

Tripura Rahasya

(Gnana khand)

Salutations to *Aum*
(undifferentiated Brahman),
the Primal and Blissful cause,
the transcendental
consciousness shining as the
unique mirror of the wonderful
universe.

Bondage

The gain is only that which is considered to be so by the unthinking people. I however cannot deem it so, seeing that even after gaining the so-called end, the attempts are repeated. Well, having gained one purpose, why does man look for another? Therefore, what the man is always after should be esteemed the only real purpose — be it the gaining of pleasure or removal of pain.

There can be neither, so long as the incentive to effort lasts.

The feeling of a need to work in order to gain happiness (being the index of misery) is the misery of miseries. How can there be pleasure or removal of pain so long as it continues? Such pleasure is like that of soothing unguents placed on a scalded limb, or of the embrace of one's beloved when one is lying pierced by an arrow in the

breast; or of the sweet melodies of music heard by an advanced consumptive!

Only those who need not engage in action, are happy; they are perfectly content, and self-contained, and they experience a happiness which extends to all the pores of the body. Should there still be a few pleasurable moments for others, they are similar to those enjoyed by one who,

while writhing with an abdominal pain, inhales the sweet odor of flowers.

As long as a man is afraid of the nightmare, obligation, so long must he placate it, or else he will not find peace.

How can a man stung by that Viper, obligation, ever be happy? Therefore, some men have gone mad, as if some poison had already entered

their blood and were torturing
their whole being.

While others are stupefied by
the poison of obligation and
unable to discriminate good
from bad. Wrongly do they
ever engage in work, being
deluded; such is the plight of
humanity stupefied by the
poison of the sense of
obligation.

To a discriminating man, pain is apparent in all aspects of life. Whatever has the impress of misery on it cannot be good. Such are wealth, children, wife, kingdom, treasury, army, fame, learning, intellect, body, beauty and prosperity. For they are all transient and already in the jaws of death, otherwise called time. Can that be good which is only the seed ready to sprout as pain and grow into misery? The right means lies beyond

these. However, the desire to possess them is born of delusion.

That cannot be happiness which is tinged with misery. Misery is of two kinds, external and internal. The former pertains to the body and is caused by the nerves, etc.; the latter pertains to the mind and is caused by desire.

Mental distraction is worse than physical pain and the whole world has fallen a victim to it. Desire is the seed of the tree of misery and never fails in its fruits.

Respite gained by the fulfilment of one desire before another takes its place, is not happiness, because the seeds of pain are still latent. Such respite is enjoyed by the insects also (which certainly do not typify

perfect happiness). Yet is their enjoyment distinctly better than that of men because their desires are less complex. If it is happiness to have one desire among many fulfilled who will not be thus happy in this world? If a man, scalded all over, can find happiness by smearing unguents on himself, then everyone must be happy.

Beauty is only a mental concept, as is evident from the

similar feeling in similar enjoyments of lovers in dreams. The fair woman that appears as the object is only the reflection of the subtle concept already in the subjective mind. The mind draws an image of her beauty in conformity with its own repeated conceptions. The repeatedly drawn image becomes clearer and clearer until it appears solidly as the object. An attraction springs up

(and enslaves the mind) by constant mental associations.

The mind, becoming restless, stirs up the senses and seeks the fulfilment of its desires in the object; a composed mind is not excited even at the sight of the fairest. The reason for the infatuation is the oft-repeated mental picture. Neither children nor self-controlled yogis are excited in the same way

(because their minds do not dwell on such things).

So whoever finds pleasure in anything, the beauty therein is only mental imagery.

Even the most accomplished among men have fallen into the habit of seeking pleasure from woman, for all consider her the best hunting ground for delight. Similarly also a man's body is thought by women to be the

highest source of enjoyment.
But consider the matter well!
Shaped of fat and flesh, filled
with blood, topped by the head,
covered by skin, ribbed by
bones, covered with hair,
containing bile and phlegm, a
pitcher of feces and urine,
generated from semen and
ovum, and born from the
opening from where urine is
ejected — such is the body.
Just think of it! Finding delight
in such a thing, how are men

any better than worms growing
in offal?

Even though afflicted by misery,
he does not cease further
indulgence in those causes
antecedent to it (namely,
wealth, etc.); just as a jackass
pursues a she-ass even if
kicked a hundred times by her,
so also is it with the man and
the world.

Confounding dispassion
(vairagya) with misery, and the
pleasures of the world with
happiness (sukha), a man
suffers in the cycle of births
and deaths, while powerful
ignorance prevails.

Faith, personal effort, Atma-Vichara & worship of Creator

Faith is like a fond mother who can never fail to save her trusting son from dangerous situations. There is no doubt about it. Confidence holds the world and nourishes all. How can a babe thrive if it has no confidence in its mother? How is one to judge whether one is good or bad? Is it by reference to accepted standards? What is

the authority behind such standards? Are the authors themselves worthy or unworthy? In this way, there will be no end to argument. Moreover, the observer's competence must be taken into account. (Thus, too, there will be no finality reached.) Therefore life moves by faith only. I shall explain to you the rationale of reaching the Supreme Goal by means of faith. Be attentive. People will

not gain anything, either during their lifetime or after death, by endless discussions or blind acceptance. Of the two, however, there is hope for the latter and there is none for the former.

Man is quickly benefited if he turns away from dry, ruinous logic and engages in purposeful discussion. Appropriate effort must follow right discussion; for a man profits according to

the zeal accompanying his efforts. You find, my dear, that aimless discussions are fruitless and that earnest efforts are fruitful in the world.

No practical work will be done if people spend all their lives in vain discussions alone. Therefore, one should discard aimless talk and begin immediately to accomplish the highest aim of life as ascertained by appropriate

sincere discussion. Nor should one refrain from individual effort. A man who is in earnest need never be at a loss; will sustained effort ever fail in its purpose? Guided by proper deliberation, accompanied by zeal and engaged in individual efforts, one must make one's own unfailing way to emancipation. There are said to be many ways to that end. Choose that one among them which is the surest. Choice is

made by right discussion and according to the experience of the wise. Then begin the practice immediately.

That is best which does not again yoke you to suffering. To a discriminating man, pain is apparent in all aspects of life. Whatever has the impress of misery on it cannot be good. However, the desire to possess them is born of delusion. The Master Wizard is Mahesvara.

He being the creator of the universe, all are deluded by Him. He with whom God is graciously pleased is endowed with Mahavidya, the supreme knowledge by means of which his crossing of the Ocean of Maya is certain. Other methods are also put forward as serving this supreme end, but they are bound to fail in their purpose if the Lord's grace be not forthcoming. Therefore worship the Primal Cause of the

universe as the starting point; be devoted to Him; He will soon enable you to succeed in your attempts to destroy the illusion.

Investigation is the root-cause of everything, and it is the first step to the supreme reward of indescribable bliss. How can anyone gain security without proper investigation? Want of judgment is certain death, yet many are in its clutches.

Success attends proper
deliberation, till eventually the
end is without doubt
accomplished.

The world has been in the coils
of ignorance from time
immemorial; how can there be
discernment so long as
ignorance lasts? Can the
refreshing touch of discernment
be sought in the red-hot flue
over the furnace of long-
burning ignorance?

Discernment is, however, gained by proper methods, the most effective of which is also the best of all, and that is the supreme grace of the Goddess who inheres as the Heart Lotus in every one. Who has ever accomplished any good purpose without Her grace?

Investigation is the Sun for chasing away the dense darkness of indolence. It is generated by the worship of

God with devotion. When the Supreme Devi is well pleased with the worship of the devotee, She turns into vichara in him and shines as the blazing Sun in the expanse of his Heart. Therefore that Tripura, the Supreme Force, the Being of all beings, the blessed, the highest, the one consciousness of Siva, who abides as the Self of self, should be worshipped sincerely, exactly as taught by the Guru. The forerunner of such worship

is devotion and praiseworthy earnestness.

Clearly the universe must have some origin. Although the origin is shrouded in mystery, let us investigate the cause from the visible effect and be guided by the Holy Scriptures; and then the conclusion will be reached that there is a Creator in no way comparable to any known agents. The world is thus traced to its Creator who

differs entirely from any agent known to us. Judging from the magnitude of the creation, His power must be immeasurable in the same proportion as the unimaginable vastness of the creation. Such a one must also be able to protect and elevate His own creatures. Surrender therefore unreservedly unto Him.

Among the methods of approach to God, there are

(1) worship to overcome troubles

(2) worship to gain wealth, etc.

(3) loving dedication of oneself

The last one is the best and surest in its results. God, the Lord of the Universe, the Dweller in our hearts, knows everything and soon bestows appropriate fruits. In the case of other kinds of devotees, God has to await the course of destiny — that being His own

ordainment; whereas for the selfless devotee, God, the Lord and the sole refuge, is all in all and takes care of him without reference to the devotee's pre-destiny or His own ordained laws. He compensates the devotee quickly, and that is because He is supreme and self-contained without depending on anything else. Pre-destiny or divine will is powerless before Him. Everyone knows how He set

aside pre-destiny and divine laws in the case of His famous devotee, Markandeya.

The current notion that one cannot escape one's destiny is applicable only to weak-minded and senseless wasters. Yogis who practice control of breath conquer fate. Even fate cannot impose its fruits on yogis. Destiny seizes and holds only senseless people. Conforming to and following nature, destiny

forms part of nature. Nature again is only the contrivance for enforcing God's will. His purpose is always sure and cannot be prevented. Its edge can, however, be blunted by devotion to Him and if it is not so blunted, the predisposing cause must therefore be considered a most powerful factor in a man's life. Therefore, eschew high vanity and take refuge in Him. He will spontaneously take you to the

Highest State. This is the first rung in the ladder to the pedestal of Bliss. Nothing else is worthwhile.

God is the All-Seer who generates, permeates, sustains and destroys the universe. He is Siva, He is Vishnu, He is Brahma, the Sun, the Moon, etc. He is the One whom the different sects call their own; He is not Siva, nor Vishnu, nor

Brahma, nor any other exclusively.

True, there is no art found in the world, without a body and some intellect. In fact, the creative faculty in men belongs to something between the body and pure intelligence. Instruments are necessary for human agents because their capacities are limited and they are not self-contained. Whereas the Creator of the universe is

perfect in Himself and creates the whole universe without any external aid. This leads to the important conclusion that God has no body. Otherwise, He would be reduced to a glorified human being, requiring innumerable accessories for work and influenced by seasons and environments, in no way different from a creature, and not the Lord. Moreover, preexistence of accessories would quash His unique

mastery and imply limits to His powers of creation. This is absurd, as being contrary to the original premises. Therefore, He has no body nor the other aids, yet He still creates the world. Fools are taken in by the notion of giving a body to the transcendental Being. Still, if devotees worship and contemplate Him with a body according to their own inclinations, He shows them grace, assuming such a body.

For He is unique and fulfils the desires of His devotees.

Nevertheless, the conclusion must be reached that He is pure intelligence and His consciousness is absolute and transcendental. Such is the consciousness-intelligence in purity, Absolute Being, the One Queen, Parameswari (Transcendental Goddess), overwhelming the three states and hence called Tripura. Though She is the undivided

whole, the universe manifests in all its variety in Her, being reflected as it were, in a self-luminous mirror. The reflection cannot be apart from the mirror and is therefore one with it. Such being the case, there cannot be difference in degrees (e.g., Siva, or Vishnu being superior to each other). Bodies are mere conceptions in the lower order of beings and they are not to the point in the case of God. Therefore, be wise,

and worship the one pure, unblemished Transcendence. If unable to comprehend this pure state, one should worship God in the concrete form which is most agreeable to Him; in this way, too, one is sure to reach the goal, though gradually. Though one attempted it in millions of births, one would not advance except in one of these two ways.

When the Supreme Mother's grace descends then one becomes totally indifferent to pleasure and one's mind entirely gets absorbed in the practical investigation of the Truth. Such a state is impossible for anyone without the grace of God, because the mind engaged in the practical search for truth is the surest means of emancipation. Countless aids will not give

emancipation if an earnest
search for Truth is not made.

Self-knowledge

The end of humanity is to realize our wonderful nature. Self is not an object to be perceived, nor described; how shall I then tell you of it? You know the Mother only if you know the Self.

The Self does not admit of specification, and therefore no teacher can teach it. However, realize the Self within you, for it abides in unblemished

intellect. It pervades all, beginning from the personal God to the amoeba; but it is not cognizable by the mind or senses; being itself unilluminated by external agencies, it illumines all, everywhere and always. It surpasses demonstration or discussion. How, where, when, or by whom has it been specifically described even incompletely? What you ask me, dear, amounts to asking me to show

your eyes to you. Even the best teachers cannot bring your eyes to your sight. Just as a teacher is of no use in this instance, so in the other. He can at best guide you towards it and nothing more. I shall also explain to you the means to realization. Listen attentively. As long as you are contaminated with notions of me or mine (e.g., my home, my body, my mind, my intellect), the Self will not be

found, for it lies beyond cognition and cannot be realized as 'my Self '. Retire into solitude, analyze and see what those things are which are cognized as mine; discard them all and transcending them, look for the Real Self. For instance, you know me as your wife and not as yourself. I am only related to you and not part of you, much less your very being. Analyze everything in this way and discard it. What

remains over, transcending it all, beyond conception, appropriation, or relinquishment — know That to be the Self. That knowledge is final emancipation.

Gain is of something which is not already possessed. Is there any moment when the Self is not the Self? Neither is control of mind used to gain it. Although people understand space, they are not aware of it

because they are taken up by the objects in space. They understand the universe in space but have no regard for space itself. Similarly, it is with them in regard to the Self.

The world consists of knowledge and the objects known. Of these the objects are non-self and perceived by senses; knowledge is self-evident; there is no world in the absence of knowledge.

