

EKAM SAT

3

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Bhishma-Gita
Sanat-Sujata-Gita
Sanatkumara-Gita
Bharatha-Gita

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Preface

The Gita literature in Sanskrit is the spontaneous outpouring of the sages and seers that have realized the Self. It is the expression of their direct experience of the Divine – the Self, the Brahman, the Atman in whatever way IT is apprehended in their supreme consciousness. It is, therefore, no surprise that every Gita sets realization of the Self as its ideal. All of them point to one Truth, the only Truth – Ekam Sat.

The Bhagavad-Gita is the most widely known classic of Sanatana-dharma, translated and commented upon by hundreds of spiritual seekers in almost every language in the world. The Hindu monks who are the torch-bearers of the Sanatana-dharma have either translated and / or commented upon a few of the other Gitas in English. It may be that most of the Gitas remain to be given free translation and brief commentary in English for an easy understanding of their spirit, for the benefit of aspirants not knowing Sanskrit.

We bring out a series of volumes titled Ekam Sat containing free translation in English of each verse of all the available Gitas other than the Bhagavad-Gita, with brief commentary wherever necessary. The idea is that the translation is true reflection of the spirit of the verse (sloka) in Sanskrit as far as practicable, and the commentary is consistent with the central thought of the Gita. The division of each Gita into chapters may be arbitrary, but indicative of the subject handled therein. Ekam Sat 1 & 2 of the series have already been published.

Ekam Sat 3, the third volume of the series, contains a detailed exposition of the Bhishma-Gita, Sanat-Sujata-Gita, Sanatkumara-Gita & Bharatha-Gita. The translation into English of each sloka (verse) of the four Gitas is rendered corresponding to the idea of the verse in Sanskrit of the Gita concerned. Explanatory paragraphs are added, wherever considered necessary, to elaborate the essence of the content of the verse from the point of view of Monism.

Bhishma-Gita

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Introduction

The Bhishma-Gita consists of three Hymns - the Hymn to Mahadeva (Iswara), the Hymn to Mahavisnu and the Hymn to Narayana. The Hymn to Mahadeva is in sections 14 & 17, and the Hymn to Mahavisnu is in section 149 of the Anusasana Parva, while the Hymn to Narayana is in sections 65 to 68 of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharat.

In the world of classical literature, the Mahabharat is unique in many respects. As an epic, it is the greatest in all literatures. It is considered the mightiest single human endeavor of literary creation of any culture in human history. The effort to conceive the mind that conceived it is itself considered great education. The epic is the stupendous ocean of all-embracing knowledge. It is a wonderful production bench-marking the high state of Indian civilization long before the Christian era.

The components of Mahabharat such as the Bhagavad-Gita, the Hymn to Mahadeva, the Hymn to Mahavisnu, the Hymn to Narayana, etc are what seek to enlighten the human beings. They are the crux of the Vedanta philosophy. They constitute the basic component of the philosophy of Advaita, and Monism.

The Hymn to Mahadeva and the Hymn to Mahavisnu are similar, rather identical to a considerable extent, as both of them are the Hymns to the Supreme Brahman. This is basically the reason why the same names adoring Mahadeva are repeated in the Hymn to Mahavisnu and vice-versa at several places. The Hymn to Narayana is re-affirmation of the glory of the Brahman, though brief. The author of these Hymns must have kept always in view of the Oneness of the Supreme Brahman. The advocacy of supremacy of Iswara or Visnu was only parochial, prevalent at the time the Mahabharat was composed. This epic has sought to dispel the notions of such supremacy of personal gods in a sectarian way.

It is significant that Bhishma chose Krisna, being the embodiment of Mahavisnu, to recite the Hymn to Mahadeva while he himself recited the Hymns to Mahavisnu and Narayana. This approach enhances the catholicity of out-look of the author of the Hymns in the Mahabharat, though the epic basically relates to Vaishnava literature.

Both the Hymns to Mahadeva and to Mahavisnu contain 1000 names, many of them repeated in each. Both the Hymns contain same names in adoration. But each of the names in both the Hymns has its own inner significance. Though, etymologically, the names appear to be repeated, each has its own ontological import. This requires greater and deeper understanding of the Vedanta philosophy for appreciation.

The Hymn to Mahavisnu is quite popular as Visnu-Sahasranama and an important component of Vaishnava devotional literature. The commentaries by Parasara Bhatta and Shankara on this Hymn are exhaustive and very illuminating as to the ontological import of the names of adoration.

1. Hymn to Mahadeva

Yudhishtira said:

Oh son of the river Ganga! Thou hast heard all the names of Maheswara, the Lord of the universe. Do thou tell us, oh grandsire, all the names that are applied unto Him who is called Isa and Sambhu? Do thou tell us all those names that are applied unto Him who is called Vabhru (vast), Him that has the universe for His form, Him that is the illustrious preceptor of all the deities and the *asuras*, that is called Swayambhu (self-created) and that is the cause of the origin and dissolution of the universe? Do thou tell us also of the puissance of Mahadeva?

Bhishma said:

I am quite incompetent to recite of virtues of Mahadeva of the highest intelligence. He pervades all things in the universe, and yet is not seen anywhere. He is the creator of the universal self. All the deities from Brahma downwards adore and worship Him. He transcends both *Prakrti* and *Purusa*. He is indestructible and the Supreme *Brahman*. He is both existent and non-existent. Agitating both *Prakrti* and *Purusa* by means of His energy, He created the universal lord of creatures – Brahma. Who is there competent to tell the virtues of that God of gods that is endued with supreme intelligence?

Only Narayana, that bearer of the discus and the mace can comprehend Mahadeva. He is without deterioration. He is the foremost of all beings in attributes. He is Visnu as He pervades the universe. He is irresistible. He is possessed of supreme Energy. He is omniscient because of *Yoga*. It is in consequence of the devotion of the high-souled Krisna to Mahadeva whom he gratified.

In every new *Yuga* has Krisna, by penances, gratified Mahadeva. Only Krisna has seen with his eyes the great puissance of the high-souled Mahadeva – that original cause of the universe. Oh Bharata! I do not behold anyone superior to Mahadeva. To expound the names of that God of gods fully and without creating the desire of hearing more, only Krisna is competent. Verily, only he is able to discourse on the puissance, in its entirety, of the Supreme Deity.

Addressing Vasudeva, Bhishma continued.

Thou art the Master of all the deities and the *asuras*. Thou art illustrious. Thou art Visnu in consequence of thy pervading the universe. It behoveth thee to discourse on these subjects connected with Siva of universal form about which Yudhishtira has asked me. In days of yore, the *Rishi* Tandin, sprung from Brahma, recited in Brahma's region and before Brahma himself the thousand names of Mahadeva. Do thou recite those names before this conclave of the ascetics? Do thou discourse on the high blessedness of Him who is immutable, ever blissful, *Hotri*, universal Protector and Creator of the universe?

Vasudeva said:

All the deities are incompetent to understand the course of Mahadeva's acts truly and in all their details. He is the end which all righteous people attain. The very Adityas who are endued with subtle sight are unable to behold His abode. How can one that is merely a man comprehend Sambhu whom the senses cannot comprehend, for Sambhu dwells in the firmament of the heart and cannot be seen, but by the internal vision that *yoga* supplies. I shall, therefore, truly recite to you some of the attributes of that illustrious slayer of *asuras* who is regarded as the lord of all sacrifices and vows.

Vasudeva continued:

This hymn (stated to have been composed by the *Rishi* Tandin) relates to Him who is the Veda of the Vedas, and the most ancient of all ancient objects; to Him who is the energy of all energies, and the penance of all penances; to Him who is the most tranquil of all creatures endued with tranquility, and who is the splendour of all splendours; to Him who is looked upon as the most restrained of all creatures that are restrained, and Him who is the intelligence of all creatures endued with intelligence; to Him who is looked upon as the deity of all deities, and the *Rishi* of all *Rishis*; to Him who is regarded as the sacrifice of all sacrifices and the most auspicious of all things fraught with auspiciousness; to Him who is the Rudra of all Rudras and the effulgence of all things endued with effulgence; to Him who is the *Yogi* of all *yogis*, and the cause of all causes; to Him from whom all the worlds start into existence, and unto whom all the worlds return when they cease to exist; to Him who is the Soul of all existent creatures, and who is called Hara of immeasurable energy. Hear me recite those thousand names of the great Sarva. Hearing those names, Oh foremost of all men, thou shalt be crowned with fruition in respect of all thy wishes.

Aum!

Thou art Immobile,
Thou art Fixed,
Thou art Puissant,
Thou art Terrible,
Thou art Foremost,
Thou art boon-giving,
Thou art Superior,
Thou art the Soul of all creatures,
Thou art celebrated over all creatures,
Thou art all things,
Thou art the Creator of all,
Thou art *bhava*,

(*Bhava* implies that form from which all things flow and into which all things merge when the universal dissolution takes place. It may also imply mere existence without reference to any attribute by which it is capable of being described or comprehended.)

Thou art the bearer of matted locks on Thy head,
Thou wearest animal skins for Thy vestments,
Thou wearest a crest of matted air on Thy head like the peacock,
Thou art he that is the whole universe for Thy limbs,
(The Sanskrit word *Virat* signifies infinitude.)

Thou art the Creator of all things,
Thou art Hara in consequence of Thy being the destroyer of all things,
Thou art he that has eyes resembling those of the gazelle,
Thou art the destroyer of all creatures,
Thou art the supreme enjoyer of all things,
Thou art *Pravritti* whence all actions flow,
Thou art *Nivritti* or abstention from acts,
Thou art observant of fasts and vows,
Thou art Eternal,
Thou art Unchangeable,
Thou art he that resides in crematoria,
Thou art the possessor of the six well-known attributes of Lordship and the rest,
(The six attributes are infinite treasures, strength, glory, splendor, knowledge and renunciation. These attributes relate to Bhagavan, an epithet of the God-head. Bhagavan is also the Personal God of the devotee.)

Thou residest in the heart of every creature,
Thou art he that enjoys all things with senses,
Thou art the grinder of all sinful creatures,
Thou art he that deserves the salutations of all,
Thou art of great feats,
Thou art he that has penances for his wealth,
Thou createst all the elements at Thy will,
Thou concealest Thy real nature by putting on the guise of a lunatic,
Thou art the Master of all the worlds and of all living creatures,
Thou art of immeasurable form,
Thou art of vast body,
Thou art of the form of Righteousness,
Thou art of great fame,
Thou art of high Soul,
Thou art the soul of all creatures,
Thou hast the universe for Thy form,
Thou art of vast jaws (for Thou swallowest the universe when the time comes for the dissolution of all things),
Thou art the protector of all the *lokas* (the worlds),
Thou art the soul residing in the inner heart and as such devoid of *ahamkara* originating from ignorance, and is one and undivided,
(The allegory is to Mahadeva being the *Pratyag* Soul free from ignorance.)

Thou art *anandam* (bliss),

Thou art he whose car (vehicle) is borne by mules,
Thou art he that protects *Jiva* from the thunderbolt of rebirth,
Thou art adorable,
Thou art obtained by purity, self-restraint and vows,
Thou art again the refuge of all kinds of vows and observances including purity
and self-restraint,

(The word *niyama* in the text refers to purity, both internal and external, contentedness with whatever is had, penance, Vedic studies, meditation on the Deity, etc.)

Thou art the celestial artificer that is conversant with every art,
Thou art self-created (for no one has created Thee),
Thou art the beginning of all creatures and things,
Thou art Hiranyagarbha, the Creator of all things,
Thou art inexhaustible puissance and felicity,

(The word *nidhi* implies the largest number that can be named in arithmetical notation. Hence it implies the possessor of inexhaustible felicity and gladness.)

Thou hast a hundred eyes,

(The word *sahasraksha* connotes either Indra or possessor of innumerable eyes in consequence of Mahadeva being identical with the universe.)

Thou hast eyes of vast power,

(The word *visalaksha* connotes one whose eyes are of vast power, because the past as well as the future are seen by them even as the present.)

Thou art *Soma*,

(*Soma* implies either the Moon or the libations poured into the sacrificial fire.)

Thou art he that causes all righteous creatures to assume shapes of glory for
shining in the firmament,

(All righteous persons become luminaries in the firmament. It is Mahadeva that makes them so for the reason that He is the giver of glorious forms to those that deserve them.)

Thou art Chandramas (Moon),

Thou art Surya,

Thou art the planet Saturn,

Thou art the descending node (of the Moon),

Thou art the ascending node,

Thou art Mangala (Mars), and

Thou art Brihaspati (Jupiter) and Sukra (Venus),

Thou art the Budha (Mercury),

(Many of these names need comments to be intelligible. Ketu is no planet. Hindu astronomers call the descending node of the Moon by that name. Similarly, Rahu is the ascending node of the Moon. *Graha* is that which seizes, and *Grahapati* is Mangala, so

called for its malevolence. *Varah* is Brihaspati or Jupiter who is the counter-self of *Sukra* or Venus. In Hindu mythology, *Sukra* is a male person, the preceptor of the *daityas* and *asuras*. *Atri* is Budha or Mercury.)

Thou art the worshipper of Atri's wife,
(Atri's wife gave birth to Durvasas through a boon of Mahadeva.)

Thou art He that shot his shaft in wrath at sacrifice when sacrifice fled away from him in the form of a deer,
(Daksha's sacrifice sought to fly away from Siva, but the latter pursued it and shot His shaft at it for destroying it outright.)

Thou art sinless,
Thou art possessed of penances that have conferred upon Thee the power of creating the universe,
Thou art possessed of penances that have rendered Thee capable of destroying the universe,
Thou art high-minded (in consequence of Thy great liberality towards Thy devotees),
Thou fulfillst the wishes of all who resign themselves to Thee,
Thou art the maker of the year (for it is Thou who settest the wheel of Time revolving, by assuming the form of the Sun and the planets),
Thou art *Mantra* (in the form of *Pranava* and other sacred words and syllables),
Thou art the authority for all acts (in the form of the Vedas and the scriptures),
Thou art the highest Penance,
Thou art devoted to *yoga*,
Thou art He that merges himself in the *Brahman* (by *yoga*-abstraction),
Thou art the great seed (being the cause of causes),
Thou art the displayer of what is un-manifest in the manifest form, in which the universe exists,
Thou art possessed of infinite might,
Thou art he, whose seed is gold,
Thou art omniscient (being as Thou art all things and the great knower),
Thou art the cause of all things,
Thou art he that has the seed of action (that is, ignorance and desire) for the means of sojourning from this world to the other and the other to this,
(The *Jiva* carries the seed of acts, that is, ignorance and desire with it. As a consequence, the *Jiva* travels from one world into another without end. This seed is, therefore, the means of locomotion of the *Jiva*. Mahadeva is *Jiva*. The soul is the rider and the body is the vehicle that carries the soul.)

Thou hast ten arms,
Thou hast wink-less eyes (for Thou seest at all times),
Thou hast a blue throat (in consequence of Thy bearing in Thy throat the poison that arose upon churning the ocean and which, if not so borne, was capable of destroying the universe),

Thou art the Lord of Uma,
Thou art the origin of all the infinite forms that occur in the universe,
Thou art he, whose superiority is due to him,
Thou art a hero in might (in consequence of Thy having achieved such grand feats
as the quick destruction of the triple city of the *asuras*),
Thou art inert matter (which cannot move unless co-existing with the Soul),
Thou art all the *tattvas* (subjects of enquiry as counted in the *Sankhya*
philosophy),
Thou art the ordainer and ruler of the *tattvas*,
Thou art the chief of those beings that wait upon Thee, and called *Ganas*,
(The *Ganas* are mighty beings that wait upon Mahadeva. Ganapati is Ganesa, the
eldest son of Mahadeva.)

Thou coverest infinite space,
(The word in the text is *digvasas*, meaning nude. The Puranas say that for
stupefying the wives of certain ascetics, Mahadeva became nude on one occasion. The
real meaning appears to be that He is capable of covering, and does actually cover even
infinite space. In the sense of nude, the word means one that has empty space for one's
cover or vestments.)

Thou art Kama, the god of desire,
Thou art conversant with *mantras* (in the sense of Knowledge) being Thy
penance,
(This implies that, with Mahadeva, penance is Knowledge instead of being mere
physical austerities.)

Thou art the highest *Mantra* (for Thou art that philosophy which consists in the
ascertainment of the nature and attributes of the Soul and its differences
from the Non-soul),
Thou art the cause of the universe (since all that exists has sprung from Thy Soul),
Thou art universal destroyer (for all that ceases to exist becomes merged unto
Thee who art the un-manifest *Brahman*),
Thou bearest in one of Thy hands the calabash, in another thou holdest the bow;
in another hand thou bearest shafts and in another thou bearest a skull,
Thou bearest the thunderbolt,
Thou art armed with the hundred-killer,
(It may be a weapon of the kind of a rocket.)

Thou art armed with the sword,
Thou wieldest the battle-axe,
Thou art armed with the Sula (trident),
Thou art adorable,
Thou hast the sacrificial ladle in one of Thy hands,
Thou art of beautiful form,
Thou art endued with abundant energy,
Thou givest, in the most liberal measure, all that tends to adorn those that are

devoted to Thee,
Thou wearest a turban on Thy head,
Thou art of beautiful face,
Thou art he that swells with splendour and puissance,
Thou art he that is humble and modest,
Thou art exceedingly tall,
Thou art he that has the senses for Thy rays,
(The word Harikesa means one having the senses for one's rays. It means one that displays all objects before the soul through the senses. The meaning is that Mahadeva is he through whose puissance the mind succeeds in acquiring knowledge through the senses.)

Thou art the greatest of preceptors,
Thou art the Supreme Brahman (being a state of Pure Felicitous Existence),
(The word *kris* signifies *bhu* or existence. The syllable *na* signifies *nivritti*. Hence *Krisna* means *ananda-tanmatra* - the state of pure felicitous existence.)

Thou art he who took the shape of a jackal (for consoling the *brahmana* who, when insulted by a wealthy *vaisya*, had resolved to commit suicide),
Thou art he whose objects are all crowned with fruition (of themselves and without waiting for the puissance derivable from penances),
Thou art one who bears a bald head (as the sign of the mendicant order),
Thou art one who does good to all creatures,
Thou art unborn,
Thou hast innumerable forms,
Thou bearest all kinds of fragrance on thy person,
Thou art he whose matted locks on the head sucked up the river Ganga when it had first fallen from heaven (although they again gave out the water at the earnest solicitation of the King Bhagiratha),
Thou art the giver of sovereignty and lordship,
Thou art a *brahmacharin* without having ever fallen away from the rigid vow of continence,
Thou art distinguished for Thy sexual continence,
Thou always liest on Thy back,
Thou hast Thy abode in Puissance,
(The word *nabhah* means space implying puissance. That *Nabhah* is the abode of Mahadeva.)

Thou hast three matted locks on Thy head,
Thou art he that is clad in rags,
Thou art Rudra (in consequence of Thy fierceness),
Thou art the celestial generalissimo,
Thou art all-pervading,
Thou art he that moves about during the day,
Thou art he that moves about in the night,

(The deities are said to move about during the day, while the *asuras* are said to move about during the night. What is, therefore, implied is that Thou art the deities as well as their foes, the *asuras*.)

Thou art of fierce wrath,
Thou art possessed of dazzling effulgence (born of Vedic study and penance),
Thou art the slayer of the mighty *Asura* who had come in the form of an infuriate elephant for destroying Thy sacred city of Varanasi,
Thou art the slayer of such *daityas* as become the oppressors of the universe,
Thou art *Kala* (or Time) which is the universal destroyer,
Thou art the supreme ordainer of the universe,
Thou art a mine of excellent accomplishments,
Thou art of the forms of the lion and the tiger,
Thou art he that is clad in the skin of an elephant,
Thou art the *yogi*, who deceives Time by transcending its irresistible influence,
Thou art the original sound,
(Sound, when manifested, is perceptible. Though un-manifest and lying in eternal space, it is believed to have its existence, as it is eternal. The un-manifest *Brahman* is generally considered the primal un-manifest sound.)

Thou art the fruition of all desires,
Thou art he that is adored in four ways,
(The four ways are said to be *visva*, *taijasa*, *prajna* and *sivadyana*.)

Thou art a night-wanderer (like Betala and others),
Thou art he that wanders in the company of spirits,
Thou art he that wanders in the company of ghostly beings,
Thou art the Supreme Lord of even Indra and the other celestials,
Thou art he that has multiplied himself infinitely in the form of all existent and non-existent things,
Thou art the upholder of both *mahat* and all the innumerable combinations of the five primal elements,
Thou art the primeval ignorance or *tamas* that is known by the name of Rahu,
Thou art without measure and hence infinite,
Thou art the supreme end that is attained by the emancipate,
Thou art fond of dancing,
Thou art he that is always engaged in dancing,
Thou art he that causes others to dance,
Thou art the friend of the universe,
Thou art he, whose aspect is calm and mild,
Thou art endued with penances puissant enough to create and destroy the universe,
Thou art he that binds all creatures with the bonds of Thy illusion,
Thou art he that transcends destruction,
Thou art he that dwells on the mount Kailasa,
Thou transcendent all bonds and art unattached in respect of all things like space,

Thou art possessed of a thousand arms,
 Thou art victory,
 Thou art that perseverance, which is the cause of success or victory,
 Thou art without idleness or procrastination that interferes with persevering
 activity,
 Thou art dauntless,
 Thou art fear,
 Thou art he that puts a stop to Bali's sacrifice, or
 Thou art he called Buddha who preached against all sacrifices,
 Thou fulfillst the desires of all Thy devotees,
 Thou art the destroyer of Daksha's sacrifice,
 Thou art amiable,
 Thou art slightly amiable,
 Thou art exceedingly fierce and robbest all creatures of their energy,
 Thou art the slayer of the *asura* Bala,
 Thou art always cheerful,
 Thou art of the form of wealth which is coveted by all,
 Thou hast never been vanquished,
 (The allegory is to the defeat of Mahadeva at the hands of Krisna in the city of
 Bana. His defeat was due to Mahadeva's kindness for Krisna, even as Krisna broke his
 vow of never taking up arms in the battle of Kurukshetra, for honouring his worshipper
 Bhishma who had vowed that he would compel Krisna to take up arms.)

Thou art the most adorable,
 Thou art he that utters deep roars (in the form of ocean),
 Thou art that which is so deep that no one can measure it (Thou art of the
 form of space),
 Thou art he, whose puissance and the might of whose companions and of the bull
 have never been measured by anybody,
 Thou art the tree of the world (whose roots extend upwards and branches hang
 downwards),
 Thou art the banyan,
 Thou art he that sleeps on a banyan leaf when the universe after dissolution
 becomes one infinite expanse of water,
 (The Hindu mythology says that when the universal destruction comes and all
 becomes a mighty expanse of water, there appears a banyan tree under whose shade the
 immortal *Rishi* Markandeya sees a child who is Mahavisnu.)

Thou art he that shows compassion to all worshippers assuming, as Thou likest,
 the form of Hari, Hara, Ganesa, Arka, Agni or Wind,
 Thou art possessed of teeth that are exceedingly sharp (since Thou art competent
 to chew innumerable worlds even as one munches nuts and swallows
 them speedily),
 Thou art of vast dimensions in respect of Thy forms,
 Thou art possessed of a mouth that is vast enough to swallow the universe at once,
 Thou art he whose troops are adored everywhere, or

Thou art he at whose approach all the *asura* troops fled in all directions,
 Thou art he that dispelled all the fears of the deities when the Prince of elephants
 had to be captured,
 Thou art the seed of the universe,
 Thou art he that has for his vehicle the same bull that forms again the symbol on
 his banner in battle,
 Thou hast Agni for Thy soul,
 Thou art Surya, who has green steeds yoked onto his car (vehicle),
 Thou art the friend of *Jiva*,
 Thou art he that is conversant with the proper time for the accomplishment of all
 religious acts,
 Thou art he unto whom Visnu paid His adorations (for obtaining His celebrated
 discus),
 Thou art the Sacrifice (being in the form of Visnu),
 Thou art the ocean,
 Thou art the Barabanala Mare's head that ranges within the ocean, ceaselessly
 vomiting fire and drinking the saline waters as if they were sacrificial butter,
 Thou art Wind, the friend of Agni,
 Thou art of tranquil soul like the ocean when at rest, and unstirred by the mildest
 breeze,
 Thou art Agni that drinks the libations of clarified butter poured in sacrifices with
 the aid of *mantras*,
 Thou art he, whom it is difficult to approach,
 Thou art he, whose effulgence spreads over the infinite universe,
 Thou art ever skilful in battle,
 Thou art well conversant with the time when one should engage in battle so that
 victory may be achieved,
 Thou art that science which treats of the motions of heavenly bodies, or
 Thou art Time itself,
 Thou art of the form of success or victory,
 Thou art he whose body is Time (for Thy body is never subject to destruction),
 Thou art a house-holder for Thou wearest a tuft of hair on Thy head,
 Thou art a *sanyasin* for Thy head is bald,
 Thou wearest matted locks on Thy head (being, as Thou art, a forest dweller),
 (By these three names what is indicated is that Mahadeva is a house-holder, a
sanyasin and a forest dweller, belonging to each of these *ashramas*.)

Thou art distinguished by Thy fiery rays (for, the effulgent path by which the
 righteous proceed is identical with Thine),
 Thou art he that appears in the firmament in the heart encased in the body of
 every creature,
 (The *Brahman*, being the subtlest, is experienced in the firmament of one's own
 heart. Mahadeva, being identical with the *Brahman*, is displayed in the heart that is
 within the physical casing of every creature. As such Mahadeva may be said to appear in
 His effulgence within everyone's body.)

Thou art he that enters into the brain of every creature,
Thou bearest the wrinkles of age,
Thou bearest the bamboo flute, and also the tambour,
Thou bearest the musical instrument called tali,
Thou hast the wooden vessel used for husking grain,
Thou art he that covers that illusion, which covers Yama,
(The word *kalakatankatah* means thus: *Kala* is Yama. He is covered with the illusion of the Supreme Deity. This all-covering illusion, again, has the Supreme Deity for its cover. What is meant is that Thou art that Supreme Deity.)

Thou art an astrologer inasmuch as Thy understanding is always directed towards the motion of the wheel of Time which is made up of the luminaries in the firmament,
Thou art *Jiva*, whose understanding is directed to things that are the result of the attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*,
Thou art that in which all things merge when dissolution overtakes them,
Thou art stable and fixed, there being nothing in Thee that is subject to change or mutation of any kind,
Thou art the Lord of all creatures,
Thy arms extend all over the universe,
Thou art displayed in innumerable forms that are but fractions of Thyself,
Thou pervadest all things,
(The words *vibhaga* and *sarvaga* are indicative of Thou being the universe as *vyashti* and *samashti*.)

Thou art he that has no mouth (for, Thou enjoyest not the objects of Thy own creation),
Thou art he that frees Thy creatures from the bonds of the world,
Thou art easily attainable,
(The word *susaranab* recorded in some editions is indicative of 'Thou art he that well protects the universe'.)

Thou art he that manifested himself with the golden mail,
(The allegory is to the golden mail being the illusion of the Supreme Deity in consequence of which the universe has become manifest.)

Thou art he that appears in the phallic emblem,
Thou art he that wanders in the forests in quest of fowls and animals,
Thou art he that wanders over the Earth,
Thou art he that is omnipresent,
Thou art the blare that is produced by all the trumpets blown in the three worlds,
Thou art he that has all creatures for his relatives (Pasupati),
Thou art of the form of a snake (for, Thou art identical with the mighty Naga named Sesa),
Thou art he that lives in mountain caves (like Jaigishavya) or any other *yogi*,
Thou art identical with *Guha* (the celestial generalissimo),

Thou wearest garlands of flowers,
Thou art he that enjoys happiness that springs from the possession of worldly
objects,

(The word *tarangavit* literally means being conversant with waves. It means one that is acquainted with the pleasures that arise from the enjoyment of worldly things, for such pleasures may be likened to waves which appear and disappear on the surface of the sea, or ocean of Eternity.)

Thou art he, from whom all creatures have derived their three states of birth,
existence and destruction,

Thou art he that upholds all things that exist or occur in the three stages of time
viz., the past, the present and the future,

Thou art he that frees creatures from the effects of all acts belonging to previous
lives as well as those accomplished in the present life and from all the
bonds due to ignorance and desire,

Thou art he that is the binder of *asuras*' chiefs,

(The reference to the binder of *asuras*' chief is to the Supreme Deity's form of
Visnu in which he had bound Bali, the chief of the *asuras*. The plural form has reference
to successive *kalpas*.)

Thou art he that is the slayer of foes in battle,

Thou art that which is attainable by knowledge alone,

Thou art Durvasas,

Thou art he that is waited upon and adored by all the righteous,

Thou art he that causes the fall of even Brahma and the others,

Thou art he that gives unto all creatures the just share of joy and grief that each
deserves according to its own acts,

Thou art he that is incomparable,

Thou art well conversant with the shares that are given and appropriated in
sacrifices, or

Thou art he that is well conversant with the ritual of sacrifices,

Thou residest in every place,

Thou wanderest everywhere,

Thou art he that has mean vestments, or

Thou art he that has no vestments, for no vestments can cover Thy vast limbs,

Thou art Vasava,

Thou art immortal,

Thou art identical with the Himavat Mountains,

Thou art the maker of pure gold,

Thou art without acts,

Thou upholdest in Thee the fruits of all acts,

Thou art the foremost of all creatures that are regarded as upholders,

(Those that uphold others are, for example, the elephants that stand at the
different points of the compass, the snake Shesha, etc. What is meant here is that 'Thou
art the best of all these or all such things'.)

Thou art he that has bloody eyes,
Thou art he that has eyes whose vision extends over the infinite universe,
Thou art he that has a car (vehicle) whose wheels are ever victorious,
Thou art he that is possessed of vast learning,
Thou art he that accepts Thy devotees for Thy servants,
Thou art he that restrains and subjugates Thy senses,
Thou art he that acts,
Thou wearest clothes, whose warp and woof is made of snakes,
Thou art supreme, or
Thou art Visnu who is the foremost of the celestials,
Thou art he that is the lowest of the celestials (meaning Agni),
(It means that 'Thou art all the celestials'.)

Thou art he that is well-grown,
Thou ownest the musical instrument called Kahala,
Thou art the giver of every wish,
Thou art the embodiment of grace in all the three stages of time, viz., the past, the present and the future,
Thou art possessed with might that is always well spent,
Thou art he that had assumed the form of Balarama (the elder brother of Krisna),
Thou art the foremost of all coveted things (being emancipation or the highest of all ends to which creatures attain),
Thou art the giver of all things,
Thy face is turned towards all directions,
Thou art he from whom diverse creatures have sprung (even as all forms have sprung from space, or are modifications of that primal element),
Thou art he that falls into the pit called body,
(The body is, as it were, a pit into which the soul falls, determined by desire and ignorance.)

Thou art he that is helpless (falling into the pit constituted by the body),
Thou canst not transcend the sorrow that is Thy portion (because of body configuration),
Thou residest in the firmament of the heart,
Thou art exceedingly fierce in form,
Thou art the Deity called Ansu,
Thou art the companion of Ansu and art called Aditya,
Thou art possessed of innumerable rays,
Thou art endued with dazzling effulgence,
Thou hast the speed of the Wind,
(The word *vasu* indicates the wind, for it means that which establishes all things into itself)

Thou art possessed of the speed of the mind,
Thou art Nisachara as Thou enjoyest all things, being invested with ignorance,

(Nisachara is one, acting through *nisa* or *avidya*. The word, therefore, means one that enjoys all objects, implying that *Jiva* is invested with ignorance.)

Thou dwellest in every body,
Thou dwellest with prosperity as Thy companion,
Thou art he that imparts knowledge and instruction,
Thou art he that imparts instruction in utter silence,
Thou art he that observes the vow of taciturnity, or
Thou instructest in silence,
Thou art he that passes out of the body, looking at the soul,
(The soul of the seeker realizes the Supreme Soul if it transcends the mind-body
consciousness through *yoga*.)

