

## Vedanta: Holistic Empowerment (whole & soul)

### First Love, last Rites:

My Love towards Vedanta and Yoga compelled me to write this book. Until now in my life, I met many *Divine Prophets, Masters and Mystics, Teachers and Acharyas*. And throughout the history of my life, *God* has revealed *Himself* to me through a series of all above Divine Messengers, each of whom has showed me a path walked by hardly very very few. Majority of the people walk on beaten track. The expanse that filled my mind made me a totally different person, its' a real transformation. And on a beaten path traffic is huge.

In writing this book I have chosen the common or garden approach to life and living so as to help my brethren everywhere to find the way to get along. To me life is a beautiful garden with plants and trees to every kind, some barren, some laden with fruit, some with heart-warming flowers, mingling, conversing, dancing with delight in the gentle breeze, teeming with life, and birds and animals are abound. They follow the laws of nature and thrive. They caress, embrace, stretch out a hand, care for one another, and God cares for them. You hear the concord of sweet sounds. There is harmony. Weeds try to choke them but are outgrown. They are, however, subject to the storms and stress of time and pay their toll.

In a world full of people we are as babes in a wood, lost to higher intents and purposes in pushing a pen, fixing a pin, or driving a wedge, and wrapped in the slumber of dreams, hopes and aspirations. We believe or discover to our surprise we are each-an-island-unto himself. Living in isolation we grope in the dark, wanting to reach out to something, somewhere, or somebody, sometimes not even knowing what or why, let alone how. Forces, good and evil, within and without, jostle against us and affect our lives. They govern our attitudes, which, in turn, condition our approaches. This book attempts a study in that direction. You can dip into its pages any time, anywhere and find matter for instruction, enlightenment as well as entertainment.

### **The dynamics of human relations:**

As we look around and witness a plethora of strikes and the spate of demonstrations, morchas and gheraos, which infest the country like a plague, we know that attitudes, if not vested interests, are at the bottom of it. Unless attitudes change both among the work force and the employer, the epidemic will scourge the nation with all the power it commands regardless of consequences. Success or failure in business is caused more by mental attitudes than by mental capacities. No condition or set of circumstances is in itself a calamity to be feared. Rather it is a challenge, and, it is our reaction to it that makes it a 'Waterloo' or a field of triumph. The most valuable thing which ever comes into a life is that experience, that book, that sermon, that person, that incident, that emergency, that accident, that catastrophe—that **something** which touches the springs of a man's inner nature and flings open the doors of his great within, revealing its hidden resources. It happened to me. It is more important to be human than to be important.

Today life for most of us is beset with loneliness and deep frustrations. The rapid pace of life engendered by advanced technology, the problems of scarcity, attendant on population explosion, and the growing inhumanity of man to man has increased the pressures of life around us and added to our tensions, leaving us engulfed and gasping for every breath.

'Know then thyself, .the proper study of mankind is man', said Pope. There is nothing like knowing your-self. It gives you confidence in your handling of others. And knowing yourself takes time, work and striving. If you despise the knowledge of yourself you are likely to be punished with 'poor luck' and not at all likely to get on with others.

I would say that every man's policy towards his neighbors concerns itself primarily with his own security and protecting his own progress. Would that be or tend to selfishness? Well, it depends

on how you operate that policy. If it is only to get or take whatever you can and is so motivated, it tends to selfishness. But if it is directed towards the happiness wellbeing of others, there is more giving in it than taking and makes for your own wellbeing and happiness ultimately. This is the big secret of building happy human relationship explored by Vedanta. Here's wishing you a thrilling human encounter and conquest.

I believe every human is attractive in his or her own way. But you want to forge ahead in life. You want to avoid the pitfalls that trap so many people. You are anxious to discover the tracks that build personality power and catapult you to fame and success.

I shall try to give you a peep into the unplumbed secret caves and treasure-houses of meaning-wealth that lie so beautifully concealed behind vedantic texts. The modern atheists, the secularists, the materialists etc., have often come to discuss with me, with a seeming dignity of wisdom and a boastful intelligence, that it is the glorification of desirelessness in our Scriptures that has wrought material havoc to the quick prosperity in this country. Strange are the arguments that the wolf could give when it is impatient to make a meal of the lamb!

To these comrades, vairagya or desirelessness is that negative state of mental coma, into which a person falls when poisonous fumes rise in the bosom as his disappointed desires putrefy there! If it were so the great Masters of the world could not have recommended it as the Supreme State of Perfection.

There is a lot of difference between the disappointed-fox proverbially crying "the grapes are sour", and a Nero rejecting his golden plate of grapes declaring it to be not really perfect!! Desirelessness and the state of mental poise gained therein by the Master are because of his realization of the Self and the State of Absolute Bliss. After a complete dinner and plenty of dessert, a fully satisfied glutton will certainly cry 'no' to any loving offer of yet another slice of toast and butter as far as he is concerned; for the time being at least, he is desire less in the kingdom of food. Similarly, a moment of total satiation comes, in experiencing the perfection of the Self, so that the Master of realization cries 'no' to all material sense-objects; not because they do not contain any glitter of joy, but, because, from his standpoint, these tiny toys-of-life have no more any joy-contents when they are compared to the Infinite treasure of joy which has already become his. A millionaire would rarely go to a poor-feeding, with hopes of getting a glorious feed,-even in his dreams.

During the past 30 years, besides counseling and teaching Yoga and Vedanta, I have successfully practiced and taught a variety of healing and meditation techniques that enable people to increase their personal fulfillment and outer success. **You do not need to import power, for you were born with it;** you just need to plug the holes in your bucket through which it is leaking. And yet there is a gift in the process, you remember that the source of your strength is inside you. Time does its impartial duty and doesn't allow anyone to dictate terms and conditions. But we have to be prepared. Further, it is much evident that every event may occur in accordance with the time frame of eternity and invariably one has to undergo all sorts of experiences to come to some conclusion that nothing is in our hands.

I am not interested in the theory of Vedanta or the theory of God-realization. I only want to know how to live in this world with composure, clarity, freedom and effectiveness as an individual and as a universal man, accommodating different types of interactions and enabling effective performance under all circumstances. If spirituality does not have a relevance to these, I think I have no need for it. Spiritual wisdom is aimed at making the mind light, the intelligence clear and the ego extinct, resulting in the dawning of an illumined and expansive personality. Imbued with deep inner strength, freedom and stability, the *Knower* begins to live and move in the world with benevolence and brilliance. His mind delights in universal fondness and dispossession, which naturally blossom into a life of renunciation—the crowning glory of spiritual wisdom.

Live in continuous and unbroken God-remembrance and intelligent detachment, in self-control and purity, always cheerful and always happy, regular in meditation and in charity, ever playing the allotted part in life, but never taking it seriously to heart—this is the secret way of serving a true man of realization. To him, flowers are a criminal waste, *paada poojaas* are painful nuisance, *namaskaars*, a burning botheration, and crowds of devotees cringing and begging, praising and fondling, a terrible agony!!!