Knowledge is the direct proof of the existence of objects which are therefore dependent on knowledge. Knowledge is dependent on the knower for its existence. The knower does not require any tests for knowing his own existence. The knower therefore is the only reality behind knowledge and objects. That which is self-evident without the necessity to be proved, is alone real; not so other things. He who denies

knowledge has no ground to stand on and so no discussion is possible. The subject of knowledge settled, the question arises regarding the existence of objects in the absence of their knowledge. Objects and their knowledge are only reflections in the eternal, self-luminous, supreme Consciousness which is the same as the knower and which alone is real. The doubt that the reflection should be of all

objects simultaneously without reference to time and place (contrary to our experience), need not arise because time and space are themselves knowable concepts and are equally reflections. The specific nature of the reflections is the obverse of the objects found in space. Therefore, realize with a still mind your own true nature which is the one pure, undivided Consciousness underlying the restless mind

which is composed of the whole universe in all its diversity. If one is fixed in that fundamental basis of the universe (i.e., the Self), one becomes the All-doer. I shall tell you how to inhere thus. I assure you — you will be That. Realize with a still mind the state between sleep and wakefulness, the interval between the recognition of one object after another or the gap between two perceptions. This is the real Self, inhering in

which one is no longer deluded. Unaware of this Truth, people have become inheritors of sorrow. Shape, taste, smell, touch, sound, sorrow, pleasure, the act of gaining, or the object gained — none of these finds place in that Transcendence which is the support of all there is, and which is the being in all, but is bereft of everything (does not contain anything). That is the Supreme Lord, the Creator, the Supporter and the

Destroyer of the universe and the Eternal Being. Now let not your mind be outgoing; turn it inward; control it just a little and watch for the Self, always remembering that the investigator is himself the essence of being and the Self of self. Be also free from the thought 'I see'; remain still like a blind man seeing. What transcends sight and no sight, That you are. Be quick and be That.

Perfection cannot depend on activity or the reverse, on effort or no effort. How can that state be a perfect one if mental or physical activity can influence it? As long as these knots are not cut asunder so long will bliss not be found (The knowledge acquired is thus not effective). These knots are millions in number and are created by the bond of delusion which is no other than

ignorance of Self. These knots give rise to mistaken ideas, the chief of which is the identification of the body with the Self, which in its turn gives rise to the perennial stream of happiness and misery in the shape of the cycle of births and deaths. The second knot is the differentiation of the world from the Self whose being-consciousness is the mirror in which the phenomena are simply reflected. Similarly with

the other knots including the differentiation of beings among themselves and from the universal Self. They have originated from time immemorial and recur with unbroken ignorance. The man is not finally redeemed until he has extricated himself from these numberless knots of ignorance.

Whatever you admit as known to you, is in the knowledge

conveyed by that consciousness. Even what may be surmised to be in another place and at a different time, is also within your consciousness. Moreover, what is not apparent and unknown to that intelligence is a figment of imagination, like the son of a barren woman. There cannot be anything that is not held by consciousness, just as there cannot be reflection without a reflecting surface.

Is any place found where the effulgence is not, of the fire blazing at the dissolution of the universe? All will resolve into that fire and no residue will be left. Similarly also the fire of realization will burn away all your sense of duty so that there will be nothing left for you to do. Be strong, root out your thoughts and cut off the deep-rooted knots from your heart, namely, 'I will see', 'I am

not this', 'This is non-Self ', and such like. Find wherever you turn the one, undivided, eternal blissful Self; also watch the whole universe reflected, as in a mirror in the Self, as it arises and subsides in It. Stop contemplating 'I see the Self everywhere and in everything (within and without)'. Reach the residual Reality within and abide as the Self, with your own natural state.

Consider the Self as pure intelligence bereft of objective knowledge. 'What is known is not different from that intelligence, it is like a series of images reflected in a mirror. Absolute consciousness is the universe; it is 'I', it is all, sentient and insentient, mobile and immobile. Everything else is illuminated by it whereas it is alone and Self-luminous. Therefore let those sensible people who are desirous of chit

(pure intelligence) turn away from illusory knowledge and contemplate their own Self — the absolute consciousness — which illumines all the rest, and which is their being too.'

Meditate, O Man, on the Self, the Absolute Consciousness devoid of objects! There is naught else to know besides pure consciousness; it is like a self-luminous mirror reflecting objects within. That same

consciousness is the subject and also the objects, and that is all — the mobile and the immobile; all else shine in its reflected light; it shines of itself. Therefore, O Man, throw off delusion! Think of that consciousness which is alone, illuminating all and pervading all. Be of clear vision.

What is seen is absolutely nothing but sight. All that is seen has an origin and there must therefore be an antecedent cause for it. What is origin except that the thing newly appears? The world is changing every moment and its appearance is new every moment and so it is born every moment. The universe must have a Creator, and He must be an intelligent principle, but He cannot be of any known

type because of the vastness of the creation. His power is past understanding and is dealt with in the scriptures, whose authority is incontrovertible. They speak of the unique Creator, the Lord who was before creation, being self-contained. He created the universe by His own power. It is in its entirety and all its details, a picture on the screen of His Self like the dream world on the individual consciousness.

The individual encompasses his own creation with his ego (as 'I'); so does the Lord play with the universe. Just as the dreamer is not to be confounded with the dream so is the Lord not to be confounded with the creation. Just as a man survives his dream, so does the Lord survive the dissolution of His creation. Just as you remain ever as pure consciousness apart from the body, etc., so is

the Lord, unbounded consciousness apart from the universe, etc. Is it not after all only a picture drawn by Him on His Self? How can this unique creation be apart from Him? There can indeed be nothing but consciousness. Tell me of any place where there is no consciousness; there is no place beyond consciousness. Or can anyone prove in any manner anything outside consciousness? Consciousness

is inescapable. The Supreme God is thus the embodiment of pure Consciousness. This whole universe consisting of the mobile and the immobile, arises from, abides in, and resolves into Him. This is the final and well-known conclusion of the scriptures; and the scriptures never err. Because the scriptures proceed from the all-knowing Lord, they partake of His omniscient quality. The Being mentioned in them is

eternally existing even before the birth of the universe. His creation has been without any material aids. Therefore God is supreme, perfect, pure and self-contained. The creation is not an object apart; it is a picture drawn on the canvas of supreme consciousness, for there cannot possibly be anything beyond Perfection. Imagination on the contrary, is impractical. The universe has thus originated only as an

image on the surface of the mirror of the Absolute. This conclusion is in harmony with all facts. Just as castles in the air are mental figments of men so also is this creation a mental figment of Siva. Siva is absolute Awareness, without any form. Sri Tripura is Sakti and Witness of the whole.

The fact of the existence of things is only illumination of them, and nothing more. Such

illumination pertains to consciousness alone. That alone counts which is self-shining. Objects are not so, for their existence depends upon perception of them by conscious beings. But consciousness is self-effulgent — not so the objects, which depend on conscious beings for being known. The detail and tangibility of things are no arguments against their being nothing but images. Objects

are necessary for producing images in a mirror; they are not however necessary for consciousness, because it is self-contained. Because the Lord of consciousness is infinite, the creation can remain only within Him and the contrary is pure fancy. Since the universe is only a projection from and in the mirror of consciousness, its unreal nature can become clear only on investigation, and not otherwise. Truth can never

change its nature, whereas untruth is always changing. See how changeful the nature of the world is! Distinguish between the changeless truth and the changeful untruth and scrutinize the world comprised of these two factors, changeful phenomena and changeless subjective consciousness, like the unchanging light of the mirror and the changing images in it. The world cannot

stand investigation because of its changing unreal nature.

Just as a dreamer is foolishly alarmed at his own dreams or as a fool is deluded by the serpents created in a magic performance, so also the man ignorant of the Self is terrified. Just as the dreamer awakened from his fearful dream or the man attending the magic performance informed of the unreal nature of the magic

creations, no longer fears them but ridicules another who does, so also one aware of the Self not only does not grieve but also laughs at another's grief. Therefore, O valiant hero, batter down this impregnable fortress of illusion and conquer your misery by realization of the Self. In the meantime be discriminating and not so foolish.

What is visible lies within the range of illumination: if without, it cannot be seen. Therefore the illumined objects must be within the vision of the illuminant. The body, etc., are the illumined, because they are themselves objectified. The illumined and the illuminant cannot be identical. Again the illuminant cannot be objectified; for who is the seer apart from it? And how can the illumination by which he sees

be apart from him? The whole universe is thus in the illumination which shines self-sufficient, by itself, everywhere, and at all times. Such illumination is Her Transcendental Majesty Tripura, the Supreme. She is called Brahma in the Vedas, Vishnu by the Vaisnavites, Siva by the Saivites, and Sakti by the Saktas. There is indeed nothing but She. She holds everything by Her prowess as a mirror

does its images. She is the illuminant in relation to the illumined. The object is sunk in illumination like the image of a city in a mirror. Just as the city is not apart from the mirror, so also the universe is not apart from consciousness. Just as the image is part and parcel of the clear, smooth, compact and one mirror, so also the universe is part and parcel of the perfect, solid and unitary consciousness, namely the Self. The universe

is, always and all-through, a phenomenon in the Self. Just as the mirror remains unaffected by the passage of different images and yet continues to reflect as clearly as before, so also the one consciousness illumines the waking and dream states which can be verified by proper meditation. Consciousness permeating them obviously remains unblemished before creation or after dissolution of

the world; even during the existence of the world, it remains unaffected as the mirror by the images.

Though unperturbed, unblemished, thick, dense and single, the absolute consciousness being self-sufficient manifests within itself what looks 'exterior', just like a mirror reflecting space as external to itself. This is the first step in creation; it is called

ignorance or darkness. Starting as an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, it manifests as though external to its origin, and is a property of the ego-sense. The alienation is on account of the latent tendencies to be manifested later. Because of its non-identity with the original consciousness, it is now simple, insentient energy. That consciousness which illumines the 'exterior' is called

Sivatattva, whereas the individual feeling as 'I' is Saktitattva. When the awareness of the 'exterior', combined with the 'I', encompasses the entire imagined space as 'I', it is called Sada-Siva-tattva. When, later, discarding the abstraction of the Self and the exterior, clear identification with the insentient space takes place, it is called Ishwara-tattva. The investigation of the last two

steps is pure vidya (knowledge). All these five tattvas are pure because they relate to an as-yet-undifferentiated condition, like potentialities in a seed.

Therefore recognize the fact that the world is simply an image on the mirror of consciousness and cultivate the contemplation of 'I am', abide as pure being and thus give up this delusion of the reality of the world.

Dry polemics will not help one to Reality, for it is well guarded on all sides. The most brilliant logic can only approach it but never attain it. Although unaffected by logic coupled with a keen intellect, it can however be realized by service to one's Guru and the grace of God.

Hearing it a thousand times over will be useless unless one

verifies the teachings by means of investigation into the Self with a concentrated mind. Just as a prince labours under a misapprehension that the string of pearls still clinging to his neck has been stolen away by another and is not persuaded to the contrary by mere words but only believes when he finds it around his neck by his own effort, so also, O youth, however clever a man may be, he will never know his own self

by the mere teaching of others unless he realizes it for himself. Otherwise he can never realize the Self if his mind is turned outward.

A lamp illumines all around but does not illumine itself or another light. It shines of itself without other sources of light. Things shine in sunlight without the necessity for any other kind of illumination. Because lights do not require to be illumined,

do we say that they are not known or that they do not exist? Therefore, as it is with lights, thus are things made aware by the conscious self. What doubt can you have regarding abstract consciousness, namely the Self? Lights and things being insentient, cannot be self-aware. Still, their existence or manifestation is under no doubt. That means they are self-luminous. Can you not similarly

investigate with an inward mind in order to find out if the all-comprehending Self is conscious or not conscious? That Consciousness is absolute and transcends the three states (wakefulness, dream and deep sleep) and comprises the entire universe making it manifest. Nothing can be apprehended without its light. Will anything be apparent to you, if there be no consciousness? Even to say that nothing is apparent to you

(as in sleep) requires the light of consciousness. Is not your awareness of your unawareness (in sleep) due to consciousness? If you infer its eternal light, then closely investigate whether the light is of itself or not. Everybody fails in this investigation however learned and proficient he may be, because his mind is not bent inward but restlessly moves outward. As long as thoughts crop up, so long has

the turning inward of the mind not been accomplished. As long as the mind is not inward, so long the Self cannot be realized. Turning inward means absence of desire. How can the mind be fixed within if desires are not given up? Therefore become dispassionate and inhere as the Self. Such inherence is spontaneous (no effort is needed to inhere as the Self). It is realized after thoughts are eliminated and investigation

ceases. Recapitulate your state after you break off from it, and then you will know all and the significance of its being knowable and unknowable at the same time. Thus realizing the unknowable, one abides in immortality for ever and ever.

Now carefully analyze the underlying consciousness which, though abstract and apart from material objects, yet illumines them all the same. Know it to

be the truth. O Sage! What is not self-luminous can only fall within the orbit of intelligence and cannot be Intelligence itself. Intelligence is that by which objects are known; it cannot be what it is if it becomes the object of knowledge. What is intelligible must always be different from Intelligence itself, or else it could not be made known by it. Intelligence in the abstract cannot admit of parts, which is the characteristic of

objects. Therefore objects take on shapes. Carefully watch absolute intelligence after eliminating all else from it. Just as a mirror takes on the hues of images, so also the abstract Intelligence assumes the different shapes of objects, by virtue of its holding them within itself. Abstract Intelligence can thus be made manifest by eliminating from it all that can be known. It cannot be known as such and such, for it is the

supporter of one and all. This, being the Self of the seeker, is not cognizable. Investigate your true Self in the aforesaid manner. You are not the body, nor the senses, nor the mind, because they are all transient.

'I', is of two kinds — qualified and unqualified. Qualification implies limitations whereas its absence implies its unlimited nature. 'I' is associated with limitations in dream and

wakeful states, and it is free from them in deep slumber and Samadhi states. In that case is the 'I' in Samadhi or sleep associated with threefold division of subject, object and their relation? No! Being pure and single, it is unblemished and persists as 'I-I', and nothing else. The same is Perfection. Whereas Her Majesty the Absolute Intelligence is ever resplendent as 'I', therefore She is all and

ever-knowing. You are She, in the abstract. Realize it yourself by turning your sight inward. You are only pure abstract Consciousness. Realize it this instant, for procrastination is not worthy of a good disciple. He should realize the Self at the moment of instruction. Your eyes are not meant by the aforesaid word sight. The mental eye is meant, for it is the eye of the eye, as is clear in dreams.

The other perceptions require the two conditions, namely, elimination of other objects and concentration on the one. But Self-realization differs from them in that it requires only one condition: elimination of all perceptions. Consciousness is the supporter of all and is immanent in all and always remains perfect like space, pervading the mind also. Diversion of attention from

other items is all that is necessary for Self-realization.

