

A Short Commentary on  
**Viveka Chudamani**  
(Selected Verses)



**Pujya Sri Satguru**  
**Thuli Baba**

We take refuge at the Holy Feet of Sri Satguru!

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Viveka Chudamani  
(Selected Verses)

***Thuli Baba***

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Cover : This house is considered the "Sri Vaikunth of this world." Living in this house were two enlightened giants: our Paramaguru, Sri Vadivel Swamy, who was the aspect of Sri Veda Vyasa, and our Satguru, Sri Thuli Baba, who was the aspect of Sri SukaBrahmam. The house is located in Thirumandira Nagar (Thoothukudi), Tamil Nadu, India.

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You are everything!

## Preface

Children of grace and Self-Knowledge!

One can prostrate to His Holy Feet only by His grace. Sri Adi Sankaracharya, the world Guru, composed Sri Viveka Chudamani, the Crest Jewel of Discrimination, by the grace of his Satguru. You will understand and assimilate the essence of this text, the key to Self-Knowledge, by the grace of the Holy Feet of Sri Sankaracharya.

Listening is better than seeing. Conviction is better than mere listening. Adherence to conviction is still better. Faith in and adherence to one's conviction of what is listened to will bestow direct experience of the Self and thereby one becomes verily THAT.

To become One without a second is the supreme Knowledge. You can also become THAT if you understand the essence of this text.

Grace of Sri Satguru will guide you!

Grace of Sri Lord will show you a Satguru . This is certain.

  
(Thuli Baba)

You are everything!

Editor's Note:

Sri Thuli Baba has explained selected verses from Viveka Chudamani in His own words and in some places with His own examples.

We feel great joy in  
releasing this book  
on this day of Guru Purnima  
(July 4, 2020).

## **1. THE GLORY OF SELF-REALISATION**

Children of Self- Knowledge,

We prostrate to Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada who is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss and to Satguru, who is beyond the reach of speech and mind and who has realised the teachings of Advaita Vedanta through His sharp discriminating intellect.

Here, Sri Govinda signifies both Lord Narayanan and Sri Govinda Bhagavapada. Sri Adi Sankaracharya, the author of Viveka Chudamani, pays his deep obeisance to the Lord as well as to his Satguru.

One should know the Lord through a Satguru and understand that both the Lord and Satguru are one. Realise that both are one and the same and dissolve yourself in the true Knowledge of Brahman. This is Awareness or Self-Realisation.

You are everything!

## **2. SIGNIFICANCE OF A HUMAN BIRTH**

Of all creations, human birth is rare to obtain; more so is to get a male body. Much rarer is to be born as a pure soul without physical deformities such as hunched-back, blindness, deafness and neuter gender. Still rare is to understand the meaning of Vedas. Equally rare it is to identify oneself with the Self and cast away non-Self entities. The rarest of all is to gain the direct experience of the Self and to have firm abidance in one's own Self.

This ultimate experience cannot be obtained except through the well-earned merits in millions of human births, which help one to secure the grace of Satguru. Through Him, one will get the Darshan of the Lord. By the realisation that the Lord and Satguru are one, one will become THAT, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. It is extremely rare indeed to get three things such as a human birth, longing for Liberation in that birth and seeking the guidance of Great Beings. One who has attained the state of Oneness with Brahman will not indulge in external pleasures of life. One out of thousand people desires for Liberation. One out of thousand seekers of Truth or Liberation realises THAT.

What human beings perceive as one year is one day for demi-gods. Twelve thousand such years of demi-gods make up a cycle of four epochs (Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali). One thousand cycles of four epochs make up one forenoon for Lord Brahma and a thousand more makes up one night for Him. Two

thousand cycles of four epochs constitute one day for Lord Brahma and His lifespan is one hundred years. Whereas enlightened beings have no such boundaries of time. They transcend time.

You are everything!

### **3. MEANS TO ATTAIN SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

One must renounce both joy and sorrow derived from external or material things. He or she should approach a Satguru, perform three services to Him such as Sarvanga Seva, Satbhava Seva and Atmabhava Seva and fix his or her mind on His teachings. A person who discriminates between transitory and eternal should strive his best to attain Liberation.

A seeker with clear intellect, having commenced the practice of Sadhana for realisation of the Self inculcated by Sri Satguru, should reject the hankering for objects goaded by the senses. He must perform activities which arise spontaneously without yielding to likes and dislikes and must abide in himself by himself with contentment and bliss.

By clear reasoning, one should be firm in contemplation of the Self. He should give up all desires and perform only those acts which aid in purifying his mind. To see the rope as rope is clarity of knowledge; to misunderstand the rope for a snake is delusion of the mind. The exalted state of realisation of Truth can be understood only through the teachings of the Wise, and not by bathing in the sacred waters, righteous living, charity or worship.

You are everything!

#### **4. FOUR MEANS OF ATTAINMENT**

1. Firstly, one should discriminate between the Real and unreal or the eternal and transient. A firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman is real and the universe is unreal is true discrimination (Viveka). That which is permanent, all pervasive and beyond boundaries of time and space is the Reality and that which is transient is unreal.
2. The seeker of Truth should not evince any interest in the enjoyment of pleasures of heaven after death. He should have no desire for the abode of Lords which are only transient Liberation.
3. The seeker of Truth must possess six qualities to progress towards Liberation such as equality, equal vision, equanimity, peace, conviction and sincerity.
4. The last one is intense longing for Liberation and focusing the mind on the Self and merging in the Self.

Contentment of mind is to be attained by knowing the impermanence of all physical bodies including that of Lord Brahma. It is necessary to be detached from transitory enjoyments obtained through the body. This can be achieved by one's awareness and by comprehending the instructions of Sri Satguru. One must look upon sense-enjoyments derived through the sense organs as lethal and turn his mind away from them. He should not give attention and enquire into



the cause and effect of senses. One should train oneself to remain unaffected by them.

Let your mind remain detached from the actions of organs (mouth i.e. speech - **Vak**, hands - **Pani**, legs - **Pada**, anus - **Payu** and organ of generation - **Upashtam**) which happen on their own accord. Let your mind be detached from external things without making deliberate efforts to avoid them. Be free from worry about your activities and bear with any problems or difficulties peacefully. This, indeed, is Titiksha or forbearance.

The intellect which is convinced of the teachings of Advaitic scriptures and of Sri Satguru is oriented to Shraddha or faith. The wavering and restless mind which indulges in the world for many reasons must be stopped and it must be focussed on the ever-pure Brahman.

Mumukshutva or deep yearning for Liberation is the desire to free oneself from the imaginary bondage of mundane life. These clutches are born out of ignorance i.e., by considering the body, which is activated by "I" and "mine", as our true Self.

Even though the intensity of yearning for Liberation is dull or mediocre in some aspirants, if they imbibe steadfastness and firm faith and gain the grace of a Sri Satguru, their yearning will intensify and yield good result. Vairagya or dispassion means feeling of disgust towards all transitory pleasures like that of disgust one feels on seeing the droppings of a crow.

Divine love will not manifest unless the divine form appears in the heart. Once this appears, desire for transitory things will fade away. Among all the spiritual practices conducive to Liberation, devotion holds the supreme place. In Advaita Philosophy, meditating on one's real nature is devotion. Followers of Bhakti Marga (way) maintain that divine love towards one's

chosen Deity is devotion. In fact, both are not different. That Self which resides in one's heart is the Lord.

Sri Krishna declares the same in Srimad Bhagavad Gita: 'O Partha (Arjuna)! Become aware of Our presence as the Self in all forms you behold.' When a seeker realises himself as the Self through devotion, he truly understands Us and Our attributes as Maya. He becomes totally detached and is oblivious to good and bad which befall him. His Knowledge is unshakable. He is a Stithaprajna, one who has steady wisdom.

You are everything!

## **5. ATTRIBUTES OF SRI SATGURU**

O Children!

Sri Satguru is one who is sinless and not enslaved by desires which cause the downfall; who is well-versed in Vedas, a knower of Brahman par excellence and who has withdrawn Himself into Brahman; who is calm like fire that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who seek refuge in Him.

Worshipping such a Guru with devotion, one should approach Him with humility and offer one's service to Him. When the Guru is pleased with your prostration (a sign of humility), the student should ask Him about what he has got to know. Saints and sages do not reveal themselves to the world. That should not lead one to conclude that saints do not exist. Many believe that saints existed in the past and there are no saints in the present. This is wrong. Saints exist in all periods of time. It is the lack of knowledge and absence of desire to find one on our part that make it harder to find them or recognize them.

You are everything!

## **6. ENQUIRY OF AN EARNEST DISCIPLE**

O Gurudeva, we bow to Your Holy Feet and apply the dust of Your feet on our head. Please be gracious and listen to us and redeem Your child with compassion. Fallen as we are into the sea of birth and death, please reach us to the other shore of Samsara with a side-glance of Your taintless eyes which shed nectar-like grace supreme.

We seek refuge in Your lotus feet. Protect us please, afflicted as we are by the unquenchable fire of the world-forest which is difficult to cross and bitten by the serpent of desire, anger etc., and tossed violently by the winds of untoward lot. O Lord, please sprinkle on us Your pure, cool, nectar-like speech, sweetened by the enjoyment of the elixir-like bliss of Brahmam, issuing forth in streams from Your lips as from a fountain, and delightful to the ear, and allay our torments of worldly afflictions and quench the tongues of forest-fire of our grief. Blessed, thrice blessed are we, on whom the nectarine glance of Your compassionate eyes is cast!

O Satguruvarya! Lord of lords!

How to cross this ocean of phenomenal existence, what is to be our fate, and which of the means we should adopt – of these we know nothing. Condescend to save us, O Lord, and deign to explain at length how to put an end to the misery of this relative existence. Various texts prescribe several means. Only a doctor knows the needs of a patient. We do not have anyone except You to treat us of our ailment.

You are everything!

## **7. PRAISING THE DISCIPLE**

O child! You are blessed indeed! You have done whatever is to be done (by directing your mind to the supreme goal of life) and sanctified your family. O indeed you wish to be freed from the bondage of ignorance! You have put to us the supreme question. Knowledge is limitless; but the time is limited and obstacles to be faced are several. We shall impart to you the necessary instructions on Truth like a swan which drinks only the milk rejecting the water in it. The first step to Liberation is to follow our guidance with utmost sincerity. Listen and grasp the import with a firm resolve in your heart.

1. Give up attachment to transitory things;
2. Restraint of internal organs such as mind, intellect, mind-stuff and ego.
3. Forsake the beckoning of external senses.

A father has got his sons to free him from his debts, but he has got none but himself to remove his bond of ignorance. The burden of a headload can be removed by others. But none excepting one's own self can appease the pangs of hunger rising in him. His hunger cannot be satisfied by another person eating the food for him. The patient (seeker) who takes the proper diet and medicine from a proper doctor (Satguru) is alone seen to recover (freedom from transmigration) completely. A mother can cure a child by taking the medicine herself as long as the child feeds on its mother's milk. When the child

takes the bottle-milk or other kinds of food, such a means is of no use.

Self-Realisation will be possible for an aspirant only through intense longing on his part. It cannot be attained even if he or she enjoys the grace of the Lord, the Satguru and other devotees of the Lord. You are here to eat mangoes; relish the fruits given to you; satisfy your hunger and sleep in peace. Instead, if you start counting the trees, analysing the type of tree, or the variety of fruits, or the nature of its flowers and leaves, it will not satisfy your wish to eat the fruits. Similarly, if you start analysing the Karmic history of your body, or wondering why you got afflicted or why your child behaved in this way etc. or if you analyse a Mantra and its effects if chanted etc., it will strengthen your imagination and expand your association with the external world (but it will not lead you to Realisation).

Why should you, the Changeless be entangled in problems? Why you, the Attributeless have bias? Why is the wavering for you, the Unwavering? Why you, the Nameless and the Formless, get entangled in names and forms? Why do you, the pure Self, have attachment for non-Self or transient things? Introspecting thus will lead you to enjoy the fruit in the end. Dissolving the mind in the Self is like tasting the fruit. He who has no desires, fear or anger is verily a Jivanmukta, a liberated Being. When you let go of what is not necessary, whatever is to be attained will come to you on its own accord.