Thou art he that is well adored,
Thou art the giver of thousands (for, the lord of all the treasures derived those
treasures of his, from Thee),
Thou art the prince of birds (being Garuda, the son of Vinata and Kasyapa),
Thou art the friend that renders aid,
Thou art possessed of exceeding effulgence, or
Thy splendour is like that of a million suns arisen together,
Thou art the Master of all created beings,
Thou art he that provokes the appetites,
Thou art the deity of desire,
Thou art of the form of lovely women that are coveted by all,
Thou art the tree of the world,
Thou art the lord of treasures,
Thou art the giver of fame,
Thou art the Deity that distributes unto all creatures the fruits (in the form of joy
and grief) of their acts,
Thou art those fruits which Thou distributest,
Thou art the most ancient (having existed from a time when there was no other
existent thing),
Thou art competent to cover with a single footstep of Thine all the three worlds,
Thou art Vamana (the dwarf) who deceived the *asura* chief Bali (depriving him
of his sovereignty, and restored it unto Indra),
Thou art the *yogi* crowned with success (like Sanatkumara and others),
Thou art a great *Rishi* (like Vasistha and others),
Thou art one whose objects are always crowned with success (like Rishabha or
Dattatreya),
Thou art a *sanyasin* (like Yajnavalka and others),
Thou art he that is adorned with the marks of the mendicant order,
Thou art he that is without such marks,
Thou art he that transcends the usages of the mendicant order,
Thou art he that assures all creatures from every sort of fear,
Thou art without any passions (so that glory and humiliation are alike to Thee),
Thou art he that is called the celestial generalissimo,

Thou art that Visakha, who took his rise from the body of the celestial
Generalissimo when Indra hurled his thunderbolt at him,
Thou art conversant with the sixty *tattvas* (subject-titles of enquiry) in the
universe,
Thou art the lord of senses (for these achieve their respective functions guided by
Thee),
Thou art he that is armed with the thunderbolt (and that rives the mountains),
Thou art infinite,
Thou art the stupefier of *daitya* ranks in the field of battle,
Thou art he that moves his car (vehicle) in circles among his own ranks and that
of his foes, and who comes back safe and sound after devastating them,
Thou art he that is conversant with the lowest depth of the world's ocean (in
consequence of Thy knowledge of the *Brahman*),
Thou art he called Madhu (who had founded the clan in which Krisna took his
birth),
Thou hast eyes whose colour resembles that of honey,
Thou art he that has taken birth after Brihaspati,
(Brihaspati is the word applied to the first priest. The deities first got their priest
for assisting them at sacrifices. Human beings then got theirs. Those born after Brihaspati
are known as Brihaspatyas.)

Thou art he that does the acts which Adhyaryus have to do in sacrifices,
Thou art he that is always adored by persons whatever their modes of life,
Thou art devoted to the *Brahman*,
Thou wanderest amongst the habitations of men in the world (in consequence of
Thy being a mendicant),
Thou art he that pervades all beings,
Thou art he that is conversant with truth,
Thou knowest and guidest every heart,
Thou art he that overspreads the whole universe,
Thou art he that collects or stores the good and bad acts of all creatures so as to
award them the fruits thereof,
Thou art he that lives during even the night that follows the universal dissolution,
(The night here refers to the resulting darkness in the event of dissolution of the
universe.)

Thou art the protector wielding the bow called Pinaka,
Thou residest in even the *daityas* that are the marks, at which Thou shootest Thy
arrows,
Thou art the author of prosperity,
Thou art the mighty ape Hanuman that aided Visnu, in the incarnation of Rama in
his expedition against Ravana,
Thou art the lord of those Ganas that are Thy associates,
Thou art each member of those diverse Ganas,
Thou art he that gladdens all creatures,
Thou art the enhancer of the joys of all, or

Thou art he that takes away the joys previously conferred,
(The word *nandivardhanah* may also mean he that takes away the joys previously conferred.)

Thou takest away the sovereignty and prosperity of even such high beings as
Indra and others,
Thou art the universal slayer in the form of Death,
Thou art he that resides in the four and sixty *Kalas*,
Thou art very great,
Thou art the Grandsire,
Thou art the supreme phallic emblem that is adored by both deities and *asuras*,
Thou art of agreeable and beautiful features,
Thou art he that presides over the variety of evidence and tendencies of action
and non-action,
Thou art the lord of vision,
Thou art the lord of *yoga* (in consequence of Thy withdrawing all the senses into
the heart, and combing them together in that place),
Thou art he that upholds the Krita and the other ages (by causing them to run
ceaselessly),
Thou art the lord of seeds (in consequence of Thy being the giver of the fruits of
all acts, good and bad),
Thou art the original cause of such seeds,
Thou actest in the ways that have been pointed out in the scriptures beginning
with those that treat of the Soul,
Thou art he in who reside might and the other attributes,
Thou art the Mahabharata and other histories of the kind,
Thou art the treatises called *Mimamsa*,
Thou art Gautama (the founder of the science of dialectics),
Thou art the author of the great treatise on Grammar that has been named after
the Moon,
Thou art he that chastises his foes,
Thou art he whom none can chastise,
Thou art he that is sincere in respect of all his religious acts and observances,
Thou art he that has become obedient to those that are devoted to Thee,
Thou art he that is capable of reducing others to subjection,
Thou art he that foments quarrels among the deities and the *asuras*,
Thou art he that has created the four and ten worlds (beginning with *Bhu*),
Thou art the protector and cherisher of all beings commencing from Brahma and
ending with the lowest forms of vegetable life (like grass and straw),
Thou art the creator of even the five original elements,
Thou art he that never enjoys anything, or
Thou art always un-attached,
Thou art free from deterioration,
Thou art the highest form of felicity,
Thou art a deity proud of its might,
Thou art Sakra,

Thou art the chastisement that is spoken of in treatises on morality and is inflicted
on offenders,
Thou art of the form of that tyranny, which prevails over the world,
Thou art of pure Soul,
Thou art stainless (being above faults of every kind),
Thou art worthy of adoration,
Thou art the world that appears and disappears ceaselessly,
Thou art he whose grace is of the largest measure,
Thou art he that has good dreams,
Thou art a mirror in which the universe is reflected,
Thou art he that has subjugated all internal and external foes,
Thou art the maker of the Veda,
Thou art the maker of those declarations that are contained in the Tantras and the
Puranas and that are embodied in language that is human,
(The language of the Veda is divine. The language of other scriptures is human.)

Thou art possessed of great learning,
Thou art the grinder of foes in battle,
Thou art he that resides in the awful clouds that appear at the time of the universal
dissolution,
Thou art most terrible (in consequence of dissolution of the universe that Thou
bringest about),
Thou art he that succeeds in bringing all persons and all things into Thy
subjugation,
Thou art the great Destroyer,
Thou art he that has fire for his energy,
Thou art he, whose energy is mightier than fire,
Thou art the *yuga*-fire that consumes all things,
Thou art he that is capable of being gratified by means of sacrificial libations,
Thou art water and other liquids poured into sacrifices with the aid of *mantras*,
Thou art in the form of the Deity of Righteousness, the distributor of the fruits
that attach to acts, good and bad,
Thou art the giver of felicity,
Thou art always endued with effulgence,
Thou art of the form of fire,
Thou art of the complexion of the emerald,
Thou art always present in the phallic emblem,
Thou art the source of blessedness,
Thou art incapable of being baffled by anything in the prosecution of your
objects,
Thou art the giver of blessings,
Thou art of the form of blessedness,
Thou art he unto who is given a share of sacrificial offerings,
Thou art he that distributes unto each his share of that is offered in sacrifices,
Thou art endued with great speed,
Thou art he that is dissociated from all things,

Thou art he that is possessed of the mightiest limb,
Thou art he that is employed in the act of generation,
Thou art of a dark complexion (being of the form of Visnu),
Thou art of a white complexion (being of the form of Samva, the son of Krisna),
Thou art the senses of all embodied creatures,
Thou art possessed of vast feet,
Thou hast vast hands,
Thou art of vast body,
Thou art endued with wide extending fame,
Thou hast a vast head,
(This refers to the crown of the head.)

Thou art of vast measurements,
Thou art of vast vision,
Thou art the home of the darkness of ignorance,
Thou art the destroyer of the Destroyer,
Thou art possessed of vast ears,
Thou hast vast lips,
Thou art he that has vast cheeks,
Thou hast a vast nose,
Thou art of a vast throat,
Thou hast a vast neck,
Thou art he that tears the bond of body, or
Thou art he that effects Emancipation,
Thou hast a vast chest,
Thou hast a vast bosom,
Thou art the inner soul which resides in all creatures,
Thou hast a deer on Thy lap,
Thou art he, from whom innumerable worlds hang like fruits hanging down from
a tree,
Thou art he that stretches his lips at the time of the universal dissolution for
swallowing the universe,
Thou art the ocean of milk,
Thou hast vast nails,

(The word *mahanakha* refers to the incarnation of Lord Narasimha that slayed
Hiranyakasipu, the father of Prahlada.)

Thou hast vast jaws,
(The word *maharoman* refers to the form of the mighty Boar that the Supreme
Deity assumed for raising the submerged Earth on its tusks.)

Thou hast a vast bristle,
Thou hast hair of infinite length,
Thou hast a vast stomach,
Thou hast matted locks of vast length,
Thou art ever cheerful,

Thou art of the form of grace,
Thou art of the form of belief,
Thou art he that has mountains for his bow (or weapons in battle),
Thou art he that is full of affection to all creatures like a parent towards its
 offspring,
Thou art he that has no affection,
Thou art unvanquished,
Thou art exceedingly devoted to (spiritual) contemplation,
Thou art of the form of the tree of the world,
Thou art he that is indicated by the tree of the world,
(This is explained in the sense of no one being able to enquire after the *Brahman*
unless one has a body, however subtle, with the necessary senses and understanding. It
may also mean that the tree of the world furnishes evidence of the existence of the
Supreme Deity.)

Thou art never satiated, when eating,
(The Supreme *Brahman* is of the form of Fire. Fire is never satiated with the
quantity offered to it for consumption.)

Thou art he that has the wind for Thy vehicle for going from place to place,
(Wind is what carries fire. This allegory is in consequence of the identity of
the Supreme *Brahman* with Fire.)

Thou art he that ranges over hills and hillocks,
Thou art he that has his residence on the mountains of Meru,
Thou art the chief of the celestials,
Thou hast the Atharvans for Thy head,
Thou hast the Samans for Thy mouth,
Thou hast the thousand Richs for Thy immeasurable eyes,
Thou hast the Yajushes for Thy feet and hands,
Thou art the Upanisads,
Thou art the entire body of rituals occurring in the scriptures,
Thou art all that is mobile,
Thou art he whose solicitations are never unfulfilled,
Thou art he that is always inclined to grace,
Thou art he that is of beautiful form,
Thou art of the form of the good that one does to another,
Thou art that which is dear,
Thou art he that always advances towards Thy devotees (in proportion as they
 advance toward Thee),
Thou art gold and the other precious metals that are held dear by all,
Thy effulgence is like that of burnished gold,
Thou art of the navel of all that exists,
Thou art he that makes the fruits of sacrifices grow (for the benefit of Thy
 devotees that perform sacrifices to Thy glory),
Thou art of the form of that faith and devotion which the righteous have in

respect of sacrifices,
Thou art the artificer of the universe,
Thou art all that is immobile,
Thou art the two and ten stages of life through which a person passes,
(The ten stages begin with residence in the mother's womb and end with death as the tenth. Heaven is the eleventh and liberation is the twelfth.)

Thou art he that causes fright,
(The intermediate stages between the first and the tenth are believed to cause fright to a human being, while alive.)

Thou art the beginning of all things,
Thou art he that unites *jiva* with the Supreme *Brahman* through *yoga*,
Thou art identifiable with that *yoga*, which causes such a union between *Jiva* and the Supreme *Brahman*,
Thou art un-manifest,
(The Supreme *Brahman* is considered the deepest stupefaction.)

Thou art the presiding deity of the fourth age,
(This is in consequence of the presumed identity with lust, wrath, cupidity and other evil passions that are sourced in that deity. Kali is considered the presiding deity of that age causing sinfulness. It is, therefore, a malevolent one. But this stage of the age is considered highly propitious to liberation. Those who succeed in living righteously in the stage of this age quickly attain to heaven if it is their object, or to liberation if they strive for it.)

Thou art eternal Time,
(The Supreme *Brahman* is the substratum of the ceaseless succession of creation and destruction that goes on in the cosmos.)

Thou art of the form of Tortoise,
(This implies that the Supreme *Brahman* assumes the form of the constellation called the Great Bear and, moving onward in space, causes the lapse of Time. This constellation is known in the ancient Hindu astronomy by the name *Sisumara* because of its resemblance to the form of a tortoise.)

Thou art worshipped by the Destroyer himself,
Thou livest in the midst of Thy associates,
Thou admittest Thy devotees as members of Thy *Gana*,
Thou hast Brahma himself for the driver of Thy car (vehicle),
Thou sleepest on ashes,
(The word *bhasma*, meaning ashes, literally signifies anything that dispels, tears off all bonds and cures every disease. Ashes are used by ascetics for rubbing their bodies as a mark of having overcome every sin and cut off every bond, and freed themselves from all diseases.)

Thou protectest the universe with ashes,
(According to mythology, Mahadeva gave ashes to His devotees for protecting them from sin.)

Thou art he whose body is made of ashes,
(This has reference to the story of the *Rishi* Mankanaka. Beholding vegetable juice issuing from his body, he began to dance in joy. The whole universe began to dance with him, overpowered by a sympathetic influence of his ecstatic joy. With a view to protecting the universe, Mahadeva showed Himself to Mankanaka and, pressing his fingers, brought out a quantity of ashes, thus showing that his body was made of ashes.)

Thou art the tree that grants the fruition of all wishes,
Thou art of the form of those that constitute Thy *Gana*,
Thou art the protector of the four and ten regions,
Thou transcendest all regions,
Thou art full,
Thou art adored by all creatures,
Thou art white (being pure and unstained),
Thou art he that has body, speech and mind perfectly stainless,
Thou art he that has attained to that purity of existence called Emancipation,
Thou art he that is incapable of being stained by impurity of any kind,
Thou art he that has been attained to by the great preceptors of the yore,
Thou residest in the form of righteousness or duty in the four modes of life,
(This has reference to the four *ashramas* of life.)

Thou art that righteousness, which is of the form of rites and sacrifices,
Thou art of the form of that skill, which is possessed by the celestial artificer of the universe,
Thou art he that is adored in the primeval form of the universe,
Thou art of vast arms,
Thy lips are of coppery hue,
Thou art of the form of the vast waters that are contained in the ocean,
Thou art exceedingly stable and fixed (being of the form of mountains and hills),
Thou art Kapila,
Thou art brown,
Thou art all the hues whose mixture produces white,
Thou art the period of life,
Thou art ancient,
Thou art recent,
Thou art a Gandharva,
Thou art the mother of the celestials in the form of Aditi, or
Thou art the mother of all things in the form of the Earth,
Thou art Garuda, the prince of birds, born of Vinata and Kasyapa, otherwise called Tarkshya,
Thou art capable of being comprehended with ease,
Thou art of excellent and agreeable speech,

Thou art he that is armed with the battle-axe,
Thou art he that is desirous of victory,
Thou art he that assists others in the accomplishment of their designs,
(The word *anukari* literally means an accessory. In the form of Krisna, the
Supreme Deity sought to aid Arjuna in vanquishing Bhishma.)

Thou art an excellent friend,
(Krisna is an excellent friend of Arjuna and Pandavas.)

Thou art he that bears a *veena* made of two hollow gourds,
Thou art of terrible wrath (which Thou displayest at the time of the universal
dissolution),
Thou ownest for Thy offspring, beings higher than men and deities (meaning
Brahma and Visnu),
Thou art of the form of that Visnu who floats on the waters after the universal
dissolution,
Thou devourest all things with great ferocity,
Thou art he that procreates offspring,
Thou art family and race, continuing from generation to generation,
Thou art the blare that a bamboo flute gives out,
Thou art faultless,
Thou art he every limb of whose body is beautiful,
Thou art full of illusion,
Thou dost good to others without expecting any return,
Thou art Wind,
Thou art Fire,
Thou art the bonds of the worlds which bind *Jiva*,
Thou art the creator of those bonds,
Thou art the tearer of such bonds,
Thou art he that dwells with even the *daityas*,
(The *daityas* are considered the foes of all sacrifices.)

Thou dwellest with those that are the foes of all acts and that have abandoned all
acts,
Thou art of large teeth, and of mighty weapons,
Thou art he that has been greatly censured,
Thou art he that stupefied the *Rishis* dwelling in the Daruka forest,
Thou art he that did good unto even Thy detractors (that is, those *Rishis* residing
in the Daruka forest),
Thou art he that dispels all fears (and who, dispelling all the fears of those *Rishis*,
gave them emancipation),
Thou art he that has no wealth,
(This is an allegory to the inability of Mahadeva to procure even His necessary
wearing apparel.)

Thou art the lord of the celestials,

Thou art the greatest of the gods,
(This is an allegory to Mahadeva being adored by Indra and others that are considered the highest of the celestials.)

Thou art an object of adoration with even Visnu,
Thou art the slayer of those that are the foes of the deities,
Thou art he that resides in the nethermost region in the form of the snake *Sesha*,
(In Hindu mythology, the Earth is described as being supported in empty space by a mighty snake called Sesa. Mahadeva is that Sesa, also known as *Ananta*.)

Thou art invisible but capable of being comprehended, even as the wind, though invisible, is perceived by everybody,
Thou art he, whose knowledge extends to the roots of everything and unto whom all things, even in their inner nature, are known,
Thou art the object that is enjoyed by him that enjoys it,
Thou art he among the eleven Rudras, who is called Ajaikapat,
Thou art the sovereign of the entire universe,
Thou art of the form of all *Jivas* in the universe,
(This is in consequence of the Supreme *Brahman* considered containing *Prakrti* consisting of its three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.)

Thou art he that is not subject to those three attributes,
Thou art he that transcends all attributes and is the state of pure existence, incapable of being described in any language,
Thou art the prince of physicians called Dhanwantari,
Thou art a comet,
(This is an allegory to the calamities that flow from Mahadeva to the sinful.)

Thou art the celestial generalissimo called Skanda,
Thou art the king of the Yakshas called Kubera who is Thy inseparable associate and who is the lord of all treasures in the world,
Thou art Dhatri,
Thou art Sakra,
Thou art Visnu,
Thou art Mitra,
Thou art Tashtri, the celestial artificer,
Thou art the Pole Star,
Thou art he that upholds all things,
Thou art he called Prabhava amongst the Vasus,
Thou art the wind which is capable of going everywhere,
(This refers to the Sutra-atman that connects all things in the universe, in the nature of an invisible thread.)

Thou art Aryaman,
Thou art Savitri,
Thou art Ravi,

Thou art Ushangu, the ancient king of great celebrity,
Thou art he that protects all creatures in diverse ways,
Thou art Mandhatri,
(Mandhatri is considered competent to gratify all creatures.)

Thou art he, from whom all creatures start into life,
Thou art he that exists in diverse form,
Thou art he that causes the diverse hues to exist in the universe,
Thou art he that upholds all desires and all attributes (as they flow from Thee),
Thou art he that has the lotus on the navel,
(Brahma is said to have been born within the primeval lotus that arose from the navel of Mahavisnu.)

Thou art he within whose womb are innumerable mighty creatures,
Thou art of face as beautiful as the moon,
Thou art wind,
Thou art fire,
Thou art possessed of exceeding might,
Thou art endued with tranquility of soul,
Thou art old,
Thou art he that is known with the aid of righteousness,
Thou art Lakshmi,
Thou art the maker of the field of those actions (by which persons adore the supreme Deity),
Thou art he that lives in the field of action,
Thou art the soul of the field of action,
Thou art the medicine, or
Thou art the provoker of the attributes of sovereignty, and others,
(The word *Kuru* is an abbreviation for the word *Kurukshetra*, meaning the field of action. It also means the actual field, so called, on which King Kuru performed his penances. It is considered so sacred that its very dust cleanses a person of all sins.)

Thou art all things,
(According to the scriptures, all things become one in the Supreme *Brahman*.)

Thou art the lord of all creatures endued with life-breaths,
Thou art the god of all gods,
Thou art he that is attached to felicity,
Thou art *Sat* (in the form of cause),
Thou art *Asat* (in the form of effect),
Thou art he that possesses the best of all things,
Thou art he that resides on the mountains of Kailasa,
Thou art he that returns to the mountains of Himavat,
Thou washest away all things beside Thee like a mighty current washing away trees and other objects standing in its way,
Thou art the maker of Pushkara and other large lakes of natural water,

Thou art possessed of knowledge of infinite kinds,
 Thou art the giver of infinite blessings,
 Thou art a merchant,
 Thou art a carpenter,
 Thou art the tree (of the world that supplies the timber for Thy axe),
 Thou art the tree called Vakula (mimusops elengi, linn),
 Thou art the sandal-wood tree,
 Thou art the tree called Chchada (alstonia scholaris, syn echitis, scholaris, roxb),
 Thou art he, whose neck is very strong,
 Thou art he, whose shoulder-joint is vast,
 Thou art not restless (but endued with steadiness in all Thy acts and in respect of
 all Thy faculties),
 Thou art the principal herbs and plants with their produce (in the form of rice and
 wheat, and the other varieties of grain),
 Thou art he that grants success upon others in respect to the objects, upon which
 they bestow their heart,
 Thou art all the correct conclusions in respect of both the Veda and Grammar,
 Thou art he that utters leonine roars,
 Thou art endued with leonine fangs,
 Thou ridest on the back of a lion for performing Thy journeys,
 Thou ownest a vehicle that is drawn by a lion,
 Thou art he called the Truth of truth – the Soul of true existence,
 Thou art he whose dish or plate is constituted by the Destroyer of the universe,
 (People eat off plates of silver or gold or of other metals. Mahadeva has for his
 plate *Kala* or Destroyer of the universe.)

Thou art always engaged in seeking the good of the worlds,
 Thou art he that rescues all creatures from distress (and leads them to the felicity
 of emancipation),
 Thou art the bird called Saranga,
 Thou art a new (young) swan,
 Thou art he that is displayed in beauty in consequence of the crest Thou bearest
 on the head (like the peacock),
 Thou art he that protects the place where assemblies of the wise sit for dispensing
 justice,
 Thou art the abode of all creatures,
 Thou art the cherisher of all creatures,
 Thou art day and night (the constituent elements of eternity),
 Thou art he that is without fault and, therefore, never censured,
 Thou art the upholder of all creatures,
 Thou art the refuge of all creatures,
 Thou art without birth,
 Thou art existent,
 Thou art ever-fruitful,
 Thou art endued with *dharana*, *dhyana* and *Samadhi*,
 Thou art the steed *Uchchaisravas*,

Thou art the giver of food,
 Thou art he that upholds the life-breaths of living creatures,
 Thou art endued with patience,
 Thou art possessed of intelligence,
 Thou art endued with exertion and cleverness,
 Thou art honoured by all,
 Thou art the giver of the fruits of righteousness and sin,
 Thou art the cherisher of the senses,
 Thou art the lord of all the luminaries,
 Thou art collection of all objects,
 Thou art he whose vestments are made of cowhides,
 Thou art he that dispels the grief of his devotees,
 Thou hast a golden arm,
 Thou art he that protects the bodies of *yogis*, who seek to enter their own selves,
 Thou art he that has reduced to nothingness all his foes,
 (Mahadeva is the foremost of *sadhakas* or worshippers engaged in acquiring a particular object, for he has reduced to nothingness all his foes in the form of all passions, good and evil.)

Thou art he the measure of whose bliss is very great,
 Thou art he that achieved victory over the deity of irresistible desire,
 Thou art he that has subjugated his senses,
 Thou art the note called *gandhara* in the musical octave,
 Thou art he that has an excellent and beautiful home (on the delightful mountains of Kailasa),
 Thou art he that is ever attached to penances,
 Thou art of the form of cheerfulness and contentment,
 Thou art he called vast or infinite,
 Thou art he in whose honour the foremost of hymns has been composed,
 Thou art he whose dancing is characterized by vast strides and large leaps,
 Thou art he that is adored with reverence by the diverse groups of *apsaras*,
 Thou art he that owns a vast standard (bearing the device of the bull),
 Thou art the mountains of Meru,
 Thou art he that roves among all the summits of that great mountain range,
 Thou art so mobile that it is very difficult to seize Thee,
 Thou art capable of being explained by preceptors to disciples, though Thou art incapable of being described in words,
 Thou art of the form of that instruction, which preceptors impart to disciples,
 Thou art he that can perceive all agreeable scents simultaneously,
 Thou art of the form of the poached gates of towns and palaces,
 Thou art of the form of the moats and ditches that surround fortified towns and give victory to the besieged garrison,
 Thou art the Wind,
 Thou art of the form of fortified cities and towns encompassed by walls and moats,
 Thou art the prince of all winged creatures (of the form of Garuda),

Thou art he that multiplies the creation, with union by the opposite sexes,
Thou art the first of all, in respect of virtues and knowledge,
Thou art superior to even him, who is the first of all in virtues and knowledge,
Thou transcendest all virtue and knowledge,
Thou art eternal and immutable, as also dependent on Thyself,
Thou art the master and protector of the deities and *asuras*,
Thou art the master and protector of all creatures,
Thou art he that wears a coat of mail,
Thou art he whose arms are competent to grind all foes,
Thou art an object of adoration with even the Suparvan in heaven,
(The Suparvan in heaven is otherwise called Mahan.)

Thou art he that grants the power of bearing or upholding all things,
(Mahadeva is He that makes creatures competent to bear all things such as grief
and joy, and also bear the influence of all physical objects without life being destroyed.)

Thou art capable of bearing all things,
Thou art fixed and steady,
Thou art white or pure,
Thou bearest the trident that is capable to destroy (all things),
Thou art the grantor of bodies or physical forms unto those that constantly
revolve in the universe of birth and death (*samsara*),
Thou art more valuable than wealth,
Thou art the conduct or way of the righteous (in the form of goodness and
courtesy),
Thou art he that had torn the head of Brahma after due deliberation,
Thou art he that is marked with all those auspicious marks stated in palmistry,
phrenology and other branches of knowledge which treat the physical
frame as the indicator of mind,
Thou art that wooden bar called *aksha* of a chariot and, therefore, art Thou he that
is attached to the chariot represented by the body,
Thou art attached to all things as the all-pervading consciousness,
Thou art endowed with very great might, or
Thou art a hero of heroes,
Thou art the Veda,
Thou art the *Smritis*, the *Itihasas*, the Puranas and other scriptures,
Thou art the illustrious deity of every sacred shrine,
Thou art he that has the Earth for his car (chariot),
Thou art the inert elements that enter into the composition of every creature,
Thou art he that imparts life into every combination of those inert elements,
Thou art the *Pranava* and other sacred *mantras* that instill life into dead matter,
Thou art he that casts tranquil glances,
Thou art exceedingly harsh by Thy being the destroyer of all things,
Thou art he in who are innumerable precious attributes and possessions,
Thou hast a body that is red,
Thou art he that has all the vast oceans as so many ponds filled for Thy drinking,

(The word *nipana* means a shallow pond or ditch where cattle drink. The very oceans are in the nature of *nipanas* for Mahadeva.)

Thou art the root of the tree of the world,
Thou art exceedingly beautiful, and shinest with surpassing grandeur,
Thou art of the form of ambrosia or nectar,
Thou art both cause and effect,
Thou art an ocean of penances (being a great *yogi*),
Thou art he that is desirous of ascending to the highest state of existence,
Thou art he that has already attained to that state,
Thou art he that is distinguished for the purity of his conduct, acts and observances,
Thou art he that is possessed of great fame by virtue of the righteousness of his behavior,
Thou art the ornament of armies (as Thou art of the form of prowess and courage),
Thou art he that is adorned with celestial ornaments,
Thou art *Yoga*,
Thou art he from whom flow eternal Time measured by *yugas* and *kalpas*,
Thou art he that conveys all creatures from place,
(This has reference to the incarnation of *Trivikrama*, the dwarf suddenly expanding his form till, with two steps, he covered heaven and earth, and demanded space for his third step.)

Thou art of the form of righteousness and sin, and their intermixture (as displayed in the successive *yugas*),
Thou art great and formless,
Thou art he that slew the mighty *Asura* that had approached Varanasi in the form of an infuriated elephant of vast proportions,
Thou art of the form of death,
Thou givest to all creatures such fruition of their wishes as accords with their merits,
Thou art approachable,
Thou art conversant with all things that are beyond the ken of the senses,
Thou art conversant with the *tattvas*,
Thou art he that incessantly shines in beauty,
Thou wearest garlands that stretch from Thy neck down to the feet,
Thou art that Hara that has the Moon for his beautiful eye,
Thou art the ocean of salt of vast expanse,
Thou art the first three *Yugas* – *Krita*, *Treta* and *Dwapara*,
Thou art he, whose appearance is always of advantage to others,
Thou art he that has three eyes in the form of the scriptures, the preceptor and meditation,
Thou art he whose forms are exceedingly subtle,
Thou art he whose ears are bored for wearing jewelled *kundalas*,
Thou art the bearer of matted locks,

Thou art the point which indicates the nasal sound,
 Thou art the two dots – *Visarga*,
 Thou art possessed of an excellent face,
 Thou art the shaft that is shot by the warrior for destruction of his foe,
 Thou art all the weapons that are used by warriors,
 Thou art endued with patience capable of bearing all things,
 Thou art he whose knowledge has risen from the cessation of all physical and
 mental functions (that is, who has possessed the knowledge of *Yoga*),
 Thou art he that has become displayed as Truth (in consequence of the cessation
 of all other faculties),
 Thou art that note which, arising from the region called *gandhara*, is exceedingly
 sonorous to the ear,
 Thou art he that is armed with the mighty bow (called *Pinaka*),
 Thou art he that is the understanding and the desires that exist in all creatures,
 besides being the supreme upholder of all beings,
 Thou art he, from whom all acts flow,
 Thou art that wind which rises at the time of universal dissolution capable of
 churning the entire universe even as the staff in the hands of the dairy-maid
 churns curd in the pot,
 Thou art he that is full,
 Thou art he that sees all things,
 Thou art the sound that arises from slapping one palm against another,
 Thou art he the palm of whose hand serves as the dish or plate whence to take his
 food,
 Thou art he that is possessed of an adamantine body,
 Thou art exceedingly great,
 Thou art of the form of an umbrella,
 Thou art he that has an excellent umbrella,
 Thou art well-known to be identical with all creatures,
 Thou art he that, having put forth three feet, covered the entire universe with two
 and wanted space for the third,
 Thou art he whose head is bald,
 Thou art he whose form is exceedingly ugly and fierce,
 Thou art he that has undergone infinite modifications and become all things in the
 universe,
 Thou art he that wears the well-known insignia of an ascetic, the stick,
 Thou art he that has a *kunda*,
 Thou art he that is incapable of being attained to by means of acts,
 Thou art he that is identical with the lion,
 Thou art of the form of all the points of the compass,
 Thou art he that is armed with the thunder,
 Thou art he that has a hundred tongues,
 Thou art he that has a ‘thousand feet and thousand heads’,
 Thou art the lord and the chief of the celestials,
 Thou art he that is made up of all the gods,
 Thou art the great Master or preceptor,

Thou art he that has thousand arms,
Thou art he that is competent to obtain the fruition of every wish,
Thou art he, whose protection is sought by everyone,
Thou art he that is the creator of all the worlds,
Thou art he that is the great cleanser of all from every kind of sin (in the form of
shrines and sacred waters),
Thou art he that has three great *mantras* (*Vija*, *Sakti* and *Kilakani*),
Thou art the youngest son of Aditi and Kasyapa,
(The youngest son of Aditi and Kasyapa was Upendra who, in the form of the
dwarf, beguiled the *asura* Bali of his lordship of the three worlds, and restored it to the
chief of the celestials.)

Thou art both black and tawny,
(This refers to the form of Mahadeva known as Hari-Hara.)

Thou art the maker of the *Brahmana's* rod,
(The thin bamboo rod in the hand of the *Brahmana* symbolizes the *Brahmana's*
might in the form of his curse. It is mightier than the thunderbolt of Indra. The
thunderbolt scorches only the exiting objects on which it falls. The *Brahmana's* rod blasts
even unborn generations. The might of the rod is derived from Mahadeva.)