Realization of Self requires absolute purity only and no concentration of mind. For this reason, the Self is said to be unknowable (meaning not objectively knowable).

Therefore it was also said that the sole necessity for Self-realization is purity of mind. The only impurity of the mind is thought. To make it thought-

free is to keep it pure. It must now be clear to you why purity of mind is insisted upon for Realization of Self. How can the Self be realized in its absence? Or, how is it possible for the Self not to be found gleaming in the pure mind? All the injunctions in the scriptures are directed towards this end alone. For instance, unselfish action, devotion and dispassion have no other purpose in view. Because transcendental

consciousness, viz., the Self, is manifest only in the stain-free mind.

The mind is truly abstracted in sleep. But then its light is screened by darkness, so how can it manifest its true nature? A mirror covered with tar does not reflect images, but can it reflect space also? Is it enough, in that case, that images are eliminated in order to reveal the space reflected in the

mirror? In the same manner, the mind is veiled by the darkness of sleep and rendered unfit for illumining thoughts. Would such eclipse of the mind reveal the glimmer of consciousness?

Would a chip of wood held in front of a single object to the exclusion of all others reflect the object simply because all others are excluded? Reflection can only be on a reflecting

surface and not on all surfaces. Similarly also, realization of the Self can only be with an alert mind and not with a stupefied one. Newborn babes have no realization of the Self for want of alertness. Moreover, pursue the analogy of a tarred mirror. The tar may prevent the images from being seen, but the quality of the mirror is not affected, for the outer coating of tar must be reflected in the interior of the mirror. So also

the mind, though diverted from dreams and wakefulness, is still in the grip of dark sleep and not free from qualities. This is evident by the recollection of the dark ignorance of sleep when one wakes.

I will now tell you the distinction between sleep and Samadhi. Listen attentively.

There are two states of mind:

(1) Illumination and

(2) Consideration.

The first of them is association of the mind with external objects and the second is deliberation on the object seen. Illumination is unqualified by the limitations of objects: deliberation is qualified by the limitations pertaining to the objects seen, and it is the forerunner of their clear definition.

[Note: The mind first notes a thing in its extended vision. The impression is received only after noting the thing in its non-extensive nature, and becomes deeper on musing over the first impression. There is no distinction noted in the preliminary stage of simple illumination. The thing itself is not yet defined, so illumination is said to be unqualified. The thing becomes defined later on and is said to be such and such,

and so and so. That is the perception of the thing after deliberation. Deliberation is again of two kinds: the one is the actual experience and is said to be fresh, whereas the other is cogitation over the former and is called memory. The mind always functions in these two ways.]

Dreamless slumber is characterized by the illumination of sleep alone, and

the experience continues unbroken for a time, whereas the wakeful state is characterized by deliberation repeatedly broken up by thoughts and therefore it is said not to be ignorance. Sleep is a state of nescience, though it consists of illumination alone, yet it is said to be ignorance for the same reason as a light though luminous is said to be insentient. This conclusion is admitted by the wise also.

Sleep is the first born from Transcendence (vide Ch. XIV, sloka 59), and also called the unmanifest, the exterior, or the great void. The state prevailing in sleep is the feeling 'There is naught'. This also prevails in wakefulness, although things are visible. But this ignorance is shattered by the repeated up-springing of thoughts. The wise say that the mind is submerged in sleep because it is illumining the unmanifest

condition. The submersion of mind is not, however, peculiar to sleep for it happens also at the instant of cognition of things. I shall now talk to you from my own experience. This subject is perplexing for the most accomplished persons. All these three states, namely, Samadhi, sleep and the instant of cognition of objects, are characterized by absence of perturbation. Their difference lies in the later recapitulation of

the respective states which illumine different perceptions. Absolute Reality is manifest in Samadhi; a void or unmanifest condition distinguishes sleep and diversity is the characteristic of cognition in wakefulness. The illuminant is however the same all through and is always unblemished. Therefore it is said to be Abstract Intelligence. Samadhi and sleep are obvious because their experience remains

unbroken for some appreciable period and can be recapitulated after waking up. That of cognition remains unrecognized because of its fleeting nature. But Samadhi and sleep cannot be recognized when they are only fleeting. The wakeful state is iridescent with fleeting Samadhi and sleep. Men when they are awake can detect fleeting sleep because they are already conversant with its nature. But

fleeting Samadhi goes undetected because people are not so conversant with it. O Brahmin! Fleeting Samadhi is indeed being experienced by all, even in their busy moments; but it passes unnoticed by them, for want of acquaintance with it. Every instant free from thoughts and musings in the wakeful state is the condition of Samadhi. Samadhi is simply absence of thoughts. Such a state prevails in sleep and at

odd moments of wakefulness. Yet, it is not called Samadhi proper, because all the proclivities of the mind are still there latent, ready to manifest the next instant. The infinitesimal moment of seeing an object is not tainted by deliberation on its qualities and is exactly like Samadhi. I will tell you further, listen! The unmanifest state, the first-born of abstract Intelligence revealing 'There is not

anything', is the state of abstraction full of light; it is, however, called sleep because it is the insentient phase of consciousness. Nothing is revealed because there is nothing to be revealed. Sleep is therefore the manifestation of the insentient state. But in Samadhi, Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness, is continuously glowing. She is the engulfer of time and space, the destroyer of void, and the

pure being (Jehovah – I am).
How can She be the ignorance
of sleep? Therefore sleep is not
the end-all and the be-all.

The cycle of births and deaths
is from time immemorial
caused by ignorance, which
displays itself as pleasure and
pain, and yet is only a dream
and unreal. Being so, the wise
say that it can be ended by
knowledge. By what kind of
knowledge? Wisdom born of

realization (viz., 'I am That'). Ignorance cannot be expelled by means of knowledge devoid of thoughts, for such knowledge is not opposed to anything whatsoever (including ignorance). Ignorance is only that knowledge which is called savikalpa (with thought) and nothing else. That (ignorance) exists in many ways in the form of cause and effect.

The casual ignorance is said to be of the nature of absence of knowledge of the wholeness of one's own Self. The Self that is Consciousness should only be whole on account of the exclusion of limitation. For, it is that which brings about time and the rest which are the causes of limitation. That kind of knowledge of the Self which exists as the non-wholeness (of the Self) can alone be the causal ignorance of the nature

of 'I exist here at this time'. That is the embryonic seed from which shoots forth the sprout of the body as the individualized self (growing up into the gigantic tree of the cycle of births and deaths). The cycle of births and deaths does not end unless ignorance is put to an end. This can happen only with a perfect knowledge of the Self, not otherwise. Such wisdom which can destroy ignorance is clearly of two

sorts; indirect and direct. Knowledge is first acquired from a Master and through him from the scriptures. Such indirect knowledge cannot fulfil the object in view. Because theoretical knowledge alone does not bear fruit; practical knowledge is necessary which comes through Samadhi alone. Knowledge born of nirvikalpa Samadhi generates wisdom by the eradication of ignorance and objective knowledge.

Similarly, experience of casual Samadhi in the absence of theoretical knowledge does not serve the purpose either. Just as a man, ignorant of the qualities of an emerald, cannot recognize it by the mere sight of it in the treasury, nor can another recognize it if he has not seen it before, although he is full of theoretical knowledge on the subject, in the same way theory must be supplemented with practice in

order that a man might become an expert. Ignorance cannot be eradicated by mere theory or by the casual Samadhi of an ignorant man. Again, want of attention is a serious obstacle; for a man looking up at the sky cannot identify the individual constellations. Even a learned scholar is no better than a fool, if he does not pay attention when a thing is explained to him. On the other hand, a man though not a scholar but yet

attentive having heard all about the planet Venus, goes out in confidence to look for it, knowing how to identify it, and finally discovers it, and so is able to recognize the same whenever he sees it again. Inattentive people are simply fools who cannot understand the ever-recurring Samadhis in their lives. They are like a man, ignorant of the treasure under the floor of his house, who begs for his daily food. So you

see that Samadhi is useless to such people. The intellect of babes is always unmodified and yet they do not realize the Self. Nirvikalpa Samadhi clearly will never eradicate ignorance. Therefore in order to destroy it savikalpa Samadhi must be sought. This alone can do it.

God inherent as the Self is pleased by meritorious actions which are continued through several births, after which the

desire for liberation dawns and not otherwise, even though millions of births may be experienced. Only those transcend Maya with whose devotion the Goddess of the Self is pleased; such can discern well and happily.

Being by the grace of God endowed with proper discernment and right-earnestness, they get established in transcendental

Oneness and become absorbed. I shall now tell you the scheme of liberation. One learns true devotion to God after a meritorious life continued in several births, and then worships Him for a long time with intense devotion. Dispassion for the pleasures of life arises in a devotee who gradually begins to long for knowledge of the truth and becomes absorbed in the search for it. He then finds his

gracious Master and learns from him all about the transcendental state. He has now gained theoretical knowledge.

[Note: This is Sravana.]

After this he is impelled to revolve the whole matter in his mind until he is satisfied from his own practical knowledge with the harmony of the scriptural injunctions and the teachings of his Master. He is

able to ascertain the highest truth with clearness and certitude.

[Note: This is Manana.]

The ascertained knowledge of the Oneness of the Self must afterwards be brought into practice, even forcibly if necessary, until the experience of the truth occurs to him.

[Note: This is Nidhidhyasana.]

After experiencing the Inner Self, he will be able to identify the Self with the Supreme and thus destroy the root of ignorance. There is no doubt of it. The inner Self is realised in advanced contemplation and that state of realisation is called nirvikalpa samadhi. Memory of that realisation enables one to identify the Inner Self with the Universal Self (as 'I am That'). That is the Oneness of the Self, the

same as the identification of the transcendence of the one with that same one in all the diversities of the world apparent to each individual. This destroys the root of ignorance, instantly and completely. Dhyana has been said to develop into nirvikalpa Samadhi. Whereas modifications signify the many-sidedness of consciousness, nirvikalpa signifies its unitary nature. When the mind does

not create pictures due to thoughts, it is in the unmodified state, which is its primal and pure condition. When the pictures on a wall are erased, the original wall remains. No other work is necessary to restore its original condition. Similarly, the mind remains pure when thoughts are eliminated. Therefore the unqualified state is restored if the present disturbance is ended. There is indeed nothing

more to be done for the most holy condition to be maintained. Nevertheless, even pandits are deluded in this matter, owing to the bane of Maya.

The acutely intelligent can accomplish the purpose in a trice.

Aspirants may be divided into three groups:

(1) the best,

- (2) the middle class, and
- (3) the lowest.

Of these, the best class realize at the very moment of hearing the truth. Their ascertainment of truth and contemplation thereon are simultaneous with their learning. Realization of truth requires no effort on their part. Wisdom is achieved in the course of many births by the lowest aspirants. As for the middle class, wisdom is gained

in the same birth, but slowly and gradually according to the aforesaid scheme of:

- (1) Learning the truth,
- (2) Conviction of the same,
- (3) Meditation — qualified Samadhi and unqualified samadhi — and
- (4) finally sahaja Samadhi (to be unattached even while engaged in the activities of the world). This last state is very rarely found.

Unless a man lives the ordinary life and checks every incident as the projection of the Self, not swerving from the Self in any circumstances, he cannot be said to be free from the handicap of ignorance.

Abstract Intelligence is the background on which the phenomena are displayed, and it must certainly manifest itself in all its purity, in their absence,

although its appearance may look new at first. It remains unrecognised because it is not distinguished from the phenomena displayed by it. On their being eliminated it becomes apparent. This in short is the method of Self-realisation.

Thus pure intelligence, free from objective knowledge, has been proved to exist; it can be felt on many occasions in

ordinary life. However, it goes undetected because people are in the meshes of Maya and not conversant with it. Alertness alone will reveal it. Why say so much about it? The long and short of it is this. Objective knowledge is gained by the mind; the mind cannot be objectified. Still it follows that there must be mind even in the absence of objects. Such pure mind entirely divested of all objective knowledge (or

thoughts) is pure intelligence.
Awareness is its nature.

Therefore it is always realized,
for no other knower beside
itself can ever be admitted.

At the time of cognizing an
object, the pure intellect
assumes its shape and
manifests as such. Of itself it is
pure and has no form.
Objective knowledge is thus a
particularized section of pure
intelligence. The Self is ever-

shining, un-particularized,
unblemished, ordinary
existence — self-aware and
self-sufficient.

If you say that the body, etc.,
usually appear as the Self, I tell
you that they are only the play
of thoughts and nothing more.
For think well and observe
carefully.

When you see a pot, are you
aware that it is yourself like the

body? (No, your body is no less a thought and appearance in consciousness, than the pot.) Then why should the body alone be confused with the Self? If you argue that there is no harm or mistake in identifying the body with the Self, because it is no worse than glorifying a part instead of the whole, I tell you: Do not confine such glorification to one part only, to the exclusion of all others. Extend it right through

and glorify the whole universe as the Self. In that case, there will be no confusion of the object with the subject, and you will always remain as the subject. For the Self is always self-resplendent and one without a second, and it displays diversities of phenomena as a mirror its reflections. Therefore rule out creation as a mere thought or series of thoughts and realize

the non-dual, residual, pure intelligence as the Self.

If the body and creation are transcended and the Self realized even once, there ensues that wisdom which will eradicate ignorance and override the cycle of births and deaths.

Moksha (liberation) is not to be sought in heavens, on earth or in the nether regions. It is

synonymous with Self-realization. Moksha is not anything to be got afresh, for it is already there only to be realized. Such realization arises with the elimination of ignorance. Absolutely nothing more is required to achieve the aim of life. Moksha must not be thought to be different from the Self. If it is a thing to be acquired, its absence before attainment is implied. If it can be absent even once why

should not its absence recur?
Then Moksha will be found to
be impermanent and so not
worthwhile striving for. Again if
it can be acquired, acquisition
implies non-self. What is non-
self is only a myth, like a hare
growing horns.

[Note: Sri Ramana says that
Moksha is another name for 'I'
or 'Self '.]

The Self is on the other hand
all-round Perfection. So where

else can Moksha be located? If it were so, Moksha would be like a reflection in a mirror. Moksha is defined as the steady glow of the Self in perfection. The non-modification of Abstract Intelligence into the objective phenomena is said to be the state of perfection.