You are everything!

## **8. MEANS OF TEACHING**

O child!

1. Know that death stalks the footsteps of a foolish person who treads the path of venomous sense-pleasures. If you are earnest about Emancipation, the first step is to annihilate the desires for sense-enjoyment.
2. Seeking to realise the Self, while passionately nurturing one's body, is like catching hold of a crocodile to cross a river.
3. While one person fancies certain things as pleasure-giving, another imagines the same as a source of misery. Therefore, pleasure and pain proceed from the mind. Self is ever blissful.
4. Words relating to the body and world are like a dense forest and delude the mind. He who minimizes worldly talk and seeks to know the true nature of Self is indeed a wise person. Words of bondage are one's enemy and spiritual talks are one's friend.
5. For one who has been bitten by the serpent of ignorance, the only remedy is the knowledge of Brahman. Of what avail are the Vedas and (other) Scriptures, Mantras (sacred formulae) and medicines to such a one? A disease is not cured by merely uttering the name of the medicine; the medicine has to be taken by the patient. You cannot see

the world through the eyes of someone else. You can realise the Truth only through your direct experience.

6. A treasure hidden underground requires (for its excavation) a competent person to guide you to remove the stones lying over it and (finally) to recover it from the hidden place. You don't obtain it by merely calling out, 'treasure, treasure'. Likewise, the Truth of the Self is to be attained through the guidance of a knower of Brahman, followed by restraint of inner noise of your mind, removal of the stone of ignorance using the spade of peacefulness and humility and digging out the treasure of Ultimate Bliss of Brahman from the vessel of direct experience.
7. One, who yearns for Liberation, must serve Sri Satguru and reflect on His teachings through constant and unbroken meditation on the Truth like the continuous flow of oil for a long time. It is only then he will attain the super-conscious state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
8. The Self should be beheld all the time, (everywhere with the Vision of oneness); heard all around (words should be free of delusion and interpreted positively at all times) and felt at all times. This is to know with certainty that 'you are THAT' and to abide in It. This is Self-Realisation. The mass of blood and flesh is designated by sages as the gross body.
9. Sense-objects are even more virulent in their evil effects than the poison of a deadly cobra. Poison kills one who takes it, but sense-objects kill one even when he looks at them through his eyes. If indeed you have a yearning for Liberation, shun sense-objects from a good distance as you would do to poison, and always cultivate carefully the nectar-like virtues of contentment, compassion, patience,



forgiveness, straight-forwardness, calmness and self-control.

10. When a seeker shuns the superfluous, whatever has to come will come to him automatically. No separate effort is needed. How to break free from the bondage of ignorance which is without beginning? For this, give up glorifying the physical body, which is an object of enjoyment and use for others; reduce your needs and desires; and thereby become free from the infatuation with 'my body, my wife and my children'. Only when you conquer this bondage, you can attain the supreme state of Freedom.
11. Antakarana constitutes the inner organs, i.e. mind, intellect, mind-stuff and ego, according to their respective functions: mind considers the pros and cons of a thing; intellect determines the truth of objects; Chitta remembers things of interest and the ego causes identification with the body as one's own self.
12. One and the same Prana (vital force) becomes Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana according to their diversity of functions and modifications, like gold and the ornaments made of gold and also like water which differs in taste and quality.
13. Firstly, the five organs of action such as speech, secondly, the five organs of knowledge such as the ear, thirdly, the group of five Pranas, fourthly, four internal organs such as intellect, fifthly, five elements such as space, sixthly, Nescience or Avidya, seventhly, desire and eighthly, action – this eight-fold constituents make up the subtle body associated with mind.

14. The subtle body, also known as Linga Sariram, is produced out of the source elements before their subdividing and combining with each other. It is possessed of latent impressions and causes the soul to experience the fruits of its past actions. It is a beginningless superimposition on the soul brought on by its own ignorance.

Dream is a state of the soul distinct from waking state, wherein it shines by itself without the gross body. In dream, the intellect by itself takes on the role of doership and the like, owing to various latent impressions collected during the waking state. In dream state, the intellect is illumined and energized by the Light of the Self, with intellect as Its only superimposition. However, the Self is not touched by any of the action performed by the intellect. The Self only illumines the movements of the intellect while remaining absolutely untouched.

As the Self is wholly unattached in Its very nature, It is not touched by any acts that Its superimpositions may perform. The subtle body is the instrument for all activities of the Self, who is Knowledge Absolute, like the tools of a carpenter. Therefore the Self is perfectly unattached.

All actions take place because of the subtle body. Since, in sleep, there is no association with the subtle body, no activity takes place. There is only causal body or Avyaktam in sleep. This is also known as Primal Nature or Pure Maya. Blindness or clear vision depends on the condition of the eye; so are deafness, dumbness, etc., of the ear and so forth – but never of the Self, the Knower. Inhalation and exhalation, yawning, sneezing, secretion, leaving this body, etc., are known as the functions of Prana and the rest, while hunger and thirst are characteristics of Prana proper.

The inner organ (mind) has its seat in the organs such as the eye, as well as in the body, identifying with them and endowed with a reflection of the Self. It is the ego which, identifying itself with the body, becomes the doer or experiencer, and in conjunction with the attributes such as Sattva, it assumes the three different states. In wakeful state, it is dominated by Rajas, in dream state by Sattva and in sleep by Tamas. It is the attitude or attribute, not the action which makes the sense-objects as a source of happiness or misery.

When sense-objects are favourable, the mind becomes happy, and in contrary state, it becomes miserable. So happiness and misery are characteristics of ego, and not of the ever-blissful Self. Balanced mind should be achieved by being unbiased between the states of happiness and misery or unaffected by the pairs of opposites.

You are everything!

## **9. PROOF OF MAYA**

Avyaktam or Maya, or the Unmanifest is the power of the Lord. It is without beginning, is made up of the three attributes and is superior to the effects (as their cause). It is to be inferred through clear intellect only from the effects it produces. It is Maya which brings forth the whole universe. Sri Krishna Bhagawan in Gita exclaims: 'O Partha! Our Maya which is divine and is made up of three mental attributes can be crossed by only those who surrender themselves completely to Us.'

Maya is similar to electricity which cannot be seen and is understood only by its effect. It is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different nor both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both. It is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.

The snake of delusion (ignorance) can be destroyed by the rope of Pure Knowledge. Similarly, the firm knowledge of One destroys the duality. The power of Rajas which is of the nature of activity, and from which this primeval flow of activity has emanated, is sustained by doubt and uncertainty and consequent agitation. Maya entangles men in worldly tendencies by making use of Rajasic qualities of activity through the Tamasic attributes of lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, spite, egoism, envy, jealousy, etc. Tamas or the veiling power makes things appear other than what they are, just as a person is deluded by the different names and forms (ornaments) of the

same gold. It is this delusion arising out of names and forms that causes man's repeated transmigration.

He who perceives changes and is assailed by uncertainty traps himself in bondage. He who sees no changes and has no uncertainty realises the Self. One who doesn't have the attitude, "We are Brahman" and unassailable faith is ever tormented by doubt, uncertainty and veiling power (delusion).

Ignorance, sluggishness, irrationality, carelessness, stupidity, etc., are the attributes of Tamas. Pure Sattva is transparent like clear water; yet in conjunction with Rajas and Tamas, it traps men in the bondage of transmigration. However, the mixed Sattva is characterized by self-discipline (code of conduct or do's and don'ts), faith, devotion, yearning for fruits of after-life, divine tendencies and turning away from the unreal etc.

The traits of pure Sattva are cheerfulness, realising one's own Self, supreme peace, contentment, bliss, and steady devotion to the Self. The conjunction of Sattva with Rajas and Tamas can be removed by spiritual practice after which the aforementioned traits can be experienced. When one abides always in Sattva, these traits will be imperishable.

You are everything!

## **10. THE CAUSAL BODY**

The Unmanifest, spoken of as the compound of the three attributes, is the causal body of the soul. Deep sleep is the state in which the functions of the mind and all its instruments remain suspended. The proof of this is the universal verdict, "I did not know anything in sleep."

Note: "I did not know anything then" is a state wherein ego (mind) temporarily merges with the Self.

You are everything!

## **11. PROOF OF THE SELF**

All that is the creation of Maya, all modifications including the body – all this is unreal and non-Self. That which remains after discarding non-self is the Self.

Now We will instruct you on the real nature of Self, realising which, may you be freed from bondage and attain Liberation.

- 1) There should be, primarily, a conviction that there exists a bedrock, the substratum for the sense of "I" or the "I" consciousness. He, who becomes the Witness of the three states of waking, dream and sleep, knows everything that happens in these states, how these activities are carried out and also the ego or individual sense which assumes doership for all these things is, indeed, the Knower of the Self.
- 2) THAT which sees all, but which no one beholds; which illumines the intellect, but the intellect cannot illumine THAT; THAT which pervades the universe, but which is not pervaded by anything; THAT which is self-shining and by whose light the universe is illumined; THAT in whose very presence the body, organs, mind and intellect keep to their respective spheres of action - THAT indeed is the Supreme Self, THAT indeed is the Indweller in all, THAT indeed is the Ancient Person! It shines in every cell of consciousness. THAT is ever the same. THAT is neither born nor THAT dies; THAT neither grows nor decays, nor does THAT undergo any change. It does not cease to exist

even when the body is destroyed, like the space in a pot which exists even after the pot is broken. The varying modifications of appearance, growth, change, decay and destruction do not happen to the Self. With the restraint of mind and clarity of intellect, realise by direct experience your own self as, 'We are THAT'.

If you attain this direct experience, erasing your sense of "I", you will merge in Brahman and cross the vast ocean of Samsara whose waves are birth and death. You will attain clarity, as doubt, perversion of mind, and ignorance are done away. Then you will be blessed with the sublime vision of the Self.

You are everything!



## **12. IGNORANCE**

Identifying the Self with non-Self – this is the bondage of man, which arises from ignorance, and brings in its wake the miseries of birth and death. It is through ignorance or Tamoguna that one considers this ephemeral body as real, and identifying oneself with it, he or she nourishes, bathes, and protects it. He remains bound by the body idea i.e. 'I am the body' just as the silkworm binds itself by the threads of its cocoon. Overpowered by ignorance he mistakes a thing for what it is not. A man through ignorance falsely identifies himself with the body, which is the non-Self. This misapprehension sorely afflicts him through the binding fetters of lust, anger, etc. Due to attachment to the body, he hankers after objects. If his desires are not fulfilled, he is enslaved by anger and greed which lead him to destruction.

Lust, avarice and anger which destroy the Self should be eliminated. As layers of clouds, illumined by the rays of the sun, hide the sun and dominate the sky, so the ego or 'I-sense', generated by the Self, covers the reality of the Self and dominates our experience. Just as the Self is hidden by ignorance, the projecting power afflicts the foolish man with great grief. It is from these two powers, veiling and projecting, that man's bondage has proceeded – beguiled by which he mistakes the body for the Self and wanders (from body to body).

Of the tree of Samsara, ignorance is the seed, identification with the body is its sprout, attachment its tender leaves, actions

its water, the body its trunk, the vital forces its branches, the organs its twigs, the sense-objects its flowers, various miseries resulting from diverse actions are its fruits, and the individual soul is the bird who feeds on such fruit. When man experiences pleasure through external objects, it leads to misery one way or another. They are transient pleasures with a beginning and an end. A Liberated soul utterly loathes such objects.

The body caused by ignorance subjects a man to the long train of miseries such as birth, death, disease and decrepitude. This is the bondage which can be destroyed only by the sword of Knowledge that is born of discrimination and dispassion and sharpened by the grace of the Lord. It cannot be destroyed neither by weapons nor by wind, nor by fire, nor by scriptures, nor by Mantras, nor by millions of acts. When the (delusion of) five sheaths are removed, the soul shines as the pure Being. The soul is hidden by the five sheaths just like the film of slimy moss that covers the water. A man of wisdom, on realising by himself that he is verily Sat-Chit-Ananda, revels in the bliss of Brahman. One should understand that the soul and the material sheath or body are different just as the snake and its skin which, it sheds when the new skin grows, are separate.

You are everything!