Thou art armed with the hundred-killer, the noose and the dart,
Thou art he that took his birth within the primeval lotus,
Thou art he that is endued with a vast womb (abdomen),
Thou art he that has the Veda in his womb (abdomen),
Thou art he that takes his rise from that infinite waste of water which succeeds
the dissolution of the universe,
Thou art he that is endued with rays of effulgent light,
Thou art the creator of the Veda,
Thou art he that studies the Veda,
Thou art he that is conversant with the meaning of the Veda,
Thou art devoted to the *Brahman*,
Thou art the refuge of all persons devoted to the *Brahman*,
Thou art of infinite forms,
Thou art the bearer of innumerable bodies,
Thou art endued with irresistible prowess,
Thou art the soul or nature that transcends the three universal attributes of *sattva*,
rajas and *tamas*,
Thou art the lord of all *Jivas*,
Thou art endued with the speed of the wind,
Thou art possessed of the fleetness of the mind,
Thou art always smeared of sandal-paste,
Thou art the end of the stalk of the primeval lotus,
(Mythology says that Brahma, after his birth within the primeval lotus, became
desirous of seeing the end of the stalk of that lotus. He went on and on, without

succeeding, to find what he sought. The meaning, therefore, by implication, is that Mahadeva is infinite.)

Thou art he that brought the celestial cow Surabhi down (from a superior station to an inferior one by denouncing a curse upon her),

(Mythology records that once Brahma asked Surabhi to bear evidence before Visnu to the statement that Brahma had seen the foremost part of Siva. Surabhi, having given false evidence out of fear for Brahma, was cursed by Siva that her offspring would eat unholy substances.)

Thou art that Brahma, who was unable to see Thy end,

Thou art adorned with a large wreath of *karnikara* flowers,

Thou art adorned with a diadem of blue gems,

Thou art the wielder of the bow called *Pinaka*,

Thou art the master of that knowledge, which treats of the *Brahman*,

Thou art he that has subjugated his senses with the aid of his knowledge of the *Brahman*,

Thou art he that bears Ganga on his head,

(Falling from the celestial regions, the river Ganga (the Ganges) was considered held by Mahadeva on his head, among his matted locks. At the earnest solicitation of King Bhagiratha, he gave her out so that, flowing along the surface of the earth, she met the ocean, first passing over the spot where the ashes of Bhagiratha's ancestors, the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara of the solar race, lay.)

Thou art the husband of Uma, the daughter of Himavat,

Thou art mighty (because of Thy having assumed the form of the vast Boar for raising the submerged Earth),

Thou art he that protects the universe by assuming diverse incarnations,

Thou art worthy of adoration,

Thou art that primeval Being with the equine head that recited the Veda with a thundering voice,

Thou art he, whose grace is very great,

Thou art the great subjugator,

Thou art he that has slain all his foes (in the form of passions),

Thou art both white and tawny (Thou being half male and half female),

This form is called Hara-Gauri or *Ardhanaariswara*,

Thou art possessed of a body, whose complexion is like that of gold,

Thou art he that is of the form of pure joy (being beyond the five sheaths),

Thou art of a restrained soul,

Thou art the foundation upon which rests that Ignorance (which is called

Pradhana and which, consisting of the three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, is the cause whence the universe has sprung),

Thou art he whose faces are turned to every direction,

(Mahadeva is represented as possessed of five heads, four on four sides and one above.)

Thou art he that has three eyes (the Sun, the Moon and Fire),
Thou art he that is superior to all creatures,
Thou art the soul of all mobile beings,
Thou art of the form of the subtle soul, incapable of being perceived,
Thou art the giver of immortality (in the form of emancipation as the fruit of all
acts of righteousness, achieved by living beings without the desire thereof),
Thou art the preceptor (of even those that are the gods of the gods),
Thou art Vasu, the son of Aditi,
Thou art he that is endued with innumerable rays of light (who brings forth the
universe and who is of the form of *Soma* which is consumed in sacrifices),
Thou art Vyasa (the author of the Puranas and other sacred scriptures),
Thou art the creations of Vyasa's brain (both abridged and unabridged, because
of Thy being identical with the Puranas and other sacred scriptures),
Thou art the sum-total of all *Jivas*,
Thou art the Season,
Thou art the Year,
Thou art the Month,
Thou art the Fortnight,
Thou art those sacred days that end these periods,
Thou art the *Kalas*,
Thou art the *Kashthas*,
Thou art the *Lavas*,
Thou art the *Matras*,
Thou art the *Muhurtas*, days and nights,
Thou art the *Kshanas*,
(These are all names for different portions of time.)

Thou art the soil, upon which the tree of the universe stands,
Thou art the seed of all creatures,
Thou art *Mahatattva*,
Thou art the sprout of *Jiva*,
Thou art *Sat* or Effect,
Thou art *Asat* or Cause,
Thou art manifest (being perceivable by the senses),
Thou art the Father,
Thou art the Mother,
Thou art the Grandfather,
Thou art the door to Heaven (because of Thy identity with penances),
Thou art the door of the generation of all creatures (because of Thy identity with
desire),
Thou art the door of Emancipation (because of Thy identity with the absence of
desire which alone can lead to the merging into the *Brahman*),
Thou art those acts of righteousness which lead to the felicity of heaven,
Thou art *Nirvana* (or that cessation of individual or separate existence which is
Emancipation),
Thou art the gladdener (who gives all kinds of joy to every creature),

Thou art that region of Truth (to which they that are the foremost in righteousness attain),
 Thou art superior to even that region of Truth which is attainable by the righteous,
 Thou art he that is the creator of both the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art he that is the refuge of both the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art the preceptor of both the deities and the *asuras*, or
 Thou art of the form of both Brihaspati and Sukra,
 Thou art he that is ever victorious,
 Thou art he that is ever worshipped by the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art he that guides the deities and the *asuras* even as the *Mahamatra* guides the elephant,
 Thou art the refuge of all the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art he that is the chief of both the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art of the form of both Indra and Virochana,
 Thou art he that is the leader in the battle of the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art of the form of Kartikeya and Kesi (the leaders of the celestial and the *daitya* armies),
 Thou art he that transcends the senses and shines by himself,
 Thou art of the form of the celestial *Rishis* like Narada and others,
 Thou art the grantor of boons unto the deities and *asuras* (in the form of Brahma and Rudra),
 Thou art he that rules the hearts of the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art he into whom the universe enters (when it is dissolved),
 Thou art the refuge of even him, who is the ruler of the hearts of both the deities and the *asuras*,
 Thou art he, whose body is made up of all the deities,
 (The *Srutis* declare that Fire is the head; the Sun and the Moon are the eyes, etc of Mahadeva.)

Thou art he that has no being superior to Thee, of whom to think,
 Thou art he that is the inner soul of the deities,
 Thou art he that has sprung from his own self,
 Thou art of the form of immobile things,
 Thou art he that covers the three worlds with three steps of his,
 Thou art possessed of great learning,
 Thou art stainless,
 Thou art he that is freed from the quality of *rajas*,
 Thou art he that transcends destruction,
 Thou art he in whose honour hymns should be sung,
 Thou art the master of the irresistible elephant represented by Time,
 Thou art of the form of that lord of tigers, worshipped in the country of the Kalingas,
 (In the country of the Kalingas (Orissa), Mahadeva has an image called Vyaghreswara.)

Thou art he that is called the lion among the deities (in consequence of the pre-eminence of Thy prowess),
 Thou art he that is the foremost of men,
 Thou art endued with great wisdom,
 Thou art he that takes first a share of the offerings in sacrifice,
 Thou art imperceptible,
 Thou art the sum-total of all the deities,
 Thou art he in whom penances predominate,
 Thou art always in excellent *Yoga*,
 Thou art auspicious,
 Thou art armed with the thunderbolt,
 Thou art the source whence the weapons called *Prasas* have taken origin,
 Thou art he whom Thy devotees attain in diverse ways,
 Thou art *Guha* (the celestial generalissimo),
 Thou art the supreme limit of felicity,
 Thou art identical with Thy creation,
 Thou art he that rescues the creatures from death (by granting them Emancipation),
 Thou art the cleanser of all including Brahma himself,
 Thou art of the form of bulls and other horned animals,
 Thou art he that is fond of mountain summits,
 Thou art the planet Saturn,
 Thou art Kubera, the chief of the *Yakshas*,
 Thou art complete faultlessness,
 Thou art he that inspires gladness,
 Thou art all the celestials united together,
 Thou art the cessation of all things,
 Thou art all the duties that appertain to all the modes of life,
 Thou art he that has an eye on his forehead,
 Thou art he that sports with the universe as his marble ball,
 Thou art of the form of deer,
 Thou art endued with the energy that is of the form of knowledge and penance,
 Thou art the lord of all immobile things (in the form of Himavat and Meru),
 Thou art he that has subjugated his senses by various regulations and vows,
 Thou art he whose objects have all been fulfilled,
 Thou art identical with Emancipation,
 Thou art different from him, whom we worship,
 Thou hast truth of Thy penances,
 Thou art of a pure heart,
 Thou art he that presides over all vows and fasts (in consequence of Thy being the giver of their fruits),
 Thou art the highest (being of the nature of the *turiya* state of consciousness),
 Thou art the *Brahman*,
 Thou art the highest refuge of the devotees,
 Thou art he that transcends all bonds (being emancipate),
 Thou art freed from the *linga* body,

Thou art endued with every kind of prosperity,
Thou art he that enhances the prosperity of Thy devotees,
Thou art that which incessantly undergoes change.

(The task of rendering these names into English is difficult. In the original, many of these names are such that they are capable of more than one interpretation. Each name would require a separate note for explaining different bearings. For example, the word *niyata* literally means one who observes fasts and vows, restraining one's senses. Hence it means an ascetic. Mahadeva is an ascetic. *Smasana* is either a crematorium where the dead are buried or burned, or it may mean Varanasi, the sacred city of Siva, where creatures dying need not have to take rebirth. Siva is both a resident of crematoria and of Varanasi.)

2. Hymn to Mahavisnu

Vaisampayana said:

After having heard all the duties in their entirety, and all those sacred acts and objects that cleanse human beings of their sins, Yudhishtira once more addressed the son of Santanu in the following words.

Yudhishtira said:

Who may be said to be the one god in the world? Who may be said to be the one object which is our sole refuge? Who is he by worshipping whom or hymning whose praise human beings would get what is beneficial? What religion is that which, according to thy judgment, is the foremost of all religions? What are those *mantras* by reciting which a living creature becomes freed from the bonds of birth and life?

Bhishma said:

One should always, with alacrity and throwing away all languor, hymn the praises of that Lord of the universe, that God of gods (Vasudeva), who is Infinite, and foremost of all Beings, by uttering His thousand names. By always worshipping with reverence and devotion that immutable Being, by meditation on Him, by hymning His praise and bowing the head unto Him, and by performing sacrifices unto Him, indeed by always praising Visnu, who is without beginning, and without end of destruction, who is the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, and who is the Master and Controller of the universe, one can succeed in transcending all sorrow. Verily, He is devoted to the *brahmanas*, conversant with all duties and practices, the enhancer of the fame and achievement of all persons, the master of all the worlds, exceedingly wonderful, and the prime cause of the origin of all creatures. Even this, in my judgment, is the foremost religion of all religions, that is, one should always worship and hymn the praises of the lotus-eyed Vasudeva with devotion. He is the highest Energy. He is the highest Penance. He is the highest Brahma. He is the highest refuge. He is the most holy of all holies, the most auspicious of all auspicious objects. He is the God of all the gods and He is the immutable father of all creatures. On the advent of the primal *Yuga*, all creatures spring from Him. On the expiration, again of a *Yuga*, all things disappear in Him.

Hear, oh King, the thousand names, possessed of great efficacy in destroying sins, of that foremost One in all the worlds, that Master of the universe, that is, Visnu. All those names derived from His attributes, secret and well-known, of the high-souled Vasudeva, were sung by *Rishis*, I shall recite to thee for the good of all. They are,

Aum!

He that enters all things in the cosmos, besides Himself,
He that covers (pervades) all things,
He unto whom sacrificial libations are poured,

He that is the lord of the past, the present and the future,
He that is the Creator (or Destroyer) of all existent things,
He that is the upholder of all existent things,
He that is the Existent,
He that is the Soul of all,
He that is the Originator of all things,
He that is of cleansed Soul,
(The word *putatman* in the text means ‘of cleansed soul’. This implies that though He is the lord of all existent objects, yet He is dissociated from them.)

He that is the Supreme Soul,
He that is the highest Refuge of all emancipated persons,
He that is the Immutable,
He that lies enclosed in a case,
(The word *purusha* means one that lies in a *pura* or the nine-doored mansion, that is, the body.)

He that is the Witness,
(The word *sakshi* means ‘witness’ and implies that He sees all things directly, without any medium obstructing His vision.)

He that knows the material case (body), in which He resides,
(The word *kshetrajna* implies the *chit* lying within the body and it means one who knows the body. However, the body, being inert, is not cognizant of the *chit* it holds.)

He that is the Indestructible,
He upon whom the mind rests during *Yoga*-abstraction,
(He is called *Yoga* because of the mind resting upon Him while it is in *yoga* abstraction. *Yoga*, in other words, is union with the Divine in spirit.)

He that is the guide or leader of all persons conversant with *Yoga*,
He that is the Lord of both *Pradhana* (*Prakrti*) and *Purusa*,
(In *Sankhya* philosophy, *Pradhana* is another name for *Prakrti*, meaning Nature. All things have sprung from the union of *Prakrti* and *Purusa*. *Visnu* transcends *Prakrti* and *Purusa*.)

He that assumed a human form with a leonine head,
(He assumed the human form with a lion’s head for slaying the *asura* *Hiranyakasipu*, the father of *Prahlada*.)

He that is of handsome features and equipments,
He that is of beautiful hair,
He that is the foremost of *Purusas*,
He that is the embodiment of all things,
(The word *sarva* implies the source of all existent and non-existent things and that in which all existent and non-existent things become merged at the universal dissolution.)

He that is the Destroyer of all things,
He that transcends the three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, He that is the Motionless,
He that is the Beginning of all things,
He that is the Receptacle, into which all things sink at the universal dissolution,
He that is the Immutable,
He that takes birth at his own will,
(The word *sambhava* signifies Him who takes birth at His own will. Acts cannot touch Him. The birth of all other things is determined by their acts in previous lives.)

He that causes the acts of all living creatures to fructify (in the form of weal or woe),
(The word *bhavana* signifies one who attaches to acts their respective fruits, that is, one in consequence of whom the weal and woe of all features flow as due to acts.)

He that is the Upholder of all things,
He that is the Source, from which the primal elements have sprung,
He that is the Puissant One,
He in who is the unbounded Lordship over all things,
He that is the Self-born,
(The word *svayambhu* implies one whose birth has not been determined by extraneous circumstances, or other influences than his one's wish. On the other hand, the birth of all other creatures is determined by forces extraneous to themselves.)

He that gives happiness to His worshippers,
He that is the presiding Genius (of golden form) in the midst of the solar disc,
(The word *aditya* may also mean the foremost one among the deities especially called the *Adityas*. They are twelve in number.)

He that is the Lotus-eyed,
He that is the Loud-voiced,
He that is without beginning and without end,
He that upholds the universe (in the form of Ananta and others),
(The word *dhata* may also imply One who upholds everything in the universe by multiplying Oneself infinitely.)

He that ordains all acts and their fruits,
He that is superior to the Grandsire Brahma,
(The word *dhaturuttama* may also signify One who, as *Cit*, is superior to all elements like earth, water, etc. which constitute all that is not-*Cit*.)

He that is the Immeasurable,
(The word *aprameya* literally means immeasurable. Shankara explains it thus: He has no such attributes such as sound. In consequence, He is not an object of direct perception by the senses. Nor can He be an object of inference, as a result of there being

nothing to which belong the same attributes as His. His inconceivability is the foundation of His immeasurableness.)

He that is the Lord of the senses, or
He that has curled locks,
(The word *hrishikesa* implies the lord of the senses, meaning one who has one's sense under complete control. It may also mean one who sways the senses of others, that is, causes them to exercise their functions.)

He, from whose navel the primeval lotus sprang,
He that is the Lord of all the deities,
He that is the Artificer of the universe,
(Shankara proposes another meaning: He that is the form of the Sun or the Moon and, as such the rays of light emanating from those luminaries and gladdening all creatures are the hairs on His head.)

He that is the *Mantra*,
(*Manu* is another name for *Mantra* or sacred words having great efficacy.)

He that weakens or emaciates all things,
He that is vast,
He that is the Ancient one,
He that is enduring, or
He that is incapable of being seized (by either the senses or the mind),
He that is the Eternal One,
He that is Krisna,
(*Krisna* is one of the foremost names of the supreme God-head. It means one who is always in joy. It is derived from *kris* which implies 'to be' and *na* meaning final liberation or cessation of existence. The compound probably means one in whom every attribute has been extinguished. As such there is absence of change, of sorrow, etc. There is the eternal and highest joy.)

He that is the Red-eyed,
(*Lohitaksha* is red-eyed in view of His eyes being of the hue of polished copper.)

He that kills all creatures at the time of universal dissolution,
(*Pratardana*, according to Shankara, means the killer of all creatures)

He that is Vast for knowledge and puissance and other attributes of the kind,
(*Prabhuta* is one who is great or vast as a result of knowledge, puissance, energy, renunciation, etc.)

He that resides in three parts (above, middle, and below) of every creature,
He that cleanses, is auspicious, and high,
(The words *Pavitram*, *Mangalam* and *Param* are taken as one name, although each of them has a separate meaning.)

He that urges (controls) all creatures in respect of all their acts,
He that causes the life-breaths to act,
(The word *Pranada* is interpreted variously. It may mean He that causes the life-breaths to operate. It is He that connects the life-breaths, meaning that He sets them a-going when threatened with extinction. As such, He is the healer of diseases, too.)

He that causes all living creatures to live,
(*Prana* implies He who is the cause of the life of every living creature, being Himself, as it were, the life-breath that inspires them.)

He that is the Eldest, the Foremost of all those that are regarded as the lords of all creatures,
He that has gold in His abdomen,
(*Hiranyagarbha* signifies He that is identical with the Brahman.)

He that has the Earth for his abdomen,
(*Bhugarbha* is one who has the Earth for his abdomen, implying that all things on Earth are His abdomen.)

He that is the Lord of Sri or Lakshmi,
He that is the Slayer of Madhu,
He that is the Omnipotent,
He that is endued with great prowess,
He that is armed with the bow,
He that is possessed of a mind capable of bearing the contents of all treatises,
He that roves through the universe riding on Garuda,
He that is well suited to the offerings made unto Him and that has the power to enjoy them properly,
He that is the Unrivalled,
He that is incapable of being discomfited,
He that knows all acts that are done,
He that is identical with all acts,
He that rests on His own true self,
(The supreme God-head is the *Atmavan*, the Supreme Spirit. On the other hand, other beings are said to be *sariravan*, *indriyavan*, etc in consequence of the possession of such attributes as *sarira*, *indriyas*, etc. Visnu rests on His own true nature or essence without requiring anything extraneous like the deities or human beings whereon to live or exist.)

He that is the Lord of all the deities,
He that is the Refuge of all, the embodiment of the highest felicity,
He whose seed is the universe,
He that is the source of all things,
He that is the day,

(*Ahah* is the day. He is so called because of *jiva* being, as it were, awakened when it goes to Him. As long as the *jiva* is away from Him, it is steeped in *avidya* or nescience.)

He that is the Year,
(He is called *samvatsara* or the year as His essence is Time.)

He that is the Snake (owing to His being incapable of being seized),
(He is called *Vyala*, the huge and fierce snake that inspires dread.)

He that is the embodiment of Conviction,
He that sees all things,
He that is the Unborn,
He that is the Lord of all creatures,
He that has achieved success,
He that is Success itself, or
He that is Awareness itself,
He that is the beginning of all things (in consequence of His being the cause of all things),
He that is beyond deterioration,
He that is Righteousness in the form of the bovine Bull and that great Boar that raised the submerged Earth,
(The word *vrishakapi* is also explained as being He that showers blessings on His worshippers and causes all His foes to tremble with fear.)

He that is of immeasurable soul,
He that stands aloof from all kinds of union,
He that is *Pauaka* (Fire) among the deities called Vasus, or
He that dwells in His worshippers,
He that is liberal Soul being freed from wrath, hatred, pride and other evil passions,
He that is Truth, in consequence of His thorough impartiality,
He that has been measured by His worshippers,
He that is always equal, being above all change or modification,
He that never refuses to grant the wishes of His worshippers,
He whose eyes are like the petals of the lotus,
He whose acts are always characterized by Righteousness, or
He that is always engaged in granting the wishes of those that are devoted to Him,
He that is of the form of Righteousness,
He that destroys all creatures (or their pains),
He that is the Many-headed,
He that upholds the universe,
He that is the source of the universe,
He that is of pure or spotless fame,
He that is the Immortal One,
He that is Eternal and Fixed,

He that is possessed of beautiful limbs, or
He the ascension unto whom is the best of all acts,
He that has such knowledge having penance for its indication that He is able to
 agitate *Prakrti* for evolving the universe out of it,
He that goes everywhere (in the sense of pervading all things as their cause),
He that is the Omniscient One,
He that blazes forth in unmodified effulgence,
He whose troops are everywhere (in the form of devoted associates), or
He at whose very sight the *danava* troops are scattered in all directions,
He that is coveted (or sought) by all, or
He that grinds all His foes,
He that is the Veda,
He that is conversant with the Veda,
He that is conversant with all the limbs (branches) of the Veda,
He that represents the limbs (branches) of the Veda (that is, all the subsidiary
 sciences),
He that settles the interpretations of the Veda,
He that has no superior in wisdom,
He that is the master of all the worlds,
He that is the master of the deities,
He that is the supervisor of both righteousness and unrighteousness (for giving the
 fruits thereof to those that seek the one or the other),
He that is both Effect and Cause, or
He whose life has not been determined by acts achieved on any previous occasion
 in consequence of His transcending *Prakrti*,
He that is four-souled (in consequence of His four forms of Aniruddha,
 Pradyumna, Sankarshana and Vasudeva),
He that is known by four forms (as above),
He that has four horns,
(The four horns appeared on Him when he had assumed a human form with a
lion's head for slaying the *asura* chief Hiranyakasipu.)

He that has four arms,
(The four arms are for holding conch, discus, mace and lotus.)

He that blazes forth in effulgence,
He that is the giver of food and cherishes those that are good,
He that does not bear or put up with those that are wicked,
(It also means that He puts up with the occasional transgressions of His devotees.)

He that existed before the universe started into life,
He that is stainless,
He that is ever victorious,
He that vanquishes the very deities,
He that is the material cause of the universe,
He that repeatedly resides in material causes,

He that is the younger brother of Indra, or
He that transcends Indra in accomplishments and attributes,
He that took birth as a dwarf (in the form of Vamana),
He that is tall,
(This is an allegory to the vast universal form of His which He assumed at the sacrifice of Bali for covering heaven, earth and the nether world with the three steps of His.)

He whose acts are never futile,
He that cleanses, or
He that always protects those that worship Him, hear of Him and think of Him,
He that is endued with pre-eminent energy and strength,
He that transcends Indra in all attributes,
He that accepts all His worshippers,
He that is the Creation itself in consequence of His being the cause thereof,
He that upholds His self in the same form without being ever subject to birth,
growth or death,
He that sustains all creatures in their respective functions in the universe,
He that controls the hearts of all creatures,
He that deserves to be known by those who wish to achieve their highest good,
He that is the celestial physician in the form of Dhanwantari,
He that cures that foremost of all diseases, that is, the bonds that bind one to the world,
He that is always engaged in Yoga,
He that slays great *asuras* for establishing righteousness,
He that is the lord of that Lakshmi who sprang from the ocean when it was churned by the deities and the asuras, or
He that cherishes both the goddesses of prosperity and learning,
He that is honey (in consequence of the pleasure He gives to those that succeed in having a taste of Him),
He that transcends the senses (or is invisible to those that turn away from Him),
He that is possessed of great powers of illusion (manifested in His beguiling Mahadeva and the deities on many occasions),
He that puts forth great energy (in achieving mighty feats),
He that transcends all in might,
He that transcends all in intelligence,
He that transcends all in puissance,
He that transcends all in ability,
He that discovers the universe by the effulgence emanating from His body,
He whose body (form) is incapable of being ascertained by the eye (or any other sense organ of knowledge),
He that is possessed of every beauty,
He whose soul is incapable of being comprehended by either deities or men,
He that held on His back, in the form of the vast Tortoise, the huge mountain,

(Mandara, the great mountain, was made the churning staff by the deities and the asuras when they set themselves to churn the great ocean for obtaining therefrom all the valuables hidden in its bosom),

He that held up the mountain of Govardhan in the woods of Brinda (for protecting the denizens of that delightful place, who were special objects of His kindness, from the wrath of Indra who poured incessant showers for days together, with a view to drowning everything),
He that can shoot His shafts to a great distance, piercing through obstruction of every kind,
He that raised the submerged Earth, having assumed the form of the mighty Boar, He on whose bosom dwells the goddess of Prosperity, or
He that is identical with Kama, the lord of Rati,
He that is the refuge of those that are righteous,
He that is incapable of being won without thorough devotion, or
He that is incapable of being immured or restrained by anyone putting forth His powers,
He that is the delight of the deities, or
He that is the embodiment of fullness of joy,
He that rescued the submerged Earth, or
He that understands the hymns addressed to Him by His devotees,
He that is the Master of all eloquent persons, or
He that dispels the calamities of all those who know Him,
He that is full of blazing effulgence,
He that suppresses the afflictions of His adorers, or
He that assumes the form of Yama, the universal Destroyer, for chastising all persons that fall away from their duties,
He that assumed the form of a Swan for communicating the Vedas to Brahma, or
He that enters into the bodies of all persons,
He that has Garuda, the prince of the feathery denizens of the welkin, for His vehicle,
He that is the foremost of snakes in consequence of His identity with Sesha or Ananta (who upholds on his head the vast Earth), or
He that has the hood of the prince of snakes for His bed while He lies down to sleep on the vast expanse of water after the dissolution of the universe,
He whose navel is as beautiful as gold,
He that underwent the severest austerities in the form of Narayana at Badari on the breast of Himavat,
He whose navel resembles a lotus, or
He from whose navel sprang the primeval lotus, in which Brahma was born,
He that is the Lord of all creatures,
He that transcends death, or
He that wards off death from those that are devoted to him,
He that always casts a kind eye on His worshippers, or
He that sees all things in the universe,
He that destroys all things, or

He that drenches with nectar all those that worship Him with single-minded devotion,
 He that is the Ordainer of all ordainers, or
 He that unites all persons with the consequences of their acts,
 He that Himself enjoys and endures the fruits of all acts, or
 He that assumed the form of Rama, the son of Dasaratha,
 He that is always of the same form, or
 He that is exceedingly affectionate unto His worshippers,
 He that is always moving, or
 He that is of the form of *kama* that springs up in the heart of every creature,
 He that is incapable of being endured by *danavas* and *asuras*,
 He that rescued His wife Sita after slaying Ravana,
 He that shows compassion even to members of low castes when they approach Him with devotion,
 (It is an allegory to His friendship, in the form of Rama, for Guha, the chief of the Chandalas, inhabiting the country known by the name of Sringaverapura.)

He that chastises the wicked,
 He that regulates the conduct of all persons by the dictates of the *srutis* and the *smritis*,
 He whose soul has true knowledge for its indication,
 He that destroyed Ravana, the foe of the gods, having assumed the form of Rama that was full of compassion and other amiable virtues,
 He that destroys the foes of the deities,
 He that slays those who obstruct or forbid the giving of presents unto deserving persons,
 He that is the instructor in all sciences and the father of all,
 He that is the instructor of even Brahma,
 He that is the abode or resting place of all creatures,
 He that is the benefactor of those that are good and is free from the stain of falsehood,
 He whose prowess is incapable of being baffled,
 He that never casts His eye on such acts as are not sanctioned or approved by the scriptures,
 He that casts His eye on such acts as are sanctioned or approved by the scriptures,
 He whose eye never winks or sleeps,
 He that wears the unfading garland of victory called *Vaijayanti*,
 He that is the lord of speech and that is possessed of great liberality in so much that He rescued the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile by granting them His grace,
 He that leads persons desirous of Emancipation to the foremost of all conditions, that is, Emancipation itself,
 He that assumes the form of a mighty Fish and scudding through the vast expanse of water that covers the Earth when the universal dissolution comes, and dragging the boat tied to His horns, leads Manu and others to safety,
 He that is the leader of all creatures,

He that sports in the vast expanse of water which overwhelms all things at the
 time of universal dissolution,
 He whose words are the Veda and who rescued the Veda when it was submerged
 in the water at the universal dissolution,
 He that is the accomplisher of all functions in the universe,
 He that assumes the form of the wind (air) for making all living creatures act or
 exert themselves,
 He whose motions are always beautiful,
 He that wishes His creatures to glorify Him,
 He that is endowed with a thousand heads,
 He that is the Soul of the universe and as such pervades all things,
 He that has a thousand eyes and a thousand legs,
 He that causes the wheel of the universe to revolve at His will,
 He whose soul is freed from desire and who transcends those conditions that
 invest *Jiva* and to which *Jiva* is liable,
 He that is concealed from the view of all persons that are attached to the world, or
 He that has covered the eyes of all persons with the bandage of nescience,
 He that grinds those that turn away from Him,
 He that sets the days a-going in consequence of His being identical with the Sun,
 He that is the Destroyer of all-destroying Time itself,
 He that conveys the libations poured into the sacred fire unto those for whom they
 are intended,
 He that bears the universe, placing it on only a minute fraction of His body,
 He that has no beginning,
 He that has no fixed habitation,
 He that upholds the Earth in space (in the form of Sesa),
 He that rescues the Earth in the form of the mighty Boar, or supports it as a subtle
 pervader,
 He that is exceedingly inclined to grace, insomuch that He grants happiness to
 even foes like Sisupala,
 He that has been freed from the attributes of *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (darkness)
 so that He is pure or stainless *sattva* by itself,
 He that has obtained the fruition of all His wishes,
 He that supports the universe,
 He that feeds (enjoys) the universe,
 He that is displayed in infinite puissance,
 He that honours the deities, the *pitris*, and His own worshippers,
 He that is honoured or adored by those that are themselves honoured or adored by
 others,
 He whose acts are all beautiful and enduring,
 He that accomplishes the purposes of others,
 He that is the benefactor of others,
 He that withdraws all things (beings) unto Himself at the time of the universal
 dissolution,
 He that destroys the foes of the deities or of His own worshippers,
 He that has the Waters for His home,

He that is the sole Refuge of all creatures,
 He that destroys the ignorance of all creatures,
 He that is distinguished above all,
 He that cherishes the righteous,
 He that cleanses all the worlds,
 He that crowns with fruition the desires of all creatures,
 He whose wishes are always crowned with fruition,
 He that gives success to all,
 He that bestows success upon those that solicit Him for it,
 He that presides over all sacred days,
 He that overwhelms Indra himself with His own excellent attributes,
 He that showers all objects of desire upon His worshippers,
 He that walks over all the universe,
 He that offers the excellent flight of steps constituted by Righteousness (unto
 those that desire to ascend to the highest place),
 He that has Righteousness in His abdomen,
 He that protects Indra even as a mother protects the child in her womb,
 He that nurtures (aggrandizes) His worshippers,
 He that spreads Himself out for becoming the vast universe,
 He that is aloof from all things (though pervading them),
 He that is the receptacle (in the nature of the rivers joining the ocean) of *srutis*,
 He that is possessed of excellent arms (that is, arms capable of upholding the
 universe),
 He that is incapable of being borne by any creature,
 He that from whom arose the sound, called the *Brahman* (Veda),
 He that is the Lord of all lords of the universe,
 He that is the giver of wealth,
 He that dwells in His own puissance,
 He that is Multiform,
 He that is of vast form,
 He that resides in the form of Sacrifice in all animals,
 He that causes all things to be displayed,
 He that is endued with great might, energy and splendour,
 He that displays Himself in visible forms to His worshippers,
 He that scorches the unrighteous with His burning energy,
 He that is enriched with the six-fold attributes (of affluence, etc),
 He that imparted the Veda to Brahma,
 He that is indicated by the syllable *AUM*,
 He that is of the form of the *samans*, *riks*, and *yajuses* (of the Veda),
 He that soothes His worshippers burning with the afflictions of the world, like the
 rays of the moon cooling all living creatures of the world,
 He that is endued with blazing effulgence like the sun,
 He from whose mind has sprung the moon,
 He that blazes forth in His own effulgence,
 He that nourishes all creatures even like the luminary marked by the hare,
 He that is the Master of the deities,

He that is the great medicine for the disease of worldly attachment,
 He that is the great causeway of the universe,
 He that is endued with knowledge and other attributes that are never futile, and
 with prowess that is incapable of being baffled,
 He that is solicited by all creatures at all times, that is, the past, the present and the
 future,
 He that rescues His worshippers by casting kind glances upon them,
 He that sanctifies even those that are sacred,
 He that merges the life-breath in the Soul,
 He that assumes diverse forms for protecting both the emancipated and the un-
 emancipated,
 He that kills desires of those that are emancipated,
 He that prevents evil desires from arising in the minds of His worshippers,
 He that is the Principle of *kama* (the principle of desire or lust),
 He that is the most agreeable,
 He that is desired by all creatures,
 He that grants the fruition of all desires,
 He that has the ability to accomplishing all acts,
 He that sets the four *yugas* to begin their course,
 He that is endued with the diverse kinds of illusion (and, therefore, the cause from
 which spring the different kinds of acts that distinguish the different *yugas*),
 He that is the greatest of the eaters (in consequence of His swallowing all things
 at the end of every *kalpa*),
 He that is incapable of being seized (by those that are not His worshippers),
 He that is manifest (being exceedingly vast),
 He that subjugates thousands of foes (of the deities),
 He that subjugates innumerable foes,
 He that is desired (by even Brahma and Rudra),
 He that is adored in sacrifices,
 He that is distinguished above all,
 He that is desired by those that are endued with wisdom and righteousness,
 He that has ornament of (peacock's) feathers on His headgear,
 He that stupefies all creatures with His illusion,
 He that showers His grace on all His worshippers,
 He that kills the wrath of the righteous,
 He that fills the unrighteous with wrath,
 He that is the accomplisher of all acts,
 He that holds the universe on His arms,
 He that upholds the Earth,
 He that transcends the six well-known modifications,
 (The modifications are inception in mother's womb, birth, growth, maturity,
 decline and dissolution.)

