

THIS AND THAT

Or

इदम् and तत्



A PRIMER FOR THE FIRST TIME READER
ON THE ANCIENT INDIAN UNDERSTANDING
OF EXISTENCE

BY

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A VIDYA VRIKSHAH PUBLICATION



AUM

IS THE SYMBOL OF
THAT
ETERNAL CONSCIOUSNESS
FROM WHICH SPRINGS

THY
CONSCIOUSNESS OF
THIS

MANIFESTED EXISTENCE
THIS IS THE CENTRAL TEACHING OF THE UPANISHADS
EXPRESSED IN THE MAHAVAKYA OR GREAT APHORISM

तत् त्वं असि

THIS SAYING **TAT TVAM ASI** TRANSLATES AS
THAT THOU ART

FOREWORD

This book, *This and That*, is a wonderful introductory book on the basics of the ancient Indian understanding of existence. It covers all the basics: Space and time, energy, name and form, nature, wisdom, a cosmic vision, who am I?, and the eternal manifest reality. Written primarily for people with little knowledge of ancient Indian thought or the basic tenets of Indian philosophy, it elucidates the fundamentals employing easy to understand insights. The author has rendered what appears difficult in an easily understood way and brought the insights of ancient Indian thought within the reach of all individuals. The time has come when the secretive, esoteric philosophy of India's ancient sages should be made accessible, understandable, and applicable to all individuals, everywhere and this book is to be lauded for advancing that time.

Professor John Grimes

Chennai, Dated : 25-02-2011

Dedicated to
Cornelia
To help her in exploration of the vat realms
of
THIS & THAT

Sanjaya concludes the narration of the Gita thus :

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवो नीतिर्मम

yatra yōgēśvara: kṛṣṇō yatra pārthō dhanurdhara:

tatra śrīrvijayō bhūtirdhruvō nīirmama

Wherever Krishna, the Lord of Yoga and Partha, the Archer are,
There Victory, Success and Justice will ever be, so do I declare.

LIST OF CONTENTS

Preface

Introduction

Chapter 1 The Transient Manifest : idam : इदम्

Chapter 2 Space & Time : ākāśa - kāla : आकाश - काल

Chapter 3 Energy : prāṇa : प्राण

Chapter 4 Name and Form : nāma - rūpa : नाम - रूप

Chapter 5 Nature : prakṛti : प्रकृति

Chapter 6 Knowledge – Wisdom : jñāna - vijñāna : ज्ञान - विज्ञान

Chapter 7 A Cosmic Vision : viśvarūpadarśanam : विश्वरूपदर्शनम्

Chapter 8 Who am I ? : kō'ham : कोऽहम्

Chapter 9 The Eternal Unmanifest : tat : तत्

Annexure Summary of Keywords

PREFACE

The birth and evolution of human thought through human history has been spurred by a constant desire of humans to understand and relate to what they have been observing in the world around them. The growth of thought of different peoples around the world has of course, been conditioned by the mode and manner of their observation and the many practical needs of life that weighed upon them. And while their thinking evolved in many different ways in response to their diverse circumstances, it is interesting to note how their thought patterns shared a considerable measure of commonality. It could be that the human brain is constructed in the same way across the human race and responds to similar circumstances, in largely similar ways. One might nevertheless recognize broad groups in the patterns developed in three broad geographical areas of the world. These are the West, largely centred around Greece and Rome, the Near & Middle East centred around Asia Minor, Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the East encompassing India and China. This grouping may generally be related to geo-political factors in respect of the first two areas, where circumstances of political mobilization and conflict tended to dominate the lives of people. Social stabilization over longer periods of time would account for the evolving of largely peaceful and pastoral societies in the East. This may also account for the evolution of more inclusive, assimilating tendencies in the East and exclusive, conflict-ridden circumstances in the other two areas in their socio-political, religious or philosophic traditions.

It is the basic commonality across these three groups that is fascinating and it would be interesting to consider how this could have come about. The reasons could include a common place of origin of peoples or the diffusion of ideas, practices and speech from different places through migration, travel or trade. But more basically, when the ancients everywhere started looking outwards at the stars and the far depth of space beyond, what they saw left them in awe. They needed then, to relate to and articulate what they saw. This need then led them inevitably to start looking inwards where they found the capacity to reproduce in the mind, what they saw of the external world, not only all of it, but far beyond it, and to settle on words and speech to describe and discuss what they saw or felt. For this, they necessarily had to use whatever names or words their evolving languages offered. And what they so articulated accumulated over time as a large mass of what we consider belief, legend and myth.

Today, we have vastly changed structures of language and meaning, and different experience contexts for our thinking. We therefore have no idea of what the ancients wanted to convey and at best, try to interpret much of what they articulated as allegory wherever a literal understanding was not possible. It is critical, if we are to truly understand them correctly, that we start seeking the real sense of all their word images and usages. It is for this reason that the *Rig Veda*, like many esoteric texts of those times, has remained a closed book for so long and to so many, even to the present day. When the ancient people saw what they could not understand, like thunder and lightning, they gave them names of gods or described them as powers to be feared or adored. Today many are ready to dismiss their physical and oral observations as stuff and nonsense, and we try to explain whatever we see or experience, in terms of the terminology of rational science. Yet while we may have answers in terms of causes and effects, we reach a dead end when we seek causes for the causes. On the concept of cause and effect, the Indian ancients had a word *pañcakāraṇī* (पञ्चकारणी), which presented cause and effect as a never-ending chain, where each link was marked by five stages : first, non-perception of cause and effect, followed by appearance of a cause, followed by appearance of an effect, followed by disappearance of the cause and finally disappearance of the effect. It is perhaps speculation in respect of natural phenomena of this kind that early Science came to be called Natural Philosophy !

The first observations of all peoples at all times are the Sun and the Moon, and how they schedule our days and nights, our seasons, our rains and crops. These phenomena occur with such predictable regularity that they led to the first interest in astronomy and astrology, an interest that was shared by all peoples all the world over, from the earliest times. But it was in an inward search that the Indian ancients went to extraordinary lengths and depths not found in any other of the world's cultures. It was the faculties behind cognition – the memory, the mind, the intellect, the instinct and the consciousness that prompted all activity, that became central to their concerns. The *Rig Veda* may on the face of it, appear as it did to the early Western scholars, as a mass of ritual and superstition, but it did spur a vast later effort to unravel vast insights and stores of knowledge that lay concealed behind its inscrutable language. This included the awesome speculations of the *Upanishads* at the end stage of development of the Vedic corpus. It prompted the later vast mass of the *Vedāngas*, specially the *Shiksha*, the *Nirukta*, the *Vyakarana*, and the *Chandas*. These incisive works probed the whole gamut of linguistics ranging from the originating thought that morphed through sound to letter, syllable, word and sentence to speech as a vehicle of meaning and communication. This was a knowledge structure of such sophistication that led the greatest authority on linguistics of today, Naom Chomsky, to

declare his debt to *Panini* as the first of the world's grammarians, the very founder of linguistic science.

Yet it took a lot of effort and a long time before modern scholars reached such sensitive conclusions. When Western scholars first started studying the ancient Indian texts in the 19th century, they were clearly conditioned by the perspectives that they had gained from their early studies of the growth of Western thought. Those perspectives presented rational thought in Greece as a comparatively recent emergence at the time of Homer and Plato, preceded by a long antiquity marked by myth and superstition. This prompted these scholars to assume that rational thought in India emerged with the *Upanishads* from an antiquity of similar myth and superstition suggested by their literal understanding of the language of the *Rig Veda*. The emphasis on the impressive but ritualistic interpretation of the early Vedic scholars from *Yaska* (6-5th Century BCE) on to *Sayana* (14th Century CE) tended only to establish the ritual in the psyche and way of life of the common people of India, but certainly did not preclude a critical understanding of the inner import of the Vedas on the part of the learned. Clearly the Vedic texts were addressed to different audiences, in terms of outer symbols for the masses and inner meanings for the perceptive few. But the work of these great commentators had the unfortunate consequence of confirming the early Western understanding of the primacy of myth and superstition in the *Rig Veda*. This understanding missed the true significance of the uncompromising insistence on the sanctity of the content of the Veda and the awesome lengths to which generations of early scholars went for ensuring the preservation and transmission of the Vedic texts in all their pristine authenticity over several millennia.

Luckily later scholars, both Indian and Western, have had the benefit of more sophisticated tools for linguistic and cultural studies, and of open minds less constrained by biases that inevitably led to conjectures, assumptions and presumptions. One of the most perceptive contemporary studies has come from the great philosopher-seer Aurobindo. He had the great advantage of an early Western education that gave him a great perception of the evolution of human thought in the cultures of the West against which he could later review the evolution of Indian thought as reflected in the ancient texts of India. He was able then to present the evolution of human thought in a totality across all cultures to give a remarkable insight into the fundamental commonality binding all humanity. A central finding was that human evolution had a continuity behind the apparent discontinuities of language, across geography and across centuries of time. If one found a hiatus in the word usages of languages, it was simply due to changes in the structures of our thought and articulation. These could be unraveled only if we brought an unbiased mind to bear on our study of these processes.

Specifically, Aurobindo started to unravel the meaning of the Rig Veda through its own word usages, emphasizing that words that were considered sacrosanct by scholars of unquestionable integrity over centuries, were not to be taken lightly, and that every effort should be made to discover their true sense, and certainly not dismiss them offhand as nonsense. There were many word usages that had clear and unambiguous meaning, and had a clear psychological import, and these could certainly be used to illuminate the large mass of word usages where the meaning or import was less obvious. Consider the following hymn of the *Rig Veda* :

Rig Veda : VIII-100-11

देवीं वाचमजनयन्त देवास्त्वां विश्वरूपाः पशवो वदन्ति ।

सा नो मन्द्रेषमूर्जं दुहाना धेनुर्वागस्मानुप सुष्टुतैतु ॥

dēvīm vācamajanayanta dēvāstvām viśvarūpā: paśavō vadanti .

sā nō mandrēṣamūrjaṃ duhānā dhenurvāgasmānupa suṣṭutaitu

The gods produced Vak, the goddess of speech; her do animals of every kind utter; may she, Vak, the all-gladdening cow, yielding meat and drink, come to us worthily praised.

This hymn is very clear and explicit in the meaning that it conveys. We see a goddess named *Vak*, presiding over the faculty of speech, giving voice to all living beings. The cow figures here as a power to bring physical and psychological satisfaction, and *Vak* is likened to that power whose support is sought by the supplicant. Like the cow, the horse is another symbol, a symbol of energy, and cows and horses figure all over the *Rig Veda*, and it would be a travesty of interpretation to say that its hymns are no more than a supplication of a primitive people for horses and cows which constituted wealth in ancient pastoral societies. And there are hosts of gods and demons, *Suras* and *Asuras*, that are the dramatis personae of the *Rig Veda*, representing at the same time, the different physical components of the outer world of the cosmos and the psychological components of the inner world of the individual.

Here is another hymn which clearly indicates the *Rig Veda's* central concern with the Mind, that encompasses the inner world of the individual :

Rig Veda : VI-75-6

रथं तिष्ठन्नयति वाजिनः पुरो यत्तयत्र कामयते सुषारथिः ।

अभीशूनां महिमानं पनायत मनः पश्चादनु यच्छन्ति रश्मयः ॥ ६ ॥

ratham tiṣṭhannayati vājinaḥ purō yattayatra kāmayatē suṣārathiḥ .

abhīśūnāṃ mahimānaṃ panāyata manaḥ paścādanu yacchanti raśmayaḥ .. 6 ..

Standing on his chariot, the excellent charioteer leads the horses wherever he wishes. Praise the power of the reins : the ropes follow his mind.

“The word ‘*manas*’ we have met in our *Rig Veda* context,” says the perceptive writer, Frits Staal, “point unmistakably to ‘mind’ as the correct translation. ‘Mind’ is a faculty, an inborn capacity of our species. Thoughts are passing things like the wind”

At this point, I thought it might have some relevance to end this Preface on a personal note to set out the background in which I got involved in the subject matter of this book. I was born in a humble family in Nemam village in the South Indian district of Thanjavur. My grandfather Viswanatha Sastrigal, who was born in the 1870s, followed the ancient family tradition of Vedic studies. The family led a simple, frugal life, supported by a small crop of paddy from land gifted to his forefathers by the Rajahs of Thanjavur. It was the practice then of the rulers or local kings of thus supporting Brahmin scholars. He often walked to the courts of the Rajahs at Tanjavur 30 miles away or Pudukottai 40 miles away to participate in their religious functions and festive activities. When I was a young boy, my grandfather gave me a munificent gift of a couple of coins called 'Amman Kasu' that he had thus received as dakshina, or gift, at Pudukottai, and which I still proudly possess. This tiny copper coin is hardly 12 millimetres in diameter and 12 of these were equal in value to a paisa (or pice), 64 of which made a Rupee in those times of British rule.

One side of the Amman Kasu, as may be seen in the picture below, has the Telugu inscription 'Vijaya', in acknowledgement of Pudukottai having been under the political suzerainty of the Vijayanagar Empire since the 16th century CE. The obverse of the coin holds the beautiful embossed image of Brahadambal, acknowledging as it were, the cosmic suzerainty of that presiding goddess of the Big Temple at Tanjavur. (The temple is called 'Big' because its presiding deities are *Brihad-Iswara* and *Brihad-Ambal*, where '*Brihad*' means 'Big'.)