### **13. FIVE SHEATHS**

#### 1) Annamaya kosha – The Sheath of Food:

The physical body is the product of food and comprises the material sheath. Like a crack in the wall which is patched up with clay, the body is sustained by food. It lives on food and dies without it; hence it is called food sheath or Annamaya kosha. The food causes the mass of outer and inner skin to grow. Body by itself has no consciousness, it is inert. It is just like a pot which is seen like an object. That, which didn't exist before (conception) or after (dissolution), has no existence in the middle also. (It appears only for a short, intervening period.) That which has no existence in the beginning or at the end does not have existence in between. The Soul that witnesses the body and its actions is different from the body. O ignorant man! Give up your identification with and attachment to the body which is merely a combination of skin, flesh, fat, bones and filth.

Katopanishad says: The Self is not attained by scriptural erudition, sharp intelligence, or discussion. To one who looks upon the Soul as the Supreme Brahman, the Self reveals Itself and Its pristine nature will shine forth. One who renounces worldly desires, unethical and immoral ways and also the rituals and annihilates the hankering of senses becomes the Self Itself.

## 2) Pranamaya Kosha - Vital Sheath:

The Prana or vital breath which is linked to the five organs of action, and which activates them and engages the body in all activities is the vital sheath.

Taittiriya Upanishad states: whatever is associated with Prana acts; and that which has no association with Prana cannot act. Even though the body and organs of actions are nourished by the food sheath, they cannot engage in actions without Prana. However, the vital sheath also is not the Self; it is only a modification of Vayu (air), and like the air it merely enters into and comes out of the body. Under no condition is the Prana conscious of itself or others, nor does it know what is desirable and what is not desirable.

But the vital sheath always activates and controls a being. Only the practice of Pranayama or breath control can control or regulate the Prana.

## 3) Manomaya kosha - Mental Sheath:

The organs of knowledge are controlled by the mental sheath. The functioning of the mind or the mental sheath causes the Jiva to move about with the wrong notion of "I" and "mine". It is very powerful. It creates the varied names and forms and brings about duality and otherness. It pervades the food sheath (body) and its activities and gives rise to all modifications. All impulses and actions of the five senses are under the control of the mind. Even when there is no actual contact of the senses with the external world in dream state, the mind alone imagines and creates the dream experiences. (The phenomenal world is the projection of mind.)

Taittiriya Upanishad says: In the vital sheath also, the mental sheath i.e., the mind appears to shine as the Self. The

mind causes the ego manifesting as the individual sense "I", and sense of possessiveness as "mine"; as Sankalpa (concepts or desires) and Vikalpa (imagination) i.e., remembrance and forgetfulness. This aspect of mind can be noticed in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. There is no Ignorance (Avidya) outside of the mind.

Saint Thayumanavar, a Tamil saint, has sung: *"Even if anger is controlled and eight occult powers are attained, but if the mind is not annihilated, the Supreme Self cannot be attained."*

In deep sleep, there is no movement of the mind. This is evident to all. The cycle of birth of man is caused simply by imagination of the mind. Clouds are carried here and there by the wind and again driven away by the same agency of wind. Similarly, birth and termination of birth is caused by the movement of mind, and it is not real. That is, the actions of the body are caused and tossed around by the rope of (three) attributes (of the mind). The same mind causes the knot of the rope of attributes to be untied. It is the mind which binds the Jiva with attachment, affection and desire. It is the selfsame mind which releases these chains. By bestowing discrimination, dispassion and purity, it leads the way to Liberation. Therefore the mind is the only cause that brings about man's bondage as well as Liberation.

Amritabindu Upanishad says: One should first secure the wealth of discrimination and dispassion and then enter the arena of the world. They protect a person like the footwear when he or she walks in the thorny forest. The mind deludes a person in gross and subtle ways by creating differences such as castes, like Brahmin and Shudra (fourth caste), distinction in orders in life like celibates and householders and also different

attributes and occupation. To remove the evil tendency of the mind, one's mind should be ever absorbed in thoughts of Emancipation. For one, who is keen on hearing (words of wisdom), pondering and meditating on Truth, his or her mind becomes favourably disposed. Hence this mental sheath also cannot be the Self.

The mind is unreal because it has beginning and end. When the attention of your mind is elsewhere, your ears don't hear those things which are uttered and the eyes don't see the world. The mind is illusory, the primordial Prakriti or primal ignorance. The intellect associating with the organs of knowledge, engages in their actions, assumes the role of 'doership' or the sense of 'I am the doer'. It bears the name of Vijnanamaya Kosha, the sheath of Knowledge i.e., and becomes responsible for the cycle of transmigration.

#### 4) Vijnanamaya Kosha – The Sheath of Knowledge

The knowledge sheath or intellect, a reflection of the power of Chit that follows the embodied soul, is but a modification of Prakriti or Maya. This sheath is the informing power and the power behind action. Because of its ego power or its identity with 'doership', it engages intensely in performing good and bad deeds. By its identification with the body, a particular station in life, actions, duty, qualities (Gunas) etc., and its vicinity to the Supersoul, the effulgence of Atman is reflected most in this sheath. Therefore, man is deluded into taking this for the Self and suffers transmigration.

#### 5) Anandamaya kosha – The Sheath of Bliss:

The sheath of bliss is the nearest reflection of the Self. This bliss arises when one attains the objects desired. It gives rise to love and joy. It shines forth in fortunate persons whose

virtuous deeds have come to fruition. As this sheath is ever full of bliss, it is referred to as Anandamaya kosha. However, this is also nothing more than an evolute of Prakriti. Since this is self-conscious (of its 'I'ness) and is associated with Annamaya kosha and Pranamaya kosha, even this blissful sheath cannot be the Supreme Self.

The Self-effulgent Atma which is beyond and is distinct from the five sheaths, the Witness of the three states of waking, sleep and dream is absolutely pure, ever-blissful and can be realised only by a wise person. That which remains in the end, and is the basis of the five sheaths and the substratum of all, is the Self. That is your real Self. That is the Absolute or supreme Brahman.

The disciple questioned: O revered Master! Be it through delusion or otherwise, the Supreme Self has come to consider Itself as the Jiva. This superimposition is without beginning, and that which has no beginning cannot have an end either. In that case, is it that the Jivahood of the soul will have no end and its transmigration must continue for ever? It seems like the Jiva will never be freed from the cycle of birth and death! Then, how can there be Liberation for the soul?

Sri Satguru said: Your question is quite valid! Now, listen attentively! The dull-witted delusion of misapprehending one thing for the other is absolutely unacceptable. How can there be delusion for the Self, which is unattached, actionless and formless? Is the sky really blue? How can the Jivahood or individual sense, imagined by the mind, belong to you, who are the Self beyond qualities and activity and the Witness? When the delusion or the individuality disappears, doesn't the Jivahood, which is unreal, also come to naught?

As long as the delusion lasts, the illusion of a snake in the rope (caused by delusion) will also last. The snake in the rope disappears only when your delusion vanishes. Until then, your quest for truth should continue silently, peacefully and with patience. One day, your delusion will disappear and on that day, the illusion of snake will also disappear i.e. you will no longer see the world but only your real Self. (You will not see the snake but the rope.) By knowing that the pot is a modification of clay and that the snake is an illusion imposed on the rope, your quest for true knowledge will become mature. This state of ripeness of your true knowledge is Brahman.

You are everything!



## **14. THE NATURE OF THE SELF**

The disciple questioned: O Master! After these five sheaths have been eliminated as unreal, there is nothing left here. There is nothing (but a Void), but the absence of everything. What is left here for the wise knower to realise his true Self?

Satguru answered: You are, indeed, quite intelligent in the enquiry process. What you have pointed out is true. The consciousness of "I" pervades all your sheaths right from your body. The "I" idea has firmly set in. To say, 'something exists' or to say, 'something does not exist' -, both these declarations arise from the body identification. When you recognize THAT, as the One by whom everything is experienced and who Himself is not experienced, know that subtle Knowledge as the Self.

Seeing the reflection of the sun in the water of a pot, the fool thinks that it is the sun itself. Similarly, out of delusion, one identifies oneself as "I" with the reflection of the Chit in the intellect. What can we do if he or she mistakes the perverted identification as his or her own Self, i.e. "I"?

The wise person knows the sun, by whose light the pot, water and reflection of the sun in it are seen, is the real sun (real Self) i.e. the self-luminous sun which illumines these three, himself remaining independent of them. Similarly, discarding the identification with the body, intellect and the reflection of the Chit in it, and by fully realising that the Witness, the Self, the Knowledge Absolute, the Cause of all manifestation

hidden in the recess of the intellect is distinct from cause and effect, and It is eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading and extremely subtle, and has neither interior nor exterior and It is identical with one's Self, one becomes free from sin, death and grief, and emerges as the embodiment of Bliss.

Dear child!

- 1) The extent to which one's sight is reduced? (not seeing names and forms);
- 2) The extent to which the words are reduced? (not talking about names and forms);
- 3) The extent to which the ears do not hear? (not recognizing the sound with modifications);
- 4) The extent to which the sense of smell is diminished? (not discriminating between fragrance and stink);
- 5) The extent to which the sense of taste is reduced? (not discriminating between tastes); and
- 6) The extent to which the bodily sensations are reduced? (being devoid of emotions towards physical pleasures and pain), to that extent, one becomes free from fear.

That is why Saint Appar Swamigal sings, "*We aren't under the domination of any monarch nor do we fear the lord of death*". For a seeker after Liberation, there is no other way to break the bonds of transmigration than by realising the truth of one's true Self. The entire universe which through ignorance appears as diverse forms is nothing but Brahman, which is absolutely free from all limitations and all notions of human thought.

A pot, a modification of clay is not different from clay. Why do we call it a pot? The name is given through letters and

language because of its form and the imagination of mind. The letters of the name arose from sound. Where did the sound come from? All sounds emanate from Pranava. Pranava arises from the space which in turn arises from the Self-luminous, indivisible, non-dual Supreme Self. Thus when one delves deep into the truth, names and forms subside into the essence. The form of the pot arises from the essence of a clay-pot i.e. clay. The pot is the name merely imagined (as separate) through delusion, and the component clay alone is the abiding reality in respect of it.

When one argues that the 'world is real', one commits the sin of characterizing Imperishable as subject to destruction; accuses the Lord of fallacy and declaring the truth uttered by Mahatmas as a lie.

The universe does not exist apart from the Supreme Self; and the perception of its separateness is false like the qualities (of blueness of the sky). The Reality appears different because of your delusion. Whatever a deluded man perceives through mistake also is Brahman and Brahman alone: The shell shines like silver due to your imagination until you pick it up in your hand. Then you realise that it is not silver but only a shell. Appearance of silver and its disappearance, both are your fanciful thoughts. The world superimposed on the Brahman is merely a name, it is not real.

The wise ones realise the Supreme Brahman as all-pervading, non-dual, taintless, immaculate, serene, devoid of beginning and end, beyond activity, boundless Bliss, transcending all the diversities created by Maya, eternal, ever-blissful, nameless and formless, Uncreated, Self-effulgent, beyond all imagination, and the Essence of Knowledge Absolute.

Saint Thayumanavar Swamigal glorifies the Self thus: *"Let us meditate on the One which is eternal, flawless, free from impurities, wholesome, ever immaculate, far but near, all-enveloping effulgence of Void, support of all, the fullness of Bliss, Consciousness beyond thought and speech, expanse of the Vast and the beatitude of Bliss!"*

You are everything!

## **15. ANALYSING THE GREAT APHORISM**

Dear child! In order not to delve into the analysis of the great aphorism, the Satguru states it briefly to enable you to understand it.

“Thou art That” (Tat-Tvam-Asi), the ultimate truth - one who realises this truth becomes the Truth itself. This should remove the duality or the otherness and establish the absolute identity of Brahman (or Ishwara) and Jiva. The difference between Brahman and the Jiva, which is as contradictory as in the case of sun and the glow-worm, king and the servant, ocean and the well, or Mount Meru and an atom should be completely eliminated.