Abstract Intelligence contracts at the stimuli to modification and becomes limited. Otherwise, it is infinite and

unbroken. If you mean to suggest that such intelligence is broken up into segments by time, etc., tell me whether the disintegrating influences are within the Self or without. If beyond consciousness, they cannot be proved to exist; if within, consciousness pervades them and is not divided. The breaking up at intervals as seen in the world is perceived by consciousness as events (the broken parts) and time

(the disintegrator), both of which are pervaded by consciousness. The consciousness is itself the time and the events. If time be not pervaded by Consciousness, how do intervals become evident? In the universal pervasiveness of consciousness, how is it to be considered broken up? Breaking up must be brought about by the agency of something external. But anything beyond the pale

of consciousness cannot be even maintained or discussed. Nor can it be granted that the disintegrating factor is made visible by its effects of division, while it still evades intelligence, in its entirety. For that is to say that it exists so far as its effect is concerned and does not exist in other ways — which is absurd. Therefore even the concept of exterior must lie within the bounds of consciousness (cf., Avyakta in

sleep or exterior in the scheme of creation). Similarly, all that is known and knowable must also lie within. In view of this conclusion, how can the container be split up by the contained? Investigate the truth on these lines, Rama! Being within, the universe cannot be different from consciousness. For you know that two things cannot coexist within the same limits. If they do, intermingling is the result.

However, the universe maintains its distinctness because it is like a reflection in the mirror of consciousness.

As regards the appearance of (Avyakta or) exterior in the scheme of creation which was traced to the root-cause of ignorance, how can manifestation in it be real? Their reality must be associated with the fact of their being of the nature of consciousness,

i.e., the Self. It is therefore proper to conclude that the Self is alone and single and there is nothing beyond.

O Lord, I find it difficult to follow your reasoning when you say that Abstract Intelligence, being only one, yet manifests as the diverse objects of creation.

The two entities, the cogniser and the cognised object, are distinct and separate. Of these,

the cogniser, namely consciousness, may be self-luminous, illumining the objects. Just as objects stand apart from light so the universe seems apart from the Intelligent Principle. Experience does not reveal the identity of the two. Furthermore, you are confirming the statement of Janaka as regards samadhi. Janaka has said: Mind divested of thoughts becomes pure and is identical with the Self and

further, that alone destroys ignorance. How can that be the Self? Mind is always taken to be a faculty with which the Self functions in the supramaterial planes. The Self would be no better than insentient but for the mind, which characterises it as different from the insentient world. Further, even the scriptures admit that liberation and bondage are only attitudes of the mind, according as it is unmodified or modified,

respectively. How can the mind be the Self as well as its faculty? Again, granting that the world is an image on the mirror of consciousness, the fact of its perfection is there, so the non-duality of consciousness does not follow. There are hallucinations known, like a rope mistaken for a serpent. Hallucination is not correct knowledge; but it does not end the duality attendant on its perception. Still again,

unreal images cannot serve any useful purpose, whereas the universe is enduring and full of purpose. Tell me how you assert it to be unreal, thus establishing the non-duality of the Supreme. Furthermore, if the world itself is unreal, how does that unreality happen to distinguish between fact and hallucination in the affairs of life. Still more, how does everybody happen to have

the same hallucination of
mistaking the unreal
phenomena for reality.

All these doubts are troubling
me. Please clear them for me.

Dattatreya, the omniscient,
heard these questions and was
pleased with them. Then he
proceeded to answer:

You have done well,
Parasurama, to ask these

questions, although not for the first time. They must be examined until one is thoroughly convinced. How can the Guru himself anticipate all the doubts of the disciple unless he states them clearly? There are different grades of mind and different temperaments too. How can clear knowledge be gained if one's doubts are not raised to be met? The student with an analytical turn of mind gains

deep-seated knowledge. His questions help towards depth of knowledge. The unquestioning student is of no use. The earnest student is recognised by his questions.

Consciousness is one and non-dual, but shines as if diversified like the clean surface of a mirror reflecting variegated colours. Note how the mind unmodified in sleep, remaining single and blank, is later

modified by dream and manifests as the dream world. Similarly, the One Consciousness — Sri Tripura — flashes forth as the various phenomena of the universe. The cogniser and the cognised objects are seen in dream also. Even a blind man, without sight, perceives objects. How does he do so unless by mental perception? Can anything be known at any time or place in the absence of the light of the

mind? There can be no images in the absence of a mirror, for the images are not apart from the mirror. Similarly, nothing is cognisable if it lies beyond the pale of the cognising principle. For the same reason I say that the mind cannot lie apart from intelligence in the abstract. Just as the cogniser, cognition and the cognised are identified with the mind in dream, so also the seer, the sight and the phenomena are identical with

the mind in the wakeful state. Just as an axe was created in the dream for felling a tree, which is the purpose for which it was designed, so is the mind said to be the faculty for giving perception. But, Rama, the faculty can be only of the same degree of reality as the action itself. For was anyone injured at any time by a human horn? The action and the instrument must clearly be of the same degree of truth. Since the

action itself is unreal, can the mind, the faculty, be real? So, Rama, there is no faculty known as the mind. Mind is only surmised for the location of the dream subject, dream vision and dream objects. Its reality is of the same order as that of a dream. Pure intelligence is quite unblemished; mind and other faculties are mere fabrications for enabling transactions to continue, which, however go on

because the Absolute is self-sufficient and manifests as subject and objects. The same is often pure and unqualified, as in the aforesaid momentary samadhi. I shall explain to you further:

Absolute Consciousness and space resemble each other in being perfect, infinite, subtle, pure, unbounded, formless, immanent in all, yet undefiled within and without. But space differs from the other, in it

being insentient. In fact, the conscious Self is space. This being so, they are not different from one other. Space is Self; and Self is space. It is the ignorant who see the Self as space alone owing to their delusion, just as the owls find darkness in dazzling sunlight. The wise however find in space the Self, the Abstract Intelligence. Her Transcendental Majesty, stainless and self-contained,

irradiates diversity in Her Self like an individual in the state of dream. This diversity in the shape of men, animals and other phenomena, does not delude the Self in its purity, but does delude aberrations of the Self, namely, the individual egos. Her Majesty, the Absolute, remains always aware of Her perfection and oneness. Though Herself immutable, She appears mutable to Her own creatures just as a magician

beguiles the audience with his tricks but remains himself undeceived. She is light — One without a second; and yet She appears divided to Her own creatures, because of the veil of illusion. Just as the magician's tricks delude the audience alone and not himself, so also the veiling of Maya affects the creatures and not the Creator; when the individuals are held in the meshes of Maya, they see

diversity and also discuss Maya. This Maya is the dynamic aspect of the latent self-sufficiency of the Supreme and is unfailing. See how yogis, charmers and magicians remain confident and sure, without revealing themselves, and yet play upon the imagination of others, seeking to achieve the impossible. Division in the Absolute amounts to contraction within particular limits under the guise

of the ego, which is usually termed imperfection, or ignorance. In this manner, Bhargava, has the Absolute invested its own pure and independent Self with ignorance and seems to be iridescent with its different entities. Hence the identity of space with the Self is not apparent to the learned, because they are incapable of investigating the Self with a steady mind, for the mind is

diverted by its inherent disposition to go outward. Second-hand knowledge of the Self gathered from books or Gurus can never emancipate a man until its truth is rightly investigated and applied to himself; direct Realisation alone will do that. Therefore, follow my advice and realise yourself, turning the mind inward. She who is the Transcendental Consciousness, creating all and comprising

their essence, is Pure Radiance and therefore devoid of anything insentient. She reposes in Her own Self undefiled by the ego. The insentient cannot exist of themselves but depend on Intelligence for their recognition and definition. They cannot shine by their own merit and reveal their own existence. They have, therefore, no repose. But pure Intelligence is absolute, shines by itself and

feels its own existence, without any extraneous aids. Since it is self-radiant, it is self-reposed. Such is the Perfect 'I' — the transcendental 'I' — which is not present in insentient creation. Because the aggregate of all phenomena is of Pure Intelligence — the Supreme — and there is nothing beyond Her orbit, there cannot possibly be anything to divide Her into sectors, and so She is unbroken and

continuous like a mirror reflecting images. How are divisor and division possible for the Absolute. Such freedom from disintegration is Perfection; and the Self-radiance of such Perfectness is the unbroken 'I-I' consciousness — known as Self-repose; the eternal, immanent, unique and homogeneous essence. Though descriptions of and statements about the Supreme differ

according to the aspects emphasised, yet She is simply self-sufficiency, energy, and abstract, unbroken, the single essential Being — all unified into One, just as light and heat go to make fire; yet these three factors are discussed and described separately in practical life. Such is the Power called Maya, capable of accomplishing the impossible, and remaining undefiled, notwithstanding Her manifested

diversity as phenomena
resembling a mirror and its
images. She is the eternal,
single, unbroken 'I-ness',
running through all
manifestations. These seeming
breaks in the continuum are
said to be non-self — the same
as ignorance, insentience, void,
Nature, nonexistence of things,
space, darkness, or the first
step in creation, all of which
represent nothing but the first
scission in pure intelligence.

The passage from the infinite absolute to a limited nature is influenced by Maya, and the transition is called space. But this is as yet indistinguishable from the Self owing to the non-development or absence of the ego, which is the seed of the cycles of births and deaths. Diversity is visible only in space, and this space is in the Self, which in turn projects it at the moment when differentiation starts, although it is not then

clear. Rama! Look within. What you perceive as space within is the expanse wherein all creatures exist, and it forms their Self or consciousness. What they look upon as space is your Self. Thus, the Self in one is space in another, and vice versa. The same thing cannot differ in its nature. Therefore there is no difference between space and Self — which is full and perfect Bliss-Consciousness. However, space

implies sections. Each section of intelligence is called mind. Can it be different from the Self? Pure Intelligence contaminated with inanimate excrescences is called jiva or the individual, whose faculty for discrimination is consistent with its self-imposed limitations and is called mind. Thus in the transition from the Absolute to the individual, space is the first veil cast off. The clear, concentrated Self becomes

pure, tenuous, susceptible space in which hard, dense, crowded, or slender things are conceived. They manifest as the five elements of which the body is composed. The individual then encases himself in the body like a silkworm in its cocoon. Thus the Absolute shines as awareness in the body (namely, 'I am the body'), just as a candle lights the covering globe. The individual consciousness is thus found to

be only the radiance of the Self reflected in the body, which it illumines like an enclosed lamp illumining the interior of its cover. Just as the light of the lamp spreads out through holes made in the cover, so also the light of Intelligence extends from within, through the senses, to the external world. Consciousness, being absolute and all-pervading like space, cannot go out through the senses; but still its light

extending as space presents certain phenomena; and this cognition amounts to lifting the veil of darkness to that extent. This is said to be the function of mind.

[Note: The rays of light are imperceptible in ether, but when they impinge on matter the objects become visible by the reflection of the light rays on their surface. Similarly, consciousness appears to

disclose the presence of objects in space by unveiling them from the ignorance surrounding them.]

Therefore, I tell you that mind is no other than consciousness. The difference lies in the fact that the mind is restless and the Self is always peaceful. Realisation of the Self subdues the restless mind which is the dynamic aspect of consciousness. On this being

subdued, there gleams out the peace-filled, perfect, intelligent bliss which is synonymous with emancipation. Be assured of this. Do not think that an interlude of blankness or veil of nescience will supervene after the cessation of thoughts. For, there is no such factor as a blankness or veil of nescience. It is simply a figment of the imagination. If in a daydream a man imagines himself taken, harassed and beaten by an

enemy he will suffer from the effects until and unless he dismisses the daydream. Will he continue to be bound by the enemy after the dream is dismissed with the enemy and his blows? So it is with the veil of nescience. O Rama! Even from the very beginning there has really been no bondage or tie to the cycle of births and deaths. Only do not be deluded by identifying yourself with insentient matter but enquire,

‘What is this bondage?’ The strongest fetter is the certainty that one is bound. It is as false as the fearful hallucinations of a frightened child. Even the best of men cannot find release by any amount of efforts unless their sense of bondage is destroyed. What is this bondage? How can the pure uncontaminated Absolute Self be shackled by what look like images in the mirror of the Self? To imagine that the Self is

shackled by mental projections is to imagine that the fire reflected in a mirror can burn it. There is absolutely no bondage beyond the foolish certainty that you are bound and the difference of entity created by mind. Until these two blemishes are washed away by the holy waters of investigation into the Self, neither I, nor Brahma the Creator, nor Vishnu, nor Siva, nor even Sri Tripura, the Goddess of Wisdom, can

help that person to be emancipated. Therefore, Rama, surmount these two hurdles and remain eternally happy. The mind will shine as the Self if the mind be denuded of those thoughts now crowding it, and then all sense of duality will cease to exist. Mind is nothing but sectional knowledge as this and that. Eliminate such, and then pure knowledge will alone remain. This is the Self.

As for the well-known example of the hallucination of a snake in a coil of rope, the rope is real and the snake is unreal. Even after the true state of affairs is known and the hallucination of a snake dismissed, there is still the reality of the rope (which contains the potentiality of the recurrence of the same hallucination in the same person or in others). The danger is always there until the

rope is recognised to be of and in the Self. Then objectivity totally ceases, and pure knowledge alone remains. There is thus a complete annihilation of duality.

The sense of duality persists because there is the conviction of the purposefulness of the objective world. But such purposefulness and even durability is experienced even in dreams. The difference

between dreams and the wakeful state lies in the fact that in the waking state the dream is determined to be false, whereas in the dream the waking state is not so determined. Therefore the waking state is universally taken to be real. But this is wrong. For do you not experience the same extent of permanency and purposefulness in dreams as in the wakeful state? Wakeful

consciousness does not intervene in dreams nor does dream-consciousness intervene in the wakeful state, while the two factors — enduring nature and purposefulness — are common to both. Examine your past dreams and past waking experiences in the light of these facts and see for yourself. Again, note the appearance of reality in magical phenomena and the seemingly purposeful actions of magical creations.

Does reality rest on the slender basis of such appearances? The confusion is due to want of discrimination between the real and the unreal among ignorant folk. Ignorantly indeed do they say that the wakeful universe is real. Reality must endure forever and ever.