THE AMMAN KASU

When I was 10 years old I underwent the *Upanyanam* ceremony, designed as a traditional initiation into the study of the *Vedas*. My grandfather taught me to memorize and recite the *Gayathri Mantra* exactly it has been memorized and recited in millions of households, over hundreds of generations through thousands of years. One of the first things we were also taught was to announce our personal identities to elders, tracing our spiritual lineage to our ancient forbears, typically on the following lines :

अभिवाद्ये वैश्वामित्र, आघमर्षण, कौशिक, त्रय- आर्षेय प्रवरान्वित,
(कौशिक) गोत्रः (आपस्तम्ब) सूत्रः, यजुः शाखाध्यायी, श्री (-----) शर्मा
नामाऽहं अस्मि भोः ।

abhivādayē vaiśvāmitra, āghamarṣaṇa, kauśika, traya-
ārṣeya pravarānvita, kauśika gōtra: āpastamba sūtra:, yaju:
śākhādhyāyī, śrī (---- name) śarmā nāmāham asmi bhō:

Bowing to you, Sir, I announce myself as belonging to the spiritual lineage of the three Sages *Viswamitra, Akarshmana and Kausika*, to the family lineage of the *Kausika Gothra* and to the religious disciplines of the *Apastamba Sutra* of the *Yajur Veda*, and I bear the name (so-and-so).

This personal background would not be complete without reference to my maternal grandfather, Natesa Sastrigal. In his time, he was considered of such repute that when the Paramacharya, Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, was first ordained to be the next head of the Kanchipuram Mutt, he was placed under Natesa Sastrigal's tutelage. Decades later, the Paramacharya was to tell me how he learnt the Mimamsa texts from my grandfather. The point that I wish to make here is to emphasize how the ancient culture fostered a spread and depth of learning where many a village was a virtual university that produced scholars of vast merit in large numbers. Our new generations coming out of the universities of today should pause to consider the methods of the family homes that constituted the schools of those times and the vast number of scholars they produced !

A narration of all these details here is also intended to point out how we should see ourselves as heirs to an ancient tradition founded by those Sages several millennia ago. This tradition lives vividly in the psyche and lives of the people of India to this day. It is this awesome tradition that this book seeks to sketch through some keywords of the mind-boggling texts of its great scriptures composed by those Sages. *Aum*, *Tat* and *Tvam* are the first three keywords with which this book opens that may be considered to hold the key to the sanctum sanctorum of that awe-inspiring temple, the Vedas, that constitute the foundation of the ancient scriptures of India.

I would like to conclude at this point to acknowledge the help I have received from my nephew Rajeshwar, who not only provided me with a selection of keywords that would serve the purpose of this book, but also for his careful reading of the final text to ensure its accuracy and whether that purpose has indeed been served. Whatever errors and omissions remain are of course, entirely mine.

And finally I would like to thank John Grimes for contributing a gracious foreword to this book

N.Krishnaswamy

Chennai : 1st July, 2011

INTRODUCTION

This & That : *Idam* and *Tat* : इदम् and तत्

THIS AND THAT would surely strike the first time reader, as an unusual title for a book. A brief explanation here would perhaps help, especially when the book cover shows the title juxtaposed above the sacred *OM* symbol. 'This' and 'That' are the English words for the Sanskrit 'Idam' and 'Tat'

इदम् and तत्

that represent two levels of existence, the Transient and the Eternal, as envisaged by the ancient Indian scriptures.

We clearly need to start with a simpler explanation, if this book is to be truly a primer as intended, for the First Time Reader. We may therefore start with the simplest possible description given in school grammar, of This and That as a pair of demonstrative pronouns of the English language. The pronoun is a word that can be used in the place of a noun in any sentence. And of course, a noun itself is the name of any person, place or thing. A demonstrative pronoun points to something here or there, something nearby that is describable, or something distant, that might be indefinable. It is in this sense that ancient Indian Scriptures use the words This and That. The scriptures tell us many things about This and That, built around concepts of spirituality, metaphysics and philosophy that are not easy to understand or explain. These are therefore presented here as far as possible in contexts of practical experience or relevance, and with unabashed oversimplification of the complex or even bypassing of the esoteric, that might otherwise frighten the first time reader away.

When the ancients started looking outwards into the far depths of space beyond the stars, they had to invoke the higher reaches of their faculties of thought and sight, those of imagination and insight, to visualize and understand whatever they could not physically see but clearly existed there. That vision of a vast Infinity left them speechless figuratively, in awe, and literally, because they could not find words to describe what they could only vaguely sense but not see. On the other hand, peering into the inner depths of material things that they could see and even physically handle, they saw the finite diminishing in size towards the Infinitely small. From the point where the observer stood, space thus seemed to extend in all directions inwards and outwards in what mathematicians today express as "tending to Zero or Infinity", or in symbols as

0 ←→ ∞

For describing the totality of Existence that could only be imagined, occupying all of Infinity in Space and Eternity in Time, the ancient seers

could only find the word “*Tat*”, meaning “*That*”. On the other hand, they found that only part of existence could be both physically seen or cognized, but nevertheless was itself quite vast, complex and mind-boggling, almost it seemed, co-terminous with That. For want a single word to describe this, they settled on the word “*Idam*”, meaning “*This*”. It followed from this, that ‘This’ was part of ‘That’. This play on words is of course, unintended.

The ancient Rishis who had a over-arching vision spreading all the way from across the limited reaches of This to the limitless reaches of That, set out their insights and responses for the benefit of humanity in the *Vedas*. These were expressed in hymns in Sanskrit, some short, some long. For its sublimity of thought the composers presented the *Rig Veda* in poetry; for the descriptions of ritualistic activities of the *Yajur Veda*, they lapsed into prose; and for aesthetic appeal of the *Sama Veda* they broke into song. The hymns were often abstruse and esoteric and largely metaphoric, because words were simply inadequate to convey much of what they saw. But often too, the hymns were simple and beautiful such as when they described the Dawn as the Goddess *Ushas*, in a description reminiscent of the Aurora Borealis : a fact that led Bal Magadha Tikal to consider it as coming from a racial memory that suggested an Arctic origin for the race from which those Seers may have descended.

Most of the Vedic hymns addressed the vast forces of Nature as gods and goddesses that controlled the Cosmos and as a multi-faceted Manifestation of One Single Ultimate Supreme that was Unmanifest. The furthest that the Seers attempted to go in referring to that Reality was limited to a few hymns, because it could not be comprehended by all but a few gifted seers, and all that that they could do was just to point to, or give a glimpse of that Reality but without being able to describe It.

It is only towards the end of the Vedic corpus, in the *Upanishads*, that we begin to see a more concerned and concerted effort to present the Manifested Existence against the perspective of the Ultimate Unmanifest Reality. Here the picture is presented by the Guru to the pupil whose crucial questions, in effect are : What is my place and role in this vast Existence ? In short, Who am I. And the Guru’s repeated answer is “*Tat Tvam Asi*”, meaning “*You are THAT*”. Here, ‘Tvam’ or ‘You’ refers, not just to the pupil, but to all of us who pose the same question. These words occur in the *Chandogya Upanishad* in an interesting discussion of far-reaching significance between the Sage *Uddalaka Aruni* and his son *Svetaketu*. With several examples the Sage explains to his son how all that exists and is perceived, ultimately comes from one essence, one Truth, that cannot be so perceived. He bids his son to bring him a fruit from the nearby banyan tree, break it open and see what is inside. When *Svetaketu*

does so, and says he finds small seeds, the sage bids him break one seed and see what is inside. *Svetaketu* does so, he says he finds nothing in it.

The Sage then explains that it is not nothing, but something that cannot be seen – it is a subtle essence from which springs the seed, and ultimately grows into the big tree that they behold. It is not ‘nothing’, says the Sage, it is something for which we use the word ‘That’, simply because we have no word that can ever describe it. It is not ‘nothing’ that leads to the seed and the tree, continues the Sage, but something that leads to all that exists, including you and me. The words “*Tat Tvam Asi*” or “That Thou Art”, with which the Sage concludes several examples, are words described as the *mahā vākya*, (महा वाक्य) or Great Saying, that echoes down the ages, representing its highest wisdom offered by India. The *Chandogya Upanishad* verse (6.8.7) reads thus in Sanskrit :

स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वतकेतो
इति भूय एव मा भगवान्विज्ञापयत्विति तथा सोम्येति होवाच ।।
sa ya eṣo’ṇimaitadātmyamidam sarvaṁ tatsatyam sa ātmā tattvamasī
śvatakakētōna iti bhūya mā bhagavānvijñāpayatviti tathā sōmyēti
hōvāca

The Guru’s answer “You are That”. is perhaps the most profound answer that has arisen from the mind of Man in all of human history. Its vast implications are set out here in steps that take you, the reader, all the way from “This” in the first Chapter to “That” in last Chapter of this book.

Much of the Vedas address how the common people, bound by the compulsions of the Manifested Existence could relate to and cope with their compulsions, through the simple processes of ritual and sacrifice, while leaving the higher implications of what lay beyond, to the speculations of the learned few. Our own understanding is conditioned not only by our experiences but also the experiences of our forbears, recorded in these vast and ancient texts that form our sacred inheritance. If we do not understand all that they teach us, then surely we remain steeped in poverty despite the phenomenal riches of that inheritance.

A small number of Sanskrit verses have been cited in this book. On the other hand a larger collection of Keywords have been cited and threaded into this narrative with explanations that readers will find simple and easy to understand as they traverses the topics in this book, all the way from THIS to THAT. Each Verse and Keyword is presented in Sanskrit and transliterations and translations in English. These will give the reader a feel of the sound and meter of the text and the depth and quality of the thought that they articulated. For convenience and ready reference, notes on all the cited Keywords are summarized in an Annexure at the end of this book.

CHAPTER 1 : THIS : THE TRANSIENT MANIFEST : *IDAM* : इदम्

It would be appropriate to begin an explanation of *Idam* with an explanation of *Tattva*, (तत्त्व) (1), the elemental principles that constitute *Idam*. The word *Tattva* bears a profound significance. At the direct literal level, the first syllable of this word is *Tat* which means THAT, the ultimate eternal Reality, also referred to as Brahman. The second syllable is *Tva*, which means THOU, and refers to the spark of that Reality that illumines your transient physical existence, within the framework of this worldly existence, which is usually referred to by the word *Idam*, meaning THIS. Thus it is this duality of THAT and THIS, that accounts for the totality of existence, of Reality, as it is presented to our Consciousness in its Absolute and Relative forms.

At a deeper level, the word *Tattva* means Principle, or Element or Component, and in this sense, we get the magnificent integrated vision of the totality of all Existence, in terms of the fundamental, elemental principles of which all Existence is constituted. The widely accepted Kashmir Saiva tradition conceives of a total of 36 *Tattvas* describing the emergence from *Siva*, the Absolute, Unmanifest state, through progressive manifestation, from a spiritual state to the ultimate psychological and physical entities that comprise worldly existence. Implicit in that outward path of Evolution, is also the return inward path of Involution, from the physical through the spiritual stages back to the Absolute state. The 36 *Tattvas*, which are listed below, fall within the three broad categories :

- (a) The *ásuddha Tattvas* (अशुद्ध) or Impure physical level, resting on the material, sensorial, the organs of action, the mind and the ego, the domain of objectivity and duality;
- (b) The *śuddhāśuddha Tattvas*, (शुद्धाशुद्ध) or Pure-Impure transitional level of the soul within limitations, the domain of knowledge; and
- (c) The *śuddha Tattvas* (शुद्ध) or Pure *Tattvas* (internal aspects of the Absolute) being the domain of [transcendental](#) unity and non-differentiation.

1 – 5 : The five *mahābhūtas* (महाभूत) (2)

1. *prithvī* (पृथिवी) (3) - earth
2. *jala* (जल) (4) - water
3. *tējas* (तेजस) (5) - fire
4. *vāyu* (वायु) (6) - air
5. *ākāśa* (आकाश) (7) - ether

6 – 10 : The five *tanmātras* (तन्मात्र) - (8) transit media of the five senses

6. gandha (गन्ध) (9) - the transit medium for smell 7. rasa (रस) (10) - the transit medium for taste 8. rūpa (रूप) - (11) the transit medium for sight 9. sparsā (स्पर्शा)- (12) - the transit medium for touch 10. śabda (शब्द) (13) - the transit medium for hearing.

11 – 15 : The five karmēndriyas (कर्मेन्द्रिय) (14) - organs of action

11. pāyu (पायु) (15) - the excretion organ 12. upastha (उपस्थ) (16) - the sexual organs 13. pāda (पाद) (17) - the organ of locomotion 14. pāni –(पाणि) (18) hand, the organ of holding 15. vāk –(वाक्) (19) the organ of speech

16 – 20 : The five jñānēndriyas (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय) (20) - sense organs

16. ghrāṇa (घ्राण) (21) - nose 17. rasanā (रसना) (22)- tongue 18. caṅṅsu (चक्षु) (23) - eye 19. tvak –(त्वक्) (24) - skin 20. śrotra (श्रोत्र) (25) - ear

21 – 25 : Antaḥkaraṇa (अन्तःकरण) (26) - the inner instruments of cognition

21. manas (मनस) (27) - the lower mind 22. ahaṅkāra (अहंकार) (28) - the empirical ego 23. buddhi (बुद्धि) (29) - the intellect 24. prakṛti (प्रकृति) (30) - nature 25. puruṣa (पुरुष) (31)– soul

26 – 31 : Ṣaṭ kañcukas (षट्चक) (32) – Factors imposing limitations

26. niyati (नियति) (33) - spatial limitation 27. kāla (काल) (34) - limitation in time 28. rāga (राग) (35) - the limitation of desire 29. vidyā (विद्य) (36)- the limitation of empirical knowledge 30. kalā (कला) (37) - limitation in power 31. māyā (माया) (38)- the origin of illusion and duality

32 – 36 : *Śuddha tattvas* ((शुद्धतत्त्व) (39)

32. *śuddha vidyā* (शुद्धविद्य) (40) - higher knowledge 33. *īśvara* (ईश्वर) (41) - God
34. *sadāśiva* (सदाशिव) (42) – Eterna Blss 35. *śakti* (शक्ति) (43)- Creative Power – the
Mother principle 36. *śiva* (शिव) (44) – the Ultimate Reality

The reader should pause at this point to reflect on which other scripture, tradition or culture gives such an integrated, panoramic view of the Evolution and Involution of all Existence.