This contradiction is created by superimposition. When the kingdom of a king and the shield of a soldier – the symbol of their status - are removed, there exists neither the king nor the soldier. This superimposition, in the case of Ishwara (the Lord), is Maya, which is the cause of Mahat. In the case of Jiva (the individual soul), the five sheaths which are the effects of Maya are the superimpositions. When (the notions of) Maya and the five sheaths on Ishwara and the Jiva respectively are absent, there is neither Ishwara nor Jiva (only the essence remains).

The Vedas reject the duality or differentiation that is imagined in Brahman. One certainly ought to eliminate these two superimpositions by means of direct Realisation.

Neither the gross nor the subtle universe is real. They appear like the snake seen in the rope or like the scenes in the dream, both of which are imaginary. Perfectly eliminating the objective world in this way by means of reasoning, one should next realise the oneness that underlies Ishwara and the Jiva. There is no division between them. One must reason out and negate that which differentiates 'Jiva' as 'A-jahatilakshnaa' and Ishwara as 'Jahatilakshanaa' and understand the One which combines the two into a single entity, the 'Supreme Self'. Neither the method of total rejection nor the method of complete retention will suffice.

There are three kinds of Lakshanaa or implied meaning. They are the Jahati, the Ajahati and Bhaaga.

Jahati-lakshanaa, the method of total rejection:

In which one of the terms has to give up its primary meaning. Ganga village - meaning a village situated on the bank of river Ganga – the inner meaning is: Ganga leaves the attribute of being a waterbody and assumes the identity of a village on its bank; but essentially both are one and the same. Thus a seeker must give up contradictory elements and delve into the essence of truth which does not differentiate between a river and the village on its bank.

A-jahati-lakshanaa, the method of complete retention:

In which the primary meaning is retained but something is supplied to make it clear. Just as in the sentence, "Red is running", the identity spoken of is a red coloured horse, (one cannot differentiate the red colour from the horse, leaving aside the contradictory attributes).

In the third kind of Lakshanaa, each of the terms has to give up a part of its connotation.

Just as in the sentence, 'This is that Devadatta,' the identity is spoken of, eliminating the contradictory portions, so also in the sentence "Thou art THAT", the wise man must give up contradictory elements on both sides and recognize the identity of Ishwara and Jiva, noticing carefully the essence of both, which is Chit, Knowledge Absolute. Thus hundreds of scriptural texts inculcate the oneness and identity of Brahman and Jiva.

Note: When we say that Devadatta that we met at Thiruannamalai years ago as a young man is the same that is now before us, we give up the place, time and age but do not give up the person.

You are everything!

## **16. MEDITATION ON THE SELF**

1. By eliminating the non-Self, i.e. the gross body and the world (as stated in scriptures), if one realises the Self, the truth becomes self-established like the vast sky, beyond the range of thought. A pot made of clay is always clay. Likewise, the entire universe which has ensued from Brahman, is ever Brahman Itself and nothing but THAT. There is nothing else but Brahman, and It is the only self-existent Reality. The supreme Self, which is serene, pure, and the One without a second, is verily your own Self.
2. Just as the place, time, objects, knower, etc., in a dream are unreal, so also is the world experienced here in the waking state; for, it is the effect of one's own ignorance. The body, the organs, the Pranas, and ego, etc., are also thus unreal. You are THAT which exists as serene and blissful Brahman!
3. When the truth of what is imagined to exist is known, the Reality is recognized as ever-existing substratum. There is no division or separation at all. Nothing is different from It. The diversified dream universe appears and passes away in the dream itself and is not seen in waking state. Therefore, recognize this truth and recognize yourself as Truth, Existence and Consciousness!
4. That which is beyond caste and creed, family and lineage; devoid of name and form, merit and demerit; transcending



space, time and sense-objects, that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.

5. That Supreme Brahman which is beyond the range of all speech and action, but is known through the eye of pure Knowledge; which is beginningless, - that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
6. That which is untouched by the six-fold waves of hunger, thirst, old age, death, sorrow and lust; meditated upon by the Yogi's heart, but not grasped by the sense-organs; and which is unimpeachable - that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
7. That which is the Substratum of the universe with its various subdivisions which are all the creations of delusion; which is the support of the Jiva; which is distinct from the cause and effect; which is not fragmented, - that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
8. That which is free from birth, growth, change, decay, disease and death; which is imperishable; which is the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe - that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
9. That which is undifferentiated; whose characteristics of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss are never non-existent, which is still like the waveless ocean, independent, and indivisible - that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
10. The One, Existence alone, which is the cause of the world of several divisions; the primal Cause which refutes all other causes; that which is distinct from Maya and its

effect, the world, and Self-luminous – that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.

11. That which is beyond duality; which is not limited and indestructible; which is distinct from Maya; the supreme, eternal and imperishable; which is undying bliss; – that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
12. That Reality which (though One) appears variously, owing to delusion as names and forms, attributes; always pure essence like the gold and; that which yields to modifications like the gold ornaments – that Source, the Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.
13. That which shines by Its own light; which is beyond the unmanifest Prakriti; which exists in all bodies as the bliss-permeated Indweller; that which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss – that Brahman is, indeed, you! Meditate on this continuously.

Meditating on the Truth, which is explained above, with a firm intellect and valid reasoning held forth in the scriptures, you should realise the truth, free from doubt, and as clear as a gooseberry (fruit) in the palm of one's hand. Thereafter, live like a king amidst the army. Giving up the notion of body, world, and its activities, abide in your Self and dissolve your being in the essence, the Brahman.

You are everything!

## **17. VASANA-KSHAYAM – ATTENUATION OF IMPRESSIONS**

1. The wise man must put a stop to the superimposition, the notion of "*I*" and "*mine*" in the body, organs, etc., which are the non-Self (by identifying himself with the Self). By realising your own innermost Self, the Witness of Buddhi (intellect) and its modifications, and constantly repeating the positive thought, "We are THAT", conquer this identification with the non-Self, the self-glorification and pride ("*I*" and "*mine*").
2. One should shake off the false knowledge relating to body and the world and relinquish the observance of social etiquette and rituals suggested in the scriptures. The three tendencies or proclivities - towards the study of scriptures (Shastra Vasana), following the ways of the world (Loka Vasana), and pampering the body (Sharira Vasana) will not enable one to attain the real Knowledge. He, who seeks deliverance from the prison of the world (Samsara), should give up the three irresistible desires viz., desire for land, desire for wealth and desire for opposite sex.
3. The characteristics of the tendencies of non-Self namely, pride, status, dignity, self-praise, lust, anger, avarice and egoism should be entirely eschewed.
4. The aspirant's mind dies when it is constantly fixed on his own Self i.e. the individual mind becomes cosmic mind. May the Guru remove all his or her superimposition and

past impressions, annihilating the ego-sense of "I" and "mine" and bestow his refuge on the disciple.

5. Tamas is destroyed by both Sattva and Rajas. Rajas can be severed only by Sattva. Sattva is removed when one is freed from all attributes. May the Guru remove all your superimpositions through the support of Sattva.
6. Have firm faith that the body will be cared for according to one's Prarabdha, the effects of previous Karma and thus become unassailed by worries and carry on with fortitude. May the Guru remove your superimpositions.
7. "We are not the individual soul, but the Supreme Brahman" – with this contemplation, eliminate all that is not-Self. May the Guru help you to remove your superimposition, which has come through the momentum of (past) impressions.
8. May the Guru remove your superimposition caused by the reflection of the Self (in your intellect) and help you to attain the Self which is confirmed by the Vedas, reasoning and by one's direct Realisation.
9. The sage has no sense of doership, since he is free from the sense of accepting or giving. As the Guru is established firmly in the Self, free from any thought, may he help you to remove your superimposition which is transient.
10. To be established in the Knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the soul, resulting from such a great aphorism as 'Thou art THAT', may the Guru help you to remove your superimposition, which has arisen from ignorance.

11. May the Guru help you to remove your superimposition and to remain self-effacing until your identification with the body is completely rooted out.
12. May the Guru be with you ceaselessly until you perceive the universe and the individual soul as a dream in the waking state and remove your superimposition.
13. Without giving the slightest chance to oblivion by sleep, and by not associating with secular matters or sense-objects, you must reflect on the Self in your mind.
14. Just as one turns away from an outcast, you must shun the body which has come forth from impurities of the parents and itself consists of flesh and impurities, and remain established in Brahman and realise the consummation of your life.
15. Like the space enclosed in a pot in the infinite space, you must, by means of meditation, by merging the finite soul in the Supreme Self, remain absorbed in the quietude of Brahman.
16. By rejecting both the microcosm and macrocosm, i.e., the body and the world, like two filthy receptacles, be united with the self-effulgent and ever-blissful Brahman, the substratum of all phenomena, the absolute Reality.
17. By rejecting the subtle body which has caused the consciousness, 'I am the body', revel in the bliss-permeated Self, and remain forever the unattached Self.
18. Just as an actor removes his disguise, may you remove the false notion of the sheaths, and become THAT which is the Truth, THAT which exists from the beginning, and THAT which is real; attain THAT which is non-dual, actionless, formless and blissful; and become the very Self.

This objective universe, seen by the eyes, is experienced by the ego with the sense of, "I" and "mine" in the waking as well as dream states. The Indweller or Antaratma watches this as the Witness. The Witness can be classified neither as real nor as unreal. This illumining Principle knows or understands all changes and associates itself again and again, in waking, dream and sleep states, with the movements of the body as "I" "I". It is fully clad in attachment (to the body). Therefore, on realising that the intellect has imprinted the "I" notion in the body which is merely a mound of flesh, give up your attachment to the "I" sense of the embodied soul.

When you cease to identify yourself with the family, lineage, name, form and the order of life, which pertain to the body that is akin to a rotten corpse (to a man of realisation), the subtle body gets annihilated. You are eternally the same as the Knowledge Absolute, omnipresent, the Bliss Absolute, and immutable. When you become free from attachment to body and egotism in worldly interaction, you will cross over the ocean of transmigration effortlessly, as if it is a small puddle of water collected in the imprint of the hoof of a cow.

He who identifies himself with the body is drawn to sense-pleasures. This attraction sows the seed for rebirth. Once a person realises himself as the very Self, is it possible for him to desire anything? Can he grieve for other body or its sufferings?

When the desire-oriented actions grow, the seed (ego) also is strengthened. When these actions are ignored, the seed also decays. As the desire for sense-enjoyment grows, Karmas accrue and their effects manifest. This leaves behind further impressions or Vishaya Vasanas in the mind. Then the cycle of cause and effect or birth and death goes on. In order to break the chain of transmigration, one's attachment, impressions and

actions should be annihilated without a second thought. For these three – impressions, action and attachment – to be eradicated, Satbhavana or the positive certitude, 'everything is Brahman' should become firm. This will lead a person to direct experience of the Self or Atma-Sakshatkaram.

When the sun rises, darkness effectively vanishes. Likewise, when positive impressions take over, the intensity of the effects of actions, attachment and ego start waning. If any residue of Prarabdha Karma is left behind, one should pass one's time peacefully without being deluded by names, forms and attributes and without brooding over them. One should keep reflecting on the Reality which is one's own Self, by being absorbed in the Bliss-filled Brahman, and by restraining the impulses of internal and external organs without analysing the cause and effect of anything. One should be steadfast without swerving from one's true Being. One should never lapse into inattentiveness by falling into the trap of doubt with questions like: Can it be like this? Is this the right thing for us? Are we deserving? Inadvertence is equivalent to death itself.

There is no greater danger for an enlightened being than slipping from the state of his real nature. From this will follow bondage, misery and rebirth. Sense desires seize a person, who forgets his real nature, in their grip. Even if he or she is well-versed in scriptures, the person is taken far away by the perversion of intellect. Just as a woman disturbs a man's balance of mind and leads him astray, or just as the green moss covers the water once again when our hand is removed from water, the wavering mind veils again the wisdom of even a man of intelligence.

If the mind ever so slightly strays from the ideal of Brahman and becomes externalised, then it goes sliding down

and down, just as a play-ball inadvertently dropped on the staircase bounds downwards from one step to another. The mind obsessed with sense-objects repeatedly broods over them and the intense desire arising therefrom plunges him in action to attain it. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna as follows, 'O Falguna! The mind that is attached to sense-objects broods on their qualities; from continued thinking arises desire, and thereafter, attachment grows stronger. If he fails to obtain the object, he gets angry; anger destroys his intellect and discrimination. Lack of discrimination further destroys the subtle intellect which alone can grasp the Truth.' When one's intellect is so disabled, he, whose true being is Knowledge itself, is completely destroyed. The Lord cautions that one should always be very alert.