He that is endued with great celebrity (in consequence of His feats),
 He that causes all living creatures to live (in consequence of His
 being the all-pervading Soul),

He that gives life,
 He that is the younger brother of Vasava (Indra) (in the form of Upendra or the dwarf),
 He that is the receptacle of all the waters in the universe,
 He that covers all creatures (in consequence of His being the material cause of everything),
 He that is ever vigilant (being always above error),
 He that is established in His own glory,
 He that flows in the form of nectar,
 He that dries up all things,
 He that upholds the path of righteousness,
 He that bears the burden of the universe,
 He that gives desirable boons unto those that solicit them,
 He that causes the winds to blow,
 He that is the son of Vasudeva,
 He that covers the universe with His illusions and sports in the midst of it,
 He that is endued with extraordinary lustre,
 He that is the originating cause of the deities,
 He that pierces all hostile towns,
 He that transcends all sorrow and grief (resulting from infatuation, hunger, thirst, birth and death),
 He that leads us safely across the ocean of life or the world,
 He that dispels from the hearts of all His worshippers the fear of rebirth,
 He that is possessed of infinite courage and prowess,
 He that is an offspring of Sura's race,
 He that is the Master of all living creatures,
 He that is inclined to show His grace unto all,
 He that has come on earth for hundreds of times (for rescuing the good, destroying the wicked and establishing righteousness),
 He that holds a lotus in one of His hands,
 He whose eyes resemble the petals of the lotus,
 He from whose navel sprang the primeval lotus,
 He that is seated upon a lotus,
 He that is endued with eyes resembling the petals of the lotus,
 He that is adored by worshippers as One seated within the lotus of their heart,
 He that assumes the form of embodied *Jiva* (through His own illusion),
 He that is endued with puissance of every kind,
 He that grows in the form of the five primal elements,
 He that is the Ancient Soul,
 He that is endued with vast eyes,
 He that has Garuda sitting on the standard of His car (vehicle),
 He that is incomparable,
 He that is the Sarabha (the lion-killing animal),
 He that illumines the body-mind complex with consciousness,
 He that strikes the wicked with terror,
 He that knows everything that occurs in Time,

He that accepts, in the forms of the deities, the butter poured into the sacrificial
 fire,
 He that is known by all kinds of evidence or proof,
 He upon whose breast sits Prosperity always,
 He that is victorious in every battle,
 He that is above (beyond) destruction,
 He that assumes a red form,
 He that becomes wrathful unto the enemies of His worshippers,
 He that is an object of search with the righteous,
 He that is at the root of all things,
 He that has the mark of the string around his abdomen (for, Yasoda bound Him
 with a cord while He was Krisna),
 He that bears or forgives all injuries,
 He that upholds the Earth in the form of its mountains,
 He that is the foremost of all objects of worship,
 He that is endued with great speed,
 He that swallows vast quantities of food,
 He that caused the creation to start into life,
 He that always agitates both *Prakrti* and *Purusa*,
 He that shines with resplendence,
 He that sports in joy,
 He that has puissance in his stomach,
 He that is the Supreme Master of all,
 He that is the Material, out of which the universe has been made,
 He that is the cause or Agent, who has made the universe,
 He that is independent of all things,
 He that ordains variety in the universe,
 He that is incapable of being comprehended,
 He that renders Himself invisible by the screen of illusion,
 He that is *cit* divested of all attributes,
 He, on whom all things rest,
 He in whom all things reside when the universal dissolution comes,
 He that assigns the foremost place to those that worship Him,
 He that is durable,
 He that is endued with the highest puissance,
 He that has been glorified in the Vedanta,
 He that is contented,
 He that is always full,
 He whose glance is auspicious,
 He that fills all *yogis* with delight,
 He that is the end of all creatures (for, it is in Him that all things merge at the
 universal dissolution),
 He that is the faultless Path,
 He that, in the form of *Jiva*, leads to Emancipation,
 He that leads (*Jiva* to Emancipation),
 He that has none to lead Him,

He that is endued with great might,
 He that is the foremost of all beings possessed of might,
 He that upholds,
 He that is the foremost of all beings conversant with duty and religion,
 He that joins, at the time of creation, the disunited elements for forming all
 objects,
 He that resides in all bodies,
 He that causes all creatures to act in the form of Kshetrajna,
 He that creates all creatures after destroying them at the universal dissolution,
 He unto whom every one bows with reverence,
 He that is extended over the entire universe,
 He that owns the primeval golden egg as His abdomen (as the female uterus)
 whence everything proceeds,
 He that destroys the foes of the deities,
 He that overspreads all things (being the material cause whence they spring),
 He that spreads sweet perfumes,
 He that disregards the pleasures of the senses,
 He that is identifiable with the seasons,
 He at whose sight alone all worshippers succeed in obtaining the great object of
 their wish,
 He that weakens all creatures,
 He that dwells in the firmament of the heart, depending upon His own glory and
 puissance,
 He that is capable of being known everywhere (in consequence of His
 omnipresence),
 He that inspires everyone with dread,
 He in whom all creatures dwell,
 He that is clever in accomplishing all acts,
 He that constitutes the rest of all creatures (being, as He is, the embodiment of
 Emancipation),
 He that grants liberation to all beings as the ultimate end,
 He that is endued with competence greater than that of other beings,
 He in whom the whole universe is spread out,
 He that is Himself immobile and in whom all things rest for ever,
 He that is an object of proof,
 He that is the Indestructible and unchanging seed,
 He that is sought by all (in consequence of His being happiness),
 He that has no desire (in consequence of His desire having been gratified),
 He that is the Great Cause (which covers the universe),
 He that has all sorts of things to enjoy,
 He that has great wealth wherewith to secure all objects of desire,
 He that is above despair,
 He that exists in the form of Renunciation,
 He that is without birth,
 He that is the stake, unto which Righteousness is tethered,
 He that is the great embodiment of sacrifice,

He that is the navel of the starry-wheel that revolves in the firmament,
(Visnu is supposed to be in the constellation called Sisumara or the Northern
Bear. The stars, without changing their places *per se*, seem to revolve round this point,
within the constellation.)

He that is the Moon among the constellations,
He that is competent to achieve every feat,
He that stays in His own self when all things disappear,
He that cherishes the desire for Creation,
He that is the embodiment of all sacrifices,
He that is adored in all sacrifices and religious rites,
He that is the most adorable of the deities present in the sacrifices that men
perform,
He that is the embodiment of all such sacrifices in which animals are offered
according to the ordinance,
He that is adored by persons before they take any food,
(In Hinduism, one is to offer food to Deity before one partakes of it.)

He that is the Refuge of those that seek emancipation,
He that beholds the acts and omissions of all creatures,
He who's Soul transcends all attributes,
He that is possessed of omniscience,
He that is identical with knowledge that is un-acquired, unlimited, and capable of
accomplishing everything,
He that is observant of excellent vows (chief amongst which is the granting of
favour unto one that solicits it with a pure heart),
He that has a face always full of delight,
He that is exceedingly subtle,
He that utters the most agreeable sounds (in the form of the Veda or as Krisna
playing on the lute),
He that gives happiness (to all His worshippers),
He that does good to others without expecting any return,
He that fills all creatures with delight,
He that has subdued wrath,
He that has mighty arms (so mighty that He had slain, as if in sport, the mightiest
of *asuras*),
He that tears those that are unrighteous,
He that causes those persons, who are destitute of knowledge of the soul, to be
steeped in the deep sleep of His illusion,
He that relies on Himself (being entirely independent of all persons and things),
He that overspreads the entire universe,
He that exists in infinite forms,
He that is engaged in vocations infinite in number,
He that lives in everything,
He that is full of affection towards all His worshippers,
He that is the universal father,

He that holds, in the form of the vast ocean, all jewels and gems in His abdomen,
 He that is the Lord of all treasure,
 He that is the protector of righteousness,
 He that accomplishes all the duties of righteousness,
 He that is the substratum of righteousness,
 He that is the Existent for all time,
 He that is the Non-existent (in the form of the universe, for the manifested
 universe is the result of illusion),
 He that is destructible (in the form of the universe),
 He that is indestructible as *cit*,
 He that is, in the form of *Jiva*, destitute of true knowledge,
 He that is, in the form of the Sun, endued with a thousand rays,
 He that ordains (even all such great and mighty creatures as Sesa, Garuda, etc),
 He that has created all the Sastras,
 He that exists, in the form of the Sun, as the centre of innumerable rays of light,
 He that dwells in all creatures,
 He that is possessed of great prowess,
 He that is the Master of even Yama and others of similar puissance,
 He that is the oldest of the deities (existing as He does from the beginning),
 He that exists in His own glory, casting off all conditions,
 He that is the Lord of even all the deities,
 He that is the ruler of even him that upholds the deities (that is, Indra),
 He that transcends birth and destruction,
 He that tended and protected kine (in the form of Krisna),
 He that nourishes all creatures,
 He that is approachable by knowledge alone,
 He that is Ancient,
 He that upholds the elements which constitute the body,
 He that enjoys and endures (weal and woe, in the form of *Jiva*),
 He that assumed the form of a vast Boar, or
 He that, in the form of Rama, was the lord of a large monkey hoard,
 He that gave plentiful presents unto all in a grand sacrifice performed by Him,
 He that drinks Soma in every sacrifice,
 He that drinks nectar,
 He that, in the form of Soma (Moon), nourishes all the herbs and plants,
 He that conquers foes in a trice when even they are infinite in number,
 He that is of universal form and is the foremost of all existent entities,
 He that is the chastiser,
 He that is victorious over all,
 He whose purposes are incapable of being baffled,
 He that deserves gifts,
 He that gives what His creatures do not have and who protects what they have,
 He that holds the life-breaths,
 He that beholds all His creatures as objects of direct vision, or
 He that never beholds anything beside His own Self,
 He that gives emancipation,

He whose footsteps (three in number) covered Heaven, Earth and the Nether regions,
 He who is the receptacle of all the waters,
 He that transcends all space, time, and all things,
 He that lies on the vast expanse of waters after the universal dissolution,
 He that causes the destruction of all things,
 He that is without birth,
 He that is exceedingly adorable,
 He that appears in His own nature,
 He that has conquered all foes (in the form of wrath and other evil passions),
 He that delights those that meditate on Him,
 He that is joy,
 He that fills others with delight,
 He that swells with all causes of delight,
 He that has truth and other virtues for His indications,
 He whose foot-steps are in the three worlds,
 He that is the first of the *Rishis* (being conversant with the entire Veda), or
 He that is identical with the preceptor Kapila,
 He that is the knower of the Universe,
 He that is Master of the Earth,
 He that has feet,
 He that is the guardian of the deities,
 He that has large horns,
 (This is an allusion to the piscatorial form in which He saved Manu on the occasion of the universal deluge by scudding through the waters, with Manu's boat tied to His horns.)

He that exhausts all acts by causing their doers to enjoy or endure their fruits,
 He that grinds the Destroyer himself,
 He that is the great Boar,
 He that is understood or apprehended by the aid of the Vedanta,
 He that has beautiful troops (in the form of His worshippers),
 He that is adorned with golden armlets,
 He that is concealed (being knowledge contained in the Upanisads only),
 He that is deep (in knowledge and puissance),
 He that is difficult of access,
 He that transcends both word and thought,
 He that is armed with the discus and the mace,
 He that is the Ordainer,
 He that is the Cause (in the form of helper of the universe),
 He that has never been vanquished,
 He that is the Island-born Krsna (Maharshi Vyasa),
 He that is enduring (in consequence of His transcending decay), He that mows all things and is Himself above deterioration,
 He that is the Varuna (the deity of the waters),
 He that is the son of Varuna (in the form of Vasista or Agastya),

He that is Immovable as a tree,
 He that is displayed in His own true form in the lotus of the heart,
 He that creates, preserves, and destroys by only a fiat of the mind,
 He that is possessed of the six-fold attributes,
 He that destroys the six-fold attributes (at the universal dissolution),
 He that is felicity (in consequence of His swelling with all kinds of prosperity),
 He that is adorned with the triumphal garland (called *Vaijayanta*),
 He that is adorned with the plough (in allusion to His incarnation as Baladeva),
 He that took birth from the womb of Aditi (in the form of the dwarf that beguiled
 Bali),
 He that is endued with effulgence like unto the Sun,
 He that endures all pairs of opposites (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain,
 etc),
 He that is the fore-most Refuge of all things,
 He that is armed with the best of bows (called *Saranga*),
 He that was divested of His battle-axe (by Rama of Bhrigu's race),
 (Rama of Bhrigu's race (Parasu-Rama) went to Mahadeva for acquiring the
 science of arms. While dwelling in Siva's retreat, he had a quarrel with Kartikeya or
 Kumaraswami, the son of Siva. Rama worsted his preceptor's son in battle, at which his
 preceptor, gratified with him, made him a present of his own battle-axe, wherewith the
 regenerate Rama exterminated the Kshatriyas twenty one times.)

He that is fierce,
 He that is the giver of all objects of desire,
 He that is so tall as to touch the very heavens with his head (an allusion to the
 form He assumed at Bali's sacrifice),
 He whose vision extends over the entire universe,
 He that is Vyasa (who compiled the Veda sakhās into different groups),
 He that is the Master of speech or all learning,
 He that has started into existence without the intervention of genital organs,
 He that is hymned with the three (foremost *samans*),
 (*Brihat*, *Radhantara* and *Vamadeva* are the three *samans* (hymns) from Samaveda
 collectively known as the *Devavratam*. The Lord is praised in these three *samans*.)

He that is the singer of the *samans*,
 He that is the Samaveda itself,
 He that is the Extinction of all worldly attachments (in consequence of His being
 the embodiment of Renunciation),
 He that is the Medicine,
 He that is the Physician (who applies the medicine),
 He that has ordained the fourth or last mode (stage) of life called Renunciation
 (for enabling His creatures to attain to emancipation),
 He that causes the passions of His worshippers to be quieted (with a view to give
 them tranquility of soul),
 He that is contented (in consequence of His utter dissociation with all worldly
 objects),

He that is the Refuge of devotion and tranquility of Soul,
 He that is possessed of beautiful limbs,
 He that is the giver of tranquility of soul,
 He that is the Creator,
 He that sports in joy on the bosom of the Earth,
 He that sleeps (in *yoga*) lying on the body of the prince of snakes, Sesha, after the
 universal dissolution,
 He that is the Benefactor of kine,
 He that took a human form for relieving the earth of the weight of its population,
 He that is the Master of the universe,
 He that is the Protector of the universe,
 He that is endued with eyes like those of the bull,
 He that cherishes righteousness with love,
 He that is the un-returning hero,
 He whose soul has been withdrawn from all attachments,
 He that reduces, to a subtle form, the universe at the time of universal dissolution,
 He that does good to His afflicted worshippers,
 He whose name, as soon as heard, cleanses the hearer of all his sins,
 He that has the auspicious whorl on His breast,
 He that in whom dwells the goddess of Prosperity for ever,
 He that was chosen by Lakshmi (the goddess of Prosperity) as her Lord,
 He that is the foremost one of all beings endued with prosperity,
 He that gives prosperity unto His worshippers,
 He that is the Master of prosperity,
 He that always lives with those that are endued with prosperity,
 He that is the receptacle of all kinds of prosperity,
 He that gives prosperity unto all persons of righteous acts according to the
 measure of their righteousness,
 He that holds the goddess of Prosperity on his bosom,
 He that bestows prosperity upon those that hear of, praise, and meditate on Him,
 He that is the embodiment of that condition, which represents the attainment of
 unattainable happiness,
 He that is possessed of every kind of beauty,
 He that is the Refuge of the three worlds,
 He that is possessed of beautiful eyes,
 He that is possessed of beautiful limbs,
 He that is possessed of a hundred sources of delight,
 He that represents the highest delight,
 He that is the Master of all the luminaries in the firmament (for it is He that
 maintains them in their places and orbits),
 He that has subjugated His mind,
 He whose soul is not swayed by any superior being,
 He that is always of generous acts,
 He whose doubts have all been dispelled (for, He is said to behold the whole
 universe as an *amlaka* in the His palm,
 He that transcends all creatures,

He whose vision extends in all directions:
 He that has no Master,
 He that at all times transcends all changes,
 He that (in the form of Rama) had to lie down on that bare ground,
 He that adorns the Earth (by His incarnations),
 He that is puissance's self,
 He that transcends all grief,
 He that dispels the sorrow of all His worshippers as soon as they remember Him,
 He that is possessed of effulgence,
 He that is worshipped by all,
 He that is like the water-pot containing all things within Him,
 He that is of pure soul,
 He that cleanses all as soon as they hear of Him,
 He that is free and unrestrained,
 He whose car (vehicle) never turns away from battles,
 He that is possessed of great wealth,
 He whose prowess is incapable of being measured,
 He that is the slayer of the *asura* named Kalanemi,
 He that is the hero,
 He that has taken birth in the clan of Sura (that is Krisna),
 He that is the Lord of all the deities,
 He that is the soul of the three worlds,
 He that is the Master of the three worlds,
 He that has the solar and lunar rays for his hair,
 He that is the slayer of Kesi,
 He that destroys all things (at the universal dissolution),
 He that is the Deity, from whom the fruition of all desires is sought,
 He that grants the wishes of all,
 He that has desires (ever fulfilled),
 He that has a handsome form,
 He that is endued (endowed) with thorough knowledge of *srutis* and *smritis*,
 He that is possessed of a form that is indescribable by attributes,
 He whose brightest rays overwhelm heaven,
 He that is all-pervasive, being eternal,
 He that has no end,
 He that (in the form of Arjuna or Nara) acquired vast wealth on the occasion of
 his campaign of conquest,
 He that is the foremost object of silent recitation, of sacrifice, of Veda, and of all
 religious acts,
 He that is the creator of penances and the like,
 He that is of the form of the *Brahman*,
 He that is the augments of penances,
 He that is conversant with Brahma,
 He that is of the form of *brahmana*,
 He that has, for His limbs, him that is called Brahma,
 He that knows all the Veda and everything in the universe,

He that is always fond of *brahmanas*, and of whom the *brahmanas* also are fond,
 He whose footsteps cover vast areas,
 He whose feats are mighty,
 He that is possessed of vast energy,
 He that is identical with Vasuki, the king of the snakes,
 He that is the foremost of all sacrifices,
 He that is *Japa*, the first of sacrifices,
 He that is the foremost of all offerings made in sacrifices,
 (Many of these words beginning with *Mahat* represent Kṛṣṇa's own words as
 spoken to Arjuna in Bhagavad-Gita such as, 'I am the foremost of sacrifices; I am the
 foremost of sacrificers,' etc.)

He that is hymned by all,
 He that loves to be hymned (by his worshippers),
 He that is Himself the hymns uttered by His worshippers,
 He that is the very form of hymns,
 He that is the very act of hymning,
 He that is the person that hymns,
 He that is fond of battling (with everything that is evil),
 He that is full in every respect,
 He that fills others with every kind of affluence,
 He that destroys all sins as soon as He is remembered (hymned),
 He whose acts are all righteous,
 He that transcends all kinds of disease,
 He that is endowed with the speed of the mind,
 He that is the creator and promulgator of all kinds of learning,
 He whose vital seed is gold,
 He that is giver of wealth (being identical with Kubera, the Lord of treasures),
 He that takes away all the wealth of the *asuras*,
 He that is the son of Vasudeva,
 He, in whom all creatures dwell,
 He whose mind dwells in all things, in thorough identity with them,
 He that takes away the sins of all who seek refuge in Him,
 He that is attainable by the righteous,
 He whose acts are always good,
 He that is the one entity in the universe,
 He that displays Himself in diverse forms,
 He that is the refuge of all those that are conversant with truth,
 He that has the greatest of heroes for his troops,
 (This has reference to Hanuman and others among the apes that Rama led against
 Ravana.)

He that is the foremost of the Yadavas,
 He that is the abode of the righteous,
 He that sports in joy (in the woods of Brinda) on the banks of Yamuna,
 He in whom all created things dwell,

He that is the Deity that overwhelms the universe with its *maya* (illusion),
 He in whom all foremost of beings become merged (when they achieve their
 emancipation),
 He whose hunger is never gratified,
 He that humbles the pride of all,
 He that fills the righteous with just pride,
 He that swells with joy,
 He that is incapable of being seized,
 He that has never been vanquished,
 He that is of universal form,
 He that is of vast form,
 He whose form blazes forth with energy and effulgence,
 He that is without form (that is, Awareness),
 He that is of diverse forms,
 He that is un-manifest,
 He that is of hundred (countless) forms,
 He that is of hundred (countless) faces,
 He that is One,
 He that is many (through illusion),
 He that is the sacrifice, in which Soma is offered,
 He that is full of felicity,
 He that forms the one grand topic of investigation,
 He from whom is this all,
 He that is called *Tat*,
 He that is the highest Refuge,
 He that confines *Jiva* within material causes,
 He that is coveted by all,
 He that took birth in the clan of Madhu,
 He that is exceedingly affectionate towards His worshippers,
 He that is of golden complexion,
 He whose limbs are like gold (in hue),
 He that is possessed of beautiful lips,
 He whose person is decked with *angadas* made with sandal paste,
 He that is the slayer of heroes (among *asuras*),
 He that has no equal,
 He that is like cipher,
 (This is in consequence of no attributes being affirmable of Him.)

He that stands in need of no blessings (in view of His fullness),
 He that never swerves from his own nature, puissance and knowledge,
 He that is mobile in the form of wind,
 He that never identifies Himself with anything that is Not-soul,
 He that confers honours on His worshippers,
 He that is honoured by all,
 He that is the Lord of the three worlds,
 He that upholds the three worlds,

He that is possessed of intelligence and memory capable of holding in His mind
the contents of all treatises,
He that took birth in a sacrifice,
He that is worthy of the highest praise,
He whose intelligence and memory are never futile,
He that upholds the Earth,
He that pours forth heat in the form of the Sun,
He that is the bearer of great beauty of limbs,
He that is the foremost of all the bearers of weapons,
He that accepts the flowery and leafy offerings made to Him by His worshippers,
He that has subdued all His passions, and grinds all His foes,
He that has none to walk before Him,
He that has four horns,
He that is the elder brother of Gada,
He that has four forms,
(The four forms relate to Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.)

He that has four arms,
He from whom the four *Purusas* have sprung,
He that is the refuge of the four modes of life and the four orders of men,
(The modes of life refer to the stages of life; the orders of men refer to their
castes, as stated in Dharma-Sastra.)

He that is of four souls,
(The reference is to mind, understanding, consciousness and memory.)

He from who spring the four objects of life,
(The reference is to righteousness, wealth, pleasure and emancipation,)

He that is conversant with the four Vedas,
He that has displayed only a fraction of His puissance,
He that sets the wheel of the world to revolve round and round,
He whose soul is dissociated from all worldly attachments,
He that is incapable of being vanquished,
He that cannot be transcended,
He that is exceedingly difficult of being attained,
He that is difficult of being approached,
He that is difficult of access,
He that is difficult of being brought into the heart (even by *yoga*),
He that slays even the most powerful foes,
He that has beautiful limbs,
He that takes the essence of all things in the universe,
He that holds the most beautiful warp and woof,
(The allegory is to the universe being a fabric woven by Visnu.)

He that weaves with ever-extending warp and woof,

He whose acts are glorious as those of Indra,
He whose acts are great,
He that has no acts undone,
He that has composed all the Veda-sakhas and scriptures,
He whose birth is high,
He that is exceedingly handsome,
He whose heart is full of commiseration,
He that has precious gems in His navel,
He that has excellent knowledge for His eye,
He that is worthy of worship by Brahma and other foremost ones in the universe,
He that is giver of food,
He that assumed horns at the time of the universal dissolution,
He that has always subjugated His foes most wonderfully,
He that knows all things,
He that is ever victorious over those that are of irresistible prowess,
He whose limbs are like gold,
He that is incapable of being agitated,
(The reference is to no agitation to Visnu by wrath, aversion or any passion whatsoever.)

He that is Master of all those who are masters of all speech and learning,
He that is the deepest lake,
He that is the deepest pit,
He that transcends the influence of Time,
He, in whom the primal elements are established,
He that gladdens the Earth,
He that grants boons which are as agreeable as the *kunda* flowers,
He that gave away the Earth unto Kasyapa (in His incarnation as Parasu-Rama),
He that extinguishes the three kinds of misery (as stated in the Sankhya philosophy), like a rain-charged cloud cooling the heat of the earth by its downpour,
He that cleanses all creatures,
He that has none to urge Him,
He that drank nectar,
He that has an undying body,
He that is possessed of omniscience,
He that has face and eyes turned towards every direction,
He that is easily won (with such gifts as flowers, leaves),
He that has performed excellent vows,
He that is crowned with success by Himself,
He that is victorious over all foes,
He that scorches all foes,
He that is ever-growing and tall banyan tree that overtops all others,
He that, in the form of food, nourishes all creatures,
He that is sacred fig tree, or
He that is not durable,

(This is in consequence of His being all perishable forms in the universe even as He is all the imperishable forms that exist.)

He that is the slayer of Chanura, the wrestler,
He that is endued with a thousand rays,
He that has seven tongues,
(This has reference to the tongues of the forms of Kali, Karali, etc.)

He that has seven flames,
(This is in consequence of His being identical with the deity of Fire.)

He that has seven horses for bearing His vehicle,
He that owns the steed called *Sapta*,
He that is formless,
He that is sinless,
He that is inconceivable,
He that dispels all fears,
He that destroys all fears,
He that is extremely subtle,
He that is huge,
He that is consciousness (spirit), devoid of matter,
He that is gross,
He that is emaciated,
He that is adipose,
He that is endued with attributes,
He that transcends all attributes,
He that is unseizable,
He that suffers Himself to be easily seized (by His worshippers),
He that has an excellent face,
He that has for His descendents the people of all the regions of the world,
He that extends the creation consisting of the five-fold primal elements,
He that bears heavy weights (in the form of Ananta),
He that has been declared by the Veda,
He that is devoted to *yoga*,
He that is the lord of all *yogis*,
He that is the giver of all wishes,
He that affords an asylum to those that seek it,
He that sets *yogis* to practise *yoga* after their return to life upon the conclusion of their life of felicity in heaven,
He that invests *yogis* with puissance even after the exhaustion of their merits,
He that has goodly leaves,
(This has reference to the Sakhas or Skhandas of the Vedas, Himself being the Tree of the Creation.)

He that causes the winds to blow,
He that is armed with the bow (in the form of Rama),

He that is conversant with the science of arms,
 He that is the rod of chastisement,
 He that is chastiser,
 He that executes all sentences of chastisement,
 He that has never been vanquished,
 He that is competent in all acts,
 He that sets all persons to their respective duties,
 He that has none to set Him to any work,
 He that has no Yama to slay Him,
 He that is endued with heroism and prowess,
 He that has the attribute of *sattva* (goodness),
 He that is identical with Truth,
 He that is devoted to Truth and Righteousness,
 He that is sought by those who are resolved to achieve emancipation,
 He towards whom the universe proceeds when the dissolution comes,
 He that deserves to have all objects which His worshippers present unto Him,
 He that is worthy of being adored (with hymns, flowers and other offerings of
 reverence),
 He that does good to all,
 He that enhances the delights of all,
 He whose track is through the firmament,
 He that blazes forth in His own effulgence,
 He that is endued with great beauty,
 He that eats the offerings made on the sacrificial fire,
 He that dwells everywhere and is endued with supreme puissance,
 He that sucks the moisture of the earth in the form of the sun,
 He that has diverse desires,
 He that brings forth all things,
 He that is the parent of the universe,
 He that has the Sun for His eye,
 He that is Infinite,
 He that accepts all sacrificial offerings,
 He that enjoys *Prakrti* in the form of Mind,
 He that is giver of felicity,
 He that has taken repeated births (for the protection of righteousness and the
 righteous),
 He that is the First-born of all existent things,
 He that transcends despair (in consequence of the fruition of all His wishes),
 He that forgives the righteous when they trip,
 He that is the foundation, upon which the universe rests,
 He that is the most wonderful,
 He that is existent from the beginning of Time (eternal),
 He that has existed from before the birth of Brahma and others,
 He that is of tawny hue,
 He that discovers or illumines all existing things by His rays,
 He that assumed the form of the great Boar,

He that exists even when all things are dissolved,
 He that is the giver of all blessings,
 He that creates blessings,
 He that is identifiable with all blessings,
 He that enjoys blessings,
 He that is able to scatter blessings,
 He that is without wrath,
 He that lies ensconced in folds (in the form of *Sesha*),
 He that is adorned with ear-rings,
 He that is armed with the discuss,
 He that is endowed with great prowess,
 He whose sway is regulated by the high precepts of the *srutis* and the *smritis*,
 He that is incapable of being described by the aid of speech,
 He whom the Vedantins have striven to express with the aid of speech,
 He that is the dew which cools those who are afflicted with the three kinds of
 grief,
 He that lives in all bodies, endowed with the capacity of dispelling darkness,
 He that is divested of wrath,
 He that is well-skilled in accomplishing all acts by thought, word and deed,
 He that can accomplish all acts within the shortest period of time,
 He that destroys the wicked,
 He that is the foremost of all forgiving persons,
 He that is the foremost of all persons endowed with knowledge,
 He that transcends all fear,
 He whose names and feats, heard and recited, lead to righteousness and merit,
 He that rescues the righteous from the tempestuous ocean of the world,
 He that destroys the wicked,
 He that is Righteousness,
 He that dispels all evil dreams,
 He that destroys all bad paths while leading His worshippers to the good path of
 emancipation,
 He that protects the universe by staying in the attribute of *sattva*,
 He that walks along the good path,
 He that is Life,
 He that exists overspreading the universe,
 He that is of infinite forms,
 He that is endowed with infinite prosperity,
 He that has subdued wrath,
 He that destroys the fears of the righteous,
 He that gives just fruits, on every side, to sentient beings according to their
 thoughts and acts,
 He that is immeasurable Soul,
 He that bestows diverse kinds of fruits on deserving persons for their diverse acts,
 He that sets diverse commands (on gods and men),
 He that attaches to every act its proper fruit,
 He that has no beginning,

He that is the receptacle of all causes, as well as of the earth,
 He that has the goddess of Prosperity ever by his side,
 He that is the foremost of all heroes,
 He that is adorned with beautiful armlets,
 He that produces all creatures,
 He that is the original cause of the birth of all creatures,
 He that is the terror of all the wicked *asuras*,
 He that is endowed with terrible prowess,
 He that is the receptacle and abode of the five primal elements,
 He that gulps down His throat all creatures at the time of the universal dissolution,
 He that smiles in the form of flowers,
 He that is always wakeful,
 He that stays at the head of all creatures,
 He whose conduct consists of those acts which the righteous do,
 He that revives the dead (such as Parikshit),
 He that is the initial syllable *Aum*,
 He that has ordained all righteous acts,
 He that displays the truth about the Supreme Soul,
 He that is the abode of the five life-breaths and the senses,
 He that is the food which supports the life of living creatures,
 He that causes all living creatures to live with the aid of the life-breath called
 prana,
 He that is the great topic of every system of philosophy,
 He that is the One Soul in the universe,
 He that transcends birth, decrepitude and death,
 He that rescues the universe in consequence of the sacred syllables *Bhuh, Bhuvah,*
 Suvah, and others with which *homa* offerings are made,
 He that is the great rescuer,
 He that is the sire of all,
 He that is the sire of even Brahma,
 He that is of the form of Sacrifice,
 He that is the Lord of all sacrifices,
 (This is an allegory to Visnu being the great deity that is adored in all sacrifices.)