The starting point of this manifested existence, then, is Consciousness or *Cit* (चित्) (45) which may be considered our inaugural Keyword of this book. It is this *Cit* that prompts our very first assertion “I am”, recalling the assertion from a different context and a later culture, of Descartes, “I think, therefore I am”. Thinking leads us directly to our next Keyword *Manas* (मनस्) or Mind, that instrument of thought that tries to appropriate the role of *Cit* to itself. In practical terms, whatever exists, whether inside or outside of our physical body, cannot mean anything to us, if it is not first comprehended by the Mind. While Descartes places the origin of Existence in the Mind, he does not go back far enough as the Indian ancients did, like the sage *Uddalaka Aruni*, who set the more fundamental level of an Eternal Consciousness as the ultimate origin of all Existence and enshrined this insight in the *Chandogya Upanishad's mahā vākya*, (46) the Great Saying “Tat Tvam Asi”.

All that we see, hear, feel or sense in any way get registered in the Mind, and get analysed and stored in its enormous memory bank, along with word labels to identify them and facilitate their later retrieval. And every experience is similarly stored away, linked with old labels or assigned new labels, the world of *nāma-rūpa*, or Name and Form (नाम रूप) (47), to create a phenomenal and ever-expanding data base in our memory. All existence then, whether external or internal, forms a virtual continuum, and it is all this that constitutes *Idam*. But be it remembered that while *Idam* is a vast totality of empirical and relative Existence, a partial Reality, it remains but part of an absolute Existence, an Ultimate Reality called *Tat*.

Our need is not just to remember all this, but to understand what all this means. Our need is for knowledge and it is this that the Vedas seek to provide. The word *Veda* comes from *Vid*, which means to know, and this also points to its cognate *Vidya*, which also means Knowledge. *Veda* may talk of gods and powers, but does not proclaim itself to be a religion, much less to be *aupuruṣēya* (औपुरुषेय) (48) something originating from divine sources, or to *Sruti*, (श्रुति) (49) something

heard from divine sources. Sruti may have originally meant no more than what was heard by the son from the father who transmitted the wisdom orally. These epithets were conferred on the *Vedas* by later texts and traditions which explained or interpreted the *Vedas* and were clearly inspired by the profundity of their intent and content. But ultimately, the content and intent of the *Vedas* is Knowledge.

The Rishis set out whatever was known or knowable in the *Vedas* in the form of the *Mantra*. (मन्त्रा) (50). This word is derived from *Manas*, meaning the Mind and word *Tra*, meaning that which protects or preserves, and together meaning that which protects or preserves and empowers the mind. The Mind thus occupies a position of critical importance in the *Vedas*, a gateway between the inner and outer world of man. The *Mantras* needed to be memorized and recited along with a physical performance of the *yajña* (यज्ञ) (51), or sacrificial ritual that would protect or preserve the physical well-being of the performer. The *yajña* was an activity that emphasized a giving or a giving up of something in return for a blessing of some kind, usually in those days, in the form of health and wealth, or cows which gave them both, or sons who would protect them in their old age. Here then, one sees the dual intent and content of The *Vedas*, one aspect addressed the inner world of the learned few through knowledge and the other, the outer world of the vast masses through simple activity.

The intent of the *Mantra* of course went far beyond the simpler levels of empirical knowledge in the reaches of the Mind. It addressed not just *jñāna* (ज्ञान), (52) knowledge that is known, but also *jñēya* (ज्ञेय) (53), knowledge that is to be known, And the ancients prescribed the discipline of *Dhyana* (ध्यान) or Meditation, to access the higher level of the Mind, the Discriminating Intellect, called the *Buddhi* (बुद्धि). It would be interesting to note in this context the Universal Mother's name in the *Lalitha Sahasranamam dhyāna dhyātr dhyēya svarūpiṇi* (ध्यान-यातृ-ध्येय-स्वरूपिणी) (54-55-56), meaning the personifications of the Act of Meditation, the Person Meditating and the Object Meditated. The Mother is thus seen to be the Creator of all *This* (इदम्). This brings into focus at once, another set of Her names One : *icchā śakti jñāna śakti kriyā śakti* (इच्छा-शक्ति ज्ञान-शक्ति क्रिया-शक्ति), (57-58-59) standing for the Motive power of the Will, the power of the generated Thought and the power of the resulting Activity. One now sees how many profound concepts are woven into the warp and weft of the awesome fabric of the ancient Indian texts to explain all of *Idam*. And we also see now the connectivity of all these concepts to a single source, the *Cit*, the Consciousness. How the *Cit* becomes the source of

every facet of *Idam* will become clear through the Chapters that follow, when they are all seen to emerge from and finally merge back into the *Tat*.

CHAPTER 2 : SPACE AND TIME : *ākāśa* - *kāla* : आकाश - काल

An ancient Indian understanding is that the total context of human conscious existence is set in a framework provided by Space and Time : *ākāśa* (आकाश) (1) and *kāla* (काल) (2) . The transient human Mind, *manas* (मनस), was aware of a higher eternal consciousness which illumined it, yet had to provide a finite context in which finite physical existence could function. This led the Mind to construct within itself a virtual world which was a complete replica of the external physical with the physical senses providing the channels of communication between these inner and outer worlds, to seemingly and seamlessly merge into a single entity. At the same time the Mind was also aware that its finite frame work of Space and Time were but of an Infinite framework where Space and Time themselves stretched out into Infinity and Eternity, which were but aspects of that Ultimate One Existence, *Tat*.

The ancient Indian understanding of all Existence was therefore, that the finite Manifest is but a part of an Infinite Unmanifest. The approach of Western Science was to constantly endeavour to observe the external world with the physical senses, and probe beyond their physical limitations with physical aids, the microscope to probe the atom, and the telescope to probe the cosmos. Science has calibrated Time and Space and Time with tiny units like the nano-second and huge units like the light-year. Yet for an inner ultimate understanding of all that he observed or imagined beyond what he could observe, the individual had inevitably to return to himself, or rather his inner self.

The Indian ancients too were scientists of a sort, no less than their modern counterparts, though in a different framework. In their uncompromising search for truth, when they could not physically see or sense beyond a point, in their physical explorations of the external world, they were able to visualize what lay beyond, with the Mind and its higher faculties of insight, intuition and instinct. While Einstein proposes a grand integration of the physical world, the world of Physics, the Indian ancients envisaged an integration of the physical world into the infinite world of Metaphysics, embracing every aspect and dimension of the totality of all existence. While modern science has attempted to understand and relate to the totality of Nature, the Indian ancients sought to understand the totality of both Nature and Human Nature and provide a framework where man could set his life into a more meaningful and enduring relationship with the larger existence of which he was a transient part.

The Indian ancients had a very realistic sense of what Infinity or Reality meant when, in the Shukla Yajur Veda, they offered the following vision :

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ōm pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyatē .

pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamēvāvaśiṣyatē ..

Om ! THAT is perfect. THIS too is perfect. From THAT is THIS born. Yet THAT remains undiminished.

A delimitation of Space gives us the Cosmos, and progressively within that, the Universe, and the Earth. The first attribute of Space and Time is Size expressed in units of measure. A basic measure is length in one direction, length and breadth in two directions in one plane making for area, and length, breadth and height on two planes making for volume. And when we need to quantify measure, we come up with the need to express to quantity in numbers. We are of course familiar with the Decimal system of numbers, perhaps first suggested by our use of the 10 fingers to count. There are other numbering systems too, like the Binary system that has acquired widespread use in the context of computers and communications. One property of numbers is that with a repetitive addition of 1 to a small finite number, you can increase its size endlessly, or as the mathematicians would say, till it tends to infinity. This property, called recursion, of finite symbols leading to infinite combinations is interestingly a feature that is seen in a number of different contexts of experience. The 7 frequencies of sound in an octave, give rise to an endless variety in music, and even so, a finite number of words in any language give rise to an infinite volume of sentences bearing different meanings. But the dividing line between noise and melody in music or between sense and nonsense in language, is whether they convey anything that the listener can appreciate or understand.

Thus one sees at once that while the eye can see the Finite, the inner eye of the mind can visualise the Infinite. The ancient Seers were so named as they saw everything with this faculty of higher vision . And with this, they were able to see vast vistas of the cosmos. The Bhagavata Purana describes the cosmos as the *brahmāṇḍa* (ब्रह्माण्ड) (3) or the Golden Egg first created by the Lord, and which after lying in the cosmic waters for a thousand years, was broken by Him into fourteen worlds known as *virāṭa* (विराट) (4).

The first seven were higher worlds, or levels of existence, called *bhū: bhūva: suva: maha: jana: tapa: satyam* (भूः, भुवः, सुवः, महः, जनः, तपः सत्यं). (5 to 11). The first three which refer to the Earth, the *antarikṣa* (अन्तरिक्ष) (12) or the Mid-Space and Heaven were relevant to human existence and the last four were higher worlds comprising the domain of the divine. Yet all the seven states of existence reach down into the human personality as a psycho-physical spectrum of *sat, cit, ānanda, vijñāna, manasa, prāṇa* and *anna* (सत् , चित् , आनन्द, विज्ञान, मनस, प्राण and अन्न) (13 to 19) which translate as Truth, Consciousness, Bliss, Discrimination, Mind, Energy and Food.

It may be noted in this connection that the names of the first worlds, referred to as the *vyāhrtis*, are generally used when invoking the *Gayathri Mantra* of the *Rig Veda* (V-62-100) which continues to be recited to this day in millions of Hindu households. The mantra as reproduced with its translation below shows the centrality of the role of Mind in man's relating to all existence :

ॐ भूः ॐ भुवः ॐ सुवः ॐ सत्यं .: *ōm bhū: ōm bhūvaḥ ōm suvaḥ ōm satyam*

तत् सवितुः वरेण्यम् : *tat savituh: varēṇyam*

भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि : *bhargō dēvasya dhīmahi*

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् : *dhiyō yō naḥ pracōdayāt*

We meditate upon the effulgence of that Divine Reality. May that Divine Being, the Sun, illuminate our intellect to realize That Reality.

While seven worlds are listed as the higher worlds, likened to heaven, the remaining seven are considered to be lower ones, likened to hell. These latter bear the names *atala, vitala, sutala, rasātala, talātala, mahatala* and *pātāla* (अतल, वितल, सुतल, रसातल, तलातल, महतल and पाताल) (20 to 26). They are peopled by demons and evil spirits and fallen humans, and would seem to reflect the baser elements and influences in human nature.

In existence, Space is inseparable from Time, as if to reaffirm the fundamental truth that True Existence is One that is indivisible. This is just what Albert Einstein has reaffirmed from the perspectives of Modern Science. The Cosmos provides finite slots of time to help us cope with the compulsions of existence. It prescribes a periodicity for the Sun, Moon and Stars that serve as time keepers for both humans of this world and the gods of the other worlds. The Earth itself functions both as a clock and calendar. Spinning around its own axis, it provides day and night and the hours that comprise them. The Earth gets its months from the Moon and seasons and years from the Sun. And when we find that the skew of the Earth's axis of rotation takes 25800 years to complete a full circle – causing the phenomenon called Precession of the Equinoxes – we begin to see how the Indian Ancients envisaged a much larger cosmic time scale in terms of units called kalpa, manvantara, mahāyuga and yuga (कल्प, मन्वन्तर, महायुग and युग) (27 to 30). One day or night in the life of *Brahma* makes one *Mahayuga* which lasts four *Yugas* on this cosmic time scale which correspond to 4,320,000,000 years on the human time scale !

The relativity of these terrestrial and cosmic time scales are illustrated in the following charming story from the *Bhagavata Purana* of a character who traversed the vast time span of the first 27 *Mahayugas* of the current *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. Kakudmi was a king who lived on earth in the *Satya Yuga* of the first *Mahayuga* of the current *Manvantara*. Searching for a good match for his beautiful daughter Revati, he went to *Brahma Loka*, the world of Brahma, to get his advice. There, he had to wait for around 20 minutes (on the cosmic scale) for Brahma to return from watching a dance performance. Seeing him, Brahma told Kakudmi that during this period of his waiting, 27 *Mahayugas* had already elapsed on earth. If he (Kakudmi) were to return now, he would find people on the earth enjoying the avatar of Krishna. In addition, he would also find in Krishna's brother Balarama, the right match for his daughter. Kakudmi followed Brahma's advice and thus it was that Revati came to be married to Balarama. Could this be true or was it just science fiction of that day ?

This story illustrates at once how the reaches of the human mind is able to scan and span all of Space and Time all the way from the Finite to the Infinite, and is directly interpreted by the ancient Indian seers as evidence of Existence or True Reality as one single undivided continuum. We can now proceed to examine how *prāṇa*, the primordial Energy in its vast, vital and versatile forms begins to manifest in countless forms within this finite framework of Space and Time.