‘Consciousness either is or is not’. In the former case, it is obvious and in the latter it is implied, for the conception of its absence implies

consciousness. (Therefore consciousness cannot be established to be transitory. It is permanent and therefore real.) Insentient matter is diverse in nature and its impermanency obvious. For, one object excludes all others. But can you conceive the absence of consciousness anywhere or at any time? If you say that there is no awareness in your sleep, tell me how you know that period

or again how you know that you were not aware. If absolutely unaware, you would not now be able to say 'I was not aware'. How was this unawareness illumined for you? Therefore you cannot escape the conclusion that there must be consciousness even to know its unawareness also. So, there is no moment when consciousness is not. I shall now tell you briefly the difference between reality and

unreality. The existence of Reality is self-evident and does not require other aids to reveal it. Unreality is the contrary. If you say, however, that a thing is real until and unless its existence is contradicted, consider the example of a coil of rope being mistaken for a snake. The fancied snake would according to you be real in the interval antecedent to correct knowledge, but that is absurd. Furthermore, if contradiction

means nonexistence, the mental image of the thing contradicted must be admitted, and that means the thing verbally denied is mentally admitted. Therefore contradiction leads one nowhere and does not determine the unreality of a thing; nor does the appearance of a thing determine its reality. Appearance and contradiction are both intermediate. (According to me), there is

nothing beyond the range of consciousness; even the consciousness that there is 'nothing' cannot exist; therefore he who denies consciousness, must be nothing but a dry logician. He may as well deny himself and say, 'I am not'. Then who speaks and what does he say? If he who denies himself out of incompetence and stupidity, can teach others and remove their ignorance by the force of

his logic, then this rock before me could equally do the same. Therefore the appearance of a thing and its utility do not determine the reality of a thing or otherwise. All knowledge is secondary and unreliable. There is no doubt about it. The greatest of all delusions is the conviction that knowledge is not a delusion.

A hallucination holds the field in the interval antecedent to

correct knowledge, in the same way as it does when we mistake a shining mother-of-pearl for a piece of silver. So also the mistake of the reality of the universe persists until primary and basic Self-knowledge is realised. This false sense is universal, like the blue colour of the sky, and it will end simultaneously with the realisation of Pure Intelligence.

I have now answered your questions. Do not waver but make up your mind at once. I shall enlighten you further on the point you raised with regard to the activities of Jnanis (Sages). Jnanis may be classified as (1) the best, (2) the middle class and (3) the lowest. Of these, the last know the Self and yet are influenced by the pleasures and pains accruing to them according to their prarabdha (past karma).

Jnanis of the higher order, even while reaping the fruits of their past karma, are however firmer in their internal happiness, like men inebriated with drink. Jnanis of the highest order are never detached from the enjoyment of their bliss, even if confronted with a million times more prarabdha; they are not surprised at the most unnatural and miraculous happenings; they are not elated by the greatest pleasures, nor

depressed by the worst miseries. They are always peaceful and calm within, although they appear to act like common folk. These differences are due to the differences in their intellects and to the degrees of development of jnana (wisdom). Their activities depend on their predispositions as determined by their past karma. But all their actions are like those of a drunken man.

After having heard Sri Dattatreya speak thus, Parasurama asked him further questions regarding the conduct and activities of the *Jnanis*. Lord, please tell me clearly how intellects differ according to the stages of *jnana* (wisdom). Is not wisdom of one kind alone, being simply the revelation of the Self? *Moksha* (emancipation) is the simple unfolding of the Self and is alone to be sought. How can

it be dependent on stages of development according to mental predispositions? Do the methods also differ in the same way?

Thus asked again, Sri Datta, the Ocean of Mercy, began to answer his questions. I shall now tell you the secret of it all. There is no difference in the methods, nor does *jnana* differ in fact. The fruits differ according to the grades of

accomplishment. The same extends through several births and on its completion, *jnana* easily unfolds itself. The degree of efforts is according to the stage of incompleteness brought over from past births. However, *jnana* is eternal and no effort is really needed. Because it is already there and needs no accomplishment, *jnana* is pure intelligence, the same as consciousness which is ever self-radiant. What kind of

effort can avail to disclose the eternally self-resplendent consciousness? Being coated with a thick crust of infinite *vasanas* (dispositions), it is not easily perceived. The encrustation must first be soaked in the running steam of mind control and carefully scraped off with the sharp chisel of investigation. Then one must turn the closed urn of crystal quartz — namely, the mind cleaned in the aforesaid

manner — on the grinding wheel of alertness and finally open the lid with the lever of discrimination. Lo! The *gem* enclosed within is now reached and that is all! Thus you see, Rama, that all efforts are to be directed to cleaning up the mental impressions of predispositions. Intellects are the cumulative effects of the predispositions acquired by karma. Effort is necessary so

long as the predispositions continue to sway the intellect.

The dispositions are countless but I shall enumerate a few of the most important. 16. They are roughly classified into three groups, namely,

- (1) *Aparadha* (fault)
- (2) Karma (action)
- (3) *Kama* (desire)

The disposition typical of the first group is diffidence towards

the teachings of the Guru and the holy books, which is the surest way to degeneration. Misunderstanding of the teachings, due to assertiveness or pride is a phase of diffidence and stands in the way of realization for learned pandits and others. Association with the wise and the study of holy books cannot remove this misunderstanding. They maintain that there is no reality transcending the world; even if

there were, it cannot be known; if one claims to know it, it is an illusion of the mind; for how can knowledge make a person free from misery or help his emancipation? They have many more doubts and wrong notions. So much about the first group.

There are many more persons who cannot, however well-taught, grasp the teachings; their minds are too much

cramped with predispositions to be susceptible to subtle truths. They form the second group — the victims of past actions, unable to enter the stage of contemplation necessary for annihilating the *vasanas*.

The third group is the most common, consisting of the victims of desire who are always obsessed with the sense of duty (*i.e.*, the desire to work for some ends). Desires are too

numerous to count, since they rise up endlessly like waves in the ocean. Even if the stars are numbered, desires are not. The desires of even a single individual are countless — and what about the totality of them? Each desire is too vast to be satisfied, because it is insatiable; too strong to be resisted; and too subtle to be eluded. So the world, being in the grip of this demon, behaves madly and groans with pain

and misery, consequent on its own misdeeds. That person who is shielded by desirelessness (dispassion) and safe from the wiles of the monster of desire, can alone rise to happiness.

A person affected by one or more of the aforesaid three dispositions cannot get at the truth although it is self-evident. Therefore I tell you that all efforts are directed towards the

eradication of these innate tendencies.

The first of them (*i.e.*, fault) comes to an end on respectfully placing one's faith in holy books and the Master.

The second (*i.e.*, action) may be ended only by divine grace, which may descend on the person in this birth or in any later incarnation. There is no other hope for it.

The third must be gradually dealt with by dispassion, discrimination, worship of God, study of holy scriptures, learning from the wise, investigation into the Self and so on.

Efforts to overcome these obstacles are more or less according as the obstacles are greater or lesser.

The most important of the qualifications is the desire for emancipation. Nothing can be achieved without it. Study of philosophy and discussion on the subject with others are thoroughly useless, being no better than the study of arts. For the matter of that, one might as well hope for salvation by a study of sculpture and the practice of that art. The study of philosophy in the absence of

a longing for salvation, is like dressing up a corpse.

Again, Rama, a casual desire for emancipation is also vain. Such desire often manifests on learning of the magnificence of the emancipated state. It is common to all but never brings about any abiding results. Therefore a passing desire is worthless.

The desire must be strong and abiding, in order that it may bear fruit. The effects are in proportion to the intensity and duration of the desire. The desire must be accompanied by efforts for the accomplishment of the purpose. Then only will there be concerted effort. Just as a man scalded by fire runs immediately in search of soothing unguents and does not waste his time in other pursuits, so also must the

aspirant run after emancipation to the exclusion of all other pursuits. Such an effort is fruitful and is preceded by indifference to all other attainments. Starting by discarding pleasures as being impediments to progress, he develops dispassion and then the desire for emancipation, which grows in strength. This makes a man engage in the right efforts in which he becomes thoroughly engrossed.

After these stages are passed, the most unique consummation takes place.

When Dattatreya finished, Parasurama was completely bewildered and asked him further: Lord, You said earlier that association with the wise, divine grace and dispassion are the prime factors for attaining the highest aim of life. Please tell me which is the most essential and how it can be

accomplished. For nothing happens without an antecedent cause. This is certain. What is the root cause of the fundamental requisite? Or is it only accidental?

Thus asked, Dattatreya answered him as follows:

I shall tell you the root-cause of it all. Listen! Her Transcendental Majesty, the Absolute-Consciousness, being

self-contained, originally
pictured the whole universe in
Her being, like images in a
mirror. She took on the
individuality, named
Hiranyagarbha (the Creator),
and considering the
predispositions of the egos
enclosed in that egg
(*Hiranyagarbha*), She unfolded
the scriptures — the reservoir
of sublime truths — for the
fulfilment of desires. Since the
embryonic individuals were full

of unfulfilled desires *Hiranyagarbha* began to think out the means of their fulfilment. He elaborated a scheme of cause and effect, of actions and fruits, and consequently the individuals were born later to revolve in that wheel of cause and effect. They take different shapes and are placed in different environments consistent with their predispositions. After passing through innumerable

species, the individual evolves as a human being, owing to the merit he has accumulated. At first he will take to selfish pursuits. With growing desire, he will seek the unobstructed fulfilment of mighty ambitions. But in due course the methods advocated in holy books will be adopted. Failures are inevitable everywhere. Disappointments result. Expert advice is sought. Such advice will be forthcoming only from a man living in

unbroken beatitude. Such a Sage will, in due course, initiate the seeker in divine magnificence. The initiate's accumulated merits, reinforced by association with the wise and by divine grace, make him persist in the course, and gradually take him step by step to the highest pinnacle of happiness.

Now you see how association with the wise is said to be the

root-cause of all that is good. This happens partly through the accumulated merits of the person and partly through his unselfish devotion to God, but always as if by accident, like a fruit which has suddenly fallen from the void.

Therefore the goal of life being dependent on so many causes, there is variety in its attainment, either according to the intellect or the

predispositions of the person. The state of the *Jnani* also differs, according as his efforts have been great or less. Proportionately slight effort is enough for erasing slight *vasanas*. He whose mind has been made pure by good deeds in successive past incarnations, gains supreme results quite out of proportion to the little effort he may make (as with Janaka).

The glimpse of *jnana* (realisation) gained by one whose mind is crowded with dense *vasanas* accumulated in past incarnations, does not suffice to override one's deep-rooted ignorance. Such a one is obliged to practise *samadhi* (*nidhidhyasana* or control of mind and contemplation) in successive births for effective and final realisation. Thus there are seen to be different classes of Sages.

O Scion of Bhrighu's lineage!
There are apparent differences
in the characteristics of *Jnanis*,
caused by the aspects and
attitudes of intellect and the
varieties in its activities.

Such differences are quite
obvious in Brahma (the
Creator), Vishnu (the
Preserver) and Siva (the
Destroyer) who are *Jnanis* by
nature. That does not mean
that *jnana* (realisation) admits

of variety. These attitudes depend on their *vasanas* (dispositions) and environments. They are Lords of the universe and all-knowing. Their *jnana* is pure and uncontaminated by what they do. Whether a *Jnani* is fair or dark in complexion, his *jnana* neither shares these qualities nor the qualities of the mind. See the difference in the three sons of Atri, namely, Durvasa (said to be of the aspect of Siva

and reputed to be exceedingly irritable), Chandra (the moon, of the aspect of Brahma and reputed to be the husband of the twenty-seven constellations who are in their turn daughters of Daksa) and myself (Dattatreya, of the aspect of Sriman Narayana or Vishnu, reputed to be the ideal of saints, roaming nude in the forests, etc.). Vasishta (one of the greatest *Rishis*, well known as the family preceptor of the

Solar line of kings) never fails in the strictest adherence to duty as prescribed by the scriptures; whereas Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatsujata and Sanatkumara (four sons born of Brahma's volition and instructed by Narada) are types of ascetics totally indifferent to any action, including religious rites; Narada is the ideal of *bhakti* (devotion to God); Bhargava (Sukra, the well-known preceptor of Asuras,

who incessantly fight against the gods) supports the enemies of the gods, whereas the equally great Sage Brihaspati (Jupiter, the preceptor of gods) supports the gods against their enemies; Vyasa is ever busy in codifying the Vedas, and in propagating their truth in the shape of the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and the *Upapuranas*; Janaka famous as the ascetic-king; Jadabharata looking like an idiot; and many others.

There are so many others with individual characteristics, such as Chyavana, Yagnyavalkya, Visvamitra, etc.

The secret is this. Of the three typical *vasanas* mentioned, the one of action is the most potent and is said to be ignorance. Those are the best who are free from all of the *vasanas*, and particularly from the least trace of that of action. If free from the fault of mistrust of the

teachings of the Master, the *vasana* due to desire, which is not a very serious obstruction to realisation, is destroyed by the practice of contemplation. Dispassion need not be very marked in this case. Such people need not repeatedly engage in the study of scriptures or the receiving of instructions from the Master, but straightaway pass into meditation and fall into *samadhi*, the consummation of

the highest good. They live evermore as *Jivanmuktas* (emancipated even while alive).

Sages with subtle and clear intellect have not considered it worthwhile to eradicate their desire, etc., by forcing other thoughts to take their place, *because desires do not obstruct realisation*. Therefore their desires continue to manifest even after realisation, as before. Neither are they tainted by

such *vasanas*. They are said to be emancipated and diverse-minded. They are also reputed to be the best class of *Jnanis*.

Rama, he whose mind clings to the ignorance of the necessity of work cannot hope for realisation even if Siva offers to instruct him. Similarly also the person who has the fault of marked indifference to or misunderstanding of the teachings. On the other hand, a

man only slightly affected by these two *vasanas*, and much more so by desires or ambitions, will by repeated hearing of the holy truth, discussion of the same, and contemplation on it, surely reach the goal, though only with considerable difficulty and after a long lapse of time. Such a Sage's activities will be small because he is entirely engrossed in his efforts for realisation. A Sage of this class

has, by his long practice and rigorous discipline, controlled his mind so well that predispositions are totally eradicated and the mind is as if dead. He belongs to the middle class in the scheme of classification of Sages and is said to be a Sage without mind.