He that is the sacrificer,
 He that has sacrifices for his limbs,
 He that upholds all sacrifices,
 He that protects sacrifices,
 He that has created sacrifices,
 He that is the foremost of all performers of sacrifices,
 He that enjoys the rewards of all sacrifices,
 He that causes the accomplishment of all sacrifices,
 He that completes all sacrifices by accepting the full libation at the end,
 He that is identical with such sacrifices as are performed without desire of fruit,
 He that is the food which sustains all living creatures,
 He that is also the consumer of that food,

He that is Himself the cause of His existence,
He that is self-born,
He that penetrated through the solid earth,
He that sings the *samans*,
He that is the delighter of Devaki,
He that is the creator of all,
He that is the lord of the Earth,
He that is the destroyer of the sins of His worshippers,
He that bears the conch (*Panchajanya*) in His hand,
He that bears the sword of knowledge and spiritual illumination,
He that sets the cycle of the *yugas* to revolve without end,
He that invests Himself with consciousness and senses,
He that is endued with the mace of the most solid understanding,
He that is armed with a circular wheel,
He that is incapable of being agitated,
He that is armed with all kinds of weapons,
Aum! Salutations to Him!

Bhishma said:

Even thus have I recited to thee, without any exception, the thousand excellent names of the high-souled Kesava whose glory should always be sung!

The man who hymns the praises of that foremost of beings by reciting His thousand names with devotion succeeds in quickly crossing all difficulties.

That mortal who takes refuge in Vasudeva, and who becomes devoted to Him, becomes freed of all sins and attains to the eternal *Brahman*.

That man who, with devotion and faith, recites this hymn succeeds in acquiring felicity of soul, forgiveness of disposition, prosperity, intelligence, memory and fame.

Those persons that worship and adore the Lord of the universe, the Deity that is unborn and possessed of blazing effulgence, who is the source or cause of the universe, who knows no change or deterioration have never to meet with any discomfiture.

3. Hymn to Narayana

Sanjaya said:

.....
.....
Listen, O king, with attention, and having listened, let it go to thy heart. Nothing (in this world) is the result of incantation, nothing the result of illusion of any king.....

Listen again, O King, to what you have asked me, that is, the true cause, O chief of the Bharatas, of the victory of the Pandavas! I will tell you what I have heard, O chastiser of foes. Duryodhana had asked the grandsire this very question. Beholding his brothers, all mighty car-warriors, vanquished in battle, your son Duryodhana, O Kaurava, with heart confounded with grief, repaying with humility during the night to the grandsire possessed of great wisdom, asked him this question. Listen to me, O monarch, about it all!

Duryodhana said:

Drona and you, Salya, Kripa, Drona's son, Kritavarman the son of Hridika, Sudakshina the ruler of the Kamvojas, Bhurisravas, Vikarna, and Bhagadatta, of exceeding prowess, are all regarded as mighty car-warriors. All of these, again, are high-born, and prepared to throw away their lives in battle. It is my opinion that these are a match, for even the three worlds (united together) cannot bear your prowess. A doubt has arisen in my mind. Explain it to me who enquires of you. Who it is, relying on whom the Pandavas are vanquishing us repeatedly?

Bhishma said:

Listen, O King, to the words that I will speak unto you, O you of Kuru's race! Frequently were you addressed by me to the same effect, but you did not do what I had said. Let peace be made with the Pandavas, O best of the Bharatas! I regard this to be beneficial both to the world and you, O Lord!

Enjoy this earth, O King, with your brothers and be happy, gratifying all your well-wishers and delighting your kinsfolk. Although I had cried myself hoarse before, you did not listen to me, O Sire! You had always disregarded the sons of Pandu. The effect of all that has now overtaken you! Listen also, O King, from me as I speak of it, O Lord, to the reason why the Pandavas, whose achievements tire them not, are un-slayable.

There is not, was not, will not be, the being in all the worlds who would or will be able to vanquish the sons of Pandu who are all protected by the wielder of *Saranga*. Listen truly, O you that are conversant with morality, to that ancient history which was recited to me by sages of souls under control.

In days of yore, all the celestials and the *Rishis*, united together, waited reverentially on the Grandsire (*Brahma*) upon the mountains of Gandhamadana. And the Lord of all creatures, seated at his ease in their midst, beheld an excellent car stationed in the firmament, blazing with effulgence. Having ascertained (everything about it) by meditation, joining his hands with restrained heart, Brahma, with delighted soul, made his salutations to the highest Divine Being. And the *Rishis* and the celestials, beholding in the firmament (the form thus) displayed, all stood up with joined hands, their eyes fixed on that wonder of wonders.

Worshipping Him duly, Brahma, the foremost of all conversant with the *Brahman*, the Creator of the universe, acquainted with the highest morality, uttered these high words:

Aum!

Thou art the Glory of the universe for Thy form,
Thou art the Lord of the universe,
Thou whose protection extends through the whole universe,
Thou that has the universe for Thy work,
Thou that has Thy soul under control,
Thou art the Supreme Master of the universe,
Thou art Vasudeva.
Therefore, I seek refuge in Thee that art the soul of *Yoga* and the highest Divinity.
Victory to Thee that art the Supreme God of the universe,
Victory to Thee that art ever employed in the good of the worlds,
Victory to Thee that art the Lord of *Yoga*.

Having the lotus springing from Thy navel, and having large expansive eyes,
Victory to Thee that art Lord of lords of the universe.

O Lord of the past, the present and the future,
Victory to Thee that art the embodiment of gentleness,
Victory to Thee that art the Sun of suns, and
Thee that art the receptacle of untold attributes,
Victory to Thee that art the refuge of all things,

Thou art *Narayana*.
Thou art incapable of being understood.
Victory to Thee that art the wielder of the bow called *Saranga*,
Victory to Thee that art endued with every attribute.

O Thou that hast the universe for Thy form,
O Thou that art ever hale,
O Lord of the Universe,
O Thou of mighty arms,
Victory to Thee that art always ready for benefiting the worlds,

O great Snake!
O huge Boar!
O first Cause!
O Thou of tawny locks! Victory to Thee that art Almighty!

O Thou of yellow robes,
O Lord of the cardinal, and the subsidiary points of the compass,
O Thou that hast the universe for Thy abode,
O Thou that art Infinite,
O Thou that hast no decay,
O Thou that art the Manifest,
O Thou that art the Un-manifest,
O Thou that art the immeasurable Space,
O Thou that hast all thy senses under control,
O Thou that always achievest what is good,
O Thou that art immeasurable,
O Thou that alone knowest Thy own nature,
Victory to Thee that art deep,

O Thou that art the giver of all wishes,
O Thou that art without end,
O Thou that art known as the *Brahman*,
O Thou that art Eternal,
O Thou that art the Creator of all creatures,
O Thou that art ever successful,
O Thou whose acts always display wisdom,
O Thou that art conversant with morality,
O Thou that givest victory,
O Thou of mysterious Self,
O Thou that art the Soul of all *Yoga*,
O Thou that art the Cause of everything that hath sprung into existence,
O Thou that art the knowledge of the selves of all beings,
O Lord of the worlds! Victory to Thee that art the creator of all beings!

O Thou that hath Thyself for Thy origin,
O Thou that art highly blessed,
O Thou that art the Destroyer of everything,
O Thou that art the inspirer of all mental thoughts,
Victory to Thee that art dear to all conversant with the *Brahman*!

O Thou that art busy in creation and destruction,
O Controller of all wishes,
O Supreme Lore,
O Thou that art the Cause of *Amrita*,
O Thou that art All-existent,
O Thou that art the first that appears at the end of the *Yuga*,

O Thou that art the giver of victory,
O Divine Lord of the lords of all creatures,
O Thou that hast the lotus springing from thy navel,
O Thou of mighty strength,
O Thou that art sprung from Thyself,
O Thou that art the great elements in their primeval state,
O Thou that art the soul of all (religious) rites,
Victory to Thee that givest all.

The goddess Earth represents Thy two feet, the cardinal and the subsidiary directions Thy arms, and the heavens Thy head. I am Thy form, the celestials constitute Thy limbs, and the Sun and the Moon are Thy two eyes. Ascetic austerities and Truth born of morality and (religious) rites constitute Thy strength. Fire is Thy energy, the wind is Thy breath, and the waters have sprung from Thy sweat. The twins *Aswins* constitute Thy ears, and the goddess *Saraswati* is Thy tongue. The *Vedas* are Thy Knowledge, and upon Thee rests this Universe.

O Lord of *Yoga* and *Yogis*! We do not know Thy extent, Thy measure, Thy energy, Thy prowess, Thy might and Thy origin.

O God! O *Visnu*! Filled with devotion in Thee, and depending upon Thee with vows and observances, we ever worship Thee as the highest Lord, the God of gods. The *Rishis*, the gods, the *Gandharvas*, the *Yakshas*, the *Rakshasas*, the *Pannagas*, the *Pisachas*, human beings, beasts, birds and reptiles were all created by me on earth through Thy grace.

O Thou having the lotus springing from Thy navel,
O Thou of large expansive eyes,
O *Krisna*,
O Dispeller of all woe,
Thou art the Refuge of all creatures, and
Thou art their Guide,
Thou hast the universe for Thy mouth,
Through Thy grace, O Lord of the gods, the gods are ever happy.
Through Thy grace the Earth hath always been freed from terrors.

Therefore, O Thou of large eyes, take birth in the race of *Yadu*. For the sake of establishing righteousness, for slaying the sons of *Diti* and for upholding the universe do what I have said.

O Lord! O *Vasudeva*! That which is Thy supreme mystery, which, O Lord, has been sung by me through Thy grace.

Having created the divine *Sankarshana* out of Thy own Self by Thyself, Thou didst then, O *Krisna*, create Thyself as *Pradyumna* born of Thyself. From *Pradyumna* Thou didst then create *Aniruddha* who is known as the eternal *Visnu*. And it was

Aniruddha who created me as Brahma, the upholder of the Universe. Created out of Vasudeva's Essence, I have, therefore, been created by Thee.

Dividing Thyself into portions, take birth, O Lord, among human beings. And slaughtering the *asuras* there for happiness of all the worlds, and establishing righteousness, and winning renown, Thou wilt again truly attain to *Yoga* (Divinity).

The regenerate *Rishis* on earth and the gods, O Thou of infinite prowess, devoted to Thee, sing of Thy wondrous Self, under those names that belong to Thee.

O Thou of excellent arms! All classes of creatures rest on Thee, having taken refuge in Thee, Thou being the giver of boons. The regenerate ones sing of Thee as the world's bridge, having no beginning, middle and end, and as possessed of unlimited *Yoga*.

Bhishma said:

Then that illustrious Deity, the Lord of the worlds, replied unto Brahma in a soft deep voice, saying:

Through Yoga, O sire, all that is wished by thee is known to me. It will be even as thou wishest.

And saying this, He disappeared then and there.

Then the gods, *Rishis* and the *Gandharvas*, filled with great wonder and curiosity, all asked the Grandsire, saying:

Who is that One, O Lord, that was worshipped by thy illustrious self with such humility, and praised in such high words? We desire to hear.

Thus addressed, the illustrious Grandsire replied unto saying:

He who is called *TAT*,
He who is Supreme,
He who is existent at present and who will be for all time,
He who is the highest Self,
He who is the Soul of beings, and
He who is the great Lord,
I was talking with His ever-cheerful Self, ye bulls among gods.

The Lord of the universe was solicited by me, for the good of the universe, to take His birth among mankind in the family of Vasudeva. I said unto Him, 'for the slaughter of the *asuras*, take Thy birth in the world of men. Those *daityas* and *rakshasas*, of fierce form and great strength that were slain in battle, have been born among men. Indeed, the illustrious and mighty Lore, taking birth in the human womb, will live on the earth,

accompanied by Nara. Those ancient and the best of *Rishis*, that is, Nara and Narayana, when born together in the world of men, will not be known (as such) by fools.

He, from whose Self, I, Brahma, the lord of the whole universe, have sprung, that Vasudeva, that Supreme God of all the worlds, is worthy of your adoration. Endued with great energy, and bearing the conch, the discus and the mace, he should never be disregarded as a man, ye best of deities.

He is the Supreme Mystery, the Supreme Refuge, the Supreme Brahman and the Supreme Glory. He is without decay, Un-manifest, and Eternal. He it is who hath been sung as *Purusa*, though none can comprehend Him. The divine Artificer hath sung of Him as the Supreme Energy, the Supreme Felicity and the Supreme Truth. Therefore, the Lord Vasudeva of immeasurable prowess should never be disregarded as a man, by all the *asuras* and the gods with Indra at their head.

That person of foolish understanding is called a wretch, who, from disregard, speaketh of Hrishikesa as only a man. People speak of Him as one labouring under darkness who disregardeth Vasudeva, that *Yogi* of illustrious Soul, for his entering into a human form. People speak of Him as one labouring under darkness, who knoweth not that Divine personage, that Soul of the mobile and the immobile creation, that One bearing the auspicious wheel (on his breast), that One of dazzling effulgence, that One from whose navel hath sprung the (primeval) lotus.

He, who disregardeth that wearer of the diadem and the *Kaustubha gem*, that dispeller of fears of His friends, that high-souled One, sinketh in this darkness. Having known all these truths duly, that Lord of the worlds, that is, Vasudeva, should be adored by every one, ye the best of gods.

Bhishma continued:

Having said these words unto those gods and *Rishis* in days of yore, the illustrious Grandsire, dismissing them all, repaired to his own abode. And the gods and the *Gandharvas*, and the *munis* and the *apsaras* also, having listened to those words spoken by Brahma, were filled with delight and repaired to heaven. Even this was heard by me, O sire, from *Rishis* of cultured souls, talking in their assembly, of Vasudeva, that ancient One.

O thou that art well-versed in scriptures, I heard this from Rama, the son of Jamadagni, Markandeya of great wisdom, Vyasa and Narada also. Having learnt all this and heard of the illustrious Vasudeva as the Eternal Lord, the Supreme God of all the worlds, and the great Master, from who hath sprung Brahma himself, the Father of the universe, why should not that Vasudeva be adored and worshipped by men?

Forbidden wert thou before, O sire, by sages of cultured souls (who said unto thee) ‘never go to war with that Vasudeva armed with bow, as also with the Pandavas’.

This, from folly, thou couldst not apprehend. I regard thee, therefore, as a wicked *rakshasa*. Thou art, besides, enveloped in darkness.

It is for this, O King, that I say unto thee that this One is Eternal and Unfading, Pervading the whole universe, Unchanging, the Ruler, Creator and Upholder of all, and the truly Existent. He it is who upholdeth the three worlds. He is the Supreme Lord of all mobile and immobile creatures, He is the great Master, He is Warrior, He is Victory, He is Victor, and He is the Lord of all nature. O King, He is full of goodness and divested of all the qualities of darkness and passion.

There, where Krisna is, righteousness is; and there is victory where righteousness is. It is by the *Yoga* of His Supreme Excellence and the *Yoga* of His Self that the sons of Pandu, O King, are supported. Victory, therefore, will surely be theirs.

He it is that always imparteth to the Pandavas the understanding endued with righteousness, and strength in battle; and He it is that always protecteth them from danger. He is the Eternal God, pervading all beings, and ever blessed.

He, of whom thou hadst asked me, is known by the name of Vasudeva. He it is whom *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras*, having distinctive features of their own, humbly serve and worship with restrained hearts, while performing their own duties. He it is who, towards the close of the *Dwapara-yuga* and the beginning of the *Kali -yuga*, is sung of, with Sankarshana, by believers with devotion. It is that Vasudeva that createth *yuga* after *yuga*, the worlds of the gods and the mortals, all cities girt by the sea, and the region of human habitation.

Duryodhana said:

In all the worlds, Vasudeva is spoken of as the Supreme Being. I desire, O grandsire, to know His origin and glory.

Bhishma said:

Vasudeva is the Supreme Being. He is the God of all gods. None superior to him of eyes like lotus-petals is to be seen, O bull of Bharata's race!

Markandeya speaketh of Govinda as the most Wonderful and the most High, as the All-being, as the All-soul, as the Highest soul, and as the Supreme Being. Water, Air and Fire were created by Him. That Divine Master and Lord of all the worlds created this Earth. That Supreme Being of illustrious Soul laid himself down on the waters. And that Divine Being, made up of all kinds of energy, slept thereon in *Yoga*.

From His mouth, He created Fire; and from His breath, the Wind. Of unfading glory, He created from His mouth Speech and the *Vedas*. It is thus that He created first the worlds, and also the gods along with the diverse classes of *Rishis*. And He created decay and death also of all creatures, as well as birth and growth.

He is Righteousness, and of righteous soul. He is the giver of boons and the giver of all (our) wishes. He is the Actor and Action, and He is Himself the Divine Master. He first made the past, the present and the future; He is the Creator of the universe. He is of illustrious Soul; He is the Master possessed of unfading glory.

He created Sankarshana, the first-born of all creatures. He created the divine Sesha who is known as *Ananta* and who upholdeth all creatures and the earth with its mountains. Of Supreme Energy, He it is whom the regenerate ones know by *yoga*-meditation.

Sprung from the secretions of his ear, the great *asura* known by the name Madhu, fierce and of fierce deeds, entertaining a fierce intent and about to destroy Brahma, was slain by that Supreme Being. O sire! In consequence of Madhu's slaughter, the gods, the *danavas*, the human beings and the *Rishis* call Janardana, the slayer of Madhu.

He is the great Boar. He is the great Lion. And He is the three-stepped Lord. He is the mother and the father of all living creatures. There never was, nor be, any superior to Him of eyes like lotus-petals.

From His mouth, He created the *brahmanas*, from His two arms the *kshatriyas*, from His thighs the *vaisyas* and from His feet the *sudras*. One, waiting dutifully on Him, observant of vows with ascetic austerities on days of the full-moon and the new-moon, is sure to obtain the Divine Kesava, that Refuge of all embodied creatures, that Essence of the *Brahman* and of *Yoga*.

Kesava is the higher Energy, the Grandsire of all the worlds. Him, O King, the sages call *Hrishikesa* (the lord of the senses). He, should all know, is the Preceptor, the Father and the Master.

Inexhaustible regions (of blessedness) are won by him with whom Krisna is gratified. He who, in a place of fear, seeketh the protection of Kesava, and he who frequently readeth this description, becometh happy and endued with prosperity. Those men who attain to Krisna are never beguiled. Janardana always saveth those that are sunk in great terrors. Knowing this truly, O Bharata, Yudhishtira, with his whole soul, O King, hath sought the shelter of the highly blessed Kesava, the Lord of Yoga, and the Lord of the Earth.

Bhishma continued:

Hear from me, O King, this hymn that was uttered by Brahma himself. This hymn was, in days of yore, communicated by regenerate *Rishis* and the gods (to men) on earth.

Narada described Him as the Master and the Lord of the God of gods, and all the *Sadhyas* and the celestials, and as one acquainted with the nature of the Creator of the worlds.

Markandeya spoke of Him as the Past, the Present and the Future, the Sacrifice of sacrifices and the Austerity of austerities.

The illustrious Bhrigu said of Him that ‘Thou art the God of the gods, and that Thine is the ancient form of Visnu’.

Dwaipayana said of Him that ‘Thou art Vasudeva of the Vasus, the establisher of Sakra and the God of gods and all creatures’.

In days of yore, on the occasion of procreating creatures, the sages spoke of Him as Daksha, the Father of Creation.

Angiras said that ‘Thou art the Creator of all beings’.

Devala said of Him that the ‘Un-manifest is all Thy body, and the Manifest is in Thy mind, and that the gods are all the result of Thy breath. With Thy head is pervaded the heavens, and Thy two arms support the earth. In Thy stomach are the three worlds, and Thou art the Eternal Being’.

Men exalted by asceticism know Him thus: ‘Thou art the Sat of Sat, with *Rishis* gratified with sight of Self. With royal sages of liberal minds, never retreating from battle, and having morality for their highest end, Thou, O slayer of Madhu, art, the sole refuse’.

Even thus is that illustrious and Supreme Being, Hari, adored and worshipped by Sanatkumara and other ascetics endued with yoga. The truth about Kesava, O sire, is now narrated to thee, both in brief and in detail. Turn thy heart in love to Kesava.

Sanjaya continued:

Hearing this sacred story, thy son, O great King, began to regard highly both Kesava and these mighty car-warriors, that is, the sons of Pandu. Then, O Monarch, Bhishma, the son of Santanu, once more addressed thy son, saying:

Thou hast now heard truly, O King, about the glory of the high-souled Kesava and of Nara, about which thou hadst asked me. Thou hast also heard about the object for which both Nara and Narayana have taken their births among men. Thou hast also been told the reason why those heroes are invincible and have never been vanquished in battle, and why also, O King, the sons of Pandu are incapable of being slain in battle, by anybody.

Krisna beareth great love for the illustrious sons of Pandu. It is for this, O King of kings, that I say, ‘*let peace be made with the Pandavas.*’ Restraining thy passions, enjoy thou the earth with thy mighty brothers (around thee). By disregarding the divine Nara and Narayana, thou shalt certainly be destroyed.

Having said these words, thy sire became silent, O Monarch, and dismissing the King, entered his tent. And the King also came back to his (own) tent, having worshipped the illustrious grandsire. And then, O bull of Bharata's race, he laid himself down on his white bed for passing the night in sleep.

Sanat-Sujata-Gita

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Introduction

The Sanat-Sujata-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between the Rishi Sanat-Sujata and Dhritarashtra, contained in chapters 41 to 46 of Udyoga-Parva of the Mahabharata.

In the world of classical literature, the Mahabharata is unique in many respects. As an epic, it is the greatest in all literatures. It is considered the mightiest single human endeavour of literary creation of any culture in human history. The effort to conceive the mind that conceived it is itself considered great education. It is the stupendous ocean of all-embracing knowledge. It is a wonderful production bench-marking the high state of Indian civilization long before the Christian era.

The Sanat-Sujata-Gita is an exposition of the concept of the Brahman as propounded in the Vedanta in its entirety. It is, like the Bhagavad-Gita, one of the numerous episodes of the Mahabharata. It has had the high distinction of being commented on by Shankara. It purports to be a dialogue between Sanat-Sujata on the one side and Dhritarashtra on the other. Sanat-Sujata, from whom it takes its name, is said to be identical with Sanatkumara frequently related to in the literature of the Upanisads.

The content of the Sanat-Sujata-Gita is a forceful exposition of Monism, of the God-head being One, Indivisible, Immutable, Eternal and All-pervading, attainable only by knowledge of the Self.

The Brahman

Dhritarashtra said:

If there is anything still left unsaid by you, O Vidura, say it then, as I am ready to listen to you. The discourse is, indeed, charming.

Vidura said:

O Dhritarashtra, O you of the Bharata race! That ancient and immortal Rishi Sanat-sujata who, the foremost of all intelligent persons, leading a life of perpetual celibacy, has said that Death does not exist, will clear you of all the doubts in your mind, both expressed and unexpressed.

Rishi Sanat-Sujata is no other than Sanatkumara, according to Shankara. The doubts expressed or unexpressed relate to subjects freely discussed by all, or those that may not.

Dhritarashtra said:

Do you not know what that immortal Rishi will say to me? O Vidura, do you say it, if indeed, you have that degree of wisdom.

Vidura said:

I am born in the *sudra* order and, therefore, do not venture to say more than what I have already said. The understanding, however, of that Rishi, leading a life of celibacy, is regarded by me to be infinite. He, that is a *brahmana* by birth, by discoursing on even the profoundest mysteries, never incurs the censure of the gods. It is for this alone that I do not discourse to you, upon the subject.

The knowledge of the Rishi is infinite in the sense that it is never-failing. Sanatkumara is, incidentally, the teacher of Narada in the famous dialogue in Khandogya-upanisad.

Dhritarashtra said:

Tell me, O Vidura, how with this body of mine, I can meet with that ancient and immortal one?

Then Vidura began to think of that Rishi of rigid vows. And knowing that he was thought of, the Rishi showed himself there. Vidura then received him with the rites prescribed by ordinance. And when, having rested a while, the Rishi was seated at his ease, Vidura addressed him, saying:

O illustrious one! There is a doubt in Dhritarashtra's mind which is incapable of being explained away by me. It behooves you, therefore, to expound it, so that listening to your discourse, this chief of men may tide over all his sorrows. To that extent, he may bear the gain and loss, what is agreeable and what is disagreeable, decrepitude and death, fright and jealousy, hunger and thirst, pride and prosperity, dislike, sleep, lust and wrath, and decrease and increase, with equanimity.

The 'gain and loss' refers to what results from a general dissatisfaction with everything.

Then Dhritarashtra bowed (respected) and questioned Sanat-Sujata in a secluded place (free from the presence of ignorant and vulgar people), desirous of obtaining the highest knowledge of the Self:

O Sanat-Sujata! I hear that you are of the opinion that there is no death. Again it is said that the gods and the *asuras* practise ascetic austerities in order to avoid death. Of these two opinions, then, which is true?

Sanat-Sujata said:

Some say that freedom from death is attainable by particular acts (prescribed in the Vedas). Others opine that there is no death. O Kshatriya! Both have been truths since creation. The learned are of the opinion that death results from ignorance. I say that ignorance is Death. So, the absence of ignorance, that is, knowledge is immortality. It is from ignorance that the *asuras* became subject to defeat and death. It is from the absence of ignorance that the gods have attained to the nature of the Brahman. Death does not devour creatures like a tiger; its form is unascertainable. Besides, some (deluded by worldly objects) imagine Yama to be Death. This is, however, due to the weakness of the mind.

(Shankara suggests that *asuras* (demons) might mean creatures attached to worldly objects and gods might mean those pleased in their own self. The 'defeat and death' of *asuras* is an allegory to the story in the Khandogya-upanishad)

The pursuit of the Brahman or Self-knowledge is immortality. That imaginary god Yama holds his sway in the region of the *Pitris*, being the source of bliss to the virtuous, and of woe to the sinful. It is at his command that death in the form of wrath, ignorance and covetousness occurs among men. Swayed by pride, men always walk in unrighteous path. None amongst them succeeds in attaining to his real nature. The being who pursues desires is destroyed (in pursuing) after the desires. With their understanding clouded, and themselves swayed by their passions, such beings cast off their bodies and repeatedly fall into hell (the cycle of life and death). They are always followed by their senses. It is for this that ignorance receives the name of death.

Those men that desire the fruits of action, when the time comes for enjoying those fruits, proceed to heaven, casting off their bodies. Hence they cannot avoid death.

Embodied creatures, from inability to attain the knowledge of the Brahman and from their connection with earthly enjoyments, are obliged to sojourn in a cycle of re-births, up and down and around. The natural inclination of man towards pursuits that are unreal is alone the cause of the senses being led to error. The soul (mind) that is constantly affected by the pursuit of unreal objects, remembering only that with which it is always engaged, adores only earthly enjoyments that surround it. The desire of enjoyments first kills men. Lust and wrath soon follow behind it. Thus, the desire for enjoyment, lust and wrath lead foolish men to death.

Those that have conquered their souls (minds), however, succeed, by self-restraint, to escape death. He that has conquered his mind conquers the senses, regarding them as of no value, by the aid of self-knowledge. Ignorance, assuming the form of Yama, cannot devour that learned man who controls his desires in this manner. That man who follows his desires is destroyed along with his desires. He that can renounce desires can certainly drive away all kinds of woe.

Desire is, indeed, ignorance and darkness, and hell in respect of all creatures. For, swayed that way, they lose their senses. As intoxicated men walking along a street reel towards ruts and holes, men under the influence of desire, misled by deluding joys, run towards destruction.

What can death do to a person whose soul (mind) has not been misled by desire? To him, death has no terror, like a tiger made of straw.

Therefore, O Kshatriya, if the existence of desire which is ignorance, is to be destroyed, not even the slightest wish is either to be thought of or pursued. That soul, which is in your body, associated as it is with wrath and covetousness, and filled with ignorance, is indeed death. Knowing that death arises in this way, he that relies on knowledge entertains no fear of death. Even as the body is destroyed when brought under the influence of death, death itself is destroyed when it is brought under the influence of knowledge.

Dhritarashtra said:

The Vedas declare the emancipating capacity of those highly sacred and eternal regions obtainable by the regenerate classes of men, by prayers and sacrifices. Knowing this, why should not a learned person have recourse to religious acts?

The question that Dhritarashtra asks is fair and straight. When the *Rishi* has applauded knowledge and its efficacy in procuring emancipation, the King asks, if knowledge is of such efficacy, what then is the value of prayers and sacrifices as ordained in the Veda? The Vedantic Idea of emancipation is not peace or bliss enjoyed by a conscious individual, but freedom from the obligation of re-birth resulting from *karma*. Mere *karma*, as such, implies pain and misery, and the Supreme Soul is without action and attributes. The emancipation that is the subject of this dialogue is freedom from this action (*karma*).

Sanat-Sujata said:

Indeed, he that is without knowledge proceeds thither by the path indicated by you. The *Vedas* also declare that thither are both bliss and emancipation. But he, that regards the material body to be self, if he succeeds in renouncing desire, at once attains emancipation (the Brahman). If, however, one seeks emancipation without renouncing desire, one must have to proceed along the (prescribed) route of action, taking care to destroy the chances of one's retracing routes that one has once passed over.

The *Rishi* answers that *karma* or action does, indeed, lead to the emancipate state. The materialist, by renouncing desire, attains to the state of emancipation. What it means is that, by renouncing desire, both actions and attributes are lost. The state, therefore, of such a soul is one of inaction, or perfect quietude and the absence of attributes which is exactly the nature of the Supreme Soul. If, again, emancipation is sought without extinguishing desire by the aid of prayers and sacrifices, it is to be attained by 'extinguishing path by a path'. It means that the seeker is to proceed along a definite or ordained route, taking care that the route he once passes over is not re-trodden. Action such as prayers and sacrifices, no doubt, leads to regions of bliss and emancipation, but that state is only transitory. For, when the merit is extinguished, and the body falling off, he has to re-commence action. If permanent emancipation is to be attained, the obligation of re-commencing action has to be got rid of. It means that the path once passed over is not re-trodden, and getting rid of the paths which keep one away from the *Brahman*, for emancipation.

Dhritarashtra said:

Who is it that constrains that Unborn and Ancient One (primeval Self)? Is it He all this severally? If, again, it is He that is this entire Universe in consequence of His having entered everything (without desire as He is) what can be His action, or His happiness (very purpose of existence)? O learned sage, tell me all this truly.

The *Rishi* has said that the ordinary soul, by a certain process such as renunciation of desire, attains to the state of the Supreme Soul. But the King infers it *vice versa* and asks: If it is the Supreme Soul that becomes the ordinary soul, who is it that urges the Supreme Soul to become so? And if this entire universe be indeed that Soul, in consequence of the latter pervading and entering into everything, then divested of desire as the Supreme Soul is, where is the possibility of Its action or work being the direct consequence of desire? If it is answered that the universe is the Supreme Soul's sport, then, as every sport is ascribable to some motive of happiness, what can be the happiness of the Supreme Soul, which is supposed to be without desire?

(Shankara explains the dilemma of the King ontologically: Having shown that true death is heedlessness, and having shown that heedlessness in its forms of anger, etc is the cause of all evil, and having also shown further that heaven, etc are really not man's highest goal, the author has only implied the unity of the Supreme Self and the individual self. On that arises a doubt which is stated in the passage.)