CHAPTER 3 : ENERGY : *prāṇa* : प्राण

While Space and Time provide a physical framework for manifestation in different forms of Existence, there is need for a third component that now becomes essential for generating and supporting all activity in that framework. This component is *prāṇa* (प्राण) (1), often translated as life-breath, or vital energy, but it will be adequate to refer to it as just Energy, in a generic sense, which manifests in several specific forms for specific functions. Activities arising from the play of energy in the framework of Space and Time would seem to make the first step in all Manifestation. The three Names of the Lalita Sahasranamam : *ichha śakti* (इच्छा-शक्ति) (2), *jñana śakti* (ज्ञान-शक्ति) (3) and *kriya śakti* (क्रिया-शक्ति) (4) which personify Her as the *Prana* source of Will, Knowledge and Action are vivid examples of the working of *Prana* in the generation of Existence

Energy, whether it takes the form of heat, light or sound that is perceptible to our physical senses or other forms that are accessible to physical equipment, has of course, to manifest itself in space and subject to the constraints of time. The interesting thing about Energy is that all of its forms spring from one fundamental element, that manifest in two states now recognized by modern Science : the particle and the wave. As a particle it can aggregate progressively into matter in the three states of solid, liquid or gas, and as a wave, it can proliferate into frequencies that can propagate through space at various speeds, slow, in the case of heat and sound, and near instantaneous, in the case of light, electricity or electro-magnetism.

When energy manifests as a particle, it starts aggregating into atoms of more than 100 elements of which all matter known to us is comprised. Some elements are called inorganic, and others, organic. The latter, comprised mainly of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen along with smaller quantities of other elements, aggregate into molecules of bewildering complexity that are called organic, as they acquire the functionality of organs of growth, that characterises living matter. This perspective is beautifully described in the story from the *Chandogya Upanishad*, recounted earlier in this book, with the example of the invisible spark of *Prana* or life energy in the seed that grows ultimately into the huge banyan tree.

Prana in its wave form of various frequencies fall largely into what is called the electromagnetic [spectrum](#). This is comprised of a continuous range of frequencies or wavelengths of electromagnetic [radiation](#), ranging

from long wavelength, low energy radio waves to short wavelength, high **frequency**, high-energy gamma rays. The electromagnetic spectrum is traditionally divided into regions of **radio** waves, microwaves, infrared radiation, visible **light**, ultraviolet rays, **x rays**, and gamma rays. Frequency is defined as the number of wave cycles that pass a particular point per unit of **time**, and is commonly measured in Hertz or cycles per second. Wavelength defines the **distance** between adjacent crests of a wave.

The Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell's (1831–1879) developed a set of mathematical equations that accurately described electromagnetic phenomena, allowed the mathematical and theoretical unification of electrical and magnetic phenomena and enabled calculation of the speed of light that could be experimentally verified. Other physicists soon realized that visible light should be a part of a broader electromagnetic spectrum containing forms of electromagnetic radiation that varied from visible light only in terms of wavelength and wave frequency. In 1888, the German physicist Henrich Rudolph Hertz demonstrated the existence of radio waves and this was followed a decade later by Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery of high-energy electromagnetic radiation in the form of x-rays which quickly found practical medical use. At the beginning of the twentieth century, German physicist, Maxwell Planck, proposed that **atoms** absorb or emit electromagnetic radiation only in bundles of energy termed quanta. In his work on the **photoelectric effect**, German-born American physicist Albert Einstein used the term **photon** to describe these electromagnetic quanta. Planck's work established a mathematical figure, named after him as Planck's constant, which relates the energy of a photon to the frequency of the electromagnetic wave and allows a precise calculation of the energy of electromagnetic radiation in all portions of the electromagnetic spectrum.

The region of the electromagnetic spectrum that contains light at frequencies and wavelengths that stimulate the inner nerve endings of the human **eye** is termed the visible region of the electromagnetic spectrum with different parts of it recognized as colour. A nanometer (10^{-9} m) is the most common unit used for characterizing the wavelength of visible light. The following table summarizes the range and relationship of frequency, wavelength and energy across the electromagnetic spectrum.

| Region | Frequency (Hz) | Wavelength (m) | Energy (eV) |
|---------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Radio waves | $< 10^9$ | > 0.3 | $< 7 \times 10^{-7}$ |
| Microwaves | $10^9 - 3 \times 10^{11}$ | 0.001 - 0.3 | $7 \times 10^{-7} - 2 \times 10^{-4}$ |
| Infrared | $3 \times 10^{11} - 3.9 \times 10^{14}$ | $7.6 \times 10^{-7} - 0.001$ | $2 \times 10^{-4} - 0.3$ |
| Visible | $3.9 \times 10^{14} - 7.9 \times 10^{14}$ | $3.8 \times 10^{-7} - 7.6 \times 10^{-7}$ | 0.3 - 0.5 |
| Ultraviolet | $7.9 \times 10^{14} - 3.4 \times 10^{16}$ | $8 \times 10^{-9} - 3.8 \times 10^{-7}$ | 0.5 - 20 |
| X-rays | $3.4 \times 10^{16} - 5 \times 10^{19}$ | $6 \times 10^{-12} - 8 \times 10^{-9}$ | $20 - 3 \times 10^4$ |
| Gamma Rays | $> 5 \times 10^{19}$ | $< 6 \times 10^{-12}$ | $> 3 \times 10^4$ |

If we now move on to a consideration of sound, we find this is also characterised by its own spectrum of frequencies, but these are of physical vibrations in the air around us, that are not electromagnetic in

character. An audio frequency (abbreviation: AF), is characterized as a periodic vibration whose [frequency](#) is audible to the average human. While the range of frequencies that any individual can hear is largely related to environmental factors, the generally accepted standard range of audible frequencies is 20 to 20,000 [hertz](#) (Hz). Frequencies below 20 Hz can usually be felt rather than heard, assuming the [amplitude](#) of the vibration is high enough. Frequencies above 20,000 Hz can sometimes be sensed by young people, but high frequencies are the first to be affected by [hearing loss](#) due to age and/or prolonged exposure to very loud noises

| Frequency (Hz) | Octave | Description |
|----------------|--------|--|
| 16 to 32 | 1st | The human threshold of feeling. |
| 32 to 512 | 2 - 5 | Rhythm frequencies, of lower and upper bass notes. |
| 512 to 2048 | 6 - 7 | Defines human speech intelligibility. |
| 2048 to 8192 | 8 - 9 | Presence in speech, in labial and fricative sounds. |
| 8192 to 16384 | 10 | Sounds of bells & cymbals. In speech, the letter "S" |

We have seen that the Mind constructs within itself a complete simulation, a complete working composite model, of both the internal and external world in order to enable the individual to interact meaningfully and almost contiguously and instantaneously in both these environments. Such interaction is made possible by the channels and instruments of his five senses, with the two levels of cognition and its instruments being named *jñānēndriya* (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय) (5) and *karmēndriyas* (कर्मेन्द्रिय) (6). What is important to note here is that the apparent diversity of the external world merges into a single composite existence within the mind, with no dividing boundaries between the different sensory experiences that merge into a single cognition and consciousness in the mind. Without losing sight of this perspective, we may now have a closer analytical look at the way the sensory channels and instruments function and not let them, as the Indian ancients would have it, take us for a ride and lose our true integrated selves to splinter into a world of multiplicity, a world of duplicity, where all is not what they seem to be. More specifically, we now see how sound and image merge in the mind and generate a word to identify the mental record. We see now the origins of a new faculty of great power : the power of speech. We are now indeed at the threshold of the new world of *nāma rūpa* (नाम रूप) (7), the world of Name and Form, that links the internal world of the Mind with the external world of the Object.

Chapter 4 : Name and Form : *nāma rūpa* : नाम - रूप

Words are the only jewels I possess
Words are the only clothes that I wear
Words are the only food that sustains my life
Words are the only wealth I distribute among people
Says Tuka, witness the Word : He is God
I worship Him with my words
--- Tukaram (1608-1650)

Sound, in the ancient Indian tradition, was considered to be the first manifestation of an infinite and eternal existence, the vital energy or *prāṇa* (प्राण) (1), in a finite form, bound by space and time. To state this in simpler terms, the vital energy that gave life to man, also created a thought in his mind. That in turn generated sound in his mouth, which took the form first, of just sounds, and later of words. The energy initiated a vibration of the vocal chords, which manifested as a simple, tonal frequency. Changes in the levels of energy created tones of more frequencies. The frequencies themselves fell into pleasing intervals that ultimately constituted the octave of music. The octave had the added charm of harmony with each higher or lower octave. Without the burden of words and meaning, it created the world of music. It should be no surprise that while the Rig Veda built around word and meaning, the Sama Veda was built around sound and music ! And it was inevitable that Time, seen in the rhythm and duration of breathing should soon regulate these vibrations in the spaces of the vocal passage, and regulate the meter of poetry and Raga and Tala, the melody and rhythm of music ! The stage was set for man not only to receive but originate and transmit sound as song and speech, through which knowledge and experience could be shared and disseminated. Here then was an assignment of words to represent everyone and everything, an emergence of the world of *nāma rūpa* (नाम रूप) (2), the world of Name and Form. Be it remembered that Name and Form are an inseparable pair of internal representations in the mind of the external physical world. Be it remembered too that the Stotras, especially the Sahasranamas, the ancient compilations of a thousand Names and Forms of each of several deities, was a simple way of getting the highest of ideas, ideals and values of existence, internalized in the minds of the last mass of common people. .

From the tones that carried no meaning, to words that carried meaning was but a short step, accomplished by energy applied to the different anatomical structures of the mouth. The first sound when the mouth was opened became quite naturally, the sound of the letter A or its equivalent in all languages. As the mouth started closing, the sound morphed into the sound of the letter U. And when the mouth was closed the sound became the closing sound of the letter M. If continued, this sound could become the hum that retained its relationship to music ! Here then was the articulation of the first word "AUM" proclaimed by the *Vedas* as the very first manifestation of the Divine through Sound as the Word ! Of course, the mouth continued to use the different parts of its anatomical structure to give further shapes and stresses to create more sounds. It used the throat, palate, tongue, teeth and lips to create the guttural, cerebral, palatal dental and labial consonants that could then create the basic components of speech, now common to virtually every language spoken by man.

At a level of structural detail, the Indian ancients developed the alphabet in terms of the syllable called the *akṣara* (अक्षर) (3) or “imperishable” unit of sound, comprised of the *vyamjana* (व्यंजन) (4) or consonant and the *svara* (स्वर) (5) or vowel. Interestingly, in Tamil, the Consonant is represented in Tamil by the word Mey, which means body, and the Vowel, by the word Uyir which means life. The Consonant is thus seen as an inert body that can come to life only with a Vowel. One of the most remarkable features here was the presentation by the ancient linguists of the main Consonants in what is called the Varga structure, a 5 x 5 matrix, as set out below. What is interesting is that the pattern of pronunciation of the letters remains the same when pronounced within rows and within the columns of the matrix.

| | | | | |
|----|-----|----|-----|----|
| ka | kha | ga | gha | ṅa |
| ca | cha | ja | jha | ña |
| ṭa | ṭha | ḍa | ḍha | ṇa |
| ta | tha | da | dha | ṇa |
| pa | pha | ba | bha | ma |

What is even more interesting is that these five groups appear in the same order in which the sounds are generated as they emerge in the vocal passage, starting with the throat, and through the palate, tongue, and teeth and ending at the lips. This is why they are referred to the gutturals, cerebrals, palatals, dentals and labials respectively. But what is truly remarkable is that these concepts accepted as standard today in modern linguistics, appeared for the first time over 3000 years ago in the *Shiksha* texts of the Vedic corpus in India.

These structures were designed to ensure the preservation of pronunciation and accent of the *Vedas* as accurately as possible, which sprang from the firm belief that the potency of their mantras lay in their sound when pronounced correctly. Portions of the Vedantic literature elucidate the evolution of sound in creation. The activation by *Prana*, the primordial Energy, of Sound and the faculty of Speech in the early stages of cosmic creation is vividly described in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Primal sound is referred to

as *śabda brahman* (शब्द ब्रह्मन्) (6) - God as word". Closely related to this is the concept of

nāda brahman (नाद ब्रह्मन्) (7) - God as sound. “*nāda*”, a Sanskrit word meaning "sound", is related to the term *nadī*, "river", figuratively denoting the stream of consciousness - a concept that goes back to the *Rig Veda*. Thus, the relationship between sound and consciousness has long been recorded in India's ancient literature. Vedic texts, in fact, describe sound as the pre-eminent means for attaining higher, spiritual consciousness.

mantras (मन्त्र) (8), or sacred sounds, are used to pierce through sensual, mental and intellectual levels of existence (all lower strata of consciousness) for the purpose of purification and reach into the spiritual level for its enlightenment. It was thus that the disciplines of the *Vedangas* set out to explain the organic linkage between the *Prana* or divine energy that initiates life, and its onward emergence through thought and speech into meaning. This clearly enables us to trace this linkage back through this chain and link us to the divine source. Modern practitioners, like Hans Jenny have claimed to have demonstrated by experiments that the sounds of Sanskrit phonemes (aksharas) have a tangible effect on the mind, intellect, and auditory nerves of those who chant or hear them.