It should not be that one feels devotional during the half-hour worship in front of the Idol, and for the rest of the day his attitude becomes different. Everything one does should constitute worship, ensuring that devotion and worship remain ceaseless. That alone will make the seeker a wholesome devotee, forging a continuous bond with the Supreme Reality. Such incessant worship leads to spiritual perfection.

It means, although we are saying that the Lord is Supreme, we are not giving Him the supreme position in our life. We are not ready to leave any of our desired possessions for the sake of the Lord. We want to cling to our petty desires and we seek petty things from the Lord. Having everything around us and with us, if Lord comes additionally, we are happy. Otherwise not.

If whatever we do, transcends the boundary of our personal, selfish motives and desires, then our activity becomes a part of the Universal Yajna of the Lord. The moon goes around the earth relentlessly; so does the earth around the sun. The sun and the galaxies move at fantastic speed. So many things are happening in the Universe! Our body has been born as an infinitesimal part of such incessant activities in Nature. And with that body, as the flower blossoms with its beauty and fragrance—without even thinking whether anybody will see it or not, whether anybody will appreciate its beauty or not—we too can blossom naturally with whatever qualities and virtues we have. When we make our life such a **desire-free blossoming**, all our actions become part of the Universal Yajna of the all-pervading Lord. Whatever we do, be it small or big, becomes an offering to the Divine Yajna.

The comprehensive, universal attitude we miss. So we miss the Yajna. We miss the divinity in all our actions. If we are conscious of this universal dimensions, then that will make every moment of our life divine. That will make each action of ours a Yajna—for the pleasure of the Lord.

Man has an abiding aspiration to discover, understand and actualize the basic values and ideals of life. In this respect, the thinkers of *Bharat* have, right from ancient times, displayed a rare interest and depth—nourishing these values and basking in their grace. The ageless Vedas are a magnificent legacy that came to be evolved as a result, bestowing enlightenment and fulfillment to human life on this earth. The Vedas laid out a framework of four *ashramas* (orders or stages) of life through which one can rise step by step to the highest level of human attainment. *Sannyasa* is the fourth and final order, culminating in freedom and fulfillment. Under its persuasion, the ascetics leave blood and matrimonial relationships, abandon all possessions as well as sources of income, and embrace the whole universe as their own. Like plants, birds and animals, they rely exclusively on the grace of the Supreme Lord, who sustains the entire creation. By dint of this rare sublimity, leading to inner freedom and fullness, they move around making the whole earth a heavenly garden.

It is no wonder that adoring this lofty resignation, some good people get drawn to the *Sannyasins* to be guided by them towards their own fulfillment and also to share in the social welfare mission conducted by them. This kind of householder-ascetic bond has been the prime force driving and perpetuating the great spiritual culture of this subcontinent. The mind that was all along tied to household routines and possessions is now poised to outlive that habit and live on a day to day basis, making Nature the sole companion and benefactor. Imagine how lofty and fulfilling will it be when adopted wholeheartedly and wholesomely! You will find a new challenge, inspiration and persuasion. Nursed by its grace and grandeur, the anchorite develops a new dimension—inner strength, purity and elevation.

Professional and family life does not generally allow you to think deeply and make your inner personality pure, expansive and delightful. After retirement, you have all the opportunity and freedom, and even persuasion to take up inner enrichment as a full-time pursuit. Take to it gladly with resolve. *Vanaprastha* has the sole aim of purifying and refining your personality. He should not hoard or store anything for the morrow. Whenever he finds anything surplus, he should immediately distribute it to others around, including creatures.

The ascetics first strive to redeem themselves from the afflictions and torments caused by worldly life. Once this is achieved, their hearts begin to melt for others around. And, like the spring season, they live with extreme benevolence to spread the message of Truth—to enlighten people, enabling them to gain peace, contentment and stability.

This kind of nobility and fondness is characteristic of the Wise people. It is like that of a moon, which with its cool radiance comforts the earth scorched by the hot rays of the sun. It is but an act and expression of spontaneity. There is neither expectation nor desire for any reward or recognition.

The Sun rises in the east, yet illumines the west too. So do the religious *Masters and Mystics*. The spiritual leaders in India stand as beacon lights of the age striving to illuminate the mind of man shrouded in religious fanaticism and perverted parochialism. To them *Geeta* is the Mother—the source of inspiration and solace in distress. Mahatma Gandhi wrote: “I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Geeta* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavad Geeta*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies.....”

The great *rishis* have asserted emphatically that even some knowledge of the inner spiritual constitution of man will give him mastery over his life. The attempt of the scriptural masters was, therefore, to analyze the individual who comes in contact with the world outside. They found out what the vehicles or instruments that constitute the experiences of life are, and how best they can be controlled, purified and readjusted so as to bring forth more and more success and happiness into each one's life. This analysis is the content of the sacred textbooks of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and the Buddhists, or any religion in the world.

Each age has its prescription. To find it out is the job of the seer and the sage; to pursue it is the exacting duty of the supreme lover of Man, and when both these qualities are met within the make-up of one and the same individual, he rises up to the eminence of a prophet who, if he has a complete knowledge of Truth and a full realization of its bliss in his own experience, becomes then an incarnation, a seer, a sage, a prophet, a guide all rolled into one, to be the best teacher of the world. In India we have that tradition.

Generation after generation, all right thinking people had come to this certain conclusion, some time or other during their lifetime; but few indeed were those who pursued the enquiry and found out the remedy, the eternal answer for all the banes of life.....and even among them a rare lion-hearted soul alone could follow the path and redeem himself and his generation. These were the seers, saints and sages of the ages. They proved to have had the heroic heart, the moral grit and the intellectual daring to hammer out their problems in their own mental workshop until they shaped out of their experiences a destiny which would waft him to bliss and make them the fittest instrument to pin hope, faith and comfort to their generation. To all men of action, to decide is to act.

### **The Gospel of Lord Krishna:**

Among the different avatars of the Lord, the most popular one that has captured the love and affections of men and women, boys and girls, children, scholars and saints, songsters and poets and philosophers, heads of *Mutts*, *Acharyas* and laymen, is of *Lord Sri Krishna*. His ineffable

beauty and transcendent loveliness are transfixed in the minds of men and women and ravished their hearts with devotion down the ages. Poets and Philosophers have glorified His message. Besides the author of the *Bhaagavata*, *Surdas*, *Purandara*, *Lilasuka*, *Vedanta Desika*, *Vadiraja*, *Bhattatiri*, and others have given us admirable pen pictures of the Lord. There is hardly a Hindu who knows not Krishna and His pranks. His personality is many-sided and complex. The greatness of His gospel has crossed the seas and we have the International Krishna Consciousness Organization all over the world. In point of popularity, Krishna takes the pride of palace and ranks as the top deity of India. From the unlettered child and cow-herd to the profound Non-dualist thinkers like *Madhusudan Saraswati* all have been worshippers of Krishna. The *Gopis* of *Brindavan* were infatuated with Lord Krishna. They have given their heart and all to Him unreservedly, and set aside conventional propriety and customary morality. They are admired as the greatest among Lord Krishna's devotees by *Uddhava*.