Sanat-Sujata said:

There is great objection (to contravening the Vedic texts such as ‘I am the *Brahman*’) in completely identifying (as here) the two that are different. Creatures always spring from the union of conditions (with what in Its Essence is without conditions). This view does not detract from the supremacy of the Unborn and the Ancient one. As for men, they also originate in the union of conditions. All this that appears is nothing but that everlasting Supreme Soul. Indeed, the universe is created by the Supreme Soul itself undergoing transformation. The *Vedas* attribute this power (of self-transformation) to the Supreme Soul. For the identity, again, of the power and its possessor, both the *Vedas* and others are the authority.

The *Rishi* explains that the ordinary soul and the Supreme Soul are not identical. As such, their identity cannot be admitted. As regards embodied beings, they flow continually from the union of the Supreme Soul with the conditions of space, time, etc. While the Supreme Soul is totally Unconditioned, there is this much of identity between the Supreme Soul and the ordinary soul in that the embodied beings arise and perish and arise, continually because of the union between the Supreme Soul and the conditions resulting in their creation. In consequence of this activity, the superiority of the Supreme Soul is not lost. The favourite analogy for explaining the connection of the Supreme Soul with the universe is derived from the connection of space absolute and unconditioned, and space as confined by the limits of a vessel. The latter has a name, is moved when the vessel is moved, and is limited in space. On the other hand, the space of which the vessel’s space is only a part is absolute and unconditioned, immovable and unlimited.

(Shankara says: The question of Dhritarashtra having suggested a difference between two principles one of which constrains, and the other of which is constrained, the answer is ‘such a difference ought not to be alleged, as it involves *danger* (objection)’. Then the question arises, ‘how is the difference, which does appear, to be explained’. The reply is, ‘it is due to the beginning-less principle—delusion or ignorance’. The next sentence shows that the universe as it appears is also a result of delusion.)

Dhritarashtra said:

In this world, some practise virtue, and some renounce action or *karma* (adopting what is called *sannyasa Yoga*). (In respect of those that practise virtue) I ask, is virtue competent to destroy vice, or is it itself destroyed by vice?

Sanat-Sujata said:

The fruits of virtue and of (perfect) inaction are both serviceable for procuring emancipation. Indeed, both are sure means for the attainment of emancipation. The man that is wise achieves success by knowledge (inaction). On the other hand, the materialist acquires merit (by action) and (as the consequence thereof) emancipation. He has also (in course of his pursuit) to incur sin. Having obtained again fruits of both virtue and

vice which are transitory (heaven having its end, as also hell in respect of the virtuous and the sinful), the man of action becomes once more addicted to action as the consequence of his own previous virtues and vices. The man of action, however, who possesses intelligence, destroys his sins by his virtuous acts. Virtue, therefore, is strong, and hence the success of the man of action.

Dhritarashtra said:

Tell me, according to their gradation, of those eternal regions that are said to be attainable, as the fruits of their own virtuous acts, by regenerate persons, engaged in the practice of virtue. Speak to me of others' regions also of a similar kind. O learned sire! I do not wish to hear of actions (towards which man's heart naturally inclines, however interdicted or sinful they may be).

Sanat-Sujata said:

Those regenerate persons that take pride in their *yoga* practices, like strong men in their own strength, departing hence, become glorious in heaven. Those regenerate persons that proudly exert in performing sacrifices and other *Vedic* rites, as the fruit of that knowledge which is theirs, in consequence of those acts, freed from this world, proceed to that region which is the abode of the deities (which is free from the three-fold source of pain, namely, physical, mental and such as is caused by super-human agency). There are others, again, conversant with the *Vedas*, who are of the opinion that the performance of the sacrifices and rites (ordained by the *Vedas*) is obligatory (their non-performance being sinful).

Wedded to external forms, though seeking the development of the inner self (for they practise these rites for only virtue's sake, and not for the accomplishment of particular aims), these persons should not be regarded very highly (although some respect should be theirs).

Wherever, again, food and drink worthy of a *brahmana* are abundant, like grass and reeds in a place during the rainy season, there should the *yogi* seek his livelihood (without afflicting the householder of scanty means). By no means should he afflict his own self by hunger and thirst. In a place, where there may be both inconvenience and danger to one to disclose one's superiority, he that does not proclaim his superiority is better than he that does. The food offered by that person who is not pained at the sight of another disclosing his superiority, and who never eats without offering the prescribed share to *brahmanas* and guests is approved by the righteous. As a dog oftentimes devours its own evacuations to its injury, so those *Yogis* devour their own vomits, who procure their livelihood by disclosing their pre-eminence.

The wise know him for a *brahmana*, who, living in the midst of kindred, wishes his religious practices to remain always unknown to them. What else a *brahmana* deserves to know other than the Supreme Soul, that is unconditioned, without attributes, unchangeable, one and alone, and without duality of any kind?

In consequence of such practices, a Kshatriya can know the Supreme Soul and behold it in his own soul. He that regards the soul to be the acting and feeling self is like the thief who robs the soul of its attributes.

A *brahmana* should be without exertion, should never accept gifts, should win the respect of the righteous, should be quiet, and, though conversant with the *Vedas*, should seem to be otherwise, for then only may he attain to knowledge and know the Brahman. They that are poor in earthly but rich in heavenly wealth and sacrifices, become unconquerable and fearless, and they should be regarded as embodiments of the Brahman.

That person, even in this world, who (by performing sacrifices) succeeds in meeting with the gods that bestow all kinds of desirable objects (on performers of sacrifices), is not equal to him that knows the Brahman, for the performer of sacrifices has to undergo exertions (while he that knows the Brahman attains to Him without such exertions). He is said to be really honoured, who, destitute of actions, is honoured by the deities. He should never regard himself as honoured who is honoured by others. One should not, therefore, grieve when one is not honoured by others.

People act according to their nature just as they open and shut their eyelids; and it is only the learned that pay respect to others. The man that is respected should think so. They that are foolish, apt to sin and adept in deceit never pay respect to those that are worthy or respect. On the other hand, they always show disrespect to such persons.

The world's esteem and asceticism (practices of *mauna*) can never exist together. Know that this world is for those that are candidates for esteem, while the other world is for those that are devoted to asceticism. Here, in this world, O Kshatriya, happiness (the world's esteem) resides in worldly prosperity. The latter, however, is an impediment (to heavenly bliss). Heavenly prosperity, on the other hand, is unattainable by one that is without true wisdom.

The righteous say that there are various kinds of gates, all difficult of being guarded, for gaining access to heavenly bliss. These are truth, uprightness, modesty, self-control, purity of mind and conduct, and knowledge (of the *Vedas*). These six are destructive of vanity and ignorance.

Dhritarashtra said:

What is the object of asceticism (*mauna*)? Of the two kinds of *mauna* (that is, the restraining of speech and meditation), which is approved by you? O learned one! Tell me the true aspect of *mauna*. Can a person of learning attain to a state of quietude and emancipation (*moksha*) by that *mauna*? O *Muni*! How is asceticism (*mauna*) to be practised here?

(Shankara says of *mauna* as the fruit of the destruction of the consciousness of anything other than the self. This is clarified as ‘the conviction in the mind that one is the self—the Supreme Brahman—and that there is nothing else existing but oneself’.)

Sanat-Sujata said:

Since the Supreme Soul cannot be penetrated by both the Vedas and the mind, it is for this that the Soul itself is called *mauna*. That from which both the *Vedic* syllable *Aum* and this one (ordinary sounds) have arisen, that One, O King, is displayed as the Word.

(Shankara takes the whole expression to mean *Jyothirmaya*, consisting of light (effulgence). Neelakantha considers this to be the substance of the answer to the questions being that the use of taciturnity (*mauna*) is to attain the seat which is not to be grasped even by the mind, and that taciturnity includes both restraint of mind and of the external senses. By means of such restraint, the external and internal worlds cease to be perceived as existing, and the highest goal is attained.)

Dhritarashtra said:

Is he that knows both the *Rig* and the *Yajur Vedas*, or is he that knows the *Sama Veda*, sullied by sins or not, when he commits sins?

This question is naturally an off-shoot of the preceding observation by Sanat-sujata which, in effect, is that the Vedas cannot grasp the Brahman fully, but they are of use towards a rudimentary comprehension thereof.

Sanat-Sujata said:

I tell you truly that the man that has not restrained his senses is not rescued from his sinful acts by either the *Sama* or the *Rig*, or the *Yajur Veda*. The *Vedas* never rescue from sin the deceitful person, living by deceit. On the other hand, like new fledged birds forsaking their nest, the *Vedas* forsake such a person at the end.

Dhritarashtra said:

O you that has restrained your senses! If, indeed, the *Vedas* are not competent to rescue a person without the aid of virtue, why then is this delusion of the *brahmanas*, that the Vedas are always destructive of sins?

Sanat-Sujata said:

O magnanimous one! This universe has sprung from that Supreme Soul by the union of conditions respecting name, form and other attributes. The *Vedas* also, pointing it out duly, declare that the Supreme Soul and the universe are different, and not wholly identical. It is for attaining to that Supreme Soul that asceticism and sacrifices are

ordained, and it is by these two that the man of learning earns virtue. Destroying sin by virtue, his soul is enlightened by knowledge.

The man of knowledge, by the aid of knowledge, attains to the Supreme Soul. Otherwise, he that is covetous of the four objects of human pursuit, taking with him all that he does here, enjoys their fruits hereafter, and (as those fruits) are not everlasting, comes back to the region of action (when the enjoyment is over).

Indeed, the fruits of ascetic austerities performed in this world have to be enjoyed in the other world (as regards those persons who have not obtained mastery of their souls). As regards those *brahmanas* employed in ascetic practices (who have the mastery of their souls), even these regions are capable of yielding fruits.

Dhritarashtra said:

O Sanat-Sujata! How can ascetic austerities which are all of the same kind be sometimes successful and sometimes unsuccessful? Tell me this in order that I may know it!

Sanat-Sujata said:

Asceticism (*tapas*) which is not stained by (desire and other) faults is said to be capable of procuring emancipation, and is, therefore, successful, while asceticism stained by vanity and want of true devotion is regarded unsuccessful. All your enquiries, O Kshatriya, touch the very root of asceticism. It is by asceticism that they, that are learned, know the Brahman and win immortality.

Dhritarashtra said:

I have listened to what you have said about asceticism unstained by faults, and by which I have succeeded in knowing an eternal mystery. Tell me now, O Sanat-sujata, about asceticism that is stained by faults!

Sanat-Sujata said:

O King! The twelve, including anger, as also the thirteen kinds of wickedness are the faults of asceticism that is stained. Anger, lust, avarice, ignorance of right and wrong, discontent, cruelty, malice, vanity, grief, love of pleasure, envy and speaking ill of others are generally the faults of human beings. These twelve should always be avoided by men. Any one amongst these can singly effect the destruction of men.

O Bull among men! Indeed, every one of these waits for an opportunity in respect of men, like a hunter expectant of opportunities in respect of deer.

Assertion of one's own superiority, desire of enjoying others' wives, humiliating others from excess of pride, wrathfulness, fickleness and refusing to maintain those

worthy of being maintained--these six acts of wickedness are always practised by sinful men defying all dangers here and hereafter.

He that regards the gratification of lust to be one of life's aims, he that is exceedingly proud, he that grieves having given away, he that never spends money, he that persecutes his subjects by exacting hateful taxes, he that delights in the humiliation of others and he that hates his own wives--these seven categories of men are also called wicked.

Righteousness, truth (abstention from injury and truthfulness of speech), self-restraint, asceticism, delight in the happiness of others, modesty, forbearance, love of others, sacrifices, gifts, perseverance, knowledge of the scriptures--these twelve virtues constitute the practices of *brahmanas*. He that succeeds in acquiring these twelve virtues becomes competent to sway the entire earth. He that is endued with three, two or even one of these should be regarded of heavenly prosperity. Self-restraint, renunciation and knowledge of the Self lead to emancipation. Those *brahmanas* that are endued with wisdom say that these are the attributes in which truth predominates.

Self-restraint has eighteen defects; if (any one of them) is committed, it is an obstacle (to self-restraint). They are stated thus: Untruthfulness, backbiting, thirst (for objects of sense), antipathy (to all beings), darkness (ignorance), repining (discontent even when one obtains much), hatred of people, haughtiness, quarrelsomeness, injuring living creatures, reviling others, garrulity, vexation (of oneself by brooding, or thinking ill of others without cause), want of endurance, want of courage (restraint of senses in the presence of their objects), imperfection (of piety, knowledge and indifference to worldly objects), sinful conduct and slaughter. These eighteen faults constitute what is called *mada* or pride.

Renunciation is of six kinds. The contraries of these six again are faults, called *mada*. (The faults, therefore, that go by the name of *mada* are eighteen and six). The six kinds of renunciation are all commendable. The third one is difficult of practice, but by that all sorrow is overcome. Indeed, if that kind of renunciation be accomplished in practice, he that accomplishes it overcomes all the pairs of opposites in the world.

The six kinds of renunciation are all commendable. They are these: The first is never experiencing joy on occasions of prosperity. The second is the offering of gifts at Vedic ceremonies and at ceremonies as laid down in the *smritis*. (This is also interpreted as offerings to gods, offerings to the manes, or sacrifices, etc and works of charity such as digging of wells and tanks).

That which is called the third, O King, is the abandonment of desire or withdrawing from the world. Indeed, it is in consequence of this third kind of renunciation of desire, which is evidenced by the abandonment of all objects of enjoyment (without enjoying them). It is not their abandonment neither after acquisition, nor by abandonment only after one has become incompetent to enjoy from loss of appetite.

The fourth kind of renunciation consists in this: One should not grieve, nor suffer his self to be afflicted by grief when one's actions fail, notwithstanding one's possession of all the virtues and all kinds of wealth. Or, when anything disagreeable happens, one shall not feel any pain.

The fifth kind of renunciation consists in not soliciting even one's sons, wives, and others that may all be very dear. The sixth kind consists in giving away to a deserving person who solicits, which act of gifting is always productive of merit.

By these acts, again, one acquires the knowledge of the Self. As regards this last attribute, it involves eight qualities. These are truthfulness, meditation (concentration), distinction of subject and object (absorbed contemplation), capacity for drawing inferences (reflection), withdrawal from the world (indifference to worldly objects), never taking what belongs to others (not stealing), the practices of *brahmacharya* vows (abstinence) and non-acceptance (of gifts).

So also the attribute of *mada* (the opposite of *dama* or self-restraint) has faults which have all been indicated (in the scriptures). These faults should be avoided. I have spoken (to you) of renunciation and self-knowledge. And, as self-Knowledge has eight virtues, so the want of it has eight faults. Those faults should be avoided.

O Bharata! He that is liberated from the five senses (the five classes of sensuous objects), mind, and also from (thoughts regarding) the past and the future becomes happy. O King! Let your soul be devoted to truth; all the worlds are established on truth; indeed, self-control, renunciation and self-knowledge are said to have truth for their foremost attribute. Avoiding (these) faults, one should practise asceticism here.

The Ordainer has ordained that truth alone should be the vow of the righteous. Asceticism that is dissociated from these faults and endued with these virtues becomes the source of great prosperity. I have now briefly told you about that sin-destroying and sacred subject which you had asked me, and which is capable of liberating a person from birth, death and decrepitude.

Dhritarashtra said:

With *Akhyana* (*Puranas*) as their fifth, the *Vedas* declare the Supreme Soul to be this universe consisting of mobile and immobile things. Others regard four God-heads; and others three; others again regard two; and others only one; and others regard the Brahman alone as the sole existent object (there being nothing else possessing separate existence). Amongst these, which should I know to be really possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman?

Sanat-Sujata said:

There is but one Brahman which is Truth's self. It is from ignorance of that One, that god-heads have been conceived to be diverse. But who is there, O King, that has attained to Truth's self or the Brahman?

Man regards himself wise without knowing that One Object of knowledge and, from desire of happiness, is engaged in study and the practices of charity and sacrifices. Men have deviated from Truth (the Brahman) and entertain purposes corresponding (with their state) and, relying on the truth of Vedic texts thereof, perform sacrifices. Some perform (or attain the object of) sacrifices by the mind (meditation), some by works (recitation of particular prayers or *Japa*) and some by acts (actual consummation of the *Jatishroma* and other costly rites). The person, however, who seeks the Brahman through Truth, obtains his desired object even at home.

When, however, one's purposes become abortive (through absence of knowledge of the Self), one should adopt vows of silence, and such-like called *Dikshavrata*. (Indeed, the word *Diksha* comes from the root *Diksha*, meaning the observance of vows.) As for those that have knowledge of the Self, Truth is the highest object of pursuit.

The fruits of knowledge are visible; asceticism yields fruits hereafter. A *brahmana* who (without knowledge and asceticism) has only read much, should only be known as a great reader. Therefore, O Kshatriya, never think that one can be a *brahmana* (Brahman-knowing) by only reading the scriptures. He who does not deviate from Truth, on the other hand, should be known to be possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman.

O Kshatriya! The verses that were recited by Atharvan to a conclave of great sages, in days of old, are known by the name of *Chhandas*. They are not to be regarded as acquainted with the *Chhandas*, who have only read through the *Vedas*, without having attained to the knowledge of Him who is known through the *Vedas*.

The *Chhandas*, O best of men, become the means of attaining the Brahman independently and without the necessity of anything foreign. They cannot be regarded as acquainted with the *Chhandas*, who are acquainted only with the modes of sacrifice enjoined in the *Vedas*. On the other hand, having waited upon those that are acquainted with the *Vedas*, have not the righteous attained to the Object that is knowable by the *Vedas*? There is none who has truly caught the sense of the *Vedas*, or there may be very few who have, O King, caught the sense. He that has only read the *Vedas* does not know the Object knowable by them. He that is, however, established in Truth, knows the Object knowable by the *Vedas*.

Amongst those faculties which lead to perception of the body as the acting agent, there is none by which true Knowledge may be acquired. By the mind alone one cannot acquire the knowledge of the Self and Not-Self. Indeed, he that knows the Self also knows what is Not-self. On the other hand, he that knows only what is Not-self, does not know Truth. Again, he that knows the 'proofs' knows also that which is sought to be

proved. But what that Object in its nature is (which is sought to be proved) is not known to either the *Vedas* or those that are acquainted with the *Vedas*.

For all that, however, those *brahmanas* that are (truly) acquainted with the *Vedas* succeed in obtaining knowledge of the Object knowable (by) through the *Vedas*. As the small digit of the moon, which cannot be perceived by itself, is pointed out as being at the tip of a branch of a tree pointing towards the moon, so the *Vedas* are of use as pointing towards the Brahman, though inaccurately and imperfectly. (This is called *sakhakandranaya*).

Know him to be a *brahmana* (possessing knowledge of the Brahman) who clears the doubts of others, having himself mastered all his own doubts, and who is possessed of the knowledge of the Self.

One cannot find what the Soul is by seeking in the East, the South, the West, the North, or in the subsidiary directions or horizontally. Very rarely can It be found in him who regards this body to be the Self. Beyond the conception of even the *Vedas*, the man of *Yoga*-meditation alone can behold the Supreme Self. Completely restraining all your senses and mind, you see that the Brahman resides in your own soul.

He is not *Muni* who lives only in the woods (having retired from the world). He is, however, a *Muni*, who knows his true nature, and is self-restrained. In consequence of one's being able to expand (analyse) every object (*Vyakarana*), one is said to be endued with the highest knowledge (*Vaiyakarana*); and, indeed, the science itself is called *Vyakarana* owing to its being able to expound every object to its very root (which is the Brahman).

Max Muller explains in other words thus: In the science of the Soul, the analyzer is he who analyses objects, not words merely. As the true analysis of objects reduces them all to the *Brahman*, and as the sage understands this and makes the analysis accordingly, so he is rightly called an analyzer.

The man who beholds directly all the regions as present before his eyes is said to be possessed of omniscience (universal knowledge). (This may mean that a man may perceive all material things such as the worlds. But to be really omniscient, he must have knowledge of the Truth, the Brahman.)

He that stays in Truth and knows the Brahman is said to be *brahmana*, and a *brahmana* possesses omniscience (universal knowledge). A *Kshatriya* that practises such virtues may also behold the Brahman. He may also attain to that high state by ascending step by step, according to what is indicated in the *Vedas*. Knowing it for certain, I tell you this.

Dhritarashtra said:

Excellent, O Sanat-Sujata, as this your discourse is, treating of the attainment of the *Brahman* and the origin of the universe! I pray to you, O celebrated *Rishi*, to go on telling me words such as these that are unconnected with the objects of worldly desire and are, therefore, rare among men.

Sanat-Sujata said:

That Brahman about which you asked me with such joy is not to be attained easily. After (the senses have been restrained and) the mind (withdrawn from worldly objects) has been merged in the pure intellect, the state that succeeds is one of utter absence of worldly thought. Even that is knowledge (leading to the attainment of the Brahman). It is attainable only by those that have been brought up under preceptors (in the state of *brahmacharya*).

Dhritarashtra said:

You say that the knowledge of the Brahman dwells of itself in the mind (soul), being discovered only in *brahmacharya*; that is, dwelling in the mind, it requires for its manifestation no efforts (such as are necessary for work) during the seeking (by means of *brahmacharya*). How then is the immortality associated with the attainment of the Brahman?

Sanat-Sujata said:

Though residing in and inherent to the mind (soul), the knowledge of the Brahman is still *un-manifest*. It is by the aid of the pure intellect and *brahmacharya* that *that* knowledge is made manifest. Indeed having attained to that knowledge, *Yogis* forsake this world. It is always to be found among eminent preceptors.

Dhritarashtra said:

What should be the nature of that *brahmacharya* by which the knowledge of the Brahman might be attained without much difficulty? O regenerate one! Tell me this.

Sanat-Sujata said:

They who, residing in the abodes of their preceptors and winning their good will and friendship, practise *brahmacharya* austerities and become, even in this world, the embodiments of the Brahman. When they cast off their bodies, they are united with the Supreme Soul.

They that, in this world, desirous of obtaining the state of the Brahman, subdue all desires, and endued as they are with righteousness, succeed in dissociating the soul from the body like a blade projected from a clump of heath.

The body, O Bharata, is created by the father and the mother. The new birth, however, that is due to the preceptor's instruction is sacred, free from decrepitude, and immortal. (The consciousness of being one with the Brahman is the new birth. That birth is not merely delusive, and does not result in death).

He who discourses upon the Brahman and grants immortality, and he who wraps all persons with the mantle of truth should be regarded as father and mother. Bearing in mind the good he does, he should never be done any injury. (Immortality or final emancipation is not to be achieved without knowledge, which can only be got from a preceptor. And one is not perfect without that immortality; one is limited by the conditions of human existence.)

A disciple must habitually pay obeisance to his preceptor with respect, purity of body and mind and well-directed attention. (The necessity of having a *guru* is often insisted even in the Upanisads). He must take to study seriously under his guidance. He must not consider any service as mean. He must not harbour any anger. This is indeed the first step of *brahmacharya*. The practices of that disciple who acquires knowledge by observing the duties ordained for one of his class (category) are also regarded as the first step of *brahmacharya*.

A disciple should, with his very life and all his possessions, in thought, word and deed do all that is agreeable to the preceptor. This is regarded as the second step of *brahmacharya*. He should behave towards the wife and the son of his preceptor in the same way as he does towards him. This is part of the second step itself.

Bearing in mind what the preceptor has done to him and understanding what has been taught, the disciple should think, with a delighted heart, that 'I have been taught and made great by him'. This is the third step of *brahmacharya*.

A wise disciple shall not move to the next stage of life without making an appropriate gift to his preceptor. At the same time, he shall not say or even think in his mind, 'I make this gift'. This is the fourth step of *brahmacharya*.

A disciple, thus, attains a quarter of knowledge of the *Brahman*, the object of *brahmacharya*, by aid of time, the second quarter through the preceptor's protections, the third by the power of his own understanding, and the fourth by discussion.

The learned have said that *brahmacharya* is constituted by twelve virtues, namely, knowledge, truth, self-restraint, sacred learning, freedom from animosity towards living beings, modesty, endurance, freedom from censoriousness, sacrifice, gift, courage and quiescence. The *yoga*-practices are its *angas*; perseverance in *yoga*-meditation is its strength. A disciple is crowned with success in *brahmacharya*, in consequence of the preceptor's aid and the understanding of the sense (core) of the *Veda*.

Whatever wealth a disciple, thus engaged, may earn should all be given to the preceptor. It is thus the preceptor obtains his highly praise-worthy livelihood. The disciple should similarly behave towards the son of the preceptor.

Thus stationed in *brahmacharya*, the disciple thrives by all means in this world, and obtains numerous progeny and fame. Men of all walks of life shower wealth on him. Many people may go to his abode for practising *brahmacharya*.

It is through *brahmacharya* of this kind that the celestials attained to their divinity, and the sages, highly blessed and of great wisdom, have attained to the region of the *Brahman*. It is by this that the *Gandharvas* and the *Apsaras* acquired such personal beauty. It is through *brahmacharya* that the Sun rises to make the day. All those that practise it derive great happiness in consequence of being able to have whatever they desire.

He, O King, who devotes to the practice of ascetic austerities, betakes himself to *brahmacharya* in its entirety and thereby purifies his body. He is truly wise. For, by this way, he becomes child-like, free from all evil passions and triumphs over death at last.

O Kshatriya! Men, however pure, obtain, by work, only worlds that are perishable. He that is blessed with Knowledge attains, by the aid of that Knowledge, to the everlasting Brahman. There is no way other than Knowledge leading to emancipation.

Dhritarashtra said:

The existence of the Brahman, you say, a wise man perceives in his own soul. Now, is the Brahman white, red, black, blue or purple? Tell me what is the true form and colour of the Omnipresent and Eternal Brahman?

Sanat-Sujata said:

Indeed, the Brahman, as perceived, may appear as white, red, black, brown or bright. But neither on the earth, nor in the sky, nor in the water of the ocean is there anything like IT. ('Water' is said by some commentators to mean the five elements of which the body is composed. In the *Svetasvatara-Upanisad*, it signifies mind. Ocean, as such, means world or samsara).

Neither in the stars, nor in lightning, nor in the clouds, is It's form to be seen. Nor is It visible in the atmosphere, nor in the deities, nor in the moon, nor in the sun. Neither in the *riks*, nor among the *yajus*, nor among the *atharvans*, nor in the pure *samans*, is It to be found. O King! Verily, It is not to be found in *Rathantara* or *Brihadratha* (Brihat-saman), or in great sacrifices.

Incapable of being compassed and lying beyond the reach of the limited intellect, even the universal Destroyer, after the dissolution, is himself lost in It. Incapable of being gazed at, It is subtle as edge of the razor, while being grosser than mountains.

It is the basis upon which everything is founded. It is unchangeable. It is this visible universe. It is vast and It is delightful. Creatures have all sprung from It and are to return to It. Free from all kinds of duality, It is manifest as the universe and all-pervading. Men of learning say that It is without any change, except in the language used to describe It. They are emancipated that are acquainted with *That* in which this universe is established.

Sanat-Sujata continued:

Sorrow, anger, covetousness, lust, ignorance, laziness, malice, self-importance, continuous desire of gain, affection, jealousy and evil speech, O Monarch, are grave faults that are destructive of men's lives. Each of these waits for opportunities to seize mankind. Afflicted by them, men lose their senses and commit sinful acts. He that is covetous, he that is fierce, he that is harsh of speech, he that is garrulous, he that is given to nursing anger, and he that is boastful are of wicked disposition. On obtaining wealth, they cannot treat others with courtesy.

He that regards sensual gratification as the end of life, he that is self-conceited, he that boasts having made a gift, he that never spends, he that is weak in mind, he that is given to self-admiration, and he that hates his own wife are counted as wicked men of sinful habits.

Righteousness, truth, asceticism, self-restraint, contentment, modesty, renunciation, love of others, gift, acquaintance with the scriptures, patience and forgiveness are the twelve practices of a *brahmana*. He that does not fall off from these twelve may sway the entire earth. He that is endued with three, or two, or even one of these does never regard anything as his own to the exclusion of others.

Self-restraint, renunciation and knowledge lead to emancipation. These are the attributes of *brahmanas*, endued with wisdom and regarding the Brahman as the highest of all *objects of attainment*. True or false, it is not laudable for a *brahmana* to speak ill of others; they that do this have hell for their abode.

Mada has eighteen faults which have not yet been enumerated by me. They are ill-will towards others, throwing obstacles in the way of virtuous acts, detraction, falsehood in speech, lust, anger, dependence, speaking ill of others, finding out the faults of others for report, waste of wealth, quarrel, insolence, cruelty to living creatures, malice, ignorance, disregard of those that are worthy of regard, loss of the senses of right and wrong, and always seeking to injure others. A wise man, therefore, should not give way to *mada*, for the accompaniments of *mada* are censurable.

Friendship is said to possess six indications; first, friends delight in the prosperity of friends, and, second, are distressed at their adversity. Third, if anyone asks for anything which is dear to his heart, but should not be asked for, a true friend surely gives away even that. Fourth, a true friend who is of a righteous disposition, when asked, can give away his very prosperity, his beloved sons, and even his own wife. Fifth, a friend should not dwell in the house of a friend, on whom he may have bestowed everything, but should enjoy what he earns himself. Sixth, a friend stops not to sacrifice his own good (for his friend).

The man of wealth who seeks to acquire those good qualities, and who becomes charitable and righteous, restrains his five senses from their respective objects. Such restraint of the senses is asceticism. When it grows in degree, it is capable of winning regions of bliss hereafter (unlike Knowledge which leads to attainment even here).

They that have fallen off from patience (and are incapable, therefore, of attaining to Knowledge) acquire such asceticism in consequence of the purpose they entertain, that is, the attainment of bliss in the high regions hereafter. In consequence of his ability to grasp that Truth (the Brahman) from which sacrifices flow, the *Yogi* is capable of performing sacrifices by the mind. Another performs sacrifices by words (*Japa*), and another by work.

Truth (the Brahman) resides in him who knows the Brahman as vested with attributes. IT dwells more completely in him who knows the Brahman as divested of attributes.

Listen now to something else from me! This high and celebrated philosophy should be taught (to disciples). All other systems are only a farrago of words.

The whole of this (universe) is established in this *Yoga*-philosophy. They that are acquainted with it are not subjected to death. O King! One cannot, by work, however well-accomplished, attain to Truth (the Brahman). The man that is destitute of Knowledge, even if he pours *homa* libations or performs sacrifices, can never, by work, attain to immortality (emancipation). Nor does he enjoy great happiness at the end. (For, he has got to undergo migration from one life to another as the result of the action).

Restraining all the external senses, and alone, one should seek the Brahman. Giving up work, one should not exert mentally. One should also (while thus engaged) avoid experiencing joy at praise, or anger at blame.

O Kshatriya! By conducting oneself in this way, according to the successive steps indicated in the *Vedas*, one may, even here, attain to the Brahman. This, O learned one, is all that I tell you.

(This discourse is, for the most part, a repetition of what has earlier been said. But Shankara makes a general statement of the object of this discourse, and what follows next, thus: The course of study of the science of the Brahman, in which knowledge is be

principal thing, and concentration of mind, etc are subsidiary, has been described. Now is described the course of study in which concentration of mind is principal, and knowledge subsidiary. The first mode consists in understanding the meaning of the word 'You' by means of concentration of mind, and then identifying it with the Brahman by means of a study of the Upanisads; the second, in first intellectually understanding the identity of the individual self and the Brahman, by such study of the Upanisads, and then realizing the identity to consciousness by contemplation, etc. In both modes, the fruit is the same and the means are the same; and to show this, the merits and defects, already stated, are here again re-iterated.)

Sanat-Sujata continued:

The primary (pure) Seed (of the universe), called *Mahayasas*, is destitute of accidents, is pure (free from ignorance and other traits) Knowledge, and blazes with effulgence. It leads the senses, and it is in consequence of that Seed that *Surya* (the sun) shines.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). It is in consequence of that Seed (which is Joy's self) that the Brahman becomes capable of creation and it is through it that the Brahman increases in expansion. It is that Seed which entering into luminous bodies gives light and heat. Without deriving its light and heat from any other thing, it is self-luminous, and is an object of terror to all luminous bodies.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The body composed of the five gross elements, that are themselves sprung from the five subtler ones is upheld (realized) in consciousness by both the individual creature (endued with life) and the Soul (*Iswara*). (These two, during sleep and the universal dissolution, are deprived of consciousness). The Brahman, on the other hand, never bereft of consciousness, upholds both these two, and also the earth and the heaven.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The perfect is raised out of the Perfect. It (being raised) out of the Perfect is called the Perfect. The perfect is withdrawn from the Perfect, and the Perfect alone remains.