The world has no more fascinating story than that of the origin of sound from the hour-glass shaped drum, the *Damaru*, played by *Siva* to provide the melodic beat of his celestial dance that unleashed the energy of all Creation. It created not only all matter, but provided the rhythms of all existence from the heart beat of living organisms to the motions of the Sun and the stars, and all the sounds from which came all speech and song. It is

interesting to note that modern Physics should now be deeply engaged in one of its most ambitious, cooperative world efforts at CERN in Geneva in utilizing energy to simulate the creation of the most fundamental particles of sub-atomic matter. What is even more interesting is that a two-meter tall statue of Siva in his Cosmic Dance, gifted by India in 2004 now stands installed at the Headquarters of CERN. Could this be admission of a slow convergence of the empirical Reason of modern Science and the intuitive Reason of ancient India ?. Fritjof Capra describes this in the following beautiful words : “ The metaphor of the Cosmic Dance thus unifies ancient mythology, religious art and modern Physics”

Let us now look at how our Mind responds to the promptings of the external world through two of our faculties, sound and sight. These faculties are in constant, concurrent play throughout our waking lives and thereby, establishes a dynamic interplay between our inner world of the mind and the outer world of nature, and integrating them virtually into a single world of existence. Many would have it that the sound channel is open and in operation in us even before we are born. They would suggest that this is evidenced by the astonishing knowledge levels sometimes displayed by precocious children hardly out of infancy. Traditional beliefs in India therefore encouraged expectant mothers to regularly recite various Stotras not only for their own benefit but for the benefit of the foetus within them. Be that as it may, it is generally recognized that from a very early age children start their learning processes first with sounds, later responding to hearing with speech, then start associating objects and activities with words and these lead them into the full-fledged skills of two way communication.

Communication can of course take several forms. Without sight or sound it could use the sense of touch as in the case of the blind. With just sight alone, it could take the form of gesture and sign and finally of dance. With sound, it could take the form of the rhythm of drums, music of string and wind instruments and song and speech of the voice. Speech of course becomes the most powerful mode of two-way communication, and thereby opens a world of more easily shared values or articulated experiences. Speech has therefore a place of centrality in the Vedas, indeed invested with a divine status of *vāc* (वाक्) (9) a Goddess. But it is important to remember that meaning resides in the Vedas, not only in their words, but also the stresses, rhythms and pitch levels with which those words are articulated. Meaning would reside at the same time, in other sounds and the ritual activity that would appear to be inseparable from their words or sounds. One could understand a word in some sense, but not the sense implied by the accompanying action which are seen to add a contextual extension to the meaning. *Mantras* would thus appear to be word-action composites that could, indeed had, to be simply repeated for their power, rather than understood for their meaning. Meticulous repetition, requiring intense memorizing became a critical need, resulting in faith in their power rather than their meaning.

There are some other basic aspects to the structure and content of the Vedas that have a critical bearing on how we are to study them to discover their meanings. First we need to note that the Rig Veda is the acknowledged source of the other three Vedas, The word became in them, the principal vehicle of higher knowledge. In the absence of special words that could describe their visions, the seers used words of common parlance, that applied to common experiences. The special contextual meanings remained in their minds, and only a disciple could learn directly from the seers what they meant. The words they used were also invariably assembled and structured as poetry. Each hymn they composed was always prefaced with the name of the deity addressed by it, the name of the seer who composed it and the meter of poetry in which it was set. *Candas* (चन्दस) (10)

or poetic meter was itself invested with an exalted status, often equated to the Veda itself, indicating that the words were so structured as to indicate something very special, or holding some special power. The hymns themselves fell into two types, one simply composed in praise of a god or a power of nature, and the other structured as a ritualistic offering to the gods in return for material rewards or blessings. The ritualistic hymns were then imported into the other Vedas, with the Yajur Veda elaborating the physical details of the rituals and the Sama Veda, prescribing the musical forms in which they were to be recited. The rendering of the Sama Veda made extensive use of sounds like *Om*, vowels and other sounds, called *Stobhas*, of varying frequencies that apparently carried no meaning but filled in prescribed time intervals to subserve the meter and the melody. The later development of Indian music systems are traced back to these renderings of the *Sama Veda*. Rituals were then woven around the poetry of the Rig, the procedures of the Yajur and the chants of the *Sama*. It was the appeal, power and purpose of these ritualistic add-ons that ultimately acquired the phenomenal popular and unquestioning acceptance and following that created the huge structures and following of Hinduism through the later millennia.

An important outcome of these developments was the establishment of a deep dichotomous separation of word from meaning and a distinction between their meaning and power in the acceptance of the Vedas. The understanding of the meaning of the word was confined to the mind of the seer and scholar, to be passed on orally from teacher to student, *guru* to *sisya* (गुरु सिष्य), (11). On the other hand, recitation of the word was tightly bound to the performance of the associated ritual, and the activity passed into the hands of the priest, to be passed on orally perhaps from father to son, and as a rigid discipline not necessarily with an understanding of the higher or inner meaning. It was not until the stage of the Upanishads that meaning started acquiring centrality and wider acceptance. Attention to higher meaning of the Vedas got started as stated earlier, with the *Upanishads* at the final stages of the canonization of the *Veda* corpus but the willingness to break out from the hold of ritual had really to wait for the later *Darshanikas* or Philosophers. The content and intent of the *Mantras* and the *Stotras* (स्तोत्र) (12) that described all Forms of Existence, present an awe-inspiring perspective.

When we listen to the content of the Vedic texts, our difficulty is twofold. One, we may not know Sanskrit. And two, even if we know Sanskrit, we do not know what the ancient composers had in their minds and wished to communicate. Be it remembered that what was in their minds were experiences or perceptions of a different order which they could not, or possibly, chose not, to communicate in simpler or more direct language. But there were enough indications in whatever they did say, to indicate that their experiences and perceptions were of a higher order.

And it was also clear that the words themselves, rather than the sentences, may have carried what they had in mind, and it is in their minds where we might have to seek meaning of their words. Their words seemed to proliferate with meaning as easily as words do into sentences, or just as numbers are seen to proliferate in size. This is precisely where scholars with the western mindset and related approaches to the logic of linguistics, missed their way. They missed meanings in words, and sought them in sentences, which often turned out to be meaningless by the standards of common speech. The perceptive scholar, Frits Staal makes the point that *Mantras* do not carry meaning in the sense that we understand, but he emphasises that they clearly carry a lot of power, readily seen in the awesome hold they have had over the Indian masses over millennia. The Indian tradition would consider that meaning lay precisely in the power. The Indian mind seemed to be quite comfortable in a context where each discrete, transient external sound of a word would simply point to a range of meanings in the mind, from which they could pick and choose on the basis of, not textual, but contextual experience. This is what

the great ancient grammarians like *Panini* and *Patanjali* meant when they said that the number of the external words of speech was finite while the range of their meanings in the mind, comprising language was infinite. And it must be noted too, that beyond that, meanings seem to merge within the mind as an unbroken continuum of shades, from which any specific shade could be picked and articulated by whatever word would adequately, if not exactly serve the immediate purpose of communication.

A remarkable commonality across humanity is seen to characterize a great part of their observation and articulation of what people saw, sensed, thought, and perceived, though not necessarily in the same or similar words. This is seen in respect of their observations of nature, as well as human nature, where physical facts and psychological experiences shared a great deal of commonality across people, across region and across centuries, like the identity of the Sun, Moon, Planets, Stars, Seasons, Months and Days, or the human experiences of joy, sorrow, love, hate or hope and despair. This commonality is seen in also the structure and content and the syllabic articulations of their languages, the metric structures of poetry, tonal structures of music and the concept content of their stories, legends, myths, and scriptures. The commonality is seen to occur even without physical contact between peoples, though of course, contact can be seen to influence or deepen the commonality to extend into word structures of languages. Thus words as expressions of quantity under the decimal system are seen to cut across cultures and the millenia, as will be readily seen in the following table of words for the numbers from 1 to 10 in the Indo-European languages.

THE NAMES OF THE NUMERALS IN NINE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

| ENGLISH | SANSKRIT | PERSIAN | GREEK | LATIN | LITHUANIAN | CELTIC | GOTHIC | GERMAN |
|---------|----------|---------|-----------|---------|------------|--------|--------|--------|
| ONE | EKA | YAK | ELS | UNUS | VINAS | ONE | AINS | EINS |
| TWO | DVA | DU | DUO | DUO | DVY | DAU | TWAI | ZWEI |
| THREE | TRI | SIH | TRELS | TRES | TRYS | TRI | THREIS | DREI |
| FOUR | CATUR | CHAHAR | TERSSARES | QUATTAR | KETURI | CETHIR | FIDWR | VIER |
| FIVE | PANCA | PANJ | PENTE | QUINQUE | PENKI | COIC | FIMF | FUNF |
| SIX | SHAT | SHASH | EZ | SEX | SZEZI | SE | SAIHS | SECHS |
| SEVEN | SAPTA | HAFT | EPTA | SEPTE M | SEPTYNI | SECHT | SIBUN | SIEBEN |
| EIGHT | ASHTAU | HASHT | OKTO | OCTO | ASZTUANI | OCHT | AHTAU | ACHT |
| NINE | NAVA | NUH | ENNEA | NOVEM | DEVYNI | NOI | NIUN | NEUN |
| TEN | DASHA | DAH | DEKA | DECEM | DESZIMT | DEICH | TAIHUN | ZEHN |

Word commonality is seen to extend beyond the names of numbers. The word "*chakra*" of the *Rig Veda* finds a cognate echo in the Greek "*kuklos*", the Latin "*circus*" and the English "*Cycle*". The Sanskrit "*Agni*" and the English "*ignite*" clearly share the same reference to fire. Other examples ;

Sanskrit

English

Greek

Latin

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| <i>Asti</i> | Is | esti | est |
| <i>Sapta</i> | Seven | Hepta | September |
| <i>Pada</i> | Pedal | Pedon | Pedis |

The commonality is seen to extend even into grammatical constructions like declensions and conjugations as may be seen from the following :

Sanskrit : *agnis – agnim – agnibhyas*

Latin : ignis- ignem- ignibus

This commonality was first noted and highlighted in 1786 by Sir William Jones in his book “The Sanskrit Language”. A great scholar who was a Judge of the Supreme Court in India, was so fascinated by India’s ancient heritage that he founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784. The following is his most quoted passage, establishing him as one of the great founders of the science of comparative linguistics appeared in his third annual discourse before the Asiatic Society on the history and culture of the Hindus (delivered on 2 February 1786 and published in 1788)

The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family.

Vast scholarly studies subsequently led to a general consensus of a common origin for this vast family of what are called the Indo-European languages, where there is universal unanimity that Sanskrit has led the way in terms of the earliest and most sophisticated and scientific advances in the field of linguistics. The general consensus advanced, though without certainty is that the origin was in the region in Central Asia, referred to by the acronym BMAC, standing for Bactrian-Margiana-Archeological-Complex. Its peoples are considered to have fanned out south into Asia and west into Europe, with their language evolving in their different destinations into two Asiatic groups and six European groups, viz.

- (a) the Indian (Sanskrit, the Prakrits and Pali) and the Iranian; and
- (b) the European covering the Keltic, Hellenic, Italic, Teutonic, Slavonic and Lithuanian

It is the languages of these two groups that have come to be covered by the umbrella title of Indo-European, and they are distinguished from a second major group centered south of the European group, around Asia Minor, Arabia and Africa, referred to as the Semitic.

The development of speech and language mark a major milestone in human advancement. Communication through speech leads to vast enrichment of the Mind through widely shared experiences. Yet, however rich the Mind might be in worldly experiences, there still remains the problem of how he uses or misuses these experiences. Humans still remain subject to the play of several external and internal forces that have a powerful impact on how they think or act and relate to each other or

the environment around him. These are forces of Nature and more especially, Human Nature, and it is to the play of these forces, the world of *Prakrti*, that we now turn our attention.

Chapter 5 : Nature : prakṛti : प्रकृति

I am not a Hindu, Nor a Muslim am !!
I am this body, a play of five elements;
A drama of the spirit dancing
With joy and sorrow.
---- Kabir (1440-1518)

The First Cause of all the Existence that we know, was considered an undefinable, ultimate Supreme from which it emanated. This concept found its very first expression in human history over 4000 years ago, in the Rig Veda in the verse :

Rig Veda : X - 129

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदाससीत् ।

सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥

kāmastadagnē samavartatādhi manasō rēta: prathamam yadāsasīt

satō bandhumasati niravindanhr̥di pratīṣyā kavayō maṇiṣā ..

In the beginning, desire, the first seed of mind, arose in That. Poet-seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom, found the bond of existence in non-existence.

This verse means that the intuition of the ancient Poet-Seers led them to see Existence emerging from Non-Existence. It was a desire that Manifested from the Unmanifest, *Idam* that manifested from *Tat*. More simply stated, and more specifically in a human context, creation or activity, is as an act of Will is an expression of power as a desire emanating from the Mind, The ancient Seers used the word *śakti* for power, which took three forms : *icchā śakti jñāna śakti kriyā śakti* (इच्छा शक्ति ज्ञान शक्ति क्रिया शक्ति) (1). These are respectively, the power of the Will, of Knowledge and of Activity. These words were also the names of the Universal Mother who was

regarded as having emerged from the *cidagnikunda* (चिदग्निकुण्ड) (2), the fire altar of the First Sacrifice conducted by the Divine for initiating the process of Creation. The fire altar symbolises Energy emerging from Divine Consciousness. The Mother was therefore regarded as the source of power of all Creation.