The clay, while being trampled by potter, says to him, "Now you are trampling me, but (mind well) one day will come, you will be trampled by me (you will be merged in me).

The complex personality of Krishna can be viewed, under several heads. The chief vignettes are: the wonderful child Krishna; the great friend and patron; the youthful *Brindavan* Krishna; the great friend and patron of *Pandavas*; above all the role of the world Teacher who gave us the Song Celestial, the sermon of the battle-field, the *Bhagavad Gita*. From the time of his birth which is described as wonderful, everything is wonderful about Him. He is wonderful. He is wonder. When we say that He is wonder, we mean that all other things in the world besides Him are just commonplace in comparison with Him.

Among the various religious classics of the world *Gita* occupies the pride of place. It is not merely a revered book of the Hindus but a book assessing the relative values of the human aspirations, co-coordinating them all and enabling the individual to attain *Moksha*. Devotion and service to humanity make up the *Saadhana* adumbrated by the *Gita*. It is the key to the vision of God. Devotion and duty are the watchwords of the *Gita*. *Gita* is the most widely read and greatly admired book. In the general experience of men, no book is undeservedly forgotten, and none which has no merits is remembered. It is eternal in the sense that it appeals alike to different types of men, e.g. the scholar, the man of affairs, the warrior, and the common man and the house-holder. It appeals alike to our emotions, reason, social sense and love of poetry.

The greatness of *Gita* is that it is acclaimed alike by the ancient *Acharyas* and the modern savants. *Shankara* acclaimed it as precious and sacred as the Ganges water. He continues, "a little of the *Gita* is enough and there is no need to pore over on the various scriptures. *Sri Madhava* considered the *Gita* as "the honey of the *parijata* tree, Mahabharata". Classical Sanskrit literature is full of praise for the *Gita*. In the great prose classic *Bana's Kadambari*, it is mentioned that men attained happiness by the recitation of the *Gita*. The human interest in the *Gita* emerges when the dialogue proceeds between God incarnate and *Arjuna*, the close companion and chosen instrument and representative man. The dramatic element disappears, the echoes of the battle-field die away and we have only an interview between God and man, the chariot of war becomes the lonely cell of meditation and a corner of the battle-field, where the voices of the world are stilled, a fit place for thoughts of the Supreme.

*Karmayoga* is the core of the *Gita* teaching and is its basic message. Yoga is a method. It is cognate with the English word, Yoke. Any activity as such is not *Karmayoga*. It is not not instinctive activity, nor is it the reflex process. It is not mechanical activity. It is a deliberate way of living, outlined by the Lord for humanity, to live well here on earth in amity with one's fellowmen and attain liberation after death. *Karmayoga* is the medicine administered to *Arjuna* and through him to humanity. We all are modern Arjunas, we represent *Arjuna* on the battle-field. We are also facing a great war, and that is a war of life. Act we must, there is no freedom from activity; there is only freedom in activity. It is impossible for any of us to live without activity. *Karmayoga* is opposed root and branch to several doctrines. We should not be obsessed by the fruits of the activity nor on that account, be slipshod and insufficient in the discharge of our duties. We should

dedicate all our actions to the Lord. We should not imagine that we are the sole agents of the act. *Karmayoga* is opposed to *Kaamyakarma*, the desire for the fruit of an action. This does not mean that there is no motive for the act, but the motive is not any selfish desires. It is the desire to attain the Lord's feet.

*Gita* preaches "Ego renunciation" and not "world renunciation". It does not want us to give up activities and go to mountain tops and monasteries. One can remain in the world, yet attain liberation by performing his acts as sacrifices. *Karmayoga* does not want us to do anything special for God. It asks us to dedicate all our acts in loving devotion as *Puja* to the Lord. When *the Gita* says that one should not desire fruits, it does not downgrade fore-sight but just asks us to give up selfish desires and work for the Lord's way of life.

Such a karmayogi knows no mortality; for mortality is a necessary condition through which the finite ego should pass in its dream of continued separateness! When man has realized his spiritual hood, that man can know thereafter no death, since he becomes a witness of the very process of the decay of the body, which in terms of our every day life we call, 'death'.

In fact, the whole of involution and evolution in the universe is one continuous Yoga, of the Supreme Spirit. It is in this sense that Shri Krishna as "Yogeshwar" (the Master of Yoga) designates the power of creation of the Lord as "Yoga-maya". The individual is carried along this eternal stream of Yoga unconsciously till he becomes aware of it. As soon as he is aware of it and of the extent of his part in it, he is called upon to play his role consciously and expedite matters. He then partakes consciously in the creative Yoga, and the joy of co-operation and of being in tune with the Infinite is his.

At heart be free from all desires. Transcend all attachments and passions. But be observing all formalities and activities outwardly. Conduct yourself with ease in the world. Reflect well upon the superficial and fleeting nature of all states and situations. At the same time, see clearly the loftiness of the supreme abode of the inmost Self. Linking yourself to the latter through contemplation, conduct your life in the world as though it were a sport.

Be possessed of inward dispassion, but be doing everything outwardly as though with full concern and interest. Be affected and at times even agitated externally, but be composed and cool inside. Sport then in the world with all your duties and activities well attended to. Put on the *show of undertakings* outside, but be free of all undertakings and concerns internally, at heart. Though a confirmed doer outside, be a real non-doer inside. Being so, live sport fully, in the world. Look as though you are intensely given to rejoicing and delight, to agitation and blaming. Pretend as if you have much concern and interest in all that you do. In this way, take to all activities, of the world, but regarding them as a mere sport. Abandon egoism in full. Make the mind as in deep sleep. Be graceful and radiant like the clear sky and the pure space. Devoid of the least tinge of either sin or virtue, more sport fully in the world, attending to all callings in time and well. Look to everything and all with your benign equalness. Get freed from the ties of hundreds of desires. Yet dwell upon the effects of *Prakriti* and its *Gunas*. Live thus, treating the life and movements in the world, as a long-living sport.

All things in this world depend closely upon each other and are led to decline and destruction. They are like the waves emerging and subsiding in the sea. Here those who are below suddenly rise, and those who are above suddenly fall. This world, which is ever in a state of flux, has the course of a revolving wheel. The celestials are driven to hell and those in hell are raised to heaven. Beings are led from womb to womb, and people from one continent to another. The rich become poor and the indigent turn opulent, all at once. Here all beings are seen to exist, deluded all the while by the fate of rising and falling hundreds of times. Those who are regarded as great and fortunate and those that behave as friends, fall in a few days, to change their fate and be forced to behave differently.