What is meant is that the individual self is part of the Supreme Self. What is considered Perfect is what is not limited by space, time, etc. As being part of the Perfect in its Essence, the individual soul is also perfect. When the individual self is withdrawn from the whole aggregate of the body, senses, etc presided over by the self, it still appears to be the pure Self only.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The Seed upholds the two gods, the earth and the heaven, the directions and the whole universe. It is from that Seed those directions (points of the compass) and waters spring. Even the vast seas have derived their origin from it.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The body is like a car destined to destruction. Its acts, however, are undying. (The body is perishable, but action done by the self while in the body leaves its effect, in the form of *samskaras*.) Tied to the wheels of that car (which are represented by the acts of past lives), the senses, as steeds, lead, through the region of consciousness.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The form of that One cannot be displayed by any comparison. None ever beholds Him by the eye. They, who know Him by knowledge and by the faculties such as the mind and the heart, become immortal (a direct consciousness in self of its unity or identity with the Supreme Self).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The stream of illusion is terrible. Guarded by the gods, it has twelve collections. (The twelve collections relate to the five organs of action, the five senses of perception, the mind and the understanding). Drinking of its waters and beholding many sweet things (fruits of action) in its midst, men swim along to and fro. This stream flows from that Seed.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Destined to sojourn to and fro, the creature-soul, having reflected, enjoys (in the other world) only part of the fruits of its acts. It is *Iswara* pervading everything in the universe that has ordained sacrifices.

(Shankara explains the concept thus: There may be a difficulty to understand if action performed here is to have part of its fruit in the next world (life), as the fruit is far removed in time from the action. The answer is, ‘the Lord, the Supreme Being, can effect this; and taking His existence into account, there is no more difficulty. The Lord has arranged things so that each being receives part of this food in the next world (life), which is the fruit of its own action’. Then the question arises, ‘do these beings always continue taking the honey (fruits of action) and migrating (from life to life), or are they ever released? The answer is, ‘those, verily, who have knowledge are possessed of wings, those who are not possessed of knowledge are devoid of wings’.) (Those possessed of knowledge get released from the cycle of life and death.)

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Souls divested of knowledge, coming to the Aswatha of golden leaves (for beneficial and pleasant experiences, and possessions such as wife, son, etc, attractive at first sight), there become possessed of wings (possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman), and fly away happily (obtaining final emancipation). (The ‘selves’ are compared to birds in the famous passage in *Mundaka-Upanisad*.)

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). It is from that Seed that both the consumer and the consumed (called *Agni* and *Soma*) have sprung, and it is in it that the living organisms with the senses rest. Everything should be regarded to have sprung from it. That Seed called in the *Vedas TAT*, we are unable to describe.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The vital air called *Apana* is swallowed up by the air called *Prana*; *Prana* is swallowed up by the Moon, the Moon by the Sun, and the Sun by the Supreme Soul.

(According to Shankara, the author here explains the Yoga by which the Supreme Self is to be attained. The Moon means the mind, the Sun the understanding, as they are the respective deities of those organs. One swallowing the other ultimately results in one remaining in the condition of being identified with the Brahman.)

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The Supreme Soul, endued with four legs (states), called respectively Waking, Dream, Deep Sleep and *Turiya*, like unto a swan, treading above the unfathomable ocean of worldly affairs, does not put forth one leg that is hidden deep. Unto him that beholds that leg (*Turiya*) as put forth for the purpose of guiding the other three, both death and emancipation are the same (as the whole of the material world is dissolved, when the self is dissevered from the delusion which is the cause of it).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Of the measure of the thumb, being the Inner-self, ever Full, and different from the organism, coming in contact with the Vital airs, the Will, the Intellect, and the ten Senses, it moves to and fro. That Supreme Controller, worthy of reverential hymns, and the prime cause of everything, is manifest as Knowledge in creature-souls. Fools alone do not behold Him.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Among individuals there are those that have obtained mastery of their minds, and those that have not. Yet in all men the Supreme Soul may be seen equally. Indeed, It resides equally in him that is emancipate, and in him that is not, with only this difference that they that are emancipate obtain honey flowing in a thick jet (attain to the Supreme Brahman).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). When one makes life's sojourn, having attained to the knowledge of the Self and Not-Self, then it matters little whether one's *agni-hotra* is performed or not. (Yet one obtains the fruit of it). O Monarch! The Supreme Soul has another name that is Pure Knowledge. They that have restrained their minds alone attain to Him.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Even such is He. Illustrious and full, all living creatures are merged into Him. He who knows that embodiment of Fullness attains to his object (emancipation) even here.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). That which flies away stretching forth thousands of wings, even if endued with the speed of the mind, must yet come back to the Central Spirit within the living organism (in which the most distant things reside).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). His form cannot be an object of sight. They that are of pure hearts alone can behold Him. When one seeks the good of all, succeeds in controlling one's mind, and never suffers one's heart to be affected by grief, then one is said to have purified one's heart. Those that can abandon the world and all its cares alone become immortal.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Like serpents concealing themselves in holes, there are persons who, following the dictates of their senses, or by their own conduct, conceal their vices from scrutiny's gaze. They that are so deluded take to worldly life, appreciating nothing but the sensuous objects.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). He that is emancipated thinks thus: This transitory organism can never make me liable to joy and grief and the other attributes inhering to it; nor can there be, in my case, anything like death and birth: and, further, when the *Brahman*, which has no opposing force to contend against and which is alike in all times and all places, constitutes the resting-place of both realities and unrealities, how can emancipation be mine? It is I alone that am the origin and the end of all causes and effects (existing in the form of the Self).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). The *Brahman* knowing person, who is equal unto the *Brahman* Itself, is neither glorified by good acts nor defiled by bad ones. It is only in ordinary men that acts, good or bad, produce different results. The person that knows the *Brahman* should be regarded as identical with *Amrita* or the state called *Kaivalya* which is incapable of being affected by either virtue or vice. One should, therefore, disposing one's mind in the way indicated, attain to that essence of sweetness (the *Brahman*).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). Slander grieves not the heart of the person that knows the *Brahman*, nor the thought, '*I have not studied (the Veda)*', or '*I have not performed my agni-hotra*'. The knowledge of the *Brahman* soon imparts to him that wisdom which is obtained only by the restraint of the mind (and awakening of the soul).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by *yogis* (in consciousness). He that beholds his own self in everything has no longer to grieve for, they only have to grieve, who are employed in diverse other occupations of the world. As one's purposes (appeasing thirst, etc.) may be served in a well, as in a large reservoir of vast expanse, so the various purposes of the *Vedas* may all be derivable by him that knows the Soul. Dwelling in the heart, and of the measure of the thumb, that illustrious One—the embodiment of Fullness—is not an object of sight. Unborn, He moves, awake day and night. He that knows Him becomes both learned and full of joy. I am called the mother and the father. I am again the son. Of all that was, and of all that we will be, I am the Soul.

O Bharata! I am the old grandsire; I am the father; and I am the son. You are staying in my soul, yet you are not mine, nor am I yours! The Soul is the cause of my

birth and procreation. I am the warp and woof of the universe. That upon which I rest is indestructible. Unborn I move, awake day and night. It is I knowing whom one becomes both learned and full of joy. Subtler than the subtle, of excellent eyes capable of looking into both the past and the future, the Brahman is awake in every creature. They that know Him know that Universal Father dwells in the heart of every created thing!

(According to Shankara, the reference to the pronoun 'I' is to what Sanat-Sujata states as his own experiences, like Vamadeva and others, to corroborate what he has already said.)

Sanatkumar-Gita

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Introduction

The Sanatkumara-Gita is contained in chapter 22 of *Skandha IV* of *Srimad Bhagavata* which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'.

The *Puranic* literature was initially a branch of Vedic learning and not a separate and diversified religious literature, though in later days it came to be identified, in some cases, with sectarian religious literature. While the Vedic revelation is considered fixed and unalterable, the *Puranic* literature is sought to embody, explain and popularize the philosophy of the Veda cast in a form and against a background that is its own. The *Puranic* literature is stated to have come into being from the 6th century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. embodying the devotional teachings of numerous cults and sages, and also information on a variety of scientific, occult, social and historical themes.

The Puranas are distinguished as *Maha-puranas* and *Upa-puranas*, both being eighteen in number. *Srimad Bhagavata* is considered one of the *Maha-puranas*. The topics that form the subject matter of a *Maha-purana* are primary creation, secondary creation, means of sustenance, protection including Incarnations, epoch of *Manus*, genealogy of royal and priestly lines from Bhahma down, dynastic history of distinguished emperors, dissolution, purpose of all creative activity and ultimate support or the substratum. Of the ten subjects, the last one, the Supreme Being Who is the final stay of all, and to Which man's devotion is to be unconditional and total, forms the one theme with which the *Bhagavata* is primarily concerned. All other subjects are subordinated to it. The object is to bring man into an adequate conception of His excellences and to generate in him unconditioned devotion to the Lord.

The *Pauranikas* say that their accounts are traditions based on the intuition, inspiration and revelation that have come to wise and realized sages. The immortal works of literature and art that have survived several centuries are always considered the works of intuition, inspiration and revelation. On the other hand, rationalists contend that the contents of the Puranas are either imaginary or absurd and do not have historical validity.

In this regard, it may be said that history, as such, has no spiritual value as events are only at the moment and are not in the next. Events become history to the extent they are remembered and become a tradition. Historical facts become spiritual reality to the extent they stimulate a myth and become a psychic verity. For example, the historicity of Christ as such gives no spiritual significance to Christianity, but its Christ Myth does. The events of the historical life of Christ as such have had no significance to posterity. But when it is accepted that he was the expression of the Second Person of the Trinity, that he was immaculately conceived, that he was the Redeemer of men, that his suffering on the Cross was in atonement for man's sins, that he rose from the dead, and that all who take refuge in him will be saved by his blood – then Christ transcends history and becomes a Myth and a Psychic Verity of universal significance. The above cited statements are not open to historical proof; but they have been accepted by the psychic being of the community. As such they have a value far transcending the events of the so

called history. The same is the case with the Incarnations in the Hindu tradition. Their validity lies in the fusion their traditions have achieved with the supra-historical foundations of life.

It is not always necessary that the stimulations resulting in a Myth should occur in the dimensions of space and time. They can be purely ideal, too. An ideal manifestation in the psychic life of man can be based on the Cosmic Mind from whom events of significance can take place in the external world. It is sheer ignorance if it is considered that what is external and tangible to the senses alone is real, and what is mental or ideal is always illusory or imaginary. A sensual impact is of a much inferior order to an ideal impact of an enduring and powerful nature. So Myths that become spiritual verities need not necessarily have any historical content. They may or may not have such content. Even if they have, of what use are they that have led to these stimulations, as they are dead and gone? Only ideas as powerful psychic verities remain. In fact, even a historical personality, as a series of events, must cease to be as such, and take shape as a Myth before he becomes a spiritual verity. Also, ideal stimulations of the Cosmic Mind without any reference to history can become psychic verities of even greater potency. Such are the deities worshipped by the Hindus like Vishnu, Siva, Sakti, etc. They never had location in earthly space and time except as images used in worship. They are the manifestations of the Supreme Being as Spiritual Verities before which what we call material objects are mere shadows.

The Puranas are not at all to be read as history and geography, nor are they to be regarded as fiction. They belong to an order different from both history and fiction. They are the up-throw of a people's mind struggling to express their quest for a meaning for life and their findings in this respect. They represent the more enduring and enriched reactions of the psyche of a race to the fleeting events of space and time. It is in their cumulative spiritual effect and not in the validity of their individual statements that we should seek the values they embody. They attempt to integrate philosophy, history and traditions in a way to stimulating in man a keen sense of an omniscient, omnipotent and all-loving spiritual Reality that can be communed with, prayed to and visualized in various forms of spiritual glory. God in various forms and divine personages has become concrete to the Hindu psyche. In so far as they are facts of memory in the minds of men, they fulfill the role of history. In so far as the stimulations they generate are of spiritual dimensions, they are linked with Eternal Verities that transcend history.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad states that the Brahman has two aspects – *murta* (with form) and *amurta* (formless). The Puranas accept both the aspects, but concentrated particularly on the *murta* aspect as it is more significant for a devotee. The *amurta* aspect is the non-dual Absolute and the *murta* aspect is the *Sakti* or the manifesting power of the *amurta* aspect in the absence of which the *amurta* aspect is indistinguishable from *sunya*. In the same way, if the *murta* aspect alone is accepted without the *amurta* aspect with the Infinite and the Absolute Being as its complement, the *murta* aspect will only become a limited aspect indistinguishable from an exalted man. So the Puranas in general and *Bhagavata* in particular accept the Supreme Being as both *Murta* and *Amurta* with a greater stress on the *murta* aspect and call Him the Bhagawan. The Bhagawan here is

Param-purusa, the Supreme Person, but not an individual. He has an Archetypal Form which is a potential multi-form that can take any form in which He is invoked. An anthropomorphic garb is put on Him, as man could think of Him only in terms of the highest that he could conceive of and that He is, in himself, in an idealized state of existence. So the Puranas depict the divine majesty of the Bhagawan through symbolic and supra-human descriptions that account for many unearthly and unusual features. When the details of these descriptions are analyzed in isolation, they look queer. But when taken together as a whole, with a receptivity born of devotion, they make a tremendous impact of divine consciousness on the mind of man. No literature in the world has succeeded in making God a reality to man by such vivid and realistic descriptions as the Puranas have done.

The questions of three-dimensional factuality, dates and location stated in the Puranas are irrelevant matters. The true question is whether the thought-forms they generate have sufficiently soaked into the psychic substratum of the worshippers and remain potent enough to stimulate their whole being.

Srimad Bhagavata is also known as Vishnu Bhagavata. Its excellences are of such a transcending nature that it has practically eliminated all the other Puranas from the minds of men. It is the one book that is widely studied by all devotees and commented upon by scholars of all schools of thought. Though it is a *vaishnava*-related Purana, and therefore sectarian in a way, its sectarianism is not one of narrowness and exclusion, but only its way of eliciting the undivided attention and devotion of men to the Deity in focus. In the sublimity, fervour and comprehensiveness of the pattern of devotion it inculcates, in the dignity, elevation and terseness of its Sanskrit diction, in the lyrical beauty and wealth of its imagery, Srimad Bhagavata is unparalleled among the Puranas.

The purpose of the Bhagavata Purana is to produce a whole-hearted acceptance of the Vishnu concept and evoke devotional responses of the highest order from the mind of man. The synthesizing principle for the Bhagavata is *bhakti* or devotion of the highest order considered the fifth value of life. *Bhakti* is not merely the purifying agency, a means for a higher end; but it is the highest end itself, transcending liberation.

According to Prof. Hazra, the present text of the Bhagavata must have taken shape in the early half of the 6th century A.D.

The Sanatkumara-Gita is in the nature of rendering the sermon by Sanatkumara to Prthu, by Maitreya. The Gita depicts the majesty and oneness of the Supreme Soul and the manner of realizing IT.

The Gitas that find place in Bhagavata such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, and the Sanatkumara-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

Sanatkumara's Sermon to Prthu

Maitreya said:

While people were thus extolling Prthu of mighty prowess, there approached four sages, brilliant like the sun.

Attended upon by his servants, the King saw those lords of sages descending from the heavens. They were recognized to be Sanaka and others, by their lustre which absolved the worlds of sins.

Just as the lord of sense-organs (*Jiva*) rushes forth to the objects of senses, Prthu, the son of Vena, along with the courtiers and attendants, immediately stood up (and went forth to the sages), as if to recover his vital breaths which sprang forth at their sight.

(It is believed in the Hindu tradition that when an elderly person arrives, the vital breaths of the young immediately go forth to receive the elderly person. The Young ones re-gain their vital breaths by standing immediately on seeing the elderly by way of showing respect, and by bowing down before the elderly person.)

When the sages accepted preliminary reception (*arghya*) and occupied the seats (offered to them), the courteous King, who was hypnotized with their august presence, bowed down his head out of modesty, and worshipped them with due formalities.

(*Arghya* consists of respectfully offering water and other articles to gods or venerable persons.)

(To purify himself) the King sprinkled the hair on his head with (the sanctifying drops of) water with which he washed their feet. He, thereby, observed the course of conduct of the virtuous, to show respect to them.

The King was endowed with deep faith and self-discipline, and was full of joy. He addressed those elder brothers of Lord Siva, who occupied seats of gold, and were looking like sacrificial fires in their respective altars.

Prthu said:

Oh! What meritorious deeds I must have performed that I have the privilege of seeing you, the abodes of auspiciousness, who are very difficult to be perceived even by masters of *yoga*!

What is very difficult to attain here and hereafter to a person unto whom *Brahmanas* (like you), and gods Siva and Visnu along with their attendants are gracious!

Just as *Mahat* and other principles (or Brahma, Manu and other makers of the world), which are the causes of the universe, do not visualize the Omniscient *Atman* (Soul), people do not at all see you even though you roam over the world (to help them to attain their *purusharthas*).

Verily, blessed are those saintly householders who, though poor, have in their homes materials for worship such as water, mat of (*darbha*) grass, accommodation (cleaned floor), the master of the household and his dependants ready (for receiving) the worthies.

(Unwelcome) like the trees which are haunted by poisonous serpents are the homes which, though fully furnished with all kinds of riches, are not hallowed by the holy water used for washing the feet of Visnu's devotees.

Welcome is your arrival, Oh preeminent *brahmanas*, who, determined to secure liberation, have been faithfully and with resolute mind, observing great vows (like lifelong celibacy) since your very childhood. (It may also mean, 'brahmanas whose course of observance of vows is followed by other ignorant persons desirous of Liberation').

O spiritual Masters! Is there any hope of good for us who regard the (achievement of) objects of senses as the goal of life and who, by our own deeds, have fallen into the *samsara*, the bed of miseries?

The etiquette of enquiring after welfare of the guests is not applicable (or desirable) in the case of such great men like you who are absorbed in the bliss of the *Atman* (Soul), and who are above the thoughts of welfare or otherwise.

You are the friends and well-wishers of the distressed. With full faith in you, I, therefore, wish to enquire of you how one can speedily achieve *Moksha* (Liberation) in this *samsara*.

It is obviously certain that the eternal Lord Narayana, who shines as the soul of the self-knowing sages and who manifests Himself (in the heart of the devotees), goes about the world, in the form of *Siddhas* (like you), for showering His grace upon His votaries.

Maitreya said:

Having heard Prthu's beautifully worded, logical, deeply significant, brief, melodious speech, Sanatkumara slightly smiled, and verily replied with pleasure.

Sanatkumara said:

With the welfare of all beings at your heart, a good enquiry has been made by Your Majesty, even though you know its answer. O great King! For, such is the nature of the righteous.

The meeting of the righteous is highly approved by both (the speakers and the members of the audience); for, their dialogues and enquiries increase the happiness of all.

O King! Your honour has definitely a constant and abiding love for eulogizing the excellent attributes of the lotus-like feet of Lord Visnu (the enemy of demon Madhu). Such constancy of love is difficult to be found in others. Such love (if generated) completely shakes off the sticky dirt of inner passions and desires in the heart (which is otherwise difficult to remove).

In the Sastras, which have made a thorough enquiry (about the good of beings), it has been positively stated that perfect non-attachment to things other than the soul (one's own body), firm and constant love of the attribute-less Brahman and the Self constitute the means to the final beatitude of men.

By attachment to the attribute-less Brahman and non-attachment to the entire non-self material world (*un-atman*), intense faith in the Brahman being the cause and the effect, performance of righteous duties towards the Lord, the desire to know (the Truth), firm faith in the spiritual path of *yoga*, meditation about the Lord of *yoga*, and constant listening to the holy stories of the Lord of hallowed renown; by cessation of desire to associate with the *tamasic* people who take pleasure in wealth and with the *rajasic* people who revel in the enjoyment of sensual pleasure, and by non-attachment to the filthy lucre and to sense-gratification which are highly valued by them; through love of seclusion for enjoying the blissfulness of the self (*atman*) except on occasions when the drink of the nectar of Hari's excellent glories is available; by practising non-violence, by following the course of conduct prescribed for the highest ascetic order called the *paramahamsas*, by drinking the highest form of nectar in the form of Lord Hari's stories, by eschewing desires and by observing rules of self-discipline called *yama* (abstention) and *niyama* (observance), by refraining from slandering (and condemning other paths of God-realization prescribed in scriptures), by desire-less-ness, and by endurance of opposite states (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain); and by devotion to Hari that blossoms for constantly glorifying Lord Hari's excellences which form the ornaments to the ears of His devotees through faith and deep devotion (one attains to liberation).

Performance of righteous duties is two-fold. One is performance of the five *maha-yajnas* and other round of religious duties for propitiating the Lord. The other is performance of religious duties according to one's own *varna* and *asrama* (*varna-asrama dharma*). These duties relate to the initiated and the un-

initiated. In respect of the initiated ones, they are to have faith in meditation as part of adoration of the Lord, as stated in the scriptures.

As for *yama* (abstention), according to Patanjali, it is abstention from injuries, falsehood, theft, incontinence and acceptance of gifts. As for *niyama* (observance), it is cleanliness, contentment, renunciation, study of scriptures and devotion to the Lord.

When his attachment and delight in the Brahman becomes firmly established, a man seeks a spiritual preceptor. Just as fire ignited from *arani* (a piece of wood of the *sami* tree used for kindling fire by friction) consumes its own source (the piece of wood from which it arose), the man, by force of his knowledge and non-attachment, burns down his subtle body consisting of five subtle elements and enveloping his soul, in such a way as to render it unrevivable.

What is sought to be stated is that firm faith in the Brahman leads to the grace of the spiritual preceptor, and not the other way. With the force of knowledge, renunciation and the love for or delight in the Brahman, a man burns his *karma*, resulting from merit and demerit, which is the cause of his present incarnation in body and the resulting *samsara*.

The five subtle elements referred to have two different connotations. The first consists of the five *klesas*, namely, *avidya* (nescience), *ahamkara* (ego), *raga* (attachment), *dvesa* (hatred) and *abhinivesa* (instinctive clinging to the worldly life and the bodily enjoyment). The other consists of the five sheaths which, lying one within the other, make the body enshrine the soul. They are *annamaya*, *manomaya*, *pranamaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya kosas* (sheaths).

When the screen or sheath (of the subtle body enveloping the soul) which, till then intervened between the Supreme-Soul (*Paramatman*) and the soul, is destroyed, the person becomes freed from all the attributes pertaining to the subtle body which has been burnt down. (Thenceforth) he does not perceive (his subjective states of pleasure, pain, etc) which are within him, nor objects (a pot, a piece of cloth, etc) which are external to him, just as a man awakened from a dream does not see the objects he perceived in his dream.

When the knowledge of the relation between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul (the *Jiva*) disappears, the *Jiva* does not perceive any difference within and without. While being in the *samsara*, there is a screen between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul in the sense that there is a semblance of identity of the individual soul, as in a dream. But when the subtle body is lost, there is no more identity of the *Jiva* or the individual soul. Who is there then to bother about liberation?

(The attributes referred to in the verse relate to love, hate, etc.)

(It is in the states of wakefulness and dream) this *upadhi* (conditioning) of mind continues; man can perceive himself (the seer), the objects of senses and what is beyond them both (*ahamkara* which establishes relation between them, the seer and the seen), and not otherwise (as in sleep).

(For example), if, anywhere, (reflecting) condition, *upadhi* like water, mirror or such other condition, is present, a man can see the difference between himself (the object of reflection) and the other thing (his own reflection), and not in the absence of the reflecting medium.

The limiting condition is like an inert body causing interruption between the *Jiva* and the Supreme Soul whereby the individual soul (the *Jiva*) experiences separateness from his true Self, the Supreme Soul. But a sage liberated sees no such distinction between the two. This limiting condition (*upadhi*) is destroyed for the sage by knowledge. When real knowledge dawns, the sage realizes the Brahman in his soul.

The mind of those who brood over objects of worldly enjoyment is distracted by their senses which are attracted to objects of worldly pleasure. Thereby the intellect loses its power of thinking and discrimination, just as water from a pool is (imperceptibly) sucked by the roots of a clump of grass.

As a consequence of the loss of the reasoning capacity, memory is lost. The loss of memory results in loss of knowledge and wisdom. The wise call this loss of wisdom as the covering of the Self through one's own self.

In this world, there is no greater loss of one's self-interest than one's loss of one's own self, for, because of loss of one's own self, every other thing in the world becomes dear.

Constantly brooding over wealth and objects of senses leads to the loss of all *purusharthas* (goals to be achieved in life). Having thus lost knowledge of the Brahman and worldly knowledge, one enters (is born in) immobile *yonis* without end.

A person who desires to cross the dense darkness (of *samsara*) should not entertain attachment to anything whatever. For, that attachment is extremely harmful to *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* (the four *purusharthas*).

Even among these objectives of life, *moksha* (liberation) is acknowledged as the highest goal of life (as it transcends death). For, the remaining goals of life are always subject to the fear of death.

For the *Jiva* of the higher order (like Brahma) and lower order like us who are created after the equilibrium of the three *gunas* of *Prakrti* was disturbed (resulting in creation), there is no security and happiness, as all their aspirations and hopes (of attaining their objectives) are ruined by the all-powerful Time.

Therefore, O King, (you) realize that you are (the same as) the Lord (the only existing Reality) – the Lord who manifests Himself and directly shines everywhere in the Self as *antaryamin* (the inner controller) in the hearts of all mobile and immobile *Jiva* who are covered (invested) with body, sense-organs, vital airs, intellect and ego (*ahamkara*).

I take shelter with the Supreme Soul, eternally free, extremely pure, highly enlightened, Reality Itself that has overpowered the *Prakrti* (primordial nature) contaminated by *karma* (of various *Jiva*), and in Which appears this universe of superior and inferior things (or of cause and effect) as *maya*, which disappears owing to (the dawn of) discriminating wisdom like (the dispelling of) the misapprehension of a garland of flowers as a (coiled) serpent.

You (therefore) take resort to Lord Vasudeva as your asylum through devotion (and concentration) on the splendour of petal-like toes of His lotus-feet. By such meditation, the saintly devotees easily cut the knot of their egotism (*ahamkara*) formed in their hearts by *karma* that even recluses and ascetics who have cleared their mind (of all worldly thoughts) and have controlled their senses are unable to do so.

(The Sanskrit word used for asylum is *a-ranam* meaning ‘beyond fight’. It, therefore, means that if one does not resort to Vasudeva, one will have to battle with one’s sense-organs which, by their brute force, will defeat one.)

(The Sanskrit word used for splendour is *vilasa* meaning ‘beauty which increases every moment’. It means that the devotee meditating on Vasudeva experiences ever increasingly the grandeur of Vasudeva leading to liberation.)

There is a great trouble here to those who have not resorted to the Lord as a boat for crossing the ocean of *samsara* which is infested with crocodiles in the form of the six-fold. For they desire to cross it (*samsara*) by painful means (practice of yoga). You should, therefore, make the adorable feet of Lord Hari as a boat, and reach the other end of this impassable ocean of *samsara* easily, and without any difficulty.

(The ‘six-fold’ relates to the six passions, namely, *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (avarice), *mada* (conceit), *moha* (delusion) and *matsara* (jealousy), or the mind and the five senses.)

Maitreya said:

The King, to whom the real nature of the *Atman* (Soul) was thus expounded by Sanatkumara, the son of god Brahma, the knower of the Brahman, praised him appropriately and enquired.

The King said:

O venerable *Brahmana*! Lord Hari is compassionate to the afflicted. He had formerly conferred His grace upon me. You all have now come to consummate it.

Your venerable-selves, merciful as you are, have translated into reality the blessing in its entirety. Everything that I possess, including my own self, belongs to the saintly souls who have graciously returned it to me as a favour. What can I give to you?

My life, wife, sons, houses with all their furnishings, kingdom, army, soil and treasury, everything, are offered to you although they already belong to you.

And a person who is well-versed in the Veda and *Sastras* really deserves to command an army, (to rule over) a kingdom, to direct military operations and to govern the entire world.

A *brahmana* eats his own food, wears the clothes belonging to him and offers his own belongings. It is through his (*brahmana*'s) grace that *kshatriyas* and others enjoy their food.

You are past-masters in the Vedic lore. In your discourse about the *Atman* (and other spiritual matters), you have succinctly and definitely explained to us the nature of the Lord. Abounding in mercy as you are, may you forever be pleased with your action of redeeming the afflicted? Who can return your obligations except by folding his palms in reverence? (One becomes an object of ridicule if one attempts to repay your kindness).

Maitreya said:

Those masters of *atma-yoga* (the yogic path of self-realization) were worshipped by the first monarch Prthu. They appreciated his righteous character, and rose to the heavens while people were looking on (agape).

Prthu (the son of Vena), the foremost among great souls, became firmly established in his soul, owing to concentration achieved by their instruction in the spiritual lore. He felt as if he had achieved all his desires in life.

It was as an offering to the Brahman that he performed all his actions at the proper time, at the proper place, to the best of his ability, according to proper formalities, and according to his means and property.

Thus, with concentrated mind, he consigned the fruit (of his deeds) to the Brahman. He remained unattached by regarding his self as distinct and beyond Prakrti, a mere witness to all actions.

Just as the sun (remains unattached to, and unsoiled by, the objects on which it shines), the King, though leading the life of a householder and endowed with imperial majesty and splendour, remained free from egotism (*ahamkara*), and hence unattached to the objects of the senses.

While he was, in this way, doing his prescribed duties properly and in time, with his heart fixed on his *atman* (self), he begot through his queen Arcis five sons who were resembling and agreeable to him. They were Vijitasva, Dhumrakesa, Haryaksa, Dravina and Vrka. But Prthu was a part of Lord Visnu. For the protection of the created world, Prthu combined in him (and manifested) powers of all *lokapalas* (protectors of worlds like Indra, Varuna), from time to time, as was necessary (according to the exigencies of the situations). He bore significantly the title *Raja* by delighting his subjects with his thoughts, words and deeds, and pleasing Soma-like (*saumya*) qualities as if he was another king Soma (the moon or the soma – juice which has *raja* as its epithet). Like the sun (evaporating water from the earth and collecting it in clouds), he levied taxes from his subjects only to give them back (for their welfare) and governed them (as the sun gives light and heat).

By his majestic splendour, he was unassailable like Agni (Fire-god); he was unconquerable like the great Indra; in forbearance, he was like the earth; and he was like the heaven (*svarga*) in granting desired objects to his subjects.

Like the rain-god, he showered to the satisfaction (of his subjects) all that they desired; like the (unfathomable) sea, he was too deep to be understood; and in his firmness, he was like Meru, the king of mountains.

He was comparable to Yama-dharma, in dispensing punishment; in marvelous-ness (in scenery, ores, etc), he was like the Himalayas. He had rich treasure like Kubera (the god of wealth). He possessed immense un-divulged treasures like Varuna.

In physical strength, force and energy and in his ability to move anywhere he was like Vayu. In his irresistibility, he was comparable to god Siva.

He was a compeer of the god of Love in beauty; in spiritedness, he was like a lion; in paternal affection, he was like Manu; while, in his lordship over man, he was like god Brahma.

He was Brihaspati in his knowledge of the Veda, while in self-control he was like Lord Hari Himself. He was comparable to himself in his devotion to cows, *brahmanas*, preceptor, votaries of Hari, and in qualities like modesty, humility, good nature and work for the benefit of others.

As his glory was loudly sung by people everywhere in the three worlds, he reached the ears of women just as Rama entered the ears of the saintly people.

Bharata-Gita

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Introduction

The Bharata-Gita is contained in chapters 11 to 14 of *Skandha V* of Srimad Bhagavata which belongs to the class of Hindu religious literature known as the Puranas. The word 'Purana' in Sanskrit means 'a narrative of ancient times'. A detailed exposition of the Bhagavata Purana is made in the introduction to the Sanat-Sujata - Gita.

The Bharata-Gita is in the nature of imparting spiritual knowledge to Rahugana by Bharata, and its exposition by Sri Suka of the philosophy of Bharata as to the manner of overcoming the *samsara* for realization of the Supreme Soul.