Iccha Shakti is the power of the Will, expressed as a desire, that provides the first impetus to initiate change of energy from one form to another. The first such change by aggregation of energy into inert matter where energy remains in a passive, potential state. The next change of energy is into the kinetic state that kindles active life elements of biology in plants with the added element of mobility in animals; and a final change is introduced the consciousness elements that constituted the instinct, mind, and intellect elements of consciousness in man. Here then is the origin and emergence from the Unmanifest, from an impetus of its Will, through the Mother of all Creation, of the Manifest in a vast range of Forms. For ease of managing all these Form in our minds, we label them with Names. Behind all these processes is the pervasive presence of the Higher Consciousness, which in the human personality, which gives us a sense of Existence and helps us to manage our lives and understand their purpose.

Here then, is a vast Consciousness which creates a vast Existence hosting a vast variety of Forms, Names and Activities of both Nature and Human Nature. At the same time it enables us to be conscious of all this. We also see at once that life or the larger existence of which it is a small part, is marked by unending activity involving unceasing change. It would therefore seem natural, or even inevitable, that sooner or later, we would ask ourselves the question, What is the purpose of our existence or the larger Existence created by the Higher Consciousness? After all, activity for its own sake, without a purpose would seem to be meaningless. We are able to see that even a body of Nature like the Sun shines endlessly and ceaselessly, and yet does fulfill a vital cosmic purpose of providing energy to support existence. Who then was this remarkable Designer who designed this remarkable totality of Existence and for what purpose ?

One philosophical answer given by the ancients, for want of a better one, was that He engaged in all this as a Divine Play for His own entertainment. Brahma Sutra 2-1-32 says :

लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम्

lōkavattu līlākaivalyam

Brahman's creative activity is merely a pastime

Being a single Supreme Existence, he engaged himself in his solitude, with play, and may have chosen to build Worlds, drawing on His Infinite resources of Space and Time and Energy as His building blocks. The Designer being possessed of an Omniscient Consciousness and an Omnipotent Power, could have fashioned this Finite Existence and invested different parts of it with limited degrees of Consciousness and Power. He could then watch how well man so endowed, could evolve from the Human level and attain to the level of the Divine and thus return back to Him. This seemed to be a simplistic but certainly fascinating guess of the Purpose of the Designer, Could our evolution to a higher state then be the purpose of our existence ? Such a purpose was certainly appealing.

We see that Activity and the Energy from which it springs, result in Change that is unremitting and endless, Modern Physics expresses this in different words as The Law of Conservation of Energy. We are familiar with the fact that energy operates through time and changes from one form to another, to serve our purposes, typically as electricity changes into heat and light. Physics tells us too, that energy can take the form of a wave or a particle. Matter aggregates into vast forms of matter, big and small, living and lifeless, and changes from one form to another, thereby giving existence its characteristics of unremitting change and transient states. We can now begin to look at this total environment of Nature under the name, *prakṛti* : प्रकृति (3), given by the ancients, a name that also encompasses Human Nature. With this understanding, we may now proceed further and focus on human lives and activities.

We see that man's life is marked by unceasing activity and change. One part of it's activity relates to involuntary processes of his body, like the heart-beat, his breathing or digestion, or the more leisurely process of simple aging. These processes, seemingly mechanical, nevertheless serve the vital purpose of sustaining life. But a more unique aspect of man's activity is that a large part of it is also subject to his voluntary control, investing it with an element of conscious choice. His mind though unceasing in its activity, can nevertheless be channeled into structured chains of thought. His emotions likewise, often uncontrollable, do nevertheless admit to some measure of control.

There is however, one aspect of all of man's activities that is critical in shaping what he is or may become. The simple fact is that man's actions have their own reactions, always inevitable, and often equal and opposite, much as stated by Newton's Law, suggesting a

process operating similarly across not only Nature but Human Nature as well. What we need to specially note is how pervasive is this reach of Action and Reaction. The Action may originate internally in the Mind or externally in Nature and the Reaction may manifest internally or externally. They could occur even at both levels in what could well be a continuum. The Action and Reaction could be Physical, Mental or Emotional or a mix of all three. The Reaction could impact on the person who initiated the Action, or could impact on other persons or on objects of the environment. And beyond all this, the Action and Reaction initiates a never-ending chain of cause and effect where each effect in turn becomes a cause. This chain so persists through Space and Time that we may simply be unable to pinpoint one particular cause as leading to one particular effect. The chain could indeed go back in time to periods simply described as past lives. This could be understood more easily, as referring to earlier generations of the individual's family. Here the cause-effect chain could be understood as being maintained down the generations through the genetic chain. Here then is the origin of what we might describe as a genetic predisposition to attitudes and motivations that influence actions in the present. And here also possibly is the framework of a vast Law governing all actions and reactions of all of Existence, comprised of both Nature and Human Nature, across Space and Time, and going far beyond Newton's Law. The Indian ancients called this the Law of *Karma* (कर्म) (4).

We come now to a more detailed view of how the ancients explained these forces and processes, especially in the context of Human Nature. The forces of Action and Reaction occurring in an equal and opposite manner explained all the pairs of opposites that characterized all experience : the physical feelings of hot and cold, the mental states of clarity and confusion, the emotional opposites of love and hate or the ethical conflicts of right and wrong. The ancients referred to these opposite pairs of effects, by the Sanskrit word "*Dvandva*" (द्वन्द्व), (5) somewhat like the English word "dichotomy."

They went on to attribute these effects to three *guṇas* or forces or tendencies respectively called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (सत्त्व रजस्

तमस्) (6). Of these, *Rajas* makes for Positive dynamism. *Tamas* for Negative Inertia, and *Sattva* for a Neutral state of Balance or Harmony. These forces pervade every facet of an individual's personality, his outlook, attitudes, temperament, motivation, and even his food

preferences. They do indeed mesh into the Action-Reaction chain across the whole of *prakṛti*, controlled by the Law of *Karma*.

Yet it is critical also to understand that while the *guṇas* may provide a strong predisposition, springing from actions of the past, we still have, or at least seem to have, the privilege of a choice between actions in the present, that have beneficial or harmful effects. Any tendency, good or bad, is clearly strengthened or weakened by the choices we make, good or bad, as the case may be. This is precisely the situation described in the *Gīta*, when Arjuna asks Krishna, why, despite an awareness of right or wrong, the mind of man, is seemingly impelled into wrong-doing, and how is one to cope with this situation. Krishna replies that, without doubt, this is because of the powerful compulsions imposed by the Gunas, but it is nevertheless possible to overcome them by constant meditative Practice, *abhyāsa* (अभ्यास) (7) and Detachment, *vairāgya* (वैराग्य) (8)

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ६-३५ ॥

asaṁśayaṁ mahābāhō mano durnigrahaṁ calam .

abhyāsēna tu kauntēya vairāgyēṇa ca gr̥hyatē . The mind is restless no doubt, and difficult to curb, O mighty armed one (Arjuna); but it can be brought under control by repeated practice of meditation and by the exercise of detachment, O Kaunteya (Arjuna). (Bhagavad Gita VI- 35)

All discussion of all these aspects of action or activity of course, brings us back to the fundamental question with which this Chapter started : For what Purpose, for Whose benefit ? Clearly we get two choices - one, where the benefit is for oneself, and the other, for the benefit of others. The choices can be described as selfish and selfless, and here we see at once that they support respectively, a narrow transient benefit for oneself, often at the expense of others and a wider enduring collective benefit for many. The latter would clearly conform to the purposes of the Divine, the Designer of this existence as described earlier : to give man the power of choice and shape his own destiny : and either descend into the conflicts of the demoniac state or ascend to harmonies of the divine state.

Selfishness proceeds from a terrible misconception of the identity of self, arising from the question Who am I ? Am I this separate perishable body which the perishable mind thinks it is ? Or am I a part of an indivisible imperishable Eternal Consciousness of which we are all part and are also but vaguely conscious ? Should we assume this mistaken identity and let this physical body submit to the forces of the three *Gunas* and their play of opposites and opt for the wrong alternatives they offer ? Or should we seek to free ourselves from this false identity and return to our true larger identity by opting for the right alternatives that bring benefit to the many ? If the latter, then how can we go about even during the transient lifetimes where the false identity clamours for acceptance and control and drives us into wrong choices ? But to reach higher levels of understanding, we need to test all experience of this existence for truth and lasting value, and reject much of it with the interesting expression coined by the ancients, *nēti nēti* (नेति नेति) (9) meaning Not This - Not This. We still need to understand a lot more about actions and reactions, and causes and effects that make up human experience and existence. We need to understand that that ultimate understanding cannot come from the superficial experiences of the mind of the external world but from the unexplored experiences of the higher inner faculties of the human personality. More answers on those faculties are given by Krishna in the later Chapters of the Gita, which follow in our next Chapter, which addresses the role of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Chapter 6 : Knowledge – Wisdom : *jñāna vijñāna* : ज्ञान विज्ञान

*What we have learned
Is like a handful of earth;*

*What we have yet to learn
Is like the whole world.*

---- Avvaiyar (13th Century)

The senses of Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste and Touch provide humans with a powerful interface for interaction with the external world. They capture all external physical experiences and present them as reality to man's mind : *manas* मनस् (1) The senses however have physical limitations to their reach, though, man, in his ingenuity, is able to devise and provide instrumental aids that can vastly extend their reach, though only up to a point. But apart from the world of physical objects, the senses register a whole world of experiences from inter-personal relationships that exercise a profound influence on the different facets of an individual's personality. They are relationships of sex, parenthood and of friends and foes. Even here, these experiences are limited to small numbers of people that one comes into contact with. The experiences that the mind registers are therefore partial, indeed real, but certainly not total. The mind can therefore reach only a level of tentative, provisional understanding of what may be considered total or ultimate reality.

The mind records, classifies, recalls, compares, contrasts and processes in many ways, all the information it receives, and the computers of today are designed to operate in much the same way. But what the senses contribute and how the mind responds go far beyond operating as mechanical processes. Several emotional factors come into play that colour the incoming experiences and the mind's responses as pleasant or unpleasant. The last chapter referred to a host of conflicting pairs of attitudinal forces unleashed by the three *Gunas* that virtually enslaves the mind by repetitive emphasis and insistence. Compulsions imposed by the external world of experience can tear a person apart as it were, till sooner or later his suffering is so great that the Mind itself cries for help.

It is at this stage that an inner faculty higher than the Mind comes into play and offers to relieve the Mind from the suffering of these conflicts. This faculty is referred to as the *buddhi* (बुद्धि) (2), and it is able to see things in perspective, with what may be called an Inner Eye, possessed of a higher sense of sight, which we would call Insight. The enslavement of the

Mind through the senses to the external world is so strong, that recourse to the *Buddhi* is momentary unless driven, as Krishna explained, by the hard course of detachment. In the fortunate, who are spared the cruel compulsions of life or in the case of those who remain a detached witness to them, the *Buddhi* appears ever-active and ever-present. Voices of the *Buddhi* emanate in most cases from others rather than oneself : most often a parent, a well-wisher or a *guru*, and of course, though rarely, from an *Avatar* like Krishna.

The empirical level of relative Knowledge of the *Manas* may be referred to *jñāna*, while the higher level of more discriminative Knowledge of the *buddhi* may be referred to as *vijñāna*. It is to the development of a more assertive role of the *Buddhi* and therefore to the establishment of this level of *vijñāna* that Krishna now turns in his teaching. *Abhyāsa* or practice involves a repeated invocation of the *Buddhi* till it is established as a habit. We need to reflect on the play of the opposites imposed on us by the forces of the three *Gunas*, and how submission to them destroys the *Buddhi*, our power of discriminative thinking. Krishna spells out beautifully the sequence of consequences of such submission :

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ २-६२ ॥

dhyāyatō viṣayānpuṃsaḥ saṅgastēṣūpajāyatē

saṅgātatsamjāyatē kāmaḥ kāmātkrōdhō bhijāyatē

The man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachments for them; from attachment springs desire, and from desire when unfulfilled, ensues anger.

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्समृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ २-६३ ॥

krōdhādbhavati saṃmōhaḥ saṃmōhātsmṛtivyibhramaḥ

smṛtibhraṃśādbuddhināśō buddhināśātpṛaṇasyati

From anger arises delusion; from delusion comes loss of memory; from loss of memory, comes loss of intellect; and from loss of intellect one goes to complete ruin. (Bhagavad Gita : II-62, 63)

Beyond *Abhyāsa* or practice, Krishna has also referred to the need of *Vairāgya*, or detachment. Clearly this refers to a declining to be drawn into the divisive pull of the pairs of opposites that arises from our worldly experience. *Abhyāsa*, or the practice of discriminative thinking and *Vairāgya*, a practice of detachment from those pulls of opposites amounts to development of a new mindset in the operation of the Mind, and this is what Krishna refers to as the discipline of *dhyāna* (ध्यान) (3) or Meditation.

These disciplines lead directly to the control of the *Buddhi* over the *Manas*, the Mind. Yet all this is not enough to enable the individual to get a grasp, or even a glimpse of the higher Reality. What more is needed is now unfolded by Krishna in the *Gīta* teaching, beginning by enabling him to transcend limitations of his physical faculties, with a higher faculty that enable him to get a glimpse of that Reality

Chapter 7 :

A Cosmic Vision : *viśvarūpadarśanam* : विश्वरूपदर्शनम्

At this stage, we are, like Arjuna, still in the thrall of our old mindset. But we are beginning to see that it is *vijñāna*, discriminating Knowledge, rather than *jñāna*, the empirical Knowledge, that can lead us to a glimpse of Reality. Our new insights developed through *vijñāna* still give us only a vague picture of reality, compared to the sharp images that our old empirical experiences seem to provide. Our old mindset leads us to still clamour for empirical evidence of things that however, can be seen only through the insights of a higher mindset.

Finding Arjuna still in this predicament, Krishna takes him through two more stages of explanation. The first is a description of the Highest level Knowledge, of Esoteric Knowledge : *rājavidya rājaguhya*. The second stage is an enumeration of examples of all that are the Best and Highest forms of Vibhuti or Manifestation in this empirical existence. These examples are given as evidence that they come from something even better and higher that still remains Unmanifest. Arjuna listens, but remains unsatisfied. He still wants proof through his own experience and pleads for this. Krishna yields but has to provide Arjuna with the faculty of extra-sensory perception that is needed for experiencing that ultimate Reality. Krishna provides him with this faculty and thereby Arjuna gets this awe-inspiring experience. Krishna presents Himself in a form that seems to encompass *viśvarūpa*, the form of the entirety of all Existence. Bewildered and terrified by what he sees, Arjuna begs Krishna to resume his normal reassuring human form.

Resuming his normal form, Krishna now explains to Arjuna how *Bhakti*, or Devotion to that highest Reality could be yet another Path that leads to it. Devotion is an attitude that goes far beyond the reach of reason. It rests on acceptance, on Shraddha, or Faith. In the following verses of the Gita, Krishna clarifies that one can then accept the Reality in either the highest Manifest form of Iswara or as the ultimate Unmanifest form of *Brahman*.

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।

सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥

सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ १२-४ ॥

mayyāvēśya manō yē mām nityayuktā upāsātē .

śraddhayā parayōpāstē mē yuktatamā matā: .. 2 ..

yē tvakṣaramanirdēśyamavyaktaṃ paryupāsātē

sarvagamacintyaṃ ca kūṭasthamacalaṃ dhruvam .. 3 ..

sanniyamyēndriyagrāmaṃ sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ .

tē prāpnuvanti māmēva sarvabhūtahitē ratā: .. 4 ..

I consider them to be the best Yogis, who, endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, (in My manifest Form) worship Me with the mind centred on Me.

But those who worship the Imperishable, Indefinable, Unmanifest, Omnipresent, Beyond Thought, Unchangeable, Immovable, and Eternal, and who, fully controlling all their senses are even-minded and engaged in the welfare of all, they too come to Me. (Bhagavad Gita XII – 2,3, and 4)

The word *sarvabhūtahitē* that appears in the above verses is a critical one that runs repeatedly through the entire *Gita* teaching. It stands for the welfare of all, human or otherwise. When we refer to “myself” or “yourself,” the word “self” can be seen to be common to all of us. What Krishna suggests here is that everyone’s “self” comes from the one Divine Self, any anyone caring for the welfare of all, surely fulfils His purpose and comes back to Him.

This experience brings Arjuna to a critical question of his own role in relation to this vast Reality of which he seems to be a tiny existence of no significance and consequence. He has so far always referred to himself as “I” but so does everyone else. He now begins to see that he is part of something incomparably and inseparably larger. Could it be that “I” am really that ? The question that now looms large is “Am I This or am I That. Ultimately, who really am I ? ” It is to this question that we now turn.

CHAPTER 8 ; Who am I ? : *kō ham* : कोऽहम्

I went in search of God and could not find him.
Then, at last, I discovered that I, the seeker was
the sought, I was the God. that I was seeking.

----- Tukaram (1608-1650)

At this point of this narrative that has largely followed the course of the *Gita* teaching, we have an explanation of this Manifested Existence largely in terms of Nature and Human Nature. With Arjuna, we have had brief glimpses of the Ultimate Reality beyond. We have seen how Man gets enmeshed in the conflicting forces of Nature and Human Nature in ways that seem to render life a meaningless mechanical existence in a never-ending transient cycle of birth, life and death. Yet he retains a vague consciousness that there must be a higher meaning and purpose to this existence, and also seems to retain a power of choice to live by its real meaning and purpose. So far, Krishna has led him to understand all these mechanisms and activities of existence, and that with the right ways of using his higher faculties, he might be able to discover that meaning and purpose in a Reality that lie beyond the reach of his lower faculties. In his affection and concern for Arjuna, Krishna has even helped him to briefly access a higher faculty that gives him a glimpse of that Reality. The question before Arjuna now is : Am I this physical body enslaved by the world around me ? . Or am I part of a Higher Existence serving its Higher purposes ? Am I This or Am I That ? Who am I ? (*aham* : (अहम्) : I) (1)

All of us, of course, invariably give ourselves the wrong answer. The right answer would then bring a final higher understanding into constant play that will enable us to recognize the true higher meaning and purpose of life and conduct our lives in consonance with that meaning and purpose. Krishna now explains that the body is just a transient dwelling, a *kṣētra* (क्षेत्र) (2) and it's occupant is the eternal Consciousness, the *kṣētrajñā* (क्षेत्रज्ञ), (3) the real "I", who gives it life and consciousness. The *kṣētra* is transient, but the *kṣētrajñā* is Eternal, an indivisible part of the Eternal Consciousness. Yet the *kṣētra* is conferred a Mind with a seeming autonomy of awareness and control of Nature, and of Human Nature, with power to make choices affecting its destiny. The basic choice is between being ruled by the three *Gunas* or living by the purposes of the Supreme

Spirit, the *puruṣōttama* (पुरुषोत्तम) (4) ; a choice between attributes of the *daiva* (दैव) (5) and *asura* (असुर) (6), the Divine or Non-Divine forces, the forces that respectively make for Harmony and Conflict in every aspect of Existence.

What then is the final choice. Krishna's parting teaching is . *śaraṇam* (शरणं) (7) : Surrender to me and I will give you Liberation : *mōkṣa* (मोक्ष) (8):

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

sarva dharmānparityajya māmēkaṁ śaraṇam vraja

aham tvā sarvapāpēbhyō mōkṣayisyāmi mā śuca:

Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all supporting Lord, I shall give you refuge in Me alone, I shall absolve you of all sins, do not fear.
Bhagavad Gita : XVIII - 66)

This is an extraordinary parting advice, that is often understood as a call to a life of complete renunciation, complete inaction. On the contrary, it is really a challenge to lead a full life, full of activity but for the good of everything and everyone that constitute the whole of Existence. This is clearly the purpose of all Manifestation undertaken by the Eternal Unmanifest. Everyone and everything is no more than a physical body, a Kshetra, a dwelling, and resident within all of them is one Kshetrajna, giving everyone a consciousness and awareness which leads everyone to claim to be the "I" It is therefore important for everyone to live up to this true shared identity.

The ancient Indian tradition defines a three-fold objective for our lives : *artha* (अर्थ), *kāma* (काम) and *mōkṣa* (मोक्ष). Of these, *artha* is prosperity, and *kāma* is desire. The ancients were pragmatic enough to recognize these as natural and necessary for a normal life. Yet they also insisted that these two objectives be pursued within reasonable limits, otherwise the individual would be drawn into conflict into a wide-ranging conflicts, both within himself and with others. This would lead to an unending chain of cause and effect, of pleasure and pain, of *sukha* (सुख) and *du:kha* (दुःख), leading to an unending cycle of birth and death.

Therefore they prescribed self-regulation of *Dharma*, an elaborate system of self-discipline covering every aspect of life. A life regulated by Dharma would then gradually mould the individual and lead him on towards the third object of moksha, a liberation starting from the cycle of . pleasure and pain. It will be readily seen that anyone who lives, not for himself but entirely for others, in one sense is one who qualifies for *mōkṣa* (मोक्ष). Liberation is not necessarily to be understood in the traditional sense of a release from the cycle of life and death, to reach some distant state of bliss or immortality. On the other hand, liberation can be here and now, from the slavery imposed by the senses responding to the false glitter of the external world that leads us into lives of selfishness. Liberation frees us to lead lives of selflessness, in the service of everyone and everything around us. One who lives thus, is liberated even while living and is called a *jīvanmukta* (जीवन्मुक्त) (9). He is one who thus identifies himself with the Divine and lives for the purposes of the Divine.

The above answer is of course provided by Krishna to Arjuna in a context that is relevant to any practical human situation. Yet it needs affirmation, arising, not from any intellectual conclusion, but from a directly experienced living truth. It was a final affirmation of that kind, the final answer to the question, Who am I, that came from the direct living experience of the ancient Indian Seers. Their answer came in four versions, the four *mahāvākyas* (महावाक्य) (10) or Great Sayings of *the Upanishads* : *Aham Brahmasmi*, *Tat Tvam Asi*, *Ayam Atma Brahma* and *Prajnanam Brahma*. These sayings form the foundation of all schools of Indian philosophy which consider them to be unassailable, unquestionable truths. These final answers are identical and translate as “I am TAT”. To TAT therefore, we may now turn in our final Chapter

Chapter 9 : That : तत्

Transform the divided individual into the world-personality;
Let all thyself be the Divine. This is thy goal.
---- Aurobindo (1872 –b1950)

This book uses two words for its title : '*Idam*' and '*Tat*' (1 and 2). Of these two words *Idam* denotes this finite existence that is bounded by Time and Space, and *Tat* denotes that source which is Eternal and Infinite, and from which all finite existence originates, and in which it is delimited. Clearly, you and I are tiny existences within *Idam*. And all of *Idam* is part of *Tat*. Yet the *Mahavakyas* declare that you and I are that *Tat*.

How can a part itself be the total ? How can two different things be the same thing ?. Obviously when we talk of One Reality, we cannot visualize a part of it, unless we regard it, by a mental construct as a partial Reality. Therefore when we talk of you and me or *Idam* as parts, we do so from a partial perspective constructed by the Mind. Our problems arise when the part starts believing it is the whole, when indeed, you and I start believing and acting as if we were as real as everyone and everything around us.

Our difficulty is that we are subject to the inescapable limitations imposed by our senses and compulsions of the processes of living. We can cope with these only on an assumption of our own reality, even if intellectually we may recognize that we are part of a larger reality. So we get caught in this inescapable dichotomy of perspectives, of living within a relative reality, but within an absolute reality. And our problems start multiplying when we take our own reality too seriously and start making living choices which conflict with purposes of the larger reality. This leads us to unceasingly disintegrate both individually and collectively while we should be integrating unceasingly and progressively into the larger harmonies of the larger reality.

The declaration *Tat Tvam Asi*, has been seized on by different schools of philosophy, with viewpoints and explanations, often contentious and difficult to understand, in respect of the nature of Reality. For our practical purposes, this declaration serves sufficiently as a call for reflection and a corrective against erroneous perspectives. It provokes us to introspect in regard to which direction our lives are taking and why. Luckily we are endowed with the tools of introspection, the *Buddhi*, the Intellect, that can provide correctives to the perspectives presented by the *Manas*, the Mind. Luckily too, we are often blessed with contemporary

teachers like Ramana, ancient teachers like Sankara or divine teachers like Krishna, to help us so introspect and so change direction.

Let us for instance, recall some of the examples with which we illustrated the different operations of Nature and Human Nature in earlier Chapters. If we trace back from the recitation of a sloka or mantra, to the sound with which it is articulated, through the consciousness and energy that generated the sound, through the space that enabled its transmission, and through the human chain that ensured its preservation over time, we are able to see their inseparable linkages into vast sources, resources and magnitudes in Time and Space. Does not this chain then reach back into Tat, that vast single Reality. Within the *vyavahārika* (व्यवहारिक), (3) or relative human perspective, what looms large as an important activity. But it fades into total insignificance and inconsequence within the *paramārthika* (परमार्थिक) (4), or the absolute perspective of Tat, .

There can be no more fitting conclusion to this Chapter and this book than the following prayer from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad :

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ॥
मृत्योर्मा मृतं गमय ।
ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति ॥ - बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् 1.3.28.

*om asato mā sadgamaya
tamaso mā jyotirgamaya
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya
om śānti śānti śānti - bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣada 1.3.28*

Lead Us From the Unreal To the Real,
Lead Us From Darkness To Light,
Lead Us From Death To Immortality,
OM (the universal sound of God)
Let There Be Peace Peace Peace. - Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
1.3.28.

EPILOGUE

No ancient scripture of the world presents philosophical speculations on the emergence of Idam from Tat in greater grandeur or profundity than the Rig Veda as in its hymn reproduced below :

Rig Veda : X - 129

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत् ।

किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद्रहनं गभीरम् ॥ १ ॥

nāsadāsīnnō sadāsīttadānīm nāsīdrajō nō vyōmā parō yat .

kimāvarīva: kuha kasya śarmannambha: kimāsīdrahanaṃ gabhīram .. 1 ..

Nonexistence and existence were then not; there was not the air nor the heaven beyond. What did it contain and where and under whose protection? Was there be water, unfathomable, profound ?

मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्ना आसीत्प्रकेतः ।

आनीदवातं स्वाधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥ २ ॥

mṛtyurāsīdamṛtaṃ na tarhi na rātryā ahna āsitprakēta: .

ānīdavātaṃ svādhayā tadēkaṃ tasmāddhānyanna para: kiṃ canāsa ..

Death or immortality was not then. There was no distinction between night and day. That One breathed, windless, by its own power. Other than that there was nothing beyond.

तम आसीत्तमसा गूळ्हमग्रेऽप्रकेतं सलिइलं सर्वमा इदम् ।

तच्छयेनाभ्वपिहितं यदासीत्तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकं ॥ ३ ॥

tama āsīttamasā gūḷhamagrē 'prakētaṃ saliilaṃ sarvamā idam .

tacchyēnābhvapihitaṃ yadāsīttapasastanmahinājāyataikam ..