The grass of human life will continue to float upon and be tormented by the roaring waves of the sea of the world until it can spot the restful shore of reason (*vichara*). A clever gold-smith is one who knows without doubt the nature of gold and its properties. He can distinguish the gold from the ashes. A clever seeker is one who is able to distinguish the inmost Self, from everything else it lays tied to in the body. Knowledge, firm like a rock and free of doubts, alone has the power to take the seeker to his goal. It is the utter ignorance of Truth that makes the mind court delusion and dabbles in it variously. Full knowledge of Truth will make it free of all doubts and oscillations. Ignorance alone leads one to the unreal and hence to destruction.

This '*amritattwa*' or immortality is never the status of the body. There are many deluded souls who run after quack saints and quaint sages enquiring for some secret process by which they can reach physical immortality! This is an absurd hope and a pleasant contradiction in terms. Body is material, and matter is finite. 'Immortalizing Mortality' is an attempt which is literally a 'continued death'. But the state of Immortality is a state which can be reached and experienced vividly, when the Knots-of-the heart are bombed out of existence. What constitutes the knots of the heart and how we can redeem ourselves from their bondage have been very exhaustively discussed in Vedanta.

To be born a human being with the unique faculties of discrimination and choice is both a **great blessing and a terrible curse**. This is because exercising one's choice often creates conflicts. The spiritual text-books, one like *Bhagavad Gita* can help us deal with our inadequate self. The *Gita* does not talk of the population explosion or of pollution control, because it is not meant for solving topical problems. It addresses the eternal problem of the inadequate self, because of which we are unable to face topical problems.

*Arjuna*, too, was faced with the problem of the inadequacy. He was an accomplished warrior--hero and intellectual; yet he was overwhelmed by personal conflict, which left him feeling helpless. Krishna taught him to know the adequate self. Once *Arjuna* understood himself to be complete, all conflict and sorrow were resolved. This is in fact the theme of the *Gita*. The essence of the *Gita* applies to all human beings. **It unfolds the solution to the fundamental human problem of conflict and want.** Then, like *Arjuna*, you too will say, "My delusion is no more."

**Walking on water is certainly miraculous, but walking peacefully on earth is an even greater miracle.** Changing water to wine is wondrous, but it is more practical to change an unhealthy craving into healthy desires. Raising the dead is clearly a miraculous demonstration of God's power, but so is healing your daughter's tummy ache or removing the pain of an earache or; better yet, feeling vibrantly healthy so you don't get sick in the first place. This power to create practical miracles is now within the reach of every person. In simple terms, what makes this new age unique is that people now have the potential to experience God's presence and power within their hearts; and as a result, accelerated change is possible. With this shift, humanity is finally capable of bringing "heaven to earth" and creating a world of peace, love, health and prosperity for all. Together we can turn tragedy into triumph.

This disintegration of the Vedic culture has culminated in the present-day decay and disaster wherein the large majority of Hindus are still seeking their spirit through the by-lanes of superstition and false beliefs, through foreign ideologies and western religions, through putrefied institutions and social festivals, while the indolent priest-class, who have the sanction to make a thorough study of the scriptures and practice them exclusively, such as the Brahmins and the Sanyaasins, also came to neglect the Life Divine and the scripture dealing with it. In short, these are days when we can call ourselves a 'Hindu' only by the sanction of a long tradition. The entire world of non-Hindus in Hindustan is today waiting to be converted to the true Hinduism!

Again, there are scholars who industriously commit to memory stupendous volumes of spiritual literature and Vedic texts. There are in North India Chaturvedis and Trivedis, which were titles once upon a time given to Braahmins who could repeat out of memory all the four or three Vedaas. Alas, today they have become surnames, the significance of which is unknown even to

many them! The Mantra clearly says here that by merely committing to memory a large volume of the literature, no one can attain the perfection indicated therein by the Rishis.

A large black bumble bee was buzzing around a lotus in full bloom. Drawn by the fragrance, the bee sat on the flower. With the setting Sun, the flower's petals began to close. The bee, intoxicated with the sweet smell, did not budge and got trapped. A similar outcome is possible when, lured by our senses; we experience undue attachment of objects of desire. When one sense-object can lead to such a disastrous outcome for the bee, what will be plight of man who is in the grip of all his five senses? Forced subjugation often proves dangerous; for subjugation can never wipe out desires completely. In subduing desires, we allow them to make our subconscious mind home to unfulfilled desires. This, in turn, leads to mental distractions. They look for an opportune time to surface and burst out in an explosive form.

Living in this world and pursuing worldly goals is no sin. We need to be cautious that the world does not live in us. We know of the caterpillar that gets entangled in its self-woven cocoon. Man too is caught in the clutches of his desires. Just as the caterpillar develops into a butterfly bursting the cocoon, man too can get across the meshes of illusion by the wings of Viveka and Vairagya. Knowledge of the spirit is a prerequisite for arming with these traits. Some may say that they are sinners, polluted by attractions of the world and whom to look to for this realization. Remember, God affords and creates means for our purification and emancipation provided we have the urge within us. This is the prerogative of every individual on earth and not the privilege of a few.

A spiritual master imparts it gratuitously without distinction of caste, creed or color and transcending the physical barriers. He will not embroil you in oft-quoted different paths leading to the Supreme Spirit. He would rather teach the synthesis of all spiritual paths in a comprehensive spirituality embedded in the Bhagvad Gita and Upanishads. Equipped with this spirituality, a man lives oblivious of body and mind consciousness and the associated vasaanas. His individual consciousness with name and form merges into the ocean of universal consciousness.

Realization is not an acquisition but a revelation of the supreme secret of God. It is essentially manifestation of inherent divinity of man. It is the saguna swarupa of supreme Brahman who alone is capable of unfolding it to the spirituality impoverished humanity. He equips us with the worship of the spirit by the spirit.

Scriptures provide perfect testimony to the fact that Divine knowledge alone is the perennial method of self-control, purifying the human mind and living life of true renunciation. Once blessed, it becomes a continuous worship for knower of this Para Vidya—divine knowledge. Indifference and apathy will give place to care and concern for others. Immoral and fallen ways of life will give room to divine endowments. He (the recipient of Brahm Gyan) would see the same consciousness permeating through all.

As there is fire hidden in the wood and it can be produced only through a technique, in the same way, there is divine light, the energizing force as Atman within all which can be seen and known by all when blessed with divine eye. The supreme knowledge consists of instant experience of divine light—cosmic vision, holy nectar—present in plenty in human body, divine music—which goes on incessantly in human body and holy name—primordial vibration—the divine energy chord within all. The triple texts of Vedanta have described God as divine light. We need to know that the Holy name is beyond any language. We should learn the unique technique of listening to inner music which brings forth our divine attributes. It is Holy nectar, amrit which keeps a child in the womb of its mother. On taking birth, the child cries as it gets detached from God. We too are restless as we have forgotten our inherent divinity. We need to learn to live life in god-consciousness so as to lead a contented and blissful life. It is spiritual-master who unties us with our origin—the creator, who is pure Bliss.