He who personifies discrimination, deep peace, steadfastness under any conditions, and considers Sri Satguru as the Supreme Being; and he who is unswerving in his contemplation on the Supreme Being will become the Supreme Being Itself. This is a promise. Sense desire which is the root of all evils should be totally wiped out. He who is completely liberated even while living is alone liberated after the dissolution of the body. Yajur-Veda declares: 'Whoever sees the least difference is afflicted by fear.' Taittiriya Upanishad states: 'When a persons swerves from the Natural State of his or her Being, that person is victimised by the fear of death. A person who identifies himself with the objective universe which has been rejected as false by the scriptures, Vedas and the words of wisdom as "*I*" and "*mine*" is beset by fear and anxiety like a thief who does something forbidden.

The condition of the thief is illustrated by a metaphor in Chandogya Upanishad. To prove one's innocence or guilt, the accused (in olden days), say, a thief is made to hold a hot iron



rod in his hand. If he is innocent, his hand will not be burnt by the hot iron rod; whereas the guilty burns his hand when he touches the same rod. The implication is explained by the Guru. When the red hot iron is handled, it burns only the flesh which gets healed in due course. Whereas, sense desire is like virulent poison and attachment and bondage arising therefrom are like raging fire indeed. Such fire doesn't scorch a person who exists in silence and peace and is fixed firmly in Brahman.

One should give up dwelling on the unreal and always fix his thoughts on the Self as "We ourselves are THAT". Externalisation will cause evil propensities and strengthen the bondage. Recognizing this truth, one should, forsaking the sense-impressions, constantly apply oneself in contemplation of the Self. To the extent the external world is shut out, the closer one gets to the state of Self-knowledge and his bondage is broken soon. One should be capable of discrimination, have faith in scriptures and Vedas, understand the meaning of words of wisdom deeply, become an earnest seeker of Truth, and abide ceaselessly in the certitude, 'We are Brahman'.

You are everything!

## **18. TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE SELF**

He, who realises the existence of Self in movable and unmovable objects and understands It as their substratum, gives up all superimpositions, removes externalisation, and remains as the undifferentiated, absolute and infinite Self. He is free, a liberated soul even while living in the body. To realise the whole universe as the Self is the means of getting rid of bondage.

There is no other means higher than identifying the whole universe as the Self i.e. Sarvatma-bhava, to break free of bondage. When the objective world, i.e. whatever seen and experienced, is considered empirically as non-existent, Self-Realisation occurs spontaneously.

Lord Krishna declares in the Gita, 'He who is immersed in the Knowledge of the Self personifies equanimity, realises the Self in everything and identifies the whole universe with Self. He is ever blissful and remains established in his Natural State of Being.' Saint Thayumananvar reiterates this theme in his song, "*Wherever we see, O Supreme Being, aren't You there, existing as the Life of each life!*"

How is the attainment of Self-Knowledge possible for the ignorant who cannot reject the objective world as unreal, who is steeped in body-consciousness, who indulges in sense-pleasures and who is obsessed with "I" sense? Only by a person who has equal vision, and who possesses equanimity, contentment and peacefulness, this great Knowledge of the

Self is revealed. A renunciant who is initiated in the Vedas by Sri Satguru attains to the knowledge of the Self by means of Guru's grace, self-effort, control of the senses with earnestness, and by securing of the compassion of the Lord.

The individual sense or the ego has been stalking people too long for countless births. Hence a seeker has to be very alert in not yielding to desires and imagination. He should dissolve his mind in a thought-free, desireless state. In this no-mind state i.e. not engaging in imagination and at the same time, focussing the mind on the Self, the seeker gets absorbed in the super-conscious state or Samadhi, just as a salt doll which is immersed in the sea with a string to measure its depth, gets dissolved completely, leaving behind only the string.

The projecting power, with the aid of veiling power, deludes a person, associates him with ego sense and covers the Self with the ego, the individual sense of "I". The veiling power should be annihilated for the duality (of the seer and seen) to disappear. For the wise, who can distinguish between the Self and the non-self, like a swan bird which separates the milk from water, the veiling power disappears on its own. When the world is recognized as unreal, Self-Knowledge arises spontaneously, and the Light of the Self shines on its own. When a person with full and perfect wisdom can discriminate between the Self and non-Self i.e. Atma and un-Atma (non-Self) principle, he breaks the bond of delusion or Maya. For him, there is no more the malady of transmigration.

When the fire of Knowledge of identity of the Jiva with Brahman entirely consumes the thorny forest of Avidya or ignorance, the state of Advaita, the non-dual Oneness, alone remains. For such a person who recognizes the identity, there

is no body-consciousness or the sense, 'I am the body.' With the direct experience of the Self, the veiling power and the sense of duality lose their grip, and firm abidance in the Self takes place spontaneously.

You are everything!

## **19. SUBSTRATUM – AN EXPLANATION**

Like iron manifesting as sparks through its contact with fire, the intellect manifests itself as knower, knowledge and known through the inherence of Brahman. But, this triad of knower-knowledge-known is false. It is a mixture of delusion, dream and imagination. Therefore, the modifications of the Prakriti, from ego down to the body and all sense-objects are unreal and are the different forms of Prakriti. Their unreality is verily due to their being subject to change every moment. But the Self never changes.

The Supreme Being denoted by the term 'Self' i.e. "I" is non-dual and undivided and beyond 'this' or 'that' or the 'subject-object' dichotomy. It is of the nature of being eternal and indivisible and of all-encompassing Witness. It is One without a second and is ever present. It is inexpressible, as 'It exists and exists not'. The wise person, discriminating between the real and unreal, ascertaining the Truth through his illuminative insight, and realising his own Self as the limitless Knowledge Absolute, gets released from the shackles of non-Self and directly attains Profound Peace.

You are everything!

## **20. AN EXPLANATION OF SAMADHI**

When the Self is realised by means of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and one attains the undifferentiated Super-conscious state, then the knot of the heart, i.e. the superimposition of the false I-ness or that of inertness (Jada) on Consciousness (Chit) or the unreal on the Real is completely broken. Such imaginations as "I and you" or "this and that" take place through the attributes of Rajas and Tamas in the intellect.

When the non-dual, undivided Supreme Being shines forth in Samadhi, all associations (with unreal) are dissolved through the experience of Truth. The enlightened person, remaining calm, self-controlled, and perfectly retiring from the sense-world and ever fixed in the meditation of Brahman experiences his own self as the Self of all.

After burning down completely the perverted play of the mind which has arisen out of the darkness of ignorance, the wise person lives free from actions and oscillations of the mind and its imagination and shines forth as Sri Brahman. He who has dissolved the sense-desires (objective world), mind and the "I" sense in the infinite Brahman and immersed himself in deep peace is verily free from the bondage of transmigration and is firmly established in the Super-conscious state.

The man who is absorbed in the Reality is not drawn to anything else. Just as the worm giving up its attention to all other actions and thinking intently on the wasp is transformed into a wasp; so also, the seeker, meditating on the Truth through one-pointed quest, becomes freed from Jivahood, veiling power

and doubt and shines forth as Brahman Itself. The nature of the Self is extremely subtle and cannot be reached by the gross outgoing tendency of the mind. It is accessible only to noble souls with perfectly pure minds and without any sense of otherness.

Just as gold purified by thorough heating on the fire gives up its dross and attains to its own lustre; so also the mind, by the strength of its faith in Truth, gives up its impurities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and attains to the reality of Brahman. When the mind purified by ceaseless practice merges in Brahman, then in that state of non-duality, all pairs of opposites disappear and Supreme Bliss arises.

Reflection is one hundred times superior to listening. Contemplation on the Self is one hundred thousand times superior even to reflection, but the glory of abidance in one's Natural State is beyond measure.

Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita, 'One who practises in this way - by seeking solitude, minimizing food, controlling the mind, speech and activity, nullifying the imagination of rules of the mundane world, destroying one's pride, ego, desire, anger, fear and seeking remedy for his sins through his firm dispassion and determination, devoid of "I" and "mine", and by imbibing serenity, peace and silence - will surely become the Reality Itself.'

Living in solitude serves to control the senses. When the sense organs subside – non-differentiation in seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, talking and smelling – it leads to the annihilation of ego. When the ego is erased, Supreme Bliss dawns in the seeker. In the absence of ego sense, profound Silence is generated. This silence is verily Brahman.

You are everything!

## **21. RESTRAINING WORDS AT THE LEVEL OF THE MIND**

One has to reduce the desires by not dwelling on the names and forms, not enquiring into their cause and interaction, and by controlling one's mind. For example, a mount of gold is the same as that of a handful; but when it is cast into a jewel it assumes the name of the jewel and is no longer called as gold. In the same way, the world works. Different jewels are worn on different parts of the body (bracelet for the wrist and necklace for the neck). Likewise, the world manifests differently in accordance with the place and time. When associating the objects with situations is minimised, to that extent, the words and delusions of the mind are controlled.

You are everything!



## **22. RESTRAINING THE MIND IN THE INTELLECT**

Intellect which determines the truth of objects is subtler than the mind which gives rise to desires and imagination and consequent delusion. Mind can be contained in the intellect by forgetting the delusion created by the names and forms and focussing on the intellect which determines the truth. It is to seek not the reflection of moon in the water, but to seek the moon itself which shines in the sky. This means to realise the hidden Brahman as the Truth by getting rid of the individual sense. This is the way to control the mind through intellect.

You are everything!

## **23. CONTAINING THE INTELLECT IN THE SELF**

When a jewel is recast into gold, it is no longer a jewel, but the gold itself. Likewise, by relinquishing names and forms and discarding action and attributes of objects which lead to relinquishing the individual sense of "I" (Jivahood), one should become the Self itself. This is the state of superlative Peace.

Dispassion and discrimination are like the two wings of a bird for an aspirant. Only with the aid of these two wings of spiritual discipline, can one fly towards the transcendental plane of Liberation. He or she who has perfect dispassion attains to the Superconscious state. Discrimination means enquiry into the nature of Truth. This will lead to direct experience of one's true Being. He who practices both these disciplines takes a flight to the Bliss of Brahman.

For the man of self-restraint, there are no better practices than dispassion and discrimination to experience the Bliss of the Self. This is the gateway to the immortal state of Liberation. Therefore, give up attachment both internally and externally. Even if one reigns over the world like Hiranyakashipu and earns suzerainty and fame thereof, such a state cannot yield forth even a trace of the bliss of Brahman which is secured by ruling over the sense-objects. Give up your craving for sense-objects, which are like poison. Sense desires drag your soul towards the jaws of death. Forsaking your pride of caste, lineage, status, fame, and dignity and resultant actions and letting go of your body identification and egoistic sense of "I", abide in the beatitude of Bliss of the Self, imbued with peace, joy and silence.

You are everything!

## **24. PROCEDURE FOR MEDITATION**

1. Fixing the mind firmly on the Ideal, i.e. Brahman, and restraining the external senses in their respective centres; with the body held steady and taking no thought for its maintenance; and attaining identity with Brahman and being united with It, drink joyfully the nectar of the Bliss of Brahman which always inundates you within! Giving up the thought of non-Self, which is evil and causes misery; and reducing delusions, think ceaselessly of the Self, the Bliss Absolute which conduces to Liberation. Looking upon the sense-objects as lethal, restraining the mind from entertaining such thoughts, and minimising the fantasies relating to the world, focus your mind on the blissful Self.
2. Here shines eternally the Self, which is Self-effulgent, the Witness of everything and is beyond five sheaths. Making this Self (which is distinct from the unreal) as your goal, meditate upon It as thy own Self to the exclusion of all other thoughts.
3. Fixing one's mind on the Self, and giving up ego-centered thoughts and thoughts of the body, one must live unconcerned about them, as if they were trifles, or like a cracked pot or a piece of cloth, and remain steady on the meditation of the Self. Only then can the Self be realised. Fixing the purified mind on the Self, the Witness, the Knowledge Absolute, and slowly making the mind still, one must experience continuously one's own Being. Distancing yourself from the adjuncts of body, sense organs,

Pranas, mind and ego which are the offshoots of fancy, you should behold, as you would look at the infinite sky, the Self which is all-pervading, undivided Bliss.