The Gitas that find place in *Bhagavata* such as the Uddhava-Gita, the Rudra-Gita, the Bhikshu-Gita, the Sruti-Gita, the Hamsa-Gita, the Sanatkumara-Gita, the Bharata-Gita propound Monism as the essence of their philosophy.

1. Bharata Imparts Spiritual Knowledge to Rahugana

The Brahmana said:

You are (really) ignorant. You (simply) give verbal expression to the arguments (which are apparently similar to those) of the learned. You will not, therefore, be (considered as) pre-eminent (in any way) among those who are supremely wise; for, the sages never speak of mundane relation (the master-servant relation) along with their investigation into (the nature of) Reality. You regard the master-servant relation as real, but the sages do not recognize it as such.

(Similarly,) the ritualistic way, *karma-kanda*, described in the Veda is also not true. In the highly glittering flowery descriptions in the Vedic texts relating to the detailed study of the minute rituals connected with the householder's life, no light is definitely thrown on the exposition of the Truth which is pure (that is, free from the contamination of injury (*himsa*), etc) and good (devoid of passions like love, hate) as a rule. (Persons who dedicate all their *karma* to God are eligible for such exposition of Truth).

Not even the most authoritative Vedic (Upanisadic) texts can directly impart the comprehension of the Truth to a person who, on the analogy of (the unreal, evanescent and hence worthless pleasures enjoyed in) a dream, does not conclude that the (dreamlike) pleasures in the householder's life (and those in heaven accruing from sacrifices) are by themselves worth casting off.

As long as the mind of a man is under the dominating influence of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, it goes on producing unchecked merit or sin through his sense-organs of perception and action.

The mind is a store-house of impressions unconsciously left by the good or bad actions in the past life; it is attached to objects of pleasures; it is tossed about by *gunas*; it is affected by passions; and it is the chief among sixteen constituents (elements, sense-organs, etc) of the *linga sarira* (the subtle body). It assumes different forms (man, beast, etc) under different names, and extends to (causes) higher or lower forms of life in various kinds of physical bodies.

The mind, the limiting condition created (and imposed upon the soul) by *Maya*, entices it (the *Jiva*) in the cycle of *samsara*. By embracing the soul associated with it, it subjects the *Jiva* to pleasure, pain and other inevitable fruits of *karma* (such as delusion) at the proper time (of fruition).

So long as the mind exists, this phenomenon of waking and dream states manifests itself within the range of perception of the *kshetrajna*. It is hence that they (the wise ones) say that the mind is the cause of the lower state – *samsara*

(the product of *gunas*) and of the higher state – *moksha* (liberation), which is beyond the range of all *gunas*.

If the mind is attached to the objects of senses (which are the products of *gunas*), it leads the creature to misery (*samsara*). If it is free from and unattached to them, it takes the *Jiva* to eternal happiness (*moksha* – liberation). Just as a lamp, which emanates flames mixed with soot while it consumes its wick soaked in ghee, later (after the consumption of ghee) betakes itself to its original state, the mind, which is attached to the objects of senses and (consequent) activities, resorts to various courses, and eventually returns to its true original self, when unattached (to them).

The courses (of the activities) of the mind are eleven – five in relation to the organs of action, five with reference to the senses of perception and its own sense of I-ness. The wise say that the cognitive organs, the subtle elements and the body are (respectively) the eleven grounds (receptacles) for these (courses), O Warrior!

Smell, form, touch, taste and sound are the five objects of cognitive organs. Evacuation (of bowels), copulation, locomotion, verbal expression and manipulation are the functions of the motor organs. The eleventh is the body associated with the I-ness

These eleven modifications (tendencies) of the mind multiply into hundreds, thousands and millions with reference to objects, the nature of things, the effect of previous experience, the un-manifested effect of *karma* (acts), the agitating factor Time, etc. They owe their existence to the *Kshetrajna* (the Supreme Soul) and not to each other or to their own self.

The *Kshetrajna* is beyond the changes. These *vrttis* do not proceed from the *Jiva*, too. Nor do they spring from their mutual action and reaction, nor from themselves. Hence all these are *mithya* –unreal though they are existent as fleeting in time.

The Supreme Soul, pure and unaffected, stands as a witness to the continuous stream of states of the mind which are sometimes manifest (in the waking and dream states) and sometimes un-manifest (as in deep sleep). The mind, a *upadhi* of the *Jiva*, is a creation of *Maya*, and of impure activity.

The Supreme Soul is all-pervading, the prime cause of the perfect (in all respects), ever-present, self-luminous (not depending on anything for the proof of its existence), devoid of birth (and death), the ruler of gods like Brahma, Narayana (the abode of the world of beings), the venerable Lord (of six excellences), Vasudeva (the receptacle of all beings) and Himself, the Inner-dweller and Controller of all *Jiva* by His *Maya*.

Just as air, entering in the form of breath, controls both the mobile and the immobile beings, so does the Supreme Lord Vasudeva, the all-pervading Soul, enter this universe (as the Inner Controller).

O lord of men! A man continues to wander in the *samsara* so long as he has not shaken off *Maya* by the dawn of knowledge, become free of attachments, conquered the six enemies (passions like lust, anger, avarice, etc) and has not realized his true self.

(He continues to wander) so long as he does not understand that the mind, the conditioning environment of the soul, is the field of the miseries of *samsara* (the cycle of birth and death), and the source of a continuous series of grieves, delusions, diseases, passions such as avarice and hatred, and the creator of the feeling of mine-ness.

Therefore, being very careful and armed with the missile in the form of the feet of Lord Hari, who is the preceptor, kill this enemy (in the form of the mind) of formidable power that has grown in strength through your negligence, and that, though unreal in itself, is capable of deluding you about (the true nature of) your soul.

2. Dialogue between Bharata and Rahugana

Rahugana said:

Salutations to you again and again! You, who are the prime cause of the universe (God), who have assumed a human form (for the protection of the world), and who, in the light of supremely blissful self-realization, have regarded your body as insignificant! I bow to you, O master of yoga, who have concealed your realization of the Eternal (Supreme Soul) in the guise of a deprived *brahmana*.

The praise of the *brahmana* is apparently a eulogy of the *antaryamin*.

My vision (power of understanding) has been thoroughly poisoned (perverted) by the bite of the serpent in the form of (my) false identification of the self with this worthless body. Your words act like a nectarine medicine on me, just as a palatable specific medicine (does) to a patient suffering from high fever, or the ice-cold water (or the water of the Ganges) is soothing to a person scorched by the heat of the summer.

I shall, therefore, refer my doubts to you later on. My mind is full of curiosity. Now, be pleased to explain to me, in easily intelligible language, couched in *yogic* terms, about the Soul.

O lord of yoga! My mind fails to grasp (in bewilderment, the significance of) your statement that the (actual) act (of carrying a load) and its effect (the resultant fatigue), though visible (directly), are limited to (and not contradicted in) practical life (*vyavahara*), but they will not easily stand the test of philosophic investigation.

The Brahmana replied:

That which has come to be known as ‘this person’ (the palanquin bearer) is a modification of the earth which moves over the earth owing to some (inexplicable) cause, O King! Above the feet of this (modification of the earth called ‘this person’) are two ankles, two shanks, two knees, two thighs, the waist, the chest, the neck and the two shoulders.

On the shoulder is the wooden palanquin wherein is seated, by designation, ‘the king of Sauviras’, which is nothing but another modification of the earth. You identify yourself with it (that modification of the earth). Being blinded with arrogant pride, you feel that you are the king of the Sindhu country.

You are hard-hearted, as you have caught hold of these pitiable (palanquin-bearers) who are already highly afflicted with hardships, and have

forced them to labour without remuneration. Still you brag about as being ‘the protector of the people’. Shamelessly insolent as you are, you will not look respectable in the assemblies of the wise.

We know that all the mobile and the immobile creation is always born out of and re-assimilated into the earth only. The difference in name is due to the difference in its product or functions. Let it be investigated if there be any other real cause or basis deducible from its effect and work (functions).

(The substance) that is denoted by the word ‘earth’ is unreal as (will be) explained thus. The earth (in its ultimate analysis) disaggregates itself into atoms. The atoms, the aggregate of which is the particular (element, the earth), are hypothetical postulated by mind (of the theorists), through ignorance. (They do not exist on their own independently.)

Similarly, know that, what is thin or fat, small or big, cause or effect, sentient or in-sentient or that which has a second (all the duality) is brought about by *Maya* in the name of substance (five elements), nature (the changeability of the phenomenal world), *samskaras* (impressions unconsciously left on the subtle body by past actions - *vasanas*), Time and destiny (*karma*).

Knowledge alone is pure (unsullied by passion or actions), absolutely real, one (without any contradiction), devoid of any aspect of in-ness or out-ness, perfect and full, direct (self-manifesting), unchangeable, and designated as *Bhagavan* (the venerable possessor of six excellences such as lordship of the universe). They (the sages) call it (Knowledge) by the term ‘Vasudeva’.

O Rahugana! This Knowledge (the Brahman) is not attained through austere penance, Vedic sacrifices, charitable distribution of food, performance of duties prescribed for a householder (such as honorary social service), the study of the Veda or propitiation of (the presiding deities of) water and fire, and the sun. (It is attainable only) by being sprinkled with the dust of the feet of the exalted souls (while rendering service to the sages).

Here (in the congregation of these exalted persons) the discourses on the excellent attributes of the Lord are always held. These prohibit all talk of vulgar worldly topics. By listening daily to these (holy discourses), the pure mind of the seeker of liberation is concentrated on Lord Vasudeva.

I was formerly a king called Bharata who, freeing himself from the bondage of attachment to all things seen or heard (objects obtainable here and hereafter), endeavoured for propitiation of the Lord, but was frustrated (in my endeavour) through my attachment to a deer, and was, therefore, re-born as a deer.

Owing to the efficacy of my devoted worship of Krisna, that memory (of my previous birth) was not lost even in my birth as the deer, O Warrior! Hence,

being unattached to and afraid of association with the society, I roam about without disclosing my real physical identity.

Therefore, a man should, in this very world, completely cut off (the ties of) delusion by the sword of knowledge obtained through the blessed company of the great souls who are free from attachment. Having revived the memory (consciousness of God) by recounting and hearing (meditating upon) the glories of Hari, one reaches the end of this long road of *samsara* and attains to the Lord.

3. The *Samsara*

The Brahmana continued:

Like unto a company of merchants intent on acquisition of wealth, this multitude of *Jiva*, desirous of and solely devoted to the attainment of pleasure, has been put by *Prakrti* or *Maya* on the path (of *pravrtti* – active worldly life) which is unending and very difficult to traverse. It (the multitude of *Jiva*) sets its eye (attention) on the activities actuated and dominated by (the attributes of) *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. While wandering (in search of pleasure) in the forest of *samsara* (worldly existence), it does not find any bliss.

In that forest, these six bandits (mind and the five sense-organs) perforce rob the caravan, captained by an evil-minded leader, O King! Just as wolves carry away the sheep, jackals (in the form of relatives), finding entry into their camp, carry away careless members (devoid of spiritual outlook).

In the forest, impregnable with the dense growth of a mass of creepers, grass, clumps of trees and bushes, the caravan was harassed by sharp stinging gnats and mosquitoes. (In the householder's life full of passions and actions, a man is harassed by wicked people.) At some places they find the city of *Gandharvas* in the sky. (The phenomenon is fictitious; so is one's body). At other places, they witness fleeting spirits in the form of fire brands.

O (King Rahugana!) With their intellect (mind) naturally anxious to find some dwelling-place, water and wealth, the company of merchants ran here and there in the jungle. And at some places, with eyes blinded with dust, they did not distinguish the directions darkened with the dust whipped up by whirl-winds.

(Here the whirl-wind stands for a woman who raises erotic sentiments which blind man to the existence of the deities presiding over the directions, who stand witness to his actions).

With their ears acutely pained by the shrill cries of unseen crickets (back-biting by evil-minded persons) and their minds agitated by the hooting of the owls (harsh words, scolding directly addressed by enemies, persons in authority, etc), they resorted to unholy trees (irreligious persons) when tormented with hunger. At some places (when thirsty), they ran after the mirage (fruitless objects of worldly pleasure).

The reference to 'unholy trees' is to the superstition that the shade of the *vibhitaka* tree is inauspicious by day, that of the *pippala* tree by night and that of the apple tree both by day and night. This is an allegory to approaching irreligious persons for help.

At some places they went towards beds of dry rivers (only to get their limbs bruised by falling, instead of getting water); being short of food, they begged for it of one another. At some places, they approached the forest conflagration only to get scorched; at other places, they found to their despair that they were deprived of their life (-like wealth) by Yakshas.

The allegory is to the dry river-beds being the schools of non-believers which lead to misery in the other world. The forest-fire is like the house-hold where the *Jiva* is tormented with miseries. The Yakshas are like the servants of the king (government) who squeeze out life-like wealth of men.

At some other places, they, deprived of their possessions by the local village chiefs, expert in robbery became mentally despondent. Overcome with grief and bewildered, they fainted. At some places, they entered an imaginary city of Gandharvas (the company of loving near relatives) and felt overjoyed for a while.

At some places, being desirous of scaling a mountain (attempting a great undertaking) they proceeded with the soles of their feet pierced with thorns and cut with gravel. And they sat down depressed in spirit. Tormented at every step by the inner (gastric) fire (hunger) and with the (unbearable) responsibility of maintaining a large group, they got angry with themselves.

Sometimes, overcome by the boa-constrictor (sleep), they lay like the dead, abandoned in a jungle and were not conscious of anything. Sometimes, bitten by fierce venomous snakes, they became blind and fell into wells with their openings hidden with overgrown grass and plants. They lay immersed in darkness (misery and ignorance).

At times (when) they sought honey of low quality, they were harassed and humiliated by bees. If they were successful in their attempt with great difficulty, others robbed of them perforce. While they were engaged in fighting among themselves, others carried off that booty.

The allegory is to one courting another man's wife. In such attempt, one is insulted and beaten up by the husband of that woman. Even if one is successful temporarily, others seek to rob one of one's booty.

And sometimes, (at some places), they sat down incapable of protecting themselves against (warding off) cold, heat, storm and showers of rain; at some other places, they sold (personal goods) among themselves, and became enemies of each other by fraudulent money-dealings.

Now and then, destitute of wealth and devoid of beds, blankets, shelter and conveyance, they begged of one another. Not getting the desired objects, they cast a coveting glance at another man's property and got insulted.

(Though) they developed hostile relations with each other by mutual (fraudulent) monetary transactions, they entered into marital relations with each other. Thus they proceeded along their path, famished, suffering great difficulties, financial losses and other calamities (including feelings of hatred).

The caravan of merchants thus proceeded on its journey leaving behind those that were dead at various places, and taking with them the new born babes. Nobody has as yet returned to its starting place. Nor does anyone (howsoever powerful) betake to yoga which lies at the terminus (of the road), O Warrior!

All those resolute and high minded warriors who have conquered the great elephants guarding the eight directions and who, claiming the earth as their own, have contracted hostility (with each other), shall lie dead on the battlefield. But they do not attain to the place (the region of Visnu) where the recluse (the *sanyasin*) who has been free from enmity, reaches.

At some places, it (the caravan, as it still continues to move without end,) clings to the arms (tender shoots) of creepers (that is, the men rest on the tender arms of women); it longs to listen to the indistinct chirping of birds which have resorted to the caravan (listen to the sweet indistinct warbling of children clinging to their mothers). And it feels strongly attached to them. Occasionally, at other places, it is afraid of a multitude of lions and makes friends with cranes, herons and vultures (being afraid of death, the people enter the fold of vile, cruel heretics).

Being deceived by them, it (the caravan of merchants) tries to enter the flock of swans (knowing the futility of the false faiths, people try to enter *brahmanic* fold). But not liking their pious way of life (not finding the *brahmanic* way of life to their liking), it approaches the monkeys (takes to the monkey-like behaviour of depraved people). By the (amorous) sports natural to that species, it (the caravan) gets its senses gratified (with sensual pleasures) and forgets the (approaching) end of life, while looking at the faces of each other.

Amusing himself in the trees (worldly objects observed in life), he (a member of the caravan) fondly loves his children and wife. Being powerless in his own bondage, he becomes void of judgment owing to the lust for sexual enjoyment. Some times falling into a valley due to inadvertence, he catches hold of a creeper and remains in a hanging position, afraid of the elephant (below). (Owing to the acts done in previous lives, he continues to live in fear of impending death).

If, by a lucky chance, he, anyhow, overcomes this calamity, he again enters the company of merchants (takes to the path of *pravrtti* or active worldly life), O vanquisher of enemies! A person who is set on this path (*pravrtti*) by *Maya* (the unborn) continues to wander in *samsara*. No such person has as yet perceived the highest *purushartha* (*Moksha* or Liberation).

O Rahugana! Even you are also set on this track (by *Maya*). You lay down your scepter (desist from violence to living beings) and make friends with all beings. With your mind unattached to worldly pleasure and arming yourself with the sword of knowledge sharpened by (dedicated) service to Hari, get to the other end of this road (of *samsara*).

The King said:

Oh! The birth as a man is the most glorious of all births in species. Of what use are other births, even in the heaven, where the association with high-souled people like you, whose minds are purified by (singing and listening to) the glories of Lord Hrshikesa (the Ruler of sense-organs – Visnu), is not available to the full?

It is no wonder (at all) that pure devotion to Lord Hari is generated in the hearts of those whose sins have been destroyed by the dust of your lotus-like feet (when constantly served for a long time). For, my thoughtlessness and ignorance, rooted as it were, in fallacious reasoning, have been completely removed by association with you for a short time (a *muhurta*).

(As it is not known in what form the knower of the Brahman moves about in the world, the King pays his respects to all). Salutations to the *brahmanas* (knower of the Brahman), who are advanced in age, to those (who are) infants, to the youthful ones, to all down to young boys! May (blundering) kings like me receive blessings from the *brahmanas* who wander over the earth as *avadhutas* (ascetics who have renounced all worldly attachment), giving no indication of their greatness.

Sri Suka said:

O Parikshit (son of Uttara)! In this way, verily, (Bharata,) the son of a *brahmana* sage, who was endowed with the highest glory, explained, out of very great compassion, the real nature of the Self to (Rahugana,) the King of Sindhu, even though the latter had insulted him. Rahugana respectfully bowed to the feet of Bharata with great remorse. Bharata with his mind unperturbed by the senses wandered over this earth.

Even the King of Sauvira (Rahugana), who realized the real nature of the Supreme Self as taught by a saintly person (like Bharata), repudiated the false notion of identifying the soul with the body, a notion superimposed on the mind by nescience (*avidya*), O King! Such is, therefore, the greatness of those who resort to the devotees of the glorious Lord.

The King Parikshit said:

O great devotee of the Lord! You who possess very wide and varied knowledge have described the path of *samsara* of the individual souls in indirect and allegorical language. It will not be easily comprehensible to people who are

not of trained mind. Hence, the same (allegory) which is difficult to understand be pointed out (explained) in an easily understandable way.

Sri Suka said:

Characterized and influenced by special attributes like *sattva*, auspicious, inauspicious and mixed types of *karma* (actions) are being committed by the *Jiva* (individual souls) who wrongly identify the body with the soul. The group of six senses (five cognitive senses and the mind) acts as the portals or media of experience of the beginning-less *samsara*, consisting of association with and separation from the series of different bodies, created as a result of such karma.

Just as a caravan of merchants, intent on making money, loses its way to find itself in wilderness, this company of *Jiva* (individual souls) has been set on this difficult path (of *samsara*), hard to travel like a mountain pass, by *Maya* (the deluding potency of the Lord) which functions under the Supreme Ruler Visnu. It (the multitude of *Jiva*) finds itself in the wilderness of *samsara*, the most inauspicious like a funeral ground. It (the multitude of *Jiva*) experiences the fruit of their individual *karma* wrought by means of their bodies. Although all their activities are obstructed by numerous difficulties and rendered fruitless, they do not still betake themselves to the path of bees (votaries of the Lord) who resort to the lotus-like feet of Lord Hari in the form of the preceptor – the feet which remove all the afflictions and agonies of *samsara*. It is in the forest of *samsara* that what are called the six senses (mind and the five cognitive senses) act as veritable robbers in practice.

For, whatever little wealth, a person acquires through great hardship, should be utilized for the sake of *dharma*. The wise say that this *dharma*, characterized by the propitiation of the Supreme Person Himself, is conducive to one's beatitude in the other world.

But the wealth of a man of perverted intellect and uncontrolled senses, which should have been used for the sake of this *dharma* (righteous conduct), is wasted in householder's life on vulgar pleasures of sight, touch, sound, taste and smell (the five objects of sensual pleasures), even as the caravan of merchants with an unworthy leader of uncontrolled mind is robbed of money.

And here (in the wilderness of *samsara*) the so-called members of the family such as wife and children are nothing but wolves and jackals in action. They carry the carefully-guarded wealth of the close-fisted householder, despite his watchfulness and unwillingness (to part with his wealth), like a lamb well-protected (in a pen).

For just as a field, the seeds (of weeds, grass, etc) in which are not burnt down, again becomes densely over-grown with a thicket of shrubs, grass and creepers, at the time of sowing, even though it is (regularly) ploughed annually, in the same way, the householder's life is a field of *karma* wherein the seeds of

karma are never destroyed. This householder's life is certainly like a box of desires (in which seeds of *karma* are never completely annihilated, just as the smell of camphor persists even after the exhaustion of camphor-tablets from the camphor-box).

There (in the householder's stage of life), his wealth, which is the very external life-breath of man, is squeezed (sucked) by vile people comparable to gnats and mosquitoes, and (food-grains) by locusts, birds, thieves, rats and others. At times, wandering on this road (of *samsara*), his mind becomes eclipsed with ignorance (*avidya*), lust or desires and actions. Hence, possessed of erroneous views, he looks upon the human world, which is as unreal as the (optic illusion of) the city of Gandharvas, to be factually real.

There (in the *samsara*), with a passionate desire for vicious habits of drinking, eating, sexual intercourse and the like, he sometimes pursues mirage-like (unreal) pleasures.

Sometimes, just as a man intensely longs for (the warmth of) fire, runs after the fire-goblin, he, with his mind over-powered with the attribute of *rajas* which is of the same colour as that of gold, ardently yearns to acquire gold which is the abode of all evils, and is a kind of excreta of fire.

And again, with an earnest desire for dwelling-places, water, wealth and other numerous amenities of life and means of livelihood, it (the multitude of the *Jiva*) runs about here and there in the forest of *samsara*.

Sometimes (when) placed on her lap, by a bewitching young woman who is like a whirlwind, his mind is instantly enveloped in ignorance, owing to the force of *rajas*, and transgresses the boundaries of virtue. With his eyes filled with the dust of lust, his mind is too much charged with passion to cognize (the existence of) the presiding deities of the directions (who watch him).

Occasionally, he perceives spontaneously for a moment the unreality of worldly objects. But as he identifies the soul with his body, he loses (his consciousness) about the nature of the soul. With his memory (consciousness) thus led astray, he intensely pursues those very sense-objects which are (illusory) like mirage.

Sometimes, its (the company of the *Jiva*) ears and heart are intensely troubled by the extremely harsh and fiercely vehement threats administered directly, like hooting of the owls, by king's officers, and indirectly (behind one's back) like the shrill cries of crickets by enemies.

When he has exhausted his fund of merit acquired in the previous life, he is (in the process of) dying though physically alive. He runs after (for help, to) those who are as good as dead though living, and whose wealth is not useful to them either in this world (as they do not enjoy it themselves) or in the world hereafter (as they do not use it for charity, and thereby earn merit), and who are

comparable to poisonous trees and creepers like *karaskara*, *kakatunda* and to wells full of poisonous water.

Sometimes, with his mind perverted owing to association with evil persons, he takes to the path of heretics, which leads him to miseries here and hereafter, like falling into the rocky bed of a waterless river.

When he cannot get food for himself even by harassing others, he proceeds to devour even those blades of grass belonging to his father or sons, or to 'eat up' his own father or sons.

Sometimes, he reaches home which is like a forest-conflagration – a home devoid of enjoyable objects, full of a series of miseries. There, scorched with the fire of deep anguish, he becomes extremely depressed in spirit.

To him, wealth is the dearest. It is veritable life itself. Sometimes he is deprived of it by demon-like officers of the king who turn hostile (to him) through change of time. When it happens, he swoons, or appears like a dead man devoid of any symptom of life.

Sometimes, imagining, as real, the unreal appearance of his (deceased) father, grandfather in fulfillment of his desire, he enjoys (a momentary) pleasure as in a dream.

Sometimes, he desires to ascend (perform in a thorough manner) the mountain of extensively detailed duties prescribed for the householder's life. But, with his mind distracted with worldly miseries, he sinks into despondency and feels afflicted like one entering (and traversing) a tract full of thorns and sharp-edged gravel.

Sometimes, his power and energy being sapped by the (gastric) fire (of hunger raging) within his body, he gets angry with the members of his family.

Again, being seized (swallowed) by the boa-constrictor in the form of sleep, and sunk in the blinding darkness (of ignorance), he remains asleep, as if in desolate forest, and he is unconscious of anything else, like a dead body cast off by the relatives.

Sometimes, his larger tooth in the form of his egotism is being broken by venomous reptiles (wicked persons). He does not get sleep even for a moment. His consciousness gets dimmer and dimmer as his heart is (deeply) agitated and disturbed. And like a blind man, he falls in a dark, covered well (of ignorance and misery).

Sometimes, (he is) on the look out for small drops of honey in the form of sensual pleasure. While he is attempting to snatch away another man's wife or property, he is beaten to death by the (men of the) king or the husband (of the

woman) or the master (of the property), and falls into the bottomless unsurmountable hell.

Hence, sages say that *karma* of both forms (whether Vedic or non-Vedic) performed in this (path of *pravrtti*) sows the seeds of future series of births (of the doer).

If he (the *Jiva*) escapes the bondage (punishment meted out by the king, the woman's husband or the master of the property), one Devadatta wrests the prize away from him, and from him Visnumitra (another) takes it away, and so on endlessly. None retains permanently the objects of enjoyment.

And sometimes, incapable of warding off miserable conditions like biting cold winds, and others caused by super-human agencies or by elements (or created by beings), or pertaining to his body, he sinks despondently in unending anxieties.

Sometimes, while transacting business with others, if he deceitfully takes away a petty amount, say, twenty *cowries* or even less than that, he incurs the enmity of others owing to deceitful dealing in money.

On this path (of *pravrtti*), there are these obstacles (financial losses, difficulties, etc) and also other ones such as pleasure and pain, lust and hatred, fear and pride, negligence and madness, delusion and greed, envy and jealousy, insult, hunger and thirst, anxieties and diseases, repeated birth, old age, death and others.

Sometimes, (when) embraced with the creeper-like (tender) arms of the woman who is the *Maya* (deluding divine potency of the Lord) incarnate, he loses his power of judgment and wisdom. He becomes anxious at heart to construct a pleasure-house for her. His heart becomes transported by the (sweet) speech, (affectionate) looks and (winsome) behaviour of his wife, sons, daughters, etc who look to him for protection. Thus, being of uncontrolled mind, he goes to the abysmal hell of blinding darkness.

Sometimes, he gets terrified in his heart at (the thought of) the discus (*kala* – time, death) of the Supreme Ruler, Lord Visnu. (The discus is alternatively designated as Time and consists of divisions beginning from the minutest point to the period covering two *parardha* years (the life-span of god Brahma). With inexorable velocity consisting of ages (childhood, youth, old age), this unwinking (watchful) discus mows down all created beings from god Brahma down to a clump of grass while they are (helplessly) looking on.) But disrespectfully ignoring the Supreme Lord, the presiding deity of sacrifice whose weapon is this eternal discus, Time, he, on the basis of un-authoritative canon of the heretics, resorts to the deities of the heretics which are no better than kites, vultures, cranes on the banyan trees (in extending protection against death) which are discarded in the religion of the *Aryans*.

When he is devastatingly deceived by those heretics who are themselves deluded, he (returns to and) stays within the *Brahmanic* fold.

He, however, does not like their pious way of life, and propitiation of the glorious Lord of sacrifices with acts prescribed in the Veda and *Smrtis* after performance of the thread investiture ceremony. As he is impure (and hence ineligible) to perform duties enjoined by the Veda, he resorts to the *sudra* community which, like the species of monkeys, indulges in copulation and maintenance of the family.

Even in that community, he behaves as he likes, without any restraint. The low-minded man forgets the limit of his (span of) life in vulgar gratification of senses such as looking at the faces of each other (mutually by husband and wife).

Sometimes, he enjoys himself in the householder's life which, like trees, yields pleasures pertaining to this world only. He is fond of children and wife, and like a monkey, he delights in sexual enjoyment.

The allegory to a monkey is in the context of a monkey addicted to sexual enjoyment becomes negligent of its own safety and is caught by the hunter while indulging in that enjoyment on the trees. When once caught, it is unable to get released.

Enjoying and suffering pleasures and pain on the path (of *pravrtti*), he falls into the veritable dark vale of ailments and other calamities, and stays (there) constantly in the fear of the elephant in the form of death.

Sometimes, when incapable of protecting him against innumerable miseries such as heat and cold – miseries caused by supernatural agencies, the elements or creatures or by his own body or mind – he sinks (sits) despondently worrying over endless sense-objects.

Sometimes, entering into business transactions with others, he acquires some wealth through fraudulent monetary dealings.

Sometimes, when his wealth is spent, he becomes destitute of (normal necessities of life such as) a bed, a seat, food, etc. He then makes up his mind to snatch away from others the objects which he covets, but has not succeeded to acquire till then. As such, in due course, he becomes subject to insult and ridicule by the public.

Although their mutual hostility is enhanced by their covetousness for wealth, they enter into matrimonial relations or break them, according to the tendencies resulting from actions of their previous lives.

On this path of *samsara*, if one is afflicted with innumerable sufferings and obstacles and succumbs to calamities or death, one is definitely abandoned

then and there. The others take with them the new-born children. They sometimes weep, fall in a swoon, are afraid, quarrel, cry and are overjoyed, sing and are bound down. They are avoided by saintly people and are thus denied pious company. In this way, they continue to go ahead. This multitude of men (the *Jiva*) has not yet returned to the starting point of this journey (God) which, the sages say, is the terminus of the path (of *samsara*).

For, he who gets knowledge of and takes to the discipline of yoga does not definitely return to the physical world or *samsara*. It is only the meditative persons who have renounced all forms of violence (to all creatures) and are firmly given to self-control (and consequent serenity), and who have detached their minds (from worldly objects), that reach the Supreme (Self).

Even the royal sages, who have conquered the elephants guarding all directions and perform sacrifices, do not attain to it. Asserting their claim to the earth that it is their own and entering into hostilities for it (its possession), they lie dead on the battlefield, leaving their bodies on the earth (claimed by them), and depart. (These do not reach the other end of *samsara*).

Supporting themselves by catching hold of the creeper of *karma* and getting out, with great difficulty, from the miserable hell, they are again present on the way of *samsara*, and rejoin the caravan of men. Similar is the case of men who have gone up to the heaven. (Thus do they sing of Bharata!)

Just as a fly cannot, even in its imagination, soar up along the path of Garuda (high up in the sky), no other king in this world can even mentally follow the path of the high-souled royal sage Bharata, the son of Rishabha.

Even while he was a youth, he longed to serve the Lord of hallowing renown (supreme glory), and abandoned, like excreta, his wife and children, friends and kingdom, so endearing to the heart, and (hence) so difficult to renounce.

It is quite befitting on the part of the King (Bharata) that he did not long for the (kingdom of the) earth, sons, relatives, wealth and wife, so difficult to renounce. Nor did he wish for Sri (the Goddess of Fortune), coveted by great gods, even though She waited for having a gracious look from him. For, in the view of the great (souls) whose minds are devotedly attached to the service of Visnu, even the Final Emancipation is of little account.

At the time of casting off his body as a deer, he (Bharata) nobly praised the Lord thus: ‘Salutations to Lord Hari who is Himself the *yajna* (sacrifice) personified, the defender of righteousness, punctilious observance of scriptural injunctions, yoga incarnate, the head (the ultimate, chief principle) of the *Samkhyas*, the controller of *Prakrti* (the personified Will or *Maya* of the Almighty), and the shelter of all created beings’.

One who faithfully listens to, recites or praises the history of the royal sage Bharata, whose spotless virtues and pure actions are appreciated and eulogized by devotees of the Lord, secures good fortune, long life, riches, renown, and attains to the heaven and Final Beatitude.