In the beginning there was darkness concealed by darkness. All this was water without distinction. The One that was covered by voidness emerged through the heat of austerity.

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदाससीत् ।

सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥

kāmastadagnē samavartatādhi manasō rēta: prathamam yadāsasīt .

satō bandhumasati niravindanhr̥di pratīṣyā kavayō manīṣā ..

In the beginning, desire, the first seed of mind, arose in That. Poet-seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom, found the bond of existence in non-existence.

तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषामधः स्विदासीशुपरि स्विदासीशुत् ।

रेतोधा आसन्महिमान आसन्त्स्वधा अवस्तात्प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ ५ ॥

tiraścīnō vitatō raśmirēṣāmadha: svidāsīśdupari svidāsīśt .

rētōdhā āsanmahimāna āsantsvadhā avastātprayati: parastāt ..

Their (visions') stretched across (existence and non-existence). Perhaps there was a below; perhaps there was an above. There were givers of seed; there were powers; effort below, impulse above.

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत्कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः ।

अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आबभुव ॥ ६ ॥

kō addhā vēda ka iha pra vōcatkuta ājātā kuta iyaṃ visṛṣṭi: .

arvāgdēvā asya visarjanēnāthā kō vēda yata ābabhuva ..

Who knows the truth ? Who here will pronounce whence this birth?
Whence this creation ? The Gods appeared afterward, with the creation of
this world. Who then knows whence it arose ?

इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेएद ॥ ७ ॥

iyam visṛṣṭiryata ābabhūvayadivā dadhē yadi vā na .

yō asyādhyakṣa: paramē vyōmantsō aṅga vēda yadi vā na vēda ..

Whence this creation arose, whether it created itself, or whether it did not ?
He who looks upon it from highest space, he surely knows. Or maybe, He
knows not.

Annexure

Summary of Keywords

CHAPTER 1 : THE TRANSIENT MANIFEST : THIS : इदम्

brahman : The One Ultimate Reality, the all-pervading consciousness principle that is the sub-stratum of all creation. The ultimate Key-word occurring in the Maha-Vakyas or Great Sayings, like Aham Brahmasmi, I am That, on which all the ancient scriptures rest.

(1) **tattva** : The thirty six basic elements, components or Principles of all Existence as listed below.

(2) **mahābhūta** (महाभूत) : The five major components of manifestation as listed below (3 to 7).

(3) **prithvī** (पृथ्वी)

(4) **jala** (जल)

(5) **tejas** (तेजस्)

(6) **vāyu** (वायु)

(7) **ākāśa** (आकाश)

(8) **tanmātras** (तन्मात्र)- subtle, transit media of the senses as listed below (8 to 13)

(9) **gandha** (गन्ध) - the transit medium for the olfactory impressions

(10) **rasa** (रस)- the transit medium for the taste sensations

(11) **rūpa** (रूप)- the transit medium for the visual sensations

(12) **sparśa** (स्पर्श)- the transit medium for the touch sensations

(13) **śabda** (शब्द) - the transit medium for the auditive sensations

(14) **karmendriyas** (कर्मेन्द्रिय)- five organs of action as listed below (15 to 19)

(15) **pāyu** (पायु)- the excretory organ

(16) **upastha** (उपस्थ)- the sexual organs

(17) **pāda** (पाद)- the locomotion organ

(18) **pāni** –(पाणि) hand, the organ of apprehension

(19) **vāk** –(वाक्) the speech organ

- (20) jñānendriyas (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय)- The five sense organs as listed below (21 to 25)
- (21) ghrāṇa (घ्राण)- nose
- (22) rasanā (रसना)- tongue
- (23) cakṣu (चक्षु)- eye
- (24) tvak –(त्वक्) skin
- (25) śrotra (श्रोत्र)- ear
- (26) antaḥkaraṇa (अन्तःकरण)- the five inner instruments of consciousness as listed below. (27 to 31)
- (27) manas (मनस)- the lower mind
- (28) ahaṁkāra (अहंकार)- the empirical ego
- (29) buddhi (बुद्धि)- the intellect
- (30) prakṛti (प्रकृति) - nature
- (31) puruṣa (पुरुष) – soul
- (32) Ṣat kañcukas (षट्चुक) : the six fundamental limitations we are subject to in respect of Space, Time, Desire, Knowledge, Power, and Maya, the Illusion of Duality, as listed below (33 to 38)
- (33) niyati (नियति)- spatial limitation
- (34) kāla (काल)- limitation in time
- (35) rāga (राग)- limitation of desire
- (36) vidyā (विद्य)- limitation of empirical knowledge
- (37) kalā (कला)- limitation in power
- (38) māyā (माया)- the origin of illusion and duality
- (39) śuddha-tattva (शुद्धतत्त्व) : The 5 pure tattvas or aspects of the Absolute, as listed below (40 to 44)
- (40) śuddha vidyā (शुद्धविद्य) - higher knowledge
- ((41) īśvara (ईश्वर) - God
- (42) sadāśiva (सदाशिव) – Eternal Bliss
- (43) śakti (शक्ति) – Creative power : the Mother principle
- (44) śiva (शिव) – The Ultimate Reality

- (45) chit (चित्): Consciousness
- (46) mahāvākya (महावाक्य) - the Great Saying
- (47) nāma rūpa (नाम रूप) – Name and Form
- (48) aupurusheya (औपुरुषेय) : What comes from a divine source
- (49) śruti (श्रुति): Knowledge that comes from hearing, or inspiration or teaching.
- (50) mantra (मन्त्र), : Words that protect, preserve and empower the Mind
- (51) yajña (यज्ञ) : Ritual sacrifice
- (52) jñana (ज्ञान): What is known
- (53) jñeyya (ज्ञेय), : What is to be known
- (54) dhyana (ध्यान) : Meditation
- (55) dhyatru (द्यात्) : The person who meditates
- (56) dhyeya (ध्येय) : the object meditated upon
- (57) ichha śakti (इच्छा-शक्ति) : The driving power of Desire, Motivation, or Will
- (58) jñana śakti (ज्ञान-शक्ति): The power of Knowledge
- (59) kriya śakti (क्रिया- शक्ति) : The power of Action

CHAPTER 2 : SPACE - TIME : ākāśa - kāla : आकाश - काल

- (1) ākāśa (आकाश) : Space
- (2) kāla (काल) : Time
- (3) brahmāṇḍa (ब्रह्माण्ड) The Golden Egg : The first form of the Cosmos
- (4) virāṭa (विराट) : The first 14 worlds of the Cosmos as listed below.
- (5 to 11) : bhū: bhuva: suva: maha: jana: tapa: satyam (भूः, भुवः, सुवः, महः, जनः, तपः सत्यं). : The first three refer to the Earth, the Antariksha or the Mid-Space between Earth and Heaven were relevant to human existence and the last four were higher worlds comprising the domain of the divine. Yet all the seven states of existence reach down into the human personality as a psycho-physical spectrum of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Vijnana, Manas, Prana and Anna, which translate as Truth, Consciousness, Bliss, Discrimination, Mind, Energy and Food. The above names are invocatory

terms referred to as the Vyahritis and are recited as part of the sacred Gayathri Mantra.

(12) antarikṣa (अन्तरिक्ष) : The mid-space between Earth and Heaven

(13 to 19) sat cit ānanda vijñāna manasa prāṇa anna (सत् चित् आनन्द विज्ञान मनस प्राण अन्न) which translate as Truth, Consciousness, Bliss, Discrimination, Mind, Energy and Food.

(20 to 26) : atala vitala sutala rasātala talātala mahātala and pātāla (अतल वितल सुतल रसातल तलातल महतल and पाताल) : The seven lower worlds likened to hell that would seem to reflect the baser elements and influences in human nature.

(27 to 30) : kalpa, manvantara, mahāyuga and yuga (कल्प मन्वन्तर महायुग and युग) : The time units in the cosmic time scale. One day or night in the life of Brahma lasts four Yugas on this cosmic time scale which correspond to 4,320,000,000 years on the human time scale !

(31) Bhagavata Purana : One of the 18 major Puranas or collection of ancient legends, myths and woven around lives and doings gods and worlds, as contrasted with the Itihasas which tell of kings and nations on earth.

CHAPTER 3 : ENERGY : PRANA (प्राण)

(1) prāṇa (प्राण) : vital energy

(2) ichha śakti (इच्छा-शक्ति) : The power of Will,

(3) jñana śakti (ज्ञान-शक्ति) : The power of Knowledge

(4) kriya śakti (क्रिया-शक्ति) : The power of Action

These attributes (2 to 4) are personified as names of Lalita, the Universal Mother in the Lalita Sahasranamam.

(5) jñānendriya (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय) : The five sense organs

(6) karmendriya (कर्मेन्द्रिय) : The five organs of action

Chapter 4 : Name and Form : nāma rūpa : नाम - रूप

- (1), prāṇa (प्राण)
- (2) nāma rūpa (नाम रूप)– Name and Form.
- (3) akṣara (अक्षर) or “imperishable” unit of sound - syllable
- (4) vyamjana (व्यंजन) - consonant
- (5) svara (स्वर) - vowel
- (6) śabda brahman (शब्द ब्रह्मन्) - [God](#) as word.
- (7) nāda brahman (नाद ब्रह्मन्) - God as sound.
- (8) [mantra](#) (मन्त्र) – verse of scripture
- (9) vāc (वाच्) – Goddess of speech.
- (10) Candas (चन्दस) - poetic meter
- (11) guru śiṣya (गुरु शिष्य), - teacher and student
- (12) stotra (स्तोत्र) - hymn of adoration

Chapter 5 : Nature : prakṛti : प्रकृति

- (1) icchā śakti jñāna śakti kriyā śakti(इच्छा शक्ति ज्ञान शक्ति क्रिया शक्ति)
: the power of the Will, of Knowledge and of Activity.
- (2) cidagnikuṇḍa (चिदग्निकुण्ड) : the fire altar of the First
Sacrifice conducted by the Divine for initiating the process
of Creation
- (3) prakṛti : प्रकृति : The World of Nature and Human nature
- (4) karma (कर्म) : Action, more importantly, the Law of inevitability
of the chain of Cause and Effect, governing all of Nature and
Human Nature across Space and Time.
- (5) Dvandva (द्वन्द्व) : The pair of opposites of all human experience.
- (6) sattva, rajas and tamas (सत्त्व रजस् तमस्) (4). The three
fundamental forces that influence all behaviour in Human Nature and
make for Tranquillity, Dynamism and Inertia

- (7) abhyāsa (अभ्यास) (5) meditative practice
(8) vairāgya (वैराग्य) (6) : detachment
(9) nēti nēti (नेति नेति) (9) : Not This - Not This

Chapter 6 : Knowledge – Wisdom : jñāna vijñāna : ज्ञान विज्ञान

- (1) manas मनस् : Mind
(2) buddhi (बुद्धि) : The Intellect : the seat of wisdom
(3) dhyāna (ध्यान) : Meditation.
(4) jñāna (ज्ञान) : Knowledge
(5) vijñāna (विज्ञान) : Wisdom
(6) viṣaya (विषयः) : Objects
(7) saṅga (सङ्गः) : Attachment
(8) kāma (कामः) : Desire
(9) krōdha (क्रोधः) : Anger
(10) saṃmōha (संमोहः) : Delusion
(11). smṛtibhramah (स्मृतिविभ्रमः) Loss of memory
(12). buddhināśa (बुद्धिनाशः) Ruin of intellect

Chapter 7 : A Cosmic Vision : Viswaroopadarsana : विश्वरूपदर्शनम्

viśvarūpa nityayukta śraddha akṣaram anirdēśyam

- (1) viśvarūpa (विश्वरूप) : Vision of the Universe
(2) nityayukta (नित्ययुक्ता) : ever steadfast
(3) śraddha (श्रद्ध) : Attentiveness
(4) akṣaram (अक्षरम्) : Fixed

- (5) Anirdeshyam (अनिर्देश्यम्) : Indefinable
- (6) avyaktam (अव्यक्तं) : Unmanifest
- (7) acintyam (अचिन्त्यं) : Inconceivable
- (8) kūṭastham (कूटस्थम्) : Unchanging
- (9) acalam (अचलं) : Unmoving
- (10) dhruvam (ध्रुवम्) : Eternal
- (11) samabudadhayah (समबुद्धयः) : Even minded
- (12) sarvabhūtahita (सर्वभूतहित) : For the welfare of all beings

CHAPTER 8 ; Who am I ? : kō'ham : कोऽहम्

- (1). aham (अहम्) : I
- (2). kṣētra (क्षेत्र) : The body
- (3). kṣētrajña (क्षेत्रज्ञ) : The Indweller of the body (soul)
- (4). puruṣōttama (पुरुषोत्तम) : The Supreme Spirit
- (5). daiva (दैव) : Divine
- (6). asura (आसुर) : Demonic
- (7). śaraṇam (शरणं) : Surrender
- (8). mōkṣa (मोक्ष) : Liberation
- (9). jīvanmukta (जीवन्मुक्त) : One who is liberated while living
- (10) mahāvākya (महावाक्य) Great Sayings of the Upanishads that convey the non-dualism between the individual soul and the Universal soul

Chapter 9 : That : तत्

- (1) Idam (इदम्) : This Transient Manifest : Worldly Existence.
- (2). Tat (तत्) : That Eternal Unmanifest
- (3) vyavahārika (व्यवहारिक) : Relative human perspective,
- (4) paramārthika (परमार्थिक) : Absolute perspective

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