

# Reality in 40 Verses

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December 25, 2009

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## Text

### 3.1 5

The body is in the form of, and includes, the 5 sheathes. Is there a world apart from the body? Has anyone without a body seen the world?

The body is a complex structure containing a large number of instruments or organs which the Self, as ego uses for a large number of purposes, including among others those of hearing, smelling, seeing, thinking, feeling, memorizing and reasoning. The materials out of which these instruments or parts are made vary from the grossest to the finest. The *emphShastras* (scriptures) have arranged them in five groups. To each group one sheath of *kosha* is assigned. The *kosha* dealing with purely physical matter is called *annamayakosha* (the sheath of food). The *pranamayakosha* (the vital sheath) looks after the fivefold functions of the vital energies — breathing, assimilation, generation, excretion and locomotion. The *manomayakosha* (mental sheath) contains the faculties of mentation. The *vijnanamayakosha* is the sheath of the intellectual and reasoning faculties, of scientific and philosophic thinking, and last is the *anandamayakosha*, the sheath of bliss, or causal sheath, which stores up within itself the karmic seeds of every birth and is concerned with that state in which profound peace is enjoyed by the dreamless sleeper. This *kosha* is made of the finest substance, *sattva*, which in itself is happy, due to its freedom from grossness and its close proximity to the blissful Self.

Thus the term body includes all these *koshas*, whose appearance and

disappearance cause the appearance and disappearance of all objective and subjective perceptions. Assumption of a body is therefore necessary for the world's enjoyment and the body owes its existence, as we shall see in the next verse, to the five senses, which are the properties of the mind.

## 3.2 10

Knowledge and ignorance are interrelated: the one does not exist without the other. Inquiring to whom is it that knowledge and that ignorance, and arriving at their root cause, the Self, this is true knowledge.

To speak of ignorance is to admit its opposite — knowledge — and *vice versa*. Until we become aware of an object we remain ignorant of its existence. To learn a lesson is to admit our previous ignorance of its content. Knowledge is thus the light which clears away the darkness of ignorance. But knowledge and ignorance which pertain to external objects are mere modes of thought. They come and go, and are therefore of no consequence in the search for Truth. What is of consequence is their knower, who is fixed, changeless, also called first principle because he is efficient, causeless, the eternal thinker, who precedes and survives all his thoughts — “the basic One” (verse nine).

## 3.3 15

On the present the past and the future stand. They too are the present in their times. Thus the present alone exists. Ignoring the present, and seeking to know the past and the future, is like trying to count without the initial unit.

The present *is* always, for even the past was the present in its time, and so also will the future be the present in *its* time. Whatever happens therefore happens only in the present. When Methuselah was born, he was born in the present, and when he died after 9 or 10 centuries he died also in the present, despite the later date. Similarly all that happened to him between those two events happened also in the present. Thus the present is the only significant tense in actuality. Moreover, let us not forget the fact that time is made of instants which are so minute as to have no room either for a past or for a

future, but for the present alone. The next verse will tell us that even the present is unreal, being one of the notions of our mind, as past and future are — acts of our memory.

### 3.4 16

Do time and space exist apart from us? If we are the body we are affected by time and space. But are we the body? We are the same now, then and forever.

Of course time and space are mere concepts in us. Because in our long journey in life we pass through multitudes of experiences, we have to conceive past, present and future in order to arrange them conveniently in their sequence of occurrence in our memory. Because we perceive multiplicity, we have to conceive a space in which to accommodate them, like the screen on which cinematograph pictures are spread. Without a screen there can be no pictures. The screen on which the universe actually appears and moves is thus our own mind, from which it emanates as thoughts, either of external physical objects, or of internal concepts, sensations, emotions, including the senses of time and space.

Those who take themselves for the body take *time* to be the creator and destroyer of all things, and thus it inspires them with great fear — fear of future calamities, of death, of loss of fortune and position, or whatever it may be. Many of them consult astrologers to read the decrees of time and foretell events long in advance of their occurrence. To them birth, youth, old age and death; creation, preservation and dissolution; past, present and future; health and disease, prosperity and adversity all exist without the shadow of a doubt: they fall prey to time and its vagaries. The others who know themselves to be pure spirit are bodiless, timeless and spaceless; and Bhagavan affirms, they are thus free from the hallucination of “We alone are; time and space are not”.

### 3.5 23

The body does not say “I”. In sleep no one admits he is not. The “I” emerging, all else emerges. Inquire with a keen mind whence this “I” arises.

The body, being insentient, knows nothing about “I” and “not-I”, yet the “I” persists with or without a body – in the waking state or in sleep or swoon - as the man who himself wakes, swoons and sleeps. To know the true nature of this perennial “I”, we have to conduct an inquiry into its source.



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