Even if we allow senses to consume whatever they wish to, we would never be contended. Lure of senses increases with every additional consumption of a sense-object. It will demand more and more, just like fire demands more and more ghee in a *yagnya*, fire will never be extinguished if you do not stop pouring the ghee.

The Primordial power is ever at play. She is creating, preserving and destroying in play, as it were.....the divine mother wants to continue playing with her offsprings, the human beings.

The tragedy of human history is decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts and pleasures. You do not acquire happiness. Your nature is happiness. Bliss is not newly acquired. All that is done is to remove unhappiness. You are the happiness, and there is no becoming happy, says Vedanta. The golden opportunity you are seeking is in yourself. It is not in your environment, it is not in luck or chance, or the help of others; it is in yourself alone. Happiness is easy, but not to be unhappy is a difficult assignment. It simple to be happy, but difficult to be simple. The search for happiness is one of the chief sources of unhappiness. In Vedanta, we find deeper diagnosis of human unhappiness.

If life is lived in its totality, the priest is not needed at all, what is the need of a mediator between you and existence. You are directly in contact with the existence, you are living in existence, breathing in existence, and existence is pulsating in you.

Instead of feeling mentally tired or afflicted, one feels enriched and enlightened by whatever comes his way. He understands that the world is a complement to the *Soul*, and therefore, his interactions become a beautiful ornament to his life. To be spiritually enlightened is to embody these. One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.

Its' good to be just plain happy, its' little better to know that you are happy; but to understand that you are happy and to know why and how and still be happy, be happy in the being and the knowing, well that is beyond happiness, that is bliss.

We all ought to wash our minds completely clean, as the trees are washed by the rain, because they are so heavily laden with the dust of many centuries. It is rightly said that black money drives white money out of circulation. So too, bad habits wipe out good habits from one's life, once they are encouraged. Even as a farmer removes weeds from the crop he has grown before the weeds mature, so too, bad habits should be weeded out before they grow. In short, the age has failed because man has lost his mastery over his *Self*. In his preoccupation with conquering nature and subduing her to serve him as a slave, he has ignored his own inward monstrosities. He has developed the faculties of seeing with his fleshy eyes, and in engaging all his abilities in setting right the things he saw. He has left his subtler perceptions undeveloped, and, naturally, like an ownerless garden, the inner world has grown into a jungle.

When we thus enter into the inner world, no true critic of the age can, for a moment, dare compliment the age for even some imaginary goodness! [Deep within him he has grown himself to be more barbarous than the barbarians who ever lived in the virgin jungles of the newborn world.](#) He has become unconsciously cruel, selfish and arrogant and often behaves sadistically and hysterically. He is vulgar in his thoughts, low in his values and shattered all around in his individual capacity to tackle his personal life and its problems. And this picture of wailing and mourning parade of death, wherein carrions hoot and feed upon goodness butchered, has become the insignia of our much glorified materialism!

*Krishna* indicates here the great robber in the "within" of man, which loots away the true joys and thrills of "right living". Attachments and aversions of the sense organs for their respective sense organs are instinctive, and natural, in every one. The sense objects by themselves are incapable

of bringing any wave of sorrow or agitation into the “within”. We get agitated and disturbed not at the level of our sense organs, but in our mind.

The mind goes out and seeks the object, and takes the shape of the object. This is the Theory of Perception in Vedanta. We see the *Ganges* flowing to the East, and if a villager is asked why it is so, he would say “It is so, because, it had been so even at the time of my father, grand-father and great grandfather”. But if you were to ask the same question to modern student of science, he would say that as East happens to be a low-lying area and as ‘liquids find their own level’, the river flows eastwards. Thus, you see, things can be better explained in their behavior, when we have the true knowledge of them.

The Supreme is supreme indeed in every way. When the mind learns to rely on it exclusively, all corrections, improvements and enrichments are sure to follow. Between the mind and the body, know clearly that the mind is the factor to be touched, purified and embellished. The body is but an instrument for the mind to function and gain its experiences. Thus our focus before, during and after every activity must be truly on the mind. And for this, the safest and the most beneficial position will be to take to a full-fold reliance on the Supreme.

Can we just be **off-springs of bodies**, or are we the children, the **heirs of the eternal soul**? The fact that we live for a few decades acting, speaking, thinking and knowing—playing many roles—clearly proves, that we are not the inert, insentient body at all. Our real identity is with the sentient presence in the body, namely the Soul. It is this unnegatable truth that the Vedic thinkers make us instantly aware of, when they call us with the epithet “*amrtasya putrah*”—children of immortality.

I always call the Hindu mind quite fertile in its imagination and *sankalpa*. The mind is a trickle from Divinity and so has the same creative power as the Supreme Divinity itself, though in a miniature measure. Human thought, aspiration, and will are quite powerful. Whatever one thinks, that he verily can become. Such is the supreme law.

### **Self-benevolence:**

The compassionate Lord of the Universe is full in Himself. He does not yearn for any respect or offering made by the innocent. (What happens then to all the worship that people offer to the Lord?). All that but conduces to the devotees’ own welfare, like the adornment put on the face reflected in the mirror! Can a person look at his face and adorn it? He has to have a mirror. But all that he does with the help of the mirror adorns verily his own face. Worship or offering made to the God is exactly like this. God has nothing to gain from it. The beneficiary is the worshipper himself.

Getting stuck is not only a necessary part of spirituality it is a prerequisite to spiritual growth. Our problems in life are insurmountable, they have gone far beyond the reach of money and medicine, so to surmount the handicaps against long life, Yoga and Vedanta are the powerful tools.

In order to gain a Godly fact or make a profit you have to live every moment vitally aware of what is happening not only outside yourself but also within yourself. But unfortunately, the instruments, our mind and intellect, are left to rust just as the great grandfather’s razor is left in the wall-shelf rusting. For generations past we have been allowing the mind and the intellect, our great instruments of knowing, understanding, feeling and thinking, to lie in neglect. Let us repair them and use of them. It is accomplished by sincere and long *Sadhana*.

The philosophy of the *Gita* does not suggest, even in its implications, any kind of running away from the world of sense objects. Krishna’s creed is to live here and now, in the midst of our situations in life, in this very world, and to experience them through our sacred vehicles of the body, mind and intellect. The only insistence is that on all occasions a wise man should be a

master of the vehicles and not a helpless victim of these matter envelopments. And secret of the mastery in life is to live free from the tyrannies of attachments and aversions.

Man has learnt how to swim in water like a fish, he has learnt how to fly in the sky like a bird, but alas, he is yet to learn two things; how to live like an ordinary human being and walk peacefully on mother earth.