In the limiting adjuncts such as a pot or a pitcher or a receptacle for grains or a needle, it is the same space which is contained inside and pervades outside. It is not diverse. Exactly in a similar way, the pure Brahman is verily One, though it pervades several adjuncts. If you enquire into the nature of objects which are merely products of your imagination, you will come to realise that everything is THAT alone. It is not fragmented. The multiplicity is your fancy. Because of delusion, the snake appears (in the rope). Once the delusion leaves, the rope will appear as rope. (It had always been a rope, never the snake which you had imagined.) Since the delusion arises out of your imagination, you should subdue your imagination and emerge as the very Self.

Recognize that you, the Self is Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra; you, the Self is demi-gods; you, the Self is the world, you, the Self is all Jivas; you, the Self is within and without, all the quarters and you, the Self is above as also below. Though the wave, the foam, the whirlpool, the bubble, the drops etc., bear different names, you must have the faith that these are all in essence nothing but water. This certitude is verily the Self.

The entire universe known through speech and mind is nothing but Brahman. For one who is beyond the utmost range of Prakriti, there is nothing besides Brahman. Though the different adjuncts of pitcher, jug, pot, vessels etc. made of earth bear different names, once the limiting adjuncts are broken, all these are reduced to mere earth. The mind deluded by the intoxication of the wine of Maya sees different names, forms and attributes. Once the delusion is gone, everything

will be realised as Brahman, the very Self. It is under the intoxication of sense objects that man prattles of "I" and "mine". Once the inebriation goes down, his prattle also comes down. The Rig Veda declaring again and again, "Nothing exists anywhere (except the Self)," falls utterly silent in the end.

Where nothing else is seen, nothing else is heard, nothing else is noticed, there is nothing other than THAT. Once the Supreme Brahman which is pure, infinite, motionless and changeless, devoid of interior or exterior and self-luminous is known, what else is there to be known? Jiva is, in fact, none other than Brahman; the vast universe is Brahman Itself. Brahman is not different from the Vedas. With the certitude, 'we are Brahman', give up the delusion and attain clarity. May you ever remain as the Knowledge Absolute!

O Child!

What is being uttered in thousands of scriptures, Upanishads (Concluding part of Vedas) and by several sages is contained in this dictum: 'Brahman is the Truth and whole of Universe is an illusion (mere appearance)'. So long as man has any regard for this corpse-like body, he is impure and suffers from enmity, birth, death and disease.

When he realises himself as the immaculate Self, he is released from all sorrow. One who is not attached to his body will not be bound by likes and dislikes. He or she who realises the Self transcends misery, lust, anger, fear and desire.

You are everything!

## **25. REALISATION OF THE SELF**

1. The wise man directly experiences in the lotus of his heart, through Samadhi, the Infinite Brahman, which is of the nature of eternal Knowledge and absolute Bliss, which is inexpressible, which has no exemplar, which is always Aware, which is like a shoreless ocean, which transcends all limitations and is ever free and without activity, and which is like the limitless sky, indivisible and absolute.
2. The wise man directly experiences in the lotus of his heart the Absolute Brahman, which is devoid of cause and effect, which is One alone, which is beyond imagination and beyond the reach of the five senses, and which is contemplated in accordance with the teachings of the Vedas.
3. The wise man directly experiences in the lotus of his heart the Absolute Brahman, which is undivided, eternal, nameless and formless, attributeless, and which is of the nature of quietude.
4. In Jada-Bharata Upakyanam, Sage Jada Bharata says: By extroversion, one cannot cross the ocean of transmigration. By renunciation, i.e. the sense of having had enough or contentment, one can cross the cycle of birth and death.

You are everything!

## **26. INDIFFERENCE TO THE WORLD**

One who has cast away the world and the body (notion), which have followed him like a shadow, due to the effects of his past deeds, never more does he attach himself to them.

Be absorbed in the Self which is ever pure Knowledge and Bliss, and reject the body, which is impure and full of filth. Don't even think of it. Something that has been vomited excites only disgust. Even if it is sweet pudding, does anyone lick it to taste it again? Remove the memory of the world with its very root and throw it away. Relinquish your fanciful thoughts about the world and contemplate the expansive Brahman. When you become THAT, even this thought or contemplation also will disappear. After experiencing the blissful Self, why would a wise man cherish the body?

You are everything!

## **27. BENEFIT OF ATTAINING SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

1. The enlightened being who has attained perfection and is liberated while being alive enjoys eternal Bliss internally as well as externally. This indeed is the benefit of Self-Knowledge.
2. Dispassion leads to Self-Awareness. Self-Awareness frees a person from sense-desires and leads one to the experience of the Bliss of the ocean-like vast Self. This indeed is the benefit of Self-Knowledge.
3. If there is a failure in successive stages, the preceding ones are futile. When sense cravings subside, earlier efforts attain fruition. There will follow, as a matter of course, contentment that there is nothing more to seek and the rising of incomparable Knowledge within as a result of renunciation (of desires).
4. To remain blissful and unruffled in the face of hardships resulting from the effects of previous Karma – Even the loathsome deeds cease on their own when Knowledge becomes ripe. This indeed is the benefit of incomparable wisdom.
5. A person will give up beating the snake when he realises that it is just a rope. Similarly, if the heart's knot of ignorance is totally destroyed, externalisation in worldly actions will come down on its own and sense-objects will



excite no more desires. This is the culmination of dispassion. When the wandering of mind is transformed into Supreme Bliss, it is the indication of the annihilation of mind. This indeed is the benefit of Wisdom.

You are everything!

## **28. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ENLIGHTENED BEING**

1. He who abides in his Natural State unswervingly without even a trace of wavering; who is ever-blissful, like a guileless child, uncaring of the external world as if in a state of deep sleep; who partakes of whatever food and drink are offered by others beholds the world as a dream, and enjoys the Bliss of Liberation resulting from immense merits accrued in his countless births is very blessed. He alone is worthy of adoration in the world. He, indeed, is a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
2. He who remains always absorbed in the Absolute, unassailed by joy and sorrow, devoid of distractions of the mind, actionless (not goaded by doership) and is ever reveling in Supreme Bliss is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
3. He who is freed from all adjuncts through the practice of learning, reflection and contemplation, who has attained the union of his individual soul with Brahman, who is devoid of imagination of the world and is one with the self-effulgent Knowledge, who is not deluded by the transitoriness and who has his mind firmly established in Truth is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
4. He whose mind is merged in Brahman, who is actionless, untainted by (doership in) action; who is constantly reveling in never-ending Bliss; who has forgotten the phenomenal

universe experienced by the five senses is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.

5. He whose mind does not seek sense-enjoyments although his sense organs are active, as his mind is totally absorbed in Brahman; he who has no righteous acts to perform (not bound by do's and don't's); in whom, even when occasionally the sense organs grasp the worldly things, they don't leave any imprint; who remains without any concern about the world; who, though proficient in all branches of knowledge of the world, behaves as if he is ignorant of such things is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
6. When a man is not attached to sense-objects or to actions done by him, he is truly a 'Yogarudan', says Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita. Even though his body follows him like a shadow, the notion of "I" and "mine" towards the body are totally absent in him. Such a person is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
7. He who does not dwell on the past, is not anxious about the future and is indifferent to the present is, indeed, incomparable and a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
8. He who looks with equal vision upon the world which is infused naturally by the pairs of opposites i.e. likes and dislikes - good and bad is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
9. He who is unruffled even when things pleasant or painful present themselves, and looks upon them with equanimity and with the attitude that pain and pleasure spring from the mind and not from the objects themselves is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.

10. He who treats happiness and sorrow alike, looks upon gold and earth alike; who is oblivious to praise and slander, indifferent to honour and dishonour; who is the same towards friend and enemy, and is not motivated to act by desire is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
11. He who is indifferent to all happenings within and without, owing to his being engrossed in tasting the elixir of Brahman is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
12. He who lives unconcerned as a witness, devoid of the notion of "I" and "mine" with regard to his body, organs, etc., as well as to his duties, is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.
13. He who has equanimity when he is worshipped by the good or when tormented by the wicked and who is not affected by happiness and misery; and who has experienced the state of the Absolute is, indeed, a Jivanmukta, i.e. liberated while living.

It is not right to say a realised person is still attached to the sense-objects on account of the momentum of his old desires; because desires become weakened when one realises one's identity with the Brahman.

You are everything!

## **29. THE DESTINY**

Past impressions get destroyed when the realisation of one's identity with the Self takes place. The lustful tendencies of even a libertine come under control in the presence of his mother; so also, when one realises the Bliss Absolute, there will be no longer any worldly tendency in him. The poison-like sense-objects will not assault him any more.

One who (in the stage of Sadhana) practises meditation with concentration has perception of the external world. He experiences happiness and misery without any effort. The Vedas say that such experiences of joy and sorrow are Prarabdha, i.e. the effects of previous actions. The Upanishads interpret this (Prarabdha) as the situation in which one secures the privilege of serving Sri Satguru as fruition of past merits and of association of a Mahatma. By the grace of Sri Satguru, the true disciple attains the ultimate Knowledge.

Such a disciple's Prarabdha gets destroyed the moment Truth starts shining in him and he is liberated; because Liberation is the freedom from body-idea which was caused by one's previous action. One may argue that he may again acquire a body (rebirth) owing to the store of his past Karma i.e. Sanchita Karma. But the Scriptures avow that another body will not be caused in future for such a person even on account of Sanchita Karma already accrued. Prarabdha, the present destiny is like the arrow which has been already released; whereas, actions previously accumulated, i.e Sanchita are similar to arrows which are in the quiver and not yet shot.

These actions which are yet to fructify (Sanchita) are destroyed by the fire of perfect Knowledge. Prarabdha, the present destiny for a person continues so long as there is the perception of happiness and sorrow. Every result proceeds from the action performed earlier.

Nowhere does any result accrue independently of action. Through the realisation of one's identity with Brahman, all the accumulated actions of a billion cycles come to nought, just as the myriad actions of dream-state fade away on awakening. Can the good actions or dreadful sins that a man fancies himself doing in the dream-state lead him to heaven or hell after he has awakened from sleep? When one becomes unattached like the sky and realises that he is only a witness, he will never be attached to actions thereafter. Those actions which he performed with the idea of doership lose themselves (without leaving any imprint) when he loses the notion, 'I am the doer'. When one realises the truth that he or she is the non-doer, he will no more be held back by Agamiya, his future action. The sky is not affected by the smell of liquor merely because of the existence of the liquor-jar in the space or because of the space contained within the jar. Similarly, the Self is not, through Its connection with the adjuncts, affected by the properties thereof.

However, the effects of previous actions which have fashioned the present body prior to the dawning of Knowledge are not destroyed by that Knowledge without yielding its fruits, like the arrow already released from the bow towards an object. The body undergoes the experiences of the merits and demerits of Prarabdha Karma while the Self remains aloof and unattached towards the same. The arrow which is shot at an object with the idea that it is a tiger does not arrest its course when that object is perceived to be a cow, but pierces the object with full force. Prarabdha, which is powerful, cannot be

overcome even by a person of realisation and is exhausted only by the actual experience of the effect of Karma. However, the actions previously accumulated and those yet to come are destroyed by the fire of pure Self-Knowledge. But none of the three (Sanchita, Prarabdha, Agamiya) affects those who, on realising their identity with Brahman, remain firmly established in that state. This is like a man who, stung by a scorpion in his dream, does not feel the pain when he awakes.

For the sage who lives in his own Self as Brahman, devoid of identification with the world and the adjuncts, the question of the existence of Prarabdha is meaningless, like the question of a man who has awakened from sleep having any connection with the objects seen in the dream. The man who has awakened from sleep never has any idea of "I" or "mine" with regard to his dream-body and the dream-objects that ministered to that body, but lives quite awake, as his own Self. He has no desire to safeguard the unreal objects of the dream, nor is he interested in validating the dream-world. If he still clings to those unreal objects, it can be emphatically declared that he is not yet free from sleep (of ignorance). He who is absorbed in Brahman lives identified with the eternal Reality and beholds nothing else.

