्तु

द्गंधवीजवदाभासमात्रा एव रागादयः ।

(Śrī Vidyāraṇya's Vāsānākṣaya-prakaraṇa of Jivanmukti-viveka)

³¹ ... तत्काले मुख्यवदेवाभासमानानां बाधकत्वात्, रज्जुसर्पोऽपि मुख्यसर्पवदेव तदानीं

भीषयन्नुपलभ्यते तद्वत् । तर्हाभासत्वानुसन्धानानुवृत्तौ न कोऽपि बाध इति चेचिरं जीवतु

भवान् । इयमेवास्मदभिमता जीवन्मुक्तिः ।

(Śrī Vidyāraṇya's Vāsānākṣaya-prakaraṇa of Jivanmukti-viveka)

³² ... च विपरीतप्रत्ययो विद्यावत उत्पद्यते । ... क्वचित्तु विद्यायाः पूर्वोत्पन्न-

विपरीतप्रत्ययजनितसंस्कारेभ्यो विपरीतप्रत्ययावभासाः स्मृतयो जायमाना

विपरीतप्रत्ययग्रान्तिमकस्माल्पुर्वन्ति । यथा विज्ञातादिग्विभागस्याप्यकस्मा-
दिग्विपर्ययविभ्रमः ।

(Bhagavatpāda's *Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad-bhāṣya*
on the passage (I.4.10))

³³ भोगकाले कदाचित्तु मर्त्योऽहमिति भासते ॥

(*Pañcadaśī* VII.245cd)

³⁴ नैतावताऽपराधेन तत्त्वज्ञानं विनश्यति ।

जीवन्मुक्तिव्रतं नेदं किन्तु वस्तुस्थितिः खलु ॥

(*Pañcadaśī* VII.246)

³⁵ द्यासान्द्रं बालं निरिलजगतीरक्षणचणं

हरन्तं विद्वादिं विमलविमलैर्वीक्षणचयैः ।

परब्रह्माकारं प्रणवविदितं शान्तमनसं

गुरुं विद्यातीर्थं कलयत बुधाश्चित्कमले ॥

(Paramacharyal's composition on Acharyal)

³⁶ शरीरन्द्रियचित्तानां शुद्धये कल्पिता महाः ।

बहवो गुरुदेवानां तत्फलं भवतां तनुः ॥

(Paramacharyal's composition on Acharyal)

³⁷ वाणी लक्ष्मीस्तथा गौरी तिष्ठन्तं निद्रया युतम् ।

गच्छन्तमुपविष्ट्व यान्तु त्वां गुरुशेषरम् ॥

(Paramacharyal's composition on Acharyal)