Times have surely changed. Once synonymous with simplicity and detachment, today's *yogis* are living examples of how **karma and cash** can indeed co-exist! They have struck the perfect balance between material and spiritual. Considering the stake involved, life is one big balancing act for our yoga gurus.

Meditate more than you read. Meditation strengthens one's resolve. Those who meditate more upon a subject (oneself or one's self or you in you), receive more courage and strength in fulfilling their intention.

A seeker in Vedanta is expected to carry out daring intellectual flights to the Unknown through a process of deep study, vigorous reflections and tireless meditations. So here, when it is said that, according to *Shastraas*, he must be a "he-man", it must necessarily mean that he should have a special quality of the head and heart.

As the tongue of the temple bell strikes the bell-cup, there is a harsh metallic sound. But as we listen to it, it warbles out a lingering melody before it slowly dies out into the very silence in which it was born. Similarly, the words of the scriptures have a harsh sound but a lingering ringing music. The harsh sounds are caught in a web of language and preserved in text-books; but the warbling notes are to be produced in the secret cave of the seeker's heart through the process called meditation.

When a seed is allowed to grow into a tree, the tree will produce millions of seeds. A thriving tree will yearly bring forth a huge crop of seeds. If the tree is destroyed, there will be no crop of seeds emerging from it. Stop the "effect", and the "cause" also ends. If the "effect" increases, the "cause" also increases. The "results" come to manifest because of *vasanas*. The "results" are egocentric "thoughts", and sensuous "actions". Thus, "cause" and "effect" are interchangeable. The "cause" can become an "effect" and this "effect" becomes the next "cause".

This cause-effect chain is never-ending. But with the steady practice of Meditation, one could end this cycle. Similarly, wind and fire are nature's powers of annihilation. Wind dries up things and destroys them. Fire destroys them by burning them. The conviction that 'I am the body', this ignorance, can neither be dried up nor can it be burnt down. Thus the mind alone causes bondage and it is the mind again that liberates the individual. This play is called *Maya*, which is, in fact, our own *avidya* (*ignorance*), our non-comprehension of *Reality*.

The mind is the cause for all the sense-objects. Since the objects constantly change, the mind too must constantly change to become the objects. The effects are nothing else but the cause in another form. The mind cannot be the Atman because the Atman is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. It is divine changeless substratum for all changes.

### **Greatness of Sages and Vedavyasa's Distinction:**

The great Sage *Vedavyasa*, who enriched the people of this land with the unique Vedic and cultural heritage through his immortal poetic creations. It is undeniable that any society's cultural luster rests upon the eternal thoughts and literature it is able to evolve and preserve. While all memorials, however strongly built, are bound to perish sooner or later, eternal literature alone has the power to sustain and permeate the society forever. By its invaluable heritage bequeathed by the ancient Upanishads and other scriptural compositions, India illustrates how fruitfully this noble task is accomplished.

Vedas as well as the other epic creations of Sage *Vyasa* strive to ensure material prosperity and inner spiritual contentment alike for all people. The masterly texts discuss the eternal tenets of *dharma* (righteousness) and the concept of the Supreme Reality, Brahman that causes and sustains the phenomenal creations. The lofty heritage created by *Vyasadeva* began to spread and became the warp and woof of the life of teeming millions living in the

subcontinent. By the intrinsic strength of individual pursuits, familial heredity and societal as well as devotional dedication of ruler and kings, the powerful legacy unified the people, in the midst of an amazing diversity of language, dress and food. It is this spirituo-cultural fabric that inspired and activated our people with unity, strength and cohesion in the struggle of independence.

*Angiras, Uddalaka, Saunaka* and the other sages feature in Vedic Upanishads, while sage *Valmiki* arrive in *Treta yuga*, with his alluring *Ramayana*, sung even today throughout the land.

*Vyasadeva*, however, stands with distinction in the great hierarchy of ascetics. Besides editing the immortal *Vedas*, he authored the incomparable epic *Mahabharatam* and allied texts. His aim was to delight the ordinary hearts and arouse in them an abiding interest in the eternal spiritual heritage. Sage Vyasa's writings have ever since remained the backbone of Indian ethos.

*Mahabharatam*, with 125,000 *Sanskrit Verses*, constitutes the foundation of our composite culture and ethics. Portraying the decline of *Kuru Dynasty*, which once ruled this land, the epic depicts the benevolent and maleficent traits of the complex world, together with the benedictory and derogatory notes of the human mind the human race. It discusses the intriguing pursuit of human life, describing the confrontations and enigmas the individual and society alike, face from time to time. *Bhagavadgeeta*, a salient part of the *Mahabharatam*, is a celebrated gospel, crowning the variegated epic discussion. By dint of its magnificence and relevance to daily life, it has ever since been the boundless inspiration and refuge of our people. This great spiritual dialogue is adored the world over, for its distinct worth, relevance and pragmatism.

*Vyasadeva*, in *Mahabharatam*, presents Krishna as an enlightened person, with exquisite excellence in resolving the problems and needs of human life. But in *Shreemad Bhaagavatam*, the sage taking recourse to eulogistic attributes makes Krishna appeal to the erudite, ignorant, old and young alike. In it, one can clearly see a healthy message for the war-torn world laboring under its own misconceptions of what life is, and its own wrong evaluations of the factors that constitute true living.

An attempt of the finite to explain the *Infinite* is the content and import of all the scriptures of the world. The *Upanishads* are exceptions to this rule. To define the *Infinite* is impossible, although, through words we can certainly indicate the Truth to one who is ready to recognize the indication, following up their direction and come to experience Godhood. The attempt of the Upanishads is to express the inexpressible, to paint the formless and to sing the voiceless beauty and bliss of the *Absolute*. The finite words are no instruments to reach the roaring silence of the all-full Spiritual Perfection. Even in our ordinary experience, when we have voice forth our intimate subjective experiences, we know that language fails in its own limitations. It is only a superstitious belief that language can do wonders everywhere, except perhaps, in the market place and in the banker's office, everywhere else it must feel choked. Factual ideas directly perceived through the five sense-organs can be expressed, to an extent, by means of sound symbols which have, by mutual consent, come to represent literally some uniform meaning. Thus, a botanist can, with ease and efficiency, describe the flower, part by part, but when the poet enters the field to express the message of the flower and the thrills of beauty it has produced in him, the trembling sentiments and the throbbing emotions must snap the silver strings of every language.

It is not a biological freak to declare that *Lord Shiva* has three eyes. Every one of us has two fleshy eyes with which we see the gross world of plurality. He sees with this special power of vision, the *Substratum* of the entire Universe. This 'eye-of-wisdom', whoever has, is a person with the third-eye. An eye of wisdom. People increase their standard of living but their standard of thinking. The best computer is the one between the ears. Understand the mind, transform the mind—this is possible through the discipline of yoga and Vedanta. On perceiving *supreme Brahman*, the *soul* drinks deep into the transensuous eternal bliss. Attachment to sensual pleasures automatically wears off. It is possible to sublimate desires. Desires and attachment to sense objects can be turned *God-ward* by perception of Supreme within through *Brahman Gyan*.