Prarabdha is valid only in the case of persons who are rooted in body-consciousness i.e. taking the body as oneself. Just as a person has a distant memory of the objects and actions in a dream, the state of a realised person is similarly distant from the acts of everyday life. The Prarabdha disappears at that very moment when the notion, 'I am the body' or the body-consciousness is dropped. If the Prarabdha is attributed to his body, since the body has been fashioned by Karma, it is sheer delusion. If the body is taken as the Self, the Self has no birth and death to undergo Prarabdha. How can something

superimposed (on another) have any existence, and how can that which is unreal have a birth? And how can that which has not been born at all, die? So how can Prarabdha exist for something that is unreal? Therefore, attributing Prarabdha even to the body is certainly an error.

“If the effects of Ignorance are destroyed by its root with firm Knowledge, then how does the body live?” It is to convince those fools who entertain such a doubt, the Shrutis (Scriptures), from a relative standpoint, hypothesise about Prarabdha and not for proving the reality of the body etc., for the man of realisation. In one place, it is said that Prarabdha is very powerful. Even realised persons cannot overcome it. In another place, it is stated that there is no Prarabdha for them. Though contradictory, these statements have been made (by the Acharya) only to lay the emphasis on the notion of the Jiva’s self-identity. Prarabdha Karma can be maintained only so long as one lives identified with the body. But the Realised person never identifies himself with the body and therefore, Prarabdha Karma should be rejected in his case.

You are everything!



### **30. EXPERIENCE OF THE SELF**

1. One who is desireless, who has forsaken all sense enjoyments and controlled all sense organs and who constantly pursues his practices for Truth and clearly understands the import of subtle and supreme teachings through association with Great Beings will be suffused with the direct experience of the Self.
2. One who revels ever in Supreme Bliss, who has discarded the mental delusion arising from imagination, is awake from ignorance, and comprehended the principle of the Self through the clear eye of wisdom; and who is free from any trace of doubt, and has gained a glimpses of the Self, will be inundated by the direct experience of Self.
3. By understanding the teachings of Satguru with clarity, becoming free from the shackles of ignorance, realising that he is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and through listening, reflection and meditation on the teachings of Satguru, one is bathed in the direct experience of the Self.
4. Brahman is not known by mere words or teachings; it is the direct experience by oneself. The bliss obtained from the teachings of Satguru is indirect experience, i.e. Paroksha Anubhuti; whereas that which is directly experienced by touching the core of Self in Samadhi is

Aparoksha Anubhuti. By realising the Undivided Bliss of the Supreme Truth in oneself through direct experience, one should shine forth as the very form of non-dual Bliss. This, indeed, is the experience of the Self.

You are everything!

### **31. AWAKENING OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

After remaining immersed in the Supreme Brahman for some time and on emerging from the experience of Supreme Bliss, the noble disciple spoke as follows:

“Our mind has vanished, and the hustle and bustle of action has slowed down. We can no longer see ‘this’ and ‘that’!(no difference between the seer and the-seen). We have no recognition of the universe nor its objects and their attributes! There is no dimension, no proof of anything! No words will issue forth, nor do any thoughts arise from the mind. Words fail to describe this state. It is like the state of a salt doll which enters the ocean to measure its depth and gets dissolved without trace. We had seen the world existing here awhile ago. Where has it disappeared suddenly? Has someone taken it away? Where did it disappear? What kind of a wonder is this? The shoreless ocean of Bliss alone is beheld all around! What foolishness that we have lived our life so far, looking upon the vast ocean-like Brahman as mere world and not realising it as Brahman! In this vast Brahman, what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected? Which is oneness and which is otherness? We see nothing, we hear nothing. We abide in ourself as ourself, as pure Bliss!

Repeated salutations to Your Holy Feet, O noble Satguru, who are unattached, the supreme among noble souls, ever-blissful, and who has boundless compassion and who is like the vast shoreless ocean, O Supreme Being!

O Sri Satguru! Your side-glance, which is like the cool shower of moonbeams, has removed our exhaustion brought on by the afflictions of birth and death. By Your immense grace, we attained, in a trice, the Supreme Bliss of the Self which is glorious, ever-blissful, immortal and infinite! We are neither the doer nor the experiencer. We are changeless, unattached, absolute purity, the essence of Pure Knowledge and we are whole and complete.

We are ever-existing, all-pervading and perfect. We are indeed all - Brahma, Narayanan, Sivan, Maheshwaran and Sadasivam! We are the Indweller in all, the Witness of everything. We have no Ruler but ourselves. We dwell in all creatures. We dwell within and without. We were Undifferentiated when there was no imagination. Just as when creation came forth through erroneous imagination, there arose superimposition as time, cycles, years, half-years, seasons, etc.; so also, the imagination of people of the world created gross and subtle things and attitudes in us.

We are like the untouched sky; like the sun, we are distinct from the things illumined; we are motionless like the mountain; we are limitless like the ocean. It is the Upadhi (superimposition like the body) that comes, and it is Upadhi alone that leaves. Again, the Upadhi performs actions and has experiences (their fruits) and that alone ages and dies; whereas we ever remain firm like a mountain and as the witness of everything.

A carpenter makes use of his tools to carve and when he discards the tools after his work, he is like an ordinary man. Likewise, when a Jiva is associated with intellect, he becomes the doer; when the association is removed, he is a non-doer. Thus, he is the doer as well as the non-doer. Birth and death come and go. Even this statement is made as a courtesy, as

death and birth appear because of the assumption of body-consciousness.

The Self has neither birth nor death. For us - who have no sense-organs, no mind; who are changeless, and formless and who revel in boundless Bliss Absolute, - how can there be merits and demerits? Even the Vedas dictate that merits and demerits do not follow such a person. Just as the sun is untouched by various actions performed in its light, fire is unattached to the nature of objects it burns; and the rope has nothing to do with the snake superimposed on it; so also we, the Knowledge Absolute, remain untouched by anything.

We neither perform any action nor do we cause any actions to be performed; we neither see nor are the seen; we neither experience nor do we cause any one to experience. Only the fools, who see the movement of the reflection of the sun in the water, declare that the sun is moving. Such people imagine, out of ignorance, that they are the doers and enjoyers and scream, "Oh, we have been ruined."

Let this inert body drown in water or drop down on land. We are untouched by the body (Prakriti) just as the space within the wine-jar is unaffected by the properties of the wine contained in it. Let tens, hundreds, or thousands of changes of Prakriti take place (in the body); but we are unattached like the sky which is not affected by the clouds!

O Supreme Master! The splendour of Self-effulgence has been attained by us by Your immense grace, which is verily the true wealth bestowed by the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi. O Benevolent Master! By Your grace, we have transcended the physical modifications of the body such as grey hair, wrinkles, old age and death. You have redeemed us from the darkness of

ignorance. O Revered Master, our salutations to You again and again! Our salutations to You who shine forth as the Reality! Our salutations to You, the indescribable Effulgence, by whose light this world shines!"

You are everything!

## **32. EPILOGUE TO THE TEACHINGS**

Beholding the worthy disciple, the exalted Sri Satguru addressed the following words of excellence:

O child of Knowledge!

By the sublime vision of the Self, may you see with serenity that in all conditions, Brahman alone has filled you as the sense of "I", i.e. your self. Do those who have only the eyes of ignorance ever see all around anything but forms? Are you seeing any name now? In that case, it is all your imagination! Are you seeing any attributes? If so, it is the delusion of your mind. Do you feel the hunger? If so, it is your craving. It is the heat of craving of your mind which has appeared as hunger.

Do desires appear? If so, you delude yourself with words like beauty, attraction and glamour and you are attracted like a moth towards fire. When you behold these things through the eye of wisdom, without the interference of mind, as the Reality, what else exists apart from you, the Absolute Brahman?

Why should one forsake the enjoyment of unparalleled Bliss and seek the pleasure of worldly things which are utterly devoid of bliss? Don't cherish any attachment for the dream-like, unreal worldly objects. Put an end to them with a contemptuous attitude of having had enough of them.

Dear child!

Behold your Self alone in all. There is nothing other than the Self. Perceiving your true Self in all, abiding in the Self

which is One without a second and revelling in the bliss of the Self, pass your days in the body until the appointed time.

Don't let your perverted intellect measure the Supreme Self which is Knowledge Absolute and which defies imagination and boundaries. Like building castles in the air, don't use your fanciful thoughts to analyse your transient body which is like a rented house or probe into the worlds and its belongings which are like an imaginary city. It is better to silence the mind which, indeed, is Quietude.

The illumined sage, whose only joy is in the Self, ever lives at ease, whether going or staying, sitting or lying, or in any other condition, without being deluded by such movements. The Self exists as the ever readily realisable Truth. When the quest made through proper means fructifies, the Self emerges shining forth as Self-effulgence.

Self-experience doesn't require any conditions like specific place or time. How can anything in the universe illumine that magnificent Brahman which is Pure Knowledge and by which the Vedas, scriptures, epics acquire their significance and flavour? It is Self-effulgent, illumining Itself by Itself. Its power is immeasurable and beyond the ken of mind. But it is within everyone's direct and common experience. When this experience arises in a person, that very moment he becomes THAT. The Self is neither affected nor elated by sense-objects; It is neither attached nor averse to them. A Knower who realises this is filled with boundless bliss and sports in the Self. Mundaka Upanishad states that he who revels in the bliss of the Self and sports with the Self and for whom this is the only act, he, indeed, is a Brahmanjani, the Realised Person.

A child is totally absorbed in playing with its toys, forgetting its hunger and bodily pains; exactly so does the man of



realisation revel in the bliss of Reality without the notion of "I" or "mine". A person of realisation has no anxieties because he possesses no sense of "I" and "mine" relating to the body and its activities. He has no sense of lack in life and is absolutely content with everything. A contented mind requires nothing. When there is fulfilment, the mind is transformed into Mahat, i.e. universal. In that state, he accepts whatever food comes to him without any sense of humiliation or self-respect, without regard to its taste, and whether the food is little or more. He lives freely and for him, the sky is the roof over his head, earth is his sleeping mat. He accepts whatever cloth, food or water is available. Even though he has no concern about such basic needs, protection of his body is taken care of automatically by the Lord's power or Maya Shakti.

1. The Knower of the Self, without any attachment to his body, experiences playfully all those things which come to him to fulfil others' wishes. He conceals himself so as not to be recognized by the external world. He remains unattached to things and wears whatever clothing comes his way. If nothing is made available, he wanders unclothed like an Avadhuta or an innocent child, but fully established in his own Self. He wanders in the world, sometimes like a madman, sometimes like one possessed or like a ghoul and at other times, like a corpse or as if he is blind.
2. A person of wisdom acts sometimes like a fool, sometimes like a scholar; sometimes he is possessed of regal splendour, sometimes he appears to be a stupid vagrant; sometimes, he lays himself down motionless like a python; sometimes he is honoured, sometimes humiliated; sometimes he lives unrecognized by others. Yet he lives his life as a celebration, all the time revelling in Supreme Bliss.

3. A person of wisdom, though he lives without any riches, is ever content and reposed in patience and peace. He is never dependant on others, he is his own support and companion; he derives no pleasure from worldly objects, but he revels in the bliss of his own Self. He sees no enemy in others and he has vanquished his inner enemies of negative attributes. He lives ever content in life.
4. A man of wisdom though engaged in action is a non-doer. He experiences the effects of past actions yet he is unaware of the body which experiences them. He possesses a body yet he has no identification with it. He engages in worldly transactions yet he is universal. He doesn't grasp the external sound; he also restrains the inner noise. He is equanimous towards good and bad, likes and dislikes, and joy and sorrow. Thus does an enlightened being roam in the world.
5. Pleasure and pain and birth and death bind only that person who identifies himself with "*I*" and "*mine*" in the body and has attachment and ego. He who has destroyed these emerges as the Truth. Though the sun appears to be swallowed by the shadow planet Rahu, the actual radiance of the sun is not diminished. Similarly, the enlightened person conceals his real state and is looked upon by the ignorant as an enjoyer of sense-objects. However, this does not diminish his real stature of Realisation.
6. Brahadharanya Upanishad states that an enlightened being discards his body and merges with the Self like the snake which sloughs its skin near its shelter.
7. A piece of wood is borne by the current of a river to a high or low ground; so is the body of a Jivanmukta carried on by the momentum of past actions to the varied experiences

of their fruits, as they present themselves in due course. The body of a Jivanmukta appears to be moving amidst sense-enjoyments on account of the effects of previous impressions or Prarabdha Karma.

He himself, however, lives untouched in the body as a witness and is free from mental oscillations like the pivot of the potter's wheel. He neither directs the sense-organs to their objects nor detaches them from them, but stays like an unconcerned spectator. He is steadfast in his Fullness and the Bliss pouring forth thereof. He who is free from likes and dislikes and ever revels in his own Self is the supreme Jivanmukta.

An actor, whether he is wearing the mask of his role or not, knows that he is always a man; so also is a perfect knower of Brahman who knows that he is always Brahman and nothing else. He remains a witness to all actions without the body-consciousness (while living in the body). Thus detached from doership, he lives ever revelling blissfully in non-dual state.

The body of the enlightened being who has realised his identity with Brahman, may wither and fall anywhere like the leaf of a tree but it is of little consequence to him, for the individual sense in the body has already been burnt by the fire of Knowledge. The sage who always lives in the Reality does not depend upon the customary considerations of place, time, etc., for giving up this mass of skin, flesh and filth.

Giving up the world is not Liberation, nor that of renouncing the belongings of the world; nor that of relinquishing the body; nor that of the staff and the water-bowl; nor that of having a long matted hair or full tonsure; nor wearing saffron clothes or Rudraksha garland on the neck. Liberation consists in destroying the knot of heart which is Nescience and realising THAT by whose power all these activities take place. If a leaf falls in a

small stream or a river or a place consecrated by Lord Siva, or in the crossing of roads, of what good or bad effect is that to the tree? The destruction of the body, organs, Pranas and intellect to the enlightened being is like that of the fall of a leaf or flower or fruit to the tree. It does not affect the Reality, the embodiment of Bliss, which is one's true nature. THAT survives like the tree.

Sage Yajnyavalkyar said to his wife Maitreyi as follows: "Dear one! When a block of salt is immersed in water, it gets dissolved and the entire water is salty wherever, at the top or the bottom, you scoop out the water. Likewise, the Oversoul is Pure Knowledge pervading everywhere and enveloping everything. All those around us, made up of five elements, are of the nature of (in essence) the Self. There is no proof of the existence of objects when they are no more. It is to be noted that only the forms or adjuncts are no more while the Essence is imperishable."

The scriptures declare that the Self is imperishable. It is verily immortal amidst the ever changing and ever perishing things. All the forms that are perceived are burnt and they turn into **earth**. Similarly, the body and other adjuncts like the senses, Prana, mind etc., which enable the actions of the body, are eventually burnt by the fire of Knowledge. But this does not impact the Self. The all-pervading Supreme remains the same as ever. When a pot is broken, the space enclosed by it remains the same (limitless). Likewise, when the body and other adjuncts are destroyed, the Realised person remains as Brahman Itself. Once the bondage of birth and death is broken, the chain of transmigration will not attach itself to the Brahman-Jnani i.e. the enlightened being. Because once the sheath of the body caused by ignorance merges with Maya, its source, it will not take a form or reincarnate again.

It is said that when the veiling takes place, bondage appears and when the veiling is removed, Liberation dawns. However, there can never be a veil covering Brahman for there exists nothing other than Brahman. There is nothing second to It. If there be any veiling, the non-duality of Brahman will be contradicted and invalidated. Advaita Vedanta can never brook duality. Bondage and Liberation are attributes of the mind. Ignorant people superimpose the unreal onto Reality, just as the cloud, which only covers our sight from the sun, is superimposed onto the sun. And so, they erroneously conclude that the cloud (completely) veils the sun.

The idea that bondage exists and the idea that bondage does not exist with reference to the Reality – both are merely the attributes of intellect and never belong to the Eternal Reality. Therefore, bondage and Liberation created by Maya are not in the Self. There is neither death nor birth, neither a bound nor a struggling soul, neither Sadhana nor the fruit of Sadhana, neither a seeker after Liberation nor a liberated one – this is the ultimate truth of Transcendental Being. This is the declaration in Mandukya Upanishad.

O children!

In this way, Sri Satguru, as to one's own son, freed the supreme disciple from the evil of Kali and all desires and enabled him to revel in the bliss of Liberation.

The true disciple, who had absorbed the words of Sri Satguru as his supreme Goal, prostrated to the Holy Feet Sri Satguru, taking the holy dust of His Feet on his head. Sri Satguru hugged the noble disciple lovingly and smelt the crown of his head. Blessing him and making him his own, the sublime Teacher united the disciple with His Being. The disciple also merged in Sri Satguru and became one with His Being.

You are everything!

### **33. COMPLETION**

The earnest disciple thus attained the Supreme Awakening of the Self by the grace of the exalted Sri Satguru!

Likewise, may those who have dissolved themselves in the salutary teachings presented herein, as a dialogue between Sri Satguru and disciple, also attain this supreme state of Being!

You are everything!

### **34. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TREATISE**

A person who wanders in the desert needs water urgently to quench his burning thirst. For those who are afflicted by the heat of threefold miseries of the world, here is the Jnana-rasam, the essence of Knowledge, the soothing shower of nectar which will cool down their burning hearts and bestow on them deep serenity, profound Peace and Great Silence!

Here concludes the treatise, Sri Viveka Chudamani composed by Srimad Sankara Bhagavathpadar, the disciple of Srimad Paramahansa (supreme swan (soul)) Parivrajaka (wandering) Acharya Govinda Bhaghavad Pujya Padar.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a long horizontal line followed by a stylized flourish and the name 'T Kuli Baba'.

(T Kuli Baba)

You are everything!

## GLOSSARY

**Advaita Vedanta** : Monistic philosophy; Nonduality; 'One without a second'. Advaita reveals the identical nature of one's Self and the Absolute, Brahman. The Absolute is the Self and there is no separate or individual self or the world.

**Agamiya Karma** : Results of acts done during the present life which will mature in the normal course of time.

**Anthakarana** : Internal instruments such as mind, intellect (Buddhi), mind-stuff (Chitta) and ego (Ahankara)

**Appar (Father)** : He is known as Saint Thirunavukkarasar (King of the Tongue, Lord of Language). A seventh-century Tamil poet-saint and one of the most prominent devotees of Lord Siva.

**Atma** : The Self

**Atma Bhava Seva** : By strictly following Sri Satguru's teachings without deviating from them, the disciple becomes a living instrument of Satguru. He walks on the path of Truth and guides others with his own experience of the Self. This service continues whether the Satguru is in his body or not.

**Avidya** : Ignorance

**Avyaktam** : Primordial (Main) Nature

**Awareness** : Self-Realisation

**Bhakti Marga** : Path of Devotion

**Brahman** : Brahman means THAT which is absolutely Supreme. Brahman is the only Reality. It is beyond words, range of sensory



perceptions and the human mind. It is ever-existent, limitless, beyond space and time, immutable, immaculate and devoid of attributes, name or form. Nothing is similar to It and nothing is different from It. Brahman is conceived of as being both attributeless (Nirguna) and with attributes (Saguna).

**Darshan :** To have a glimpse or vision of saints, deities or idols of God with devotion and reverence.

**Existence-Knowledge-Bliss :** It is the translation of Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is the nature of the Self.

**Govinda Bhagavatpada :** Sri Satguru of Adi Sankara, the author of Viveka Chudamani.

**Jiva :** Embodied soul identified with the body; individual sense of 'I'ness

**Jivanmukti :** Liberation while living; Self-Realisation.

**Liberation :** Freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

**Linga Sariram :** Subtle body.

**Lord Brahma :** One of the Hindu Trinity vested with the function of creation.

**Lord Narayanan :** One of the Hindu Trinity vested with the function of sustenance.

**Krita/Treta/Dwapara/Kali :** Names of four epochs. A cycle of four epochs.

**Maya/ Illusory Power :** It is translated as delusion or illusion. It is the principle that causes the appearance of the phenomenal world. Maya is also called "the power of obscuration". In Advaita, Maya is said to be neither real nor unreal. Maya veils what is real and projects an appearance that is not real e.g. snake and the rope. As the world of plurality appears, Maya is not unreal, and

since Maya disappears with the rising of the Knowledge of the non-dual Brahman, it is not real.

**Mumukshutva** : Deep yearning for Liberation.

**Nirvikalpa Samadhi** : A super-conscious state.

**Prakriti** : (Lit., Nature) Dynamic aspect of the Divine; causal matter out of which the phenomenal world is made; in Advaita, it is purely illusory or Maya.

**Prana (vital force), Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana** : Five airs responsible for the functioning of the physical body.

**Prana** : Governs inspiration, propulsion, forward momentum.

**Apana** : Governs elimination, downward and outward movement.

**Samana** : Governs assimilation, discernment and inner absorption.

**Udana** : Governs growth, speech, expression and upward movement.

**Vyana** : Governs circulation on levels, expansiveness and pervasiveness.

**Prarabdha Karma** : Destiny; the fructified Karma; results of past actions experienced in the present life.

**Rajas** : One of the 3 mental attributes; its attributes are activity, anger, passion and unrest.

**Real** : Brahman is the only Real entity.

**Sadhana** : Spiritual practice.

**Samsara** : Cycle of birth and death; worldly life; worldliness.

**Sanchita Karma** : Residue of the results of actions performed in previous lives but remaining latent during this life; the accumulation of Karma from the previous lives of a Jiva.

**Sarvaanga Seva** : Sarva (all) + anga (limbs) + Seva (Service). This means taking care of the gross body of the Satguru; washing

his clothes, preparing and serving food for him, maintaining his bedding and other articles used by him. Doing service intuitively, understanding his needs and situation before the Satguru expresses them.

**Satbhava Seva :** Satbhava - identification with Truth. This implies sincerely following the Guru's instructions looking upon Him verily as the embodiment of Truth; like a loving mother caring for her child and like the eyelids protecting the eyes, a disciple takes care of Gurudev with immense patience, Love, compassion, humility, kindness and intuition.

**Satguru (Sat Guru) :** The true Guru. An enlightened Guru, who can reveal the truth of the Self to the disciple. The Guru who reveals that there is only one Absolute and that THAT is the Self.

**Sattva :** The bright one among the three attributes. Its main characteristics are alertness, knowledge, patience, Love, compassion, etc.

**Self :** In the spiritual literature "Self" is often used as a synonym for Brahman. The Self and Brahman are one. The Self is different from the body, mind, intellect and senses. It remains as the unsullied Witness to their activities. It is immaculate, indivisible, all-pervasive, immanent and infinite. The Self is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

**Shraddha :** Faith.

**Stitha-prajna :** One who has steady and direct experience of the Self.

**Tamas :** One of the three attributes of the mind, the dark one. Its main attributes are delusion, sleep, indolence and darkness.

**THAT :** 'THAT' has been used as the translation of the Sanskrit term 'Tat', which denotes Brahman, the impersonal Absolute, devoid of any conditioning such as Maya.

**Thayumanavar** : An 18th century sage and devotee of Lord Siva belonging to Tamil region.

**Titiksha** : Forbearance.

**Upanishads** : That part of the Vedas known as Vedanta, dealing with the ultimate Truth. There are 108 major Upanishads and 10 of them are considered to be most important.

**Vairagya** : Spirit of dispassion; firm determination; indifference to sense cravings and enjoyments, born of spiritual discrimination.

**Vasanas** : Latent tendencies or inclinations in the mind caused by the impressions left in the subconscious by past good or bad actions.

**Vedanta** : (Lit., 'End of the Vedas') Vedanta is a term applied to the Upanishads and the teaching therein. Vedanta also means a teaching or a school of philosophy founded upon the knowledge expounded in the Upanishads. The major types of Vedanta are Advaita (Non-duality), Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-duality) and Dvaita (Duality).

**Vedas** : The most ancient and fundamental scriptures of Hinduism. They are four - Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana.

**Viveka** : Clear understanding and discrimination between Real and unreal.

You are everything!



Anbin Kudil  
Ellam Nee!