The last class and the least among the Sages are those whose practice and discipline are not perfect enough to

destroy mental predispositions. Their minds are still active and the Sages are said to be associated with their minds. They are barely *Jnanis* and not *Jivanmuktas* as are the other two classes. They appear to share the pleasures and pains of life like any other man and will continue to do so till the end of their lives. They will be emancipated after death.

Prarabdha (past karma) is totally powerless with the middle class, who have destroyed their minds by continued practice. The mind is the soil in which the seed, namely *prarabdha*, sprouts (into pleasures and pains of life). If the soil is barren, the seed loses its sprouting power by long storage, and becomes useless.

There are men in the world who can carefully attend to different functions at the same time and are famous and extraordinarily skilful; again some people attend to work as they are walking and conversing, while a teacher has an eye upon each student in the classroom and exercises control over them all; or you yourself knew Kartaviryarjuna, who wielded different weapons in his thousand hands and

fought with you using all of them skilfully and simultaneously. In all these cases, a single mind assumes different shapes to suit the different functions at the same time. Similarly the mind of the best among *Jnanis* is only the Self and yet manifests as all without suffering any change in its eternal blissful nature as the Self. They are therefore many-minded.

The *prarabdha* of *Jnanis* is still active and sprouts in the mind but only to be burnt up by the steady flame of *jnana*. Pleasure or pain is due to the dwelling of the mind on occurrences. But if these are scorched at their source, how can there be pain or pleasure? *Jnanis* of the highest order, however, are seen to be active because they voluntarily bring out the *vasanas* from the depth of the mind and allow them to run out.

Their action is similar to that of a father sporting with his child, moving its dolls, laughing at the imagined victory of one doll over another, and appearing to grieve over the injury to another, and so on; so the many-minded Sages have pleasure or pain from work. The *vasanas* not inimical to realisation are not weeded out by the best class of *Jnanis* because they cannot seek new ones to crowd the old out.

Therefore the old ones continue until they are exhausted and thus you find among them some highly irritable, some lustful and others pious and dutiful, and so on.

Now the lowest order of *Jnanis* still under the influence of their minds know that there is no truth in the objective universe. Their *samadhi* is not different from that of the rest.

What is *samadhi*? *Samadhi* is being aware of the Self, and nothing else — that is to say — it should not be confounded with the *nirvikalpa* (undifferentiated) state, for this state of *samadhi* is very common and frequent, as has been pointed out in the case of momentary *samadhis*. Everyone is experiencing the *nirvikalpa* state, though unknowingly. But what is the use of such unrecognised

samadhis? A similar state becomes possible to the *hatha yogis* also. This experience alone does not confer any lasting benefit. But one may apply the experience to the practical affairs of life. *Samadhi* can only be such and such alone. (*Sahaja samadhi* is meant here.)

Whereas a *hatha yogi* cannot remain in such a state, in the *Jnani's samadhi*, both the veil

of ignorance and perturbation of thoughts are removed. In the *hatha yogi's samadhi*, though the Self is *naturally* free from the two obstacles, yet it remains hidden by the veil of ignorance. The same is torn off by the *Jnani* in the process of his contemplation. If asked what difference there is between the *Samadhi* of a *hatha yogi* and sleep, it must be said that the mind overpowered by deep

ignorance is covered by dense darkness in sleep, whereas the mind being associated with *sattva* (quality of purity) acts in *samadhi* as a thin veil for the self-effulgent principle. The Self may be compared to the Sun obstructed by dark and dense clouds in sleep, and by light mist in *samadhi*. For a *Jnani*, the Self shines in its full effulgence like the Sun unobstructed in the heavens.

This is how the Sages describe *samadhi*.

(Having spoken of the *Jnani's* *samadhi* as approved by the Sages, Dattatreya proceeds to prove its unbroken nature).

What is *samadhi*? *Samadhi* is absolute knowledge uncontaminated by objects. Such is the state of the best *Jnanis* even when they take part in the affairs of the world. The blue colour of the sky is

known to be an unreal phenomenon and yet it appears the same to both the knowing and the unknowing, but with this difference, that the one is misled by the appearance and the other is not. Just as the false perception does not mislead the man who knows, so also all that is perceived, which is known to the wise to be false, will never mislead them. Since the middle class of *Jnanis* have already destroyed

their minds, there are no objects for them. Their state is known as the supramental one. The mind is agitated when it assumes the shape of those objects which it mistakes for real; and unagitated otherwise. Therefore the latter state alone is supramental.

Since a *Jnani* of the highest order can engage in several actions at the same time and yet remain unaffected, he is

always many-minded and yet
remains in unbroken *samadhi*.
His is absolute knowledge free
from objects. I have now told
you all that you want to know.

Vidya Gita

I shall now relate to you an ancient sacred story. On one occasion very long ago there was a highly distinguished gathering of holy saints in the abode of Brahma, the Creator, when a very subtle and sublime disputation took place. Among those present were Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata, Vasishta, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Brighu, Atri,

Angiras, Pracheta, Narada,
Chyavana, Vamadeva,
Visvamitra, Gautama, Suka,
Parasara, Vyasa, Kanva,
Kasyapa, Daksha, Sumanta,
Sanka, Likhita, Devala and
other celestial and royal Sages.

Each one of them spoke of his
own system with courage and
conviction and maintained that
it was better than all the rest.
But they could not reach a
conclusion and so asked

Brahma: Lord! We are Sages who know all about the world and beyond, but each one's way of life differs from that of the others because the dispositions of our minds differ. Some of us are always in nirvikalpa samadhi, some engaged in philosophical discussions, some sunk in devotion, some have taken to work, and others seem exactly like men of the world. Which is the best among us? Please tell

us. We cannot decide ourselves, because each thinks that his way is the best.

Thus requested, Brahma seeing their perplexity answered: Best of saints! I also would like to know. There is Parameswara who is the All-knower. Let us go and ask him. Collecting Vishnu on their way, they went to Siva. There the leader of the deputation, Brahma, asked Siva about the matter.

Having heard Brahma, Siva divined the mind of Brahma and understood that the Rishis were wanting in confidence and so that any words of his would be useless. He then said to them: Hear me, Rishis! Neither do I clearly see which is the method. Let us meditate on the Goddess — Her Majesty Unconditioned Knowledge. We shall then be able to understand even the subtlest of

truths by Her grace. On hearing these words of Siva, all of them, including Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, meditated on Her Divine Majesty, the Transcendental Consciousness pervading the three states of life (waking, dream and sleep).

Thus invoked, She manifested in Her glory as the Transcendental Voice in the expanse of pure consciousness. They heard the Voice speak like

thunder from the skies: Speak out your minds, O Rishis! Be quick, the desires of my devotees will always be fulfilled immediately.

Hearing the Voice, the exalted Rishis prostrated and Brahma and the others praised the Goddess — namely Absolute Consciousness pervading the three states of life. Salutations to Thee! The Greatest! The Best! The Most Auspicious! The

Absolute Knowledge! The
Consciousness of the three
states! The Creatrix! The
Protectress! The Dissolver in
the Self! The Supreme One
transcending all! Salutations
again! There was no time when
Thou wert not, because Thou
art unborn! Thou art ever fresh
and hence Thou never growest
old. Thou art all; the essence of
all, the knower of all, the
delighter of all. Thou art not all.
Thou art nowhere, with no core

in Thee, unaware of anything,
and delighting no one.

O Supreme Being! Salutations
to Thee, over and over again,
before and behind, above and
below, on all sides and
everywhere. Kindly tell us of
Thy relative form and Thy
transcendental state, Thy
prowess, and Thy identity with
jnana. What is the proper and
perfect means for attaining
Thee, the nature and the result

of such attainment? What is the
utmost finality of
accomplishment, beyond which
there remains nothing to be
accomplished? Who is the best
among the accomplished
Sages? Salutations again to
Thee!

Thus besought, the Goddess of
ultimate knowledge began with
great kindness to explain it
clearly to the Sages. Listen,
Sages! I shall categorically

explain to you all that you ask.
I shall give you the nectar
drawn out as the essence from
the unending accumulation of
sacred literature.

I am the Abstract Intelligence
wherefrom the cosmos
originates, whereon it
flourishes, and wherein it
resolves, like the images in a
mirror. The ignorant know me
as the gross universe, whereas
the wise feel me as their own

pure being eternally glowing as 'I-I' within. This realisation is possible only in the deep stillness of thought free consciousness, similar to that of the deep sea free from waves. The most earnest of devotees worship me spontaneously and with the greatest sincerity, which is due to their love of me. Although they know that I am their own non-dual Self, yet the habit of loving devotion which is deep-

rooted in them makes them conceive their own Self as Me and worship Me as the life-current pervading their bodies, senses and mind, without which nothing could exist and which forms the sole purport of the holy scriptures. Such is my Transcendental State.

My concrete form is the eternal couple — the Supreme Lord and Energy — always in undivided union and abiding as

the eternal consciousness
pervading the three
phenomenal states of waking,
dream and sleep, and reclining
on the cot, whose four legs are
Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu
(the Protector), Siva (the
Destroyer) and Ishwara
(Disappearance) and whose
surface is Sadasiva (grace),
which is contained in the
mansion known as the
'fulfilment of purpose', enclosed
by the garden of kadamba'

trees, in the jewel island situated in the wide ocean of nectar surrounding the cosmos and extending beyond.

Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Ishwara, Sadasiva, Ganesa, Skanda, the gods of the eight quarters, their energies, other gods, celestials, celestial serpents and other superhuman beings are all manifestations of Myself. However, people do not know Me because their intellect is

shrouded in ignorance. I grant boons to those who worship Me. There is no one besides Me worthy of worship or capable of fulfilling all desires. The fruits of worship are put forth by Me according to the mode of worship and the nature of individual desires.

I am indivisible and interminable. Being non-dual and Abstract Intelligence, I spontaneously manifest even

as the smallest detail in the universe, and as the universe. Though I manifest in diverse ways, I still remain unblemished because absoluteness is My being. This is My chief power, which is somewhat hard fully to understand. Therefore, O Rishis! Consider this with the keenest of intellect. Though I am the abode of all and immanent in all, I remain pure. Although I am not involved in

any manner and am always free, I wield My power — called Maya. I become covered with ignorance, appear full of desires, seek their fulfilment, grow restless, project favourable and unfavourable environments, am born and reborn as individuals, until growing wiser I seek a teacher and Sage, learn the truth from him, put it in practice and finally become absolved. All this goes on in My pure,

uncontaminated, ever-free
absolute intelligence. This
manifestation of the ignorant
and the free, and of others, is
called My creation which is
however, without any
accessories — My power is too
vast to be described. I shall tell
you something of it in brief. It
is that the cosmos is only the
obverse of the mind which is
projected from consciousness.

Knowledge relating to me is complex but it can be dealt with under the two categories, dual and nondual, of which the former relates to worship and the latter to realisation. On account of their intricacies, there are many details in them leading up to different results. Dual knowledge is manifold because it depends on the concept of duality and manifests as worship, prayer, incantation, meditation, etc., all

of which are due to nothing more than mental imagery. Even so, they are efficacious in contradistinction to daydreams, for the law of nature provides for it. There are degrees in the efficacy of the methods, of which the most important concerns the aspect mentioned before (see above the concrete form of Devi). The ultimate goal of all is certainly non-dual realisation. Worship of Abstract Intelligence in a concrete form

is not only useful but essential for non-dual realisation. For how can one be made fit for it without Her benediction. Non-dual realisation is the same as pure Intelligence, absolutely void of objective knowledge. Such realisation nullifies all objective knowledge, revealing it in all its nakedness to be as harmless as a picture of a pouncing tiger or of an enraged serpent. When the mind has completely resolved into the

Self, that state is called nirvikalpa samadhi (the undifferentiated peaceful state). After waking up from it, the person is overpowered by the memory of his experience as the one, undivided, infinite, pure Self and he knows 'I am That', as opposed to the puerile I-thought of the ignorant. That is Supreme Knowledge (vijnana or pratyabhijna jnana).

Theoretical knowledge consists in differentiating between the Self and the non-self through a study of the scriptures, or the teachings of a Master, or by one's own deliberation. Supreme wisdom is that which puts an end to the sense of non-self once for all. Non-dual realisation admits nothing unknown or unknowable and pervades everything in entirety so that it cannot in any way be transcended. When that is

accomplished, the intellect becomes quite clear because all doubts have been destroyed; and then the predispositions of the mind (e.g., lust, greed, anger, etc.) are destroyed, though any remnants of these that may remain are as harmless as a fangless viper.

The fruit of Self-realisation is the end of all misery here and hereafter and absolute fearlessness. That is called

Emancipation. Fear implies the existence of something apart from oneself. Can the sense of duality persist after non-dual Realisation, or can there be darkness after sunrise? O Rishis! There will be no fear in the absence of duality. On the other hand, fear will not cease so long as there is the sense of duality. What is perceived in the world as being apart from the Self is also clearly seen to be perishable. What is

perishable must certainly involve fear of loss. Union implies separation; so also acquisition implies loss. If emancipation be external to the Self, it implies fear of loss, and is therefore not worth aspiring to. On the other hand, moksha is fearlessness and not external to the Self. When the knower, knowledge and the known merge into unity, that state is totally free from fear and hence moksha results.

Jnana (Supreme Wisdom) is the state devoid of thoughts, will and desire, and is unimpeded by ignorance. It is certainly the primal state of the knower, but remains unrecognised for want of acquaintance with it. The Guru and sastras alone can make the individual acquainted with the Self. The Self is Abstract Intelligence free from thought. The knower, knowledge and

the known are not real as different entities. When differentiation among them is destroyed, their true nature is evident in the resulting nondual consciousness, which is also the state of emancipation. There is in fact no differentiation among the knower, etc. The differences are simply conventions retained for the smooth working of earthly life. Emancipation is eternal and, therefore, here

and now; it is nothing to be acquired. The Self manifests as the knower, knowledge and the known. The cycle of births and deaths endures with all the apparent reality of a mountain so long as this manifestation lasts. As soon as the manifestation is realised to consist of the Self alone without any admixture of non-self, the cycle of births and deaths comes to a standstill, and is broken down to

fragments like clouds dispersed by strong winds.

Thus you find that earnestness is the only requisite for emancipation. No other requisite is needed if the longing for emancipation is intense and unwavering. What is the use of hundreds of efforts in the absence of a real and unswerving desire for emancipation? That is the sole requisite and nothing else.

Intense devotion signifies mental abstraction as the devotee loses himself in the desired object. In this particular instance, it will mean emancipation itself. For such unwavering devotion must certainly succeed and success is only a question of time — which may be days, months, years, or even the next birth, according as the predispositions are light or dense.

The intellect is ordinarily befouled by evil propensities and so nothing good flourishes there. Consequently, people are boiled in the seething cauldron of births and deaths. Of these evil propensities, the first is want of faith in the revelations made by the Guru and in the sastras; the second is addiction to desires; and the third is dullness (i.e., inability to understand the revealed

truth). This is a brief statement of them. Of these, want of faith is betrayed by one's doubts regarding the truth of the statements and by failure to understand them. The doubt arises whether there is moksha; and later misunderstanding leads to its denial. These two are sure obstacles to any sincere efforts being made for realisation. All obstacles are set at nought by a determined belief in the

contrary; that is to say, a determined belief regarding the existence of moksha will destroy both uncertainty and misunderstanding. But the question arises how this determined belief will be possible when faith is wanting. Therefore cut at its root. What is its root? Want of faith has its root in unfavourable logic. Give it up and take to approved logic as found in holy books and expounded by a Guru. Then

enlightenment becomes possible and faith results. Thus ends the first evil propensity.

The second propensity, namely desire, prevents the intellect from following the right pursuit. For the mind engrossed in desire cannot engage in a spiritual pursuit. The abstraction of a lover is well known to all; he can hear or see nothing in front of him. Anything said in his hearing is

as good as not said. Desire must therefore be first overcome before aspiring for spiritual attainment. That can be done only by dispassion. This propensity is manifold, being in the forms of love, anger, greed, pride, jealousy, etc. The worst of them is pursuit of pleasure which, if destroyed, destroys all else. Pleasure may be subtle or gross. Neither of these must be indulged in, even in thought. As

soon as the thought of pleasure arises, it must be dismissed by the willpower developed by dispassion. In this way, the second evil propensity is overcome.

The third, known as dullness resulting from innumerable wicked actions in preceding births, is the worst of the series and hardest to overcome by one's own efforts. Concentration of mind and

understanding of truth are not possible when dullness prevails. There is no remedy for it other than worship of the Goddess of the Self. I remove the devotee's dullness according to his worship, quickly, or gradually, or in the succeeding birth.

He who unreservedly surrenders himself to Me with devotion, is endowed with all the requisites necessary for

Self-realisation. He who worships Me, easily overcomes all obstacles to Self-realisation. On the other hand, he who being stuck up does not take refuge in Me — the pure intelligence manipulating the person — is repeatedly upset by difficulties, so that his success is very doubtful. Therefore, O Rishis! The chief requisite is one-pointed devotion to God. The devotee is the best of aspirants. The one

devoted to Abstract
Consciousness excels every
other seeker.

Consummation lies in the
discernment of the Self as
distinguished from the non-self.
The Self is at present
confounded with the body, etc.
Such confusion must cease and
awareness of the Self must
result as opposed to nescience
in sleep. The Self is
experienced even now; but it is

not discerned rightly, for it is identified with the body, etc. There is therefore endless suffering. The Self is not hidden indeed; it is always gleaming out as 'I', but this 'I' is mistaken for the body, owing to ignorance. On this ignorance ceasing, the 'I' is ascertained to be the true consciousness alone; and that sets all doubts at rest. This and nothing else has been ascertained by the Sages to be the finality.

Thaumaturgic powers such as flying in space, etc., are all fragmentary and not worth a particle of Self-realisation. For this is the unbroken and immortal bliss of the Self in which all else is included.

Thaumaturgic powers are also a hindrance to Selfrealisation. Of what use are they? They are but simple acrobatic tricks. The Creator's status appears to a Self-realised man to be only a

trifle. What use are these powers, unless for wasting one's time? There is no accomplishment equal to Self-realisation, which is alone capable of ending all misery, because it is the state of eternal Bliss. Self-realisation differs from all accomplishments in that the fear of death is destroyed once for all.

Realisation differs according to the antecedent practice and, commensurate with the degree of purity of mind, may be perfect, middling or dull. You have seen great pandits well versed in the Vedas and capable of chanting them quite correctly amidst any amount of distractions. They are the best. Those who are capable businessmen, repeat the Vedas quite correctly when they engage in chanting them

without other distractions.
These are the middle class.
Whereas others are constantly
chanting them and do it well.
Such are of the lowest order
among pandits.

Similarly there are distinctions
among the Sages also. Some
Sages abide as the Self even
while engaged in complex
duties, such as ruling a
kingdom (e.g., King Janaka);
others can do so in the

intervals of work; still others can do so by constant practice alone. They are respectively of the highest, the middle and the lowest order. Of these, the highest order represents the utmost limit of realisation. Unbroken supreme awareness even in the dream state is the mark of the highest order. The person who is not involuntarily made the tool of his mental predispositions, but who invokes them at will, is of the

highest order. He who abides in the Self as 'I-I', as spontaneously and continuously as the ignorant man does in the body, is again of the highest order. He who, though engaged in work, does not look upon anything as non-self, is a perfect Sage. He who, even while doing his work remains as if asleep, is a perfect Sage. Thus the best among the Sages are never out of samadhi, be they working or idle. He who is,

from his own experience, capable of appreciating the states of other Jnanis, including the best among them, is certainly a perfect Sage. He who is not influenced by happiness or misery, by pleasure or pain, by desires, doubts or fear, is a perfect Sage. He who realises pleasure, pain and every other phenomenon to be in and of the Self, is a perfect Sage. He who feels himself pervading all

— be they ignorant or emancipated — is a perfect Sage. He who, knowing the trammels of bondage, does not seek release from them and remains in peace, is a perfect Sage. Those perfect among the Sages are identical with Me. There is absolutely no difference between us.

I have now told you all this in answer to your questions. You need no longer be perplexed

with doubts. Having said so, Transcendental Intelligence became silent. Then all the Rishis saluted Siva and the other gods and returned to their own abodes.

I have now told you the sacred Gita of pure knowledge, which destroys all sins and purifies the mind. This Gita is the best among Gitas because it has proceeded from Abstract Intelligence Herself and it leads

one to emancipation, on being attentively heard and cogitated upon. This Gita is the raft to save one from sinking in the ocean of samsara (the cycle of births and deaths), and so it must be read or repeated every day with love and care.

Thus ends the chapter of "Vidya Gita" in Tripura Rahasya.

After Parasurama heard this from Sri Dattatreya he felt as if released from the meshes of ignorance. He again saluted Sri Datta and asked him with great devotion: Lord! Please tell me exactly how wisdom can be accomplished. I want to hear the essence of it in brief. The method should also be easy and at the same time efficient. Please also tell me the characteristics of the Sages, so that I may readily recognise

them. What is their state with or without the body? How can they be unattached though active? Kindly tell me all this.

Thus requested, the son of Atri spoke to him with pleasure: Listen! Rama, I am now telling you the secret of accomplishment. Of all the requisites for wisdom, Divine Grace is the most important. He who has entirely surrendered himself to the

Goddess of his own Self is sure to gain wisdom readily. Rama! This is the best of all the methods. This method does not require other aids to reinforce its efficiency, as other methods do for accomplishing the end. There is a reason for it. Pure Intelligence illumining all has cast a veil of ignorance of Her own over all. Her true nature is evident only after removing this veil by discrimination. This is hard for those whose minds

are directed outward; but it is easy, sure and quick, for devotees engrossed in the Goddess of the Self to the exclusion of all else. An intense devotee, though endowed with only a little discipline of other kinds (e.g., dispassion), can readily understand the truth though only theoretically, and expound it to others. Such exposition helps him to imbue those ideas and so he absorbs the truth. This ultimately leads

him to identify all individuals with Siva and he is no longer affected by pleasure or pain. All-round identification with Siva makes him the best of *Jnanis* and a *Jivanmukta* (emancipated here and now). Therefore *bhakti yoga* (the way of devotion) is the best of all and excels all else.

The characteristics of a *Jnani* are hard to understand, because they are inscrutable

and inexpressible. For instance, a pandit cannot be adequately described except by his appearance, gait and dress, because his feelings, depth of knowledge, etc., are known to himself alone; while the flavour of a particular dish cannot be exactly conveyed by words to one who has not tasted it. A pandit can be understood only by another pandit by his method of expression. A bird

alone can follow the track of another bird.

There are of course some traits which are obvious, and others which are subtle and inscrutable. Those which are obvious are their speech, language, postures of meditation, signs of worship, dispassion, etc., which can, however, be imitated by non-Sages. What are accomplishments to others to

the accompaniment of dispassion, meditation, prayer, etc., remain natural to the Sage whose mind is pure and unsophisticated. He whom honour and insult, loss or gain, cannot affect, is a Sage of the best class. The best among Sages can, without hesitation, give complete answers on matters relating to Realisation and the sublimest truths. He seems to be spontaneously animated when discussing

matters pertaining to *jnana* (realisation) and is never tired of their exposition. His nature is to remain without efforts. Contentment and purity abide in him. Even the most critical situations do not disturb his peace of mind. These are qualities which must be tried for oneself and verified; they are of no value as tests applied to others, for they may be genuine or spurious. An aspirant must first apply the

tests to himself and always prove his own worth; he can then judge others. How can the repeated testing of oneself fail to improve one? Let one not spend one's time judging others; but let one judge oneself. Thus one becomes perfect.

What have here been called the traits of a *Jnani* are meant for one's own use and not for

testing others, because they admit of many modifications according to circumstances. For instance, a *Jnani* who has realised the Self with the least effort may continue in his old ways although his mind is unassailable. He looks like a man of the world for all practical purposes. How then can he be judged by others? Nevertheless, one *Jnani* will know another at sight, just as

an expert can appraise precious stones at a glance.

The *Jnanis* of the lowest order behave like ignorant men in their care for their bodies.

They have not attained *sahaja Samadhi* (*samadhi* unbroken even while engaged in work, etc.) They are in the State of Perfection only when they are calm or composed. They have as much of the body-sense and enjoy pleasure and pain with as

much zest as any animal, when they are not engaged in the investigation of the Self. Though they are not always inquiring into the Self, yet there are periods of the perfect state owing to their previous practice and experience. All the same, they are emancipated because the animal-sense is only an aberration during interludes of imperfection and does not leave any mark on them. Their aberration is

similar to the ashy skeleton of a piece of burnt cloth which, though retaining the old shape, is useless. Again, the intervals of Realisation have an abiding effect on their lives, so that the world does not continue to enthral them as heretofore. A dye applied to the border of a cloth 'creeps' and shades the body of the cloth also.

The middle class of *Jnanis* are never deluded by their bodies.

Delusion is the false identification of 'I' with the body; this never arises with the more advanced *Jnanis*, namely the middle class among them. Identification of the Self with the body is attachment to the body. The middle class of *Jnanis* are never attached to the body. Their minds are mostly dead because of their long practice and continued austerities. They are not engaged in work because they

are entirely self-possessed. Just as a man moves or speaks in sleep without being aware of his actions, so also this class of yogi does enough work for his minimum requirements without being aware of it. Having transcended the world, he behaves like a drunken man. But he is aware of his actions. His body continues on account of his *vasanas* (predispositions) and destiny. *Jnanis* of the highest class do not identify the

Self with the body but remain completely detached from their bodies. Their work is like that of a charioteer driving the chariot, who never identifies himself with the chariot. Similarly the *Jnani* is neither the body nor the actor; he is pure intelligence. Though entirely detached within from action, to the spectator he seems to be active. He performs his part like an actor in a drama, and plays with the

world as a parent does with a child.

Of the two higher orders of *Jnanis*, the one remains steadfast through his sustained practice and control of mind, whereas the other is so on account of the force of his discrimination and investigation. The difference lies in the merits of their intellect. I shall now relate to you a story in this connection.

Spirit: What is more extensive than space and more subtle than the subtlest? What is its nature? Where does it abide? Tell me, Prince.

Prince: Listen, Spirit! Abstract Intelligence is wider than space and subtler than the subtlest. Its nature is to glow and it abides as the Self.

Spirit: How can it be wider than space, being single? Or how is it subtler than the subtlest? What is that glow? And what is that Self? Tell me, Prince.

Prince: Listen, Spirit! Being the material cause of all, intelligence is extensive though single; being impalpable, it is subtle. Glowing obviously implies consciousness and that is the Self.

Spirit: Where and how is *Chit* (Abstract Intelligence) to be realised and what is the effect?

Prince: The intellectual sheath must be probed for its realisation. One-pointed search for it reveals its existence. Rebirth is overcome by such realisation.

Spirit: What is that sheath and what is concentration of mind? Again, what is birth?

Prince: The intellectual sheath is the veil drawn over Pure Intelligence; it is inert by itself. One-pointedness is abiding as the Self. Birth is the false identification of the Self with the body.

Spirit: Why is that Abstract Intelligence which is ever

shining not realised? What is the means by which it can be realised? Why did birth take place at all?

Prince: Ignorance is the cause of non-realisation. Self realises the Self; there is no external aid possible. Birth originated through the sense of doership.

Spirit: What is that ignorance of which you speak? What is

again the Self? Whose is the sense of doership?

Prince: Ignorance is the sense of separateness from consciousness and false identification with the non-self. As for the Self, the question must be referred to the self in you. The ego or the 'I-thought' is the root of action.

Spirit: By what means is ignorance to be destroyed?

How is the means acquired?
What leads to such means?

Prince: Investigation cuts at the root of ignorance. Dispassion develops investigation. Disgust for the pleasures of life generates dispassion towards them.

Spirit: What are investigation, dispassion and disgust for pleasures?

Prince: Investigation is analysis conducted within oneself, discriminating the non-self from the Self, stimulated by a stern, strong and sincere desire to realise the Self. Dispassion is non-attachment to surroundings. This results if the misery consequent on attachment is kept in mind.

Spirit: What is the root cause of the whole series of these requirements?

Prince: Divine Grace is the root cause of all that is good. Devotion to God alone can bring down His grace. This devotion is produced and developed by association with the wise. That is the prime cause of all.

Spirit: Who is that God? What is devotion to Him? Who are the wise?

Prince: God is the master of the cosmos. Devotion is unwavering love for Him. The wise are those who abide in Supreme Peace and melt with love for all.

Spirit: Who is always in the grip of fear? Who of misery? Who of poverty?

Prince: Fear holds a man possessed of enormous wealth;

misery, of a large family; and poverty, of insatiable desires.

Spirit: Who is fearless? Who is free from misery? Who is never needy?

Prince: The man with no attachments is free from fear; the one with controlled mind is free from misery; the Self-realised man is never needy.

Spirit: Who is he that passes men's understanding and is visible though without a body? What is the action of the inactive?

Prince: The man emancipated here and now passes men's understanding; he is seen though he does not identify himself with the body; his actions are those of the inactive.

Spirit: What is real? What is unreal? What is inappropriate? Answer these questions and redeem your brother.

Prince: The subject (*i.e.*, the Self) is real; the object (*i.e.*, the non-self) is unreal; worldly transactions are inappropriate.

I have now answered your questions. Please release my brother at once. When the Prince had finished, the ghoul

released Rukmangada with pleasure and himself appeared metamorphosed as a Brahmin. Seeing the figure of the Brahmin full of courage and *tapas* (penance), the two princes asked him who he was.

I was formerly a Brahmin of Magadha. My name is Vasuman. I was famous for my learning and known as an invincible debater. I was proud of myself and sought the assembly of

those learned pandits who gathered in my country under royal patronage. There was among them a great saint, perfect in wisdom and entirely Self-possessed. He was known as Ashtaka. I went there for love of debate. Though I was a mere logician, I argued against his statement on Self-realisation, by sheer force of logic. He backed his arguments by profuse quotations from the holy scriptures. Since I was out

to win laurels, I continued to refute him. Finding me incorrigible, he kept silent. However, one of his disciples, a descendant of the Kasyapa lineage, was enraged at my audacity and cursed me before the king, saying: You chip of a Brahmin! How dare you refute my Master without first understanding his statements? May you at once become a ghoul and remain so for a long time. I shook with fear at the

imprecation and took refuge at the feet of the Sage Ashtaka. Being always Self-possessed, he took pity on me, though I had figured as his opponent just before; and he modified his disciple's curse by pronouncing an end to it as follows: May you resume your old shape as soon as a wise man furnishes appropriate answers to all the questions which were raised here by you,

answered by me, but refuted by your polemics.

O Prince! You have now released me from that curse. I therefore consider you as the best among men, knowing all that pertains to life here and beyond. The princes were astonished at this story of his life.

Vasuman asked Hemangada as follows:

Prince! I shall ask you a question. Please answer me. I learnt about the Supreme Truth from Ashtaka and later from you. You are a Sage; but still, how is it that you go out hunting? How can a Sage be engaged in work? Work implies duality; wisdom is non-duality; the two are thus opposed to each other. Please clear this doubt of mine.

Thus requested, Hemangada spoke to the Brahmin as follows:

O Brahmin! Your confusion owing to ignorance has not yet been cleared up. Wisdom is eternal and natural. How can it be contradicted by work? Should work make wisdom ineffective, how can wisdom be useful any more than a dream? No eternal good is possible in that case. All this work is

dependent on Self-awareness (*i.e.*, wisdom). Being so, can work destroy wisdom and yet remain in its absence? Wisdom is that consciousness in which this world with all its phenomena and activities is known to be as an image or series of images; the duality essential for work is also a phenomenon in that non-dual awareness. There is no doubt that a man realises the Self only after purging himself of all

thoughts, and that he is then released from bondage, once for all. Your question has thus no basis and cannot be expected of the wise.

Then the Brahmin continued further:

True, O Prince! I have also concluded that the Self is pure, unblemished Intelligence. But how can it remain unblemished when *will* arises in it? *Will* is

modification of the Self, giving rise to confusion, similar to that of a snake in a coil of rope.

Listen, O Brahmin! You do not yet clearly distinguish confusion from clarity. The sky appears blue to all alike whether they know that space is colourless or not. Even the one who knows speaks of the 'blue sky' but is not himself confused. The ignorant man is confused whereas the man who knows is

not. The latter's seeming confusion is harmless, like a snake that is dead. His work is like images in a mirror. There lies the difference between a Sage and an ignorant man. The former has accurate knowledge and unerring judgement, whereas the latter has a blurred conception and his judgement is warped.

Knowledge of Truth never forsakes a Sage although he is

immersed in work. All his activities are like reflections in a mirror for, being Self-realised, ignorance can no longer touch him. Wrong knowledge, due to sheer ignorance, can be corrected by true knowledge; but wrong knowledge, due to a fault, cannot be so easily corrected. So long as there is diplopia the eyesight will be blurred and many images of a single object will be seen. Similarly, so long as there is

prarabdha (residual past karma) unaccounted for, the manifestation of the world will continue for the *Jnani*, though only as a phenomenon. This will also vanish as soon as the *prarabdha* has played itself out and then pure, unblemished Intelligence alone will remain. Therefore I tell you, there is no blemish attached to a *Jnani*, though he appears active and engaged in worldly duties.

Having heard this, the Brahmin continued to ask:

O Prince! How can there be any residue of past karma in a *Jnani*? Does not *jnana* burn away all karma as fire does a heap of camphor?

Then Hemangada replied:

Listen, Brahmin! The three kinds of karma,
(1) mature (*prarabdha*),

- (2) pending (*agami*), and
- (3) in store (*sanchita*)

are common to all — not excluding the *Jnani*. The first of these alone remains for the *Jnani* and the other two are burnt away. Karma matures by the agency of time; such is divine law. When mature, it is bound to yield its fruits. The karma of the one who is active after Selfrealisation, is rendered ineffective by his

wisdom. Karma already mature and now yielding results is called *prarabdha*: it is like an arrow already shot from a bow which must run its course until its momentum is lost. Environments are only a result of *prarabdha*: though they seem the same for all, *Jnanis* react to them differently according to their own stages of realisation. Pleasure and pain are apparent to the least among the Sages, but do not

leave any mark on them as they do on the ignorant; pleasure and pain operate on the middle class of Sages in the same way; however, they react only indistinctly to their surroundings, as a man in sleep does to a gentle breeze or to an insect creeping over him; pleasure and pain are again apparent to the highest among the Sages, who, however, look upon them as unreal, like a hare growing

horns. The ignorant anticipate pleasure and pain before the enjoyment, recapitulate them after enjoyment, and reflect on them, so that they leave a strong impression on their minds. *Jnanis* of the lowest order also enjoy pleasure and pain like the ignorant, but their remembrance of such experiences is frequently broken up by intervals of realisation. Thus worldly

experiences do not leave an impression on their minds.

Jnanis of the middle class, accustomed to control their minds by long-continued austerities, keep their minds in check even while experiencing pleasure and pain, and thus their response to the world is as indistinct as that of a man in sleep, to a gentle breeze playing on him or an ant creeping over his body.

Jnanis of the highest order are left untouched, for they always remain as the burnt skeleton of a cloth (retaining its old shape but useless) after their realisation. Just as an actor is not really affected by the passions which he displays on the stage, so also this *Jnani*, always aware of his perfection, is not affected by the seeming pleasures and pains which he

regards as a mere illusion, like the horns of a hare.

The ignorant are not aware of the pure Self; they see it as always blemished and hence they believe in the reality of objective knowledge. They are therefore affected by the pleasures and pains of life.

As for the lowest order of *Jnanis*, these realise the Self off and on, and spells of ignorance

overtake them whenever they are overcome by their predispositions. Then they look upon the body as the self and the world as real. They are often able to override the old tendencies, and thus there is an ongoing struggle between wisdom and ignorance — each of them prevailing alternately. The *Jnani* ranges himself on the side of wisdom and fights against ignorance until falsity is thoroughly blown out, and

truth prevails. Therefore *jnana* is indivisible.

Forgetfulness of the Self never overtakes a middle class *Jnani* and wrong knowledge never possesses him. However, of his own accord, he brings out some predispositions from his own depths in order to maintain his body according to *prarabdha*. This is the conduct of an accomplished *Jnani*.

As for the aspirant, there is no forgetfulness of the Self so long as he is engaged in practising *samadhi*. But the accomplished *Jnani* is always unforgetful of the Self and picks out his own predispositions according to his own choice.

The highest *Jnani* makes no difference between *samadhi* and worldly transactions. He never finds anything apart from

the Self and so there is no lapse for him.

The middle order *Jnani* is fond of *samadhi* and voluntarily abides in it. There is accordingly a lapse, however slight, when he is engaged in worldly affairs, or even in the maintenance of his body.

On the other hand, the *Jnani* of the highest order involuntarily and naturally abides in *samadhi*,

and any lapse is impossible for him under any circumstances.

The *Jnani* of the middle order or of the highest order has no tinge of karma left in him, because he is in perfection and does not perceive anything apart from the Self. How can there be anything of karma left when the wild fire of *jnana* is raging, consuming all in its way? Such karma is only a trick believed to be true by the

onlooker. I shall explain this point further. The state of the *Jnani* is said to be identical with that of Siva. There is not the least difference between them. Therefore karma cannot besmear a *Jnani*.

Vasuman had all his doubts cleared by this discourse of Hemangada. He had a clear understanding of true Realisation. Vasuman and the prince saluted each other and

returned to their respective places.

The Conclusion

Having heard all this,
Parasurama asked further of
Sri Datta:

Master! I have heard your holy
words regarding Realisation
and Wisdom. My doubts are
now cleared. I now understand
the non-dual state of abstract
consciousness pervading all
and abiding in the Self.
Nevertheless, kindly tell me the

essence of the whole discourse in a few words so that I may always remember it.

Thus requested, Sri Datta again resumed:

That which abides as the Self is
Pure Intelligence,
Transcendental Being,
comprised of the aggregate of
all the egos in perfection. She
is Self-contained, and fills the
role of *Maya* by virtue of Her

own prowess. Being one without a second, She makes even the impossible happen and thus displays the universe as a series of images in a mirror. I shall now tell you how.

She who is transcendence, awareness perfection and total summation of all egos, of Her own Will divides Herself into two. Imperfection is concomitant with such scission; there is bound to be an

insentient phase which represents the aforesaid *exterior* or *unmanifested void*. The sentient phase is *Sadasiva Tattva*.

[*Note:* This is called *Ishwara* in the *Upanisads*.]

Now Sadasiva, also not being perfect, sees the unmanifest void (*i.e.*, the sentient phase becomes aware of the insentient phase) but yet

knows it to be of Himself —
feeling 'I am this also'.

[*Note:* The sentient phase is
called *Ishwara*; and the
insentient phase is called *Maya*
or *Avidya*, in the *Upanisads*.]

Later *Sadasiva* identifies the
insentient phase with His body
at the time of starting creation.
Then he goes by the name
Ishwara. Now this
contaminated Higher Ego,

namely *Ishwara*, divides Himself into the three aspects — *Rudra*, *Vishnu* and *Brahma* (representing the modes of Ego associated with the three qualities of darkness, brightness and activity) who in their turn manifest the cosmos consisting of many worlds. *Brahmas* are innumerable, all of whom are engaged in creating worlds; *Vishnus* are equally taken up in protecting the worlds; and the *Rudras* in

destroying them. This is the way of creation. But all of them are only images in the grand mirror of Abstract Consciousness.

These are only manifest, but are not concrete, since they have never been created.

The Supreme Being is always the sum total of all the egos. Just as you fill the body and identify yourself with different

senses and organs without deviating from the Ego, so does the transcendental Pure Intelligence similarly identify itself with all, beginning with *Sadasiva* and ending with the minutest protoplasm, and yet remains single.

Again, just as you cannot taste anything without the aid of the tongue, nor apprehend other things without the aid of other senses or organs, so also the

supreme Being (*Sadasiva*) acts and knows through the agency of Brahma, etc., and even of worms. Just as your conscious Self remains pure and unqualified, although it forms the basis of all the activities of limbs, organs and senses, so also the Supreme Intelligence is unaffected though holding all the Egos within Herself. She is not aware of any distinctions in the vastness of the cosmos,

nor does She make difference among the Egos.

In this manner, the Cosmos shines in Her like images in a mirror. The shining of the Cosmos is due to Her reflection. In the same way, the individuals in the world, namely you, I, and other seers are all flashes of Her consciousness. Since all are only phases of Supreme Intelligence, that alone will shine in purity which

is bereft of taints or impediments in the shape of objects. Just as the shining mirror is clear when images no longer appear in it, and the same mirror remains untainted even when the images are reflected in it, so also Pure Intelligence subsists pure and untainted whether the world is seen or not. This untainted Supreme Intelligence is one without a second and filled with Bliss, because it is totally free

from the least trace of unhappiness. The sum total of all happiness of all the living beings has taken shape as the Supreme One because She is obviously desired by all; and She is no other than the Self, which consists of pure Bliss, because the Self is the most beloved of every being. For the sake of the Self people discipline their bodies and subdue their desires; all sensual pleasures are mere

sparks of Bliss inherent in the Self. For sensual pleasures are similar to a sense of relief felt on unburdening oneself of a crushing load, or to the peace of sleep. Pure Intelligence is indeed Bliss because it is the only one sought for. People do not recognise the Bliss inhering as their Self, because of their ignorance. They always associate pleasure with incidents.

Furthermore, just as images in a mirror are associated with objects, ignoring the presence of the reflecting surface, but after consideration are found to be dependent on the mirror and not apart from it, and the mirror is found to be untainted by the reflected images, so also the Sages know the Self alone to be unique, real and untainted by its own projections, namely, the world, etc. The relation of the cosmos

to Pure Intelligence, *i.e.*, abstract Self, is like that of a pot to earth, or of an ornament to gold, or of sculpture to the granite rock.

O Parasurama! Denial of the existence of the world does not amount to perfection. Denial is absurd. For, it implies intelligence, and intelligence displays itself as the universe. The intelligence denying or admitting the world is there

shining over all! Can the world be erased out of existence by mere denial of it?

Just as the images appear in a mirror and partake of its nature, so also the cosmos is of and in the Self, and real inasmuch as it is the Self. This wisdom in perfection is the realisation of all as the Self. Intelligence appears as objects by its own virtue, as a mirror appears as the images on it. This is the

whole essence of the *sastras*.
There is no bondage, no
liberation, no aspirant, no
process of attainment. The
transcendental Conscious
Principle alone subsists in the
three states of being. She
remains as the one uniform,
absolute being. She is
ignorance; She is wisdom; She
is bondage; She is liberation
and She is the process
therefore. This is all that need
be known, understood and

realised. There is nothing more.
I have told you all in order.