One of the most cherished and widely read sacred scriptures; the *Bhagavad Gita* has inspired and transpired many political acumen and thinkers, philosophers, freedom fighters, writers around the world. The beauty of the text lies in its universality. Its universal appeal beyond the narrow strictures of religion, caste, race or nationality makes it an eternal philosophy.

### ***Robot Pathology to Life as Wonderment:***

We all are thinking machines. We are champions of sorrow. We need a reason to worry when we get up in the morning. If we look deeply within ourselves and 'our' 'selves', we carry a big illusion that we are conscious individuals. Most of our lives, if you closely observe, we are very mechanical. Our physical movements are mechanical, our thinking is manufactured thinking and our emotions are so structured and so predictable, it could be said that we live like machines. If you live from a mechanical centre, you can never experience the poetry and beauty of life. Man is suffering because he has become a robot. The pathology that humanity suffers is robot pathology. We have become very mechanical like robots.

The mind can function only in a field of time, space and causality. These three stubborn factors seem to be on a very rocky foundation upon which the cardboard castle of the mind is erected. To an awakened intellect educated in science and reason, it is very easy to understand that time and place are concepts relative and ever-changing. But an intellect trained for observing, analyzing and recording behaviors of an objectified world is not the instrument that can very easily detect the fallacies in the concept of causality.

Mind makes us worth more and "The great mind managers of the world":

The greatest asset, a human being can possess, is the mind. Its management makes him tall or short depending on how its working is channelized. It enables a person to accept himself as he is, to accept other people as they are the capacity to approach relationships and problems in terms of the present rather than the past, the ability to trust others and the strength to perform without others' approval and recognition. The mind is a battlefield where goodness and evil fight against each other. Lord Krishna tells the same thing to poor fellow Arjuna, whose mind was shattered, that you better win the war with your own mind first and then prepare yourself to fight the war. Mind management is the triumph of goodness over evil. To build a promising future, goodness needs to be increased and evil slowly and progressively obliterated. Such a situation can be created by building character, integrity, morals and ethics, which together make up what we generally understand as goodness. All prophets and Acharyas, saints and sages, great acumen of past, philanthropists, philosophers and mind builders have this common trait of bonding their qualities while managing the mind. The human mind cannot be quantified or described. It has no distinct existence. It is born with the body and dies with it. The efficient functioning of the mind expands or shrinks the personality of the humans. Mind management enables us to access our inner resources which otherwise remain dormant and buried, never used to improve our quality of life.

It teaches that disciplining life is a wonderful way to move forward or to grow or the stretch and expands creating the belief that anything is possible and is within reach. As Lord Buddha quotes: "Be a Lamp to yourself". In other words, we can light up our own life, become instrument to light-up others, dispelling darkness, the primary aim of life. Great men have sprung from places as well as from cottages and few have the unique distinction of springing from dust. Persons operating their minds at the optimum level could always produce marvelous miracles. What we really mean by originality is the modification of ideas.

A Vedantin who practices meditation intelligently reaches the state of Godhood *here and now*, and not after death somewhere. Perfection is not a post-mortem state. It is here and now. This is the birthright of every living man. The time limit of its achievement is only directly proportional to the amount of sincere effort and correct application put forth by the seeker. Regularity, sincerity and right understanding are the three key-stones in the Castle of Perfection. It is a paradox, though true, to say that a seeker anxious to reach his goal remembers everything but, generally forgets to use or to exert his common sense! This is what has made religion impotent.

One should not think that old philosophers of India were impotent men who could not plan material world of success. This has been a copy belief of hasty critics of India, especially in our generation, when we are neither fed with the best in our culture nor with the best in the Western civilization! Fed as we are, mentally and intellectually with the rubbish and refuse of the world's cultural transactions, we have grown up to be a generation lacking in breed as well as in health but suffering physically, mentally and intellectually from cultural diseases. But in Vedanta, we find deeper diagnosis of human unhappiness. It offers democracy of happiness.

Our ulcerated personalities provide us with an age of sick hearts and lacerated intellects. If properly applied, Vedanta serve as a golden key to let the suffering world out into the ampler fields of a joyous and peaceful existence. We must know the values of life to be developed through practice and also we must know how to unwind the knotty Vasanaas in our mind through deliberate self-application.

*“The things to be avoided”* are the three planes of consciousness identifying with which we develop our sense of ego; *“the object to be realized”*.

The human personality is determined and defined by the quality and texture of one’s mind and intellect. Religion helps to bring about a revolution in the individual’s personality by chastening the mind and educating the intellect. By bringing about this change, man improves the state of his mind and develops subtler discrimination, thereby enabling him to enjoy a happier and more harmonious relationship with the ever-changing phenomena of the external world of beings and happenings.

Since man’s personality derives its essence from the structure of his mind and intellect, all schemes and plans envisaged by religion for personality rehabilitation are meant to promote development and perfection of this subtle equipment in him. Before attempting to rehabilitate ourselves, therefore, it becomes primarily necessary for us to study and understand the nature, location and functions of the inner equipment in the human system. The mind is the seat of impulses and feelings and it is common to all living creatures. Man alone, being the roof and crown of creation, has the capacity to discriminate and analyze his feelings as and when they arise and allow his actions to be guided and directed by his power of discrimination instead of being driven and carried away by momentary impulses and feelings.

The mind is like the receiving clerk in an office. Though the clerk receives the mail, he does not take action on them, but puts them unto the officer-in-charge for his direction and advice for disposal. But if the clerk chooses to take action directly, without consulting the officer, there is bound to be confusion and chaos in the organization. This, in short, is the sad state of affairs about the human system of the modern age. Our minds receive impulses from the external world and we respond directly without the guidance or control of the intellect which is the officer-in-charge within our body politic. Consequently, there is confusion and chaos within, leading naturally to dissatisfaction and discontentment in life.

The mind is defined as a flow of thoughts just as a river is a flow of water. The banks of the river guide and direct its flow and when the banks are not firm, the water runs amok. So, too, when the intellect of a man is not firm and determined the mind functions as it wants and man is tossed hither and thither by the vicissitudes of his environment and circumstances. To keep the intellect firm and determined and to be constantly guided by the dictates of such an intellect is the training imparted by religion.

When our physical body is discarded at the time of death, our mind continues to function in and through our other higher bodies successively during our after-death sojourn in the ‘Many Mansions’ or planes of existence referred to in the Bible and all other religion literature, until our individualized consciousness or soul or Jivatma reincarnates in a new physical body to complete its round of Samsara. But if one probes very deeply into oneself, in the course of meditation or otherwise, during one’s physical lifetime with full and unwavering dedication to ‘Know Thyself’, then self-realization occurs and one is liberated from rebirth and the cycle of Samsara, it is said.

Human being is neither the body nor the senses rather these are instruments of varied expressions and actions associated with temporal world of Atman—the divine self. It is on realizing the Atman—our true self—we become aware that we are essentially a fragmented part of the Universal Soul.

Spiritual wisdom always focuses on the subject part of the human personality. It frees the mind, intelligence and ego of all unwelcome constrictions and strains, to imbue them with far greater expanse, elevation and strength. The secret of success behind all men of achievements lies in the faculty of applying their intellect in all their activities without being misled by any surging emotions or feelings. Religion offers the technique of development of this faculty and leaves the choice to man to make or mar himself and his progress. If you think you can, you can. And if you think you cannot, you are right.

In every age, people are being exploited in the name of ideology or the other. In the present, science and technology are the instruments to deaden the inner being in mankind. Technology is intended to be servant of humanity and should never make humanity its slave. Three thousand million years of life in the planet, three million years of man like creatures, some ten thousand years of civilization and then a mere two hundred years of industrial revolution have brought us to the bank of extinction of our species and species of animals and birds. We are rapidly creating a situation from which we will have increasing difficulties to extricate ourselves. If there are too many clever machines we will have too many stupid people. Wrong people are placed at right jobs from politics to police. There are no devils in hell, they all are her.

The millions of known cases of mental disorder, in spite of the crimes committed by some of them, are not a menace to the race in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The danger comes from the crowds of smart, highly efficient people whose instincts are not balanced and whom lack the moral counterpoise to offset the enlarged ego, boundless ambition and immoderate greed of the highly intelligent mind directed on a wrong path. Keeping in view the picture of this mental disproportion, count the number of normals occupying the highest seats of power among the nations of the world.

The only possible way to save the world from this grave danger is to gain knowledge of the evolutionary mechanism and the conditions that are needed for its healthy operations to create the harmonious personalities that can bring peace. The leading personalities of our day are far in advance in quick-thinking political acumen and temporal knowledge of the greatest thinkers of the past. But many of them are pygmies compared to the spiritual giants of those times.

There was a time when all over this country there were eager souls filled with seething enthusiasm for the acquisition of knowledge of Truth and Reality. There were hungry seekers prepared to go to the very ends of the earth if need be to find a wise teacher or master who could initiate them into the mysteries of God, the Soul and the World. Learned men thronged at the courts of kings who delighted in arranging for discussions and debates concerning Reality. Kings and emperors humbly sat at the feet of such wise sages whose company was found to be edifying and inspiring.

It was on one of such eventful occasions that *Yajñavalkya Rushi*, a great sage, decided to renounce all his wealth and pomp of mundane life to retire into solitude. He had won the coveted prize set apart for the best of knower of Brahman in a contest of debate organized by *King Janaka of Videha*, who was a royal sage greatly renowned for his interest in Vedanta. *Yajñavalkya's* laurels won at that contest consisted of a thousand cows decked with gold of five *padas* on each of the horns. The sage had two wives *Maitreyi* and *Katyayani*. He was a great *Kulapati* teaching a number of students of Veda under his care. But in his estimate, contemplation on *Brahman* in solitude was worth more than all the wealth and comfort that worldly life could promise, and so he chose to enter the order of *Paramahansa-Parivrajakas*. The *Maitreyi-Brahmana* depicts the episode and the dialogue between this great seer and his wife *Maitreyi*.

It is very interesting to find how skillfully *Yajñavalkya* begins with the topic of conjugal affection most familiar to the man of the world and deftly leads his wife to an analysis of the notion of the individual self which all human beings instinctively love most of all. It seems plausible; however, that he may have had the Vedic transmigratory self in his mind, when he asked *Maitreyi* to know the Atman in particular to attain immortality and be able to know everything else. The individual self could very well be meant here because it is well known in common life and everything else is dear to us for the sake of one's own self.

The statement that everything becomes known by the knowledge of the Atman, may be explained away as merely figurative, since objective things may well be considered to have been known by the knowledge of their experiences to whom they are subservient. As a matter of fact we do know from *Srutis* and *Smritis* that immortality is attainable only through the knowledge of supreme Atman.

### ***The Yoga-Sutras (aphorisms) of Patanjali & Vedanta:***

I am convinced that exploration of the soul is the science of the future. The Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali are like the telegraphic message. Like one word they convey rich and profound meanings. Even before the grand Karla

caves were carved, before the marvelous Kailasa was materialized in rocks at Verul caves, before the Ajantha caves displayed their great paintings, Patanjali wrote this saga—'The Yoga Sutras' on the powers of the mind and soul. It shows the wonders and marvels of the cave that is the human body and its in-dweller—the soul. The art, even in rocks, is not ageless. But this tiny work is. It reveals centers of titanic and tremendous potentialities. Truth, told here, is stranger and stronger than fiction. No magic can match it.

Patanjali presents for application the pure Vedanta doctrine. The subsequent distortions, distentions and debasing are not there. The negative coloring given to Vedanta is a later graft. Tradition makes him an incarnation of Ananta, the thousand-hooded live snake, the mythological seat of Vishnu. It may be just a symbolic explanation. Probably, his name was Ananta. What can safely be said without any fear of contradiction is that he was a great seer of rare insight. He is a marvel of a personality, a superior one, a Vibhuti.

What is important is that he has made full use of the perennial philosophy of the Vedanta and preserved it intact. The philosophy he incorporates is an ancient one and of a standing and maturity of at least four thousand years. He towers over other persons like a peak of the Himalayas over other heights and his work is like the rise of the river Ganga. The flow from Gangotri is unfailing, purifying and nourishing. It is an overrunning source. Patanjali has put the noble Vedanta in practice and he reveals its immense potentialities. If belief in progress means, belief in the progressive developments of human potentialities, then applied Vedanta or Yoga, then is the only way to achieve them. The aphorisms are Vedanta in action. It is shown that purity begets power and that character and wisdom are one. This immortal heritage of rich lineage Patanjali presents here as a practice that may lead to perfection. He has framed these aphorisms for the aspirants. These contain in a coherent relevancy his verdicts on applied Vedanta. They are 196 in number. They may appear as mere irregular contents, but, are in reality crystals, complete and comprehensive, of this superb and sublime wisdom.

### ***Japa Yoga:***

One may wonder why a student of Yoga and Vedanta, listening and reflecting upon discourses on the Upanishads and the *Gita*, should care to take up any other method of *sadhana* other than pure meditation. It is natural for seekers, in their blind enthusiasm to come to question the importance of *japa* for a *Yogic* and *Vedantic* seeker. This doubt comes out of confusion in the understanding of *Japa Yoga*.

*Japa* is a training by which the ever-dancing rays of the mind are compelled to behave in some order and rhythm, and thereby bring out of their cooperative effort a single melody of repeated *mantra* chanting. In this practicing, the mind becomes extremely single-pointed. In fact, *japa*, properly done, can more effectively bring about a sustained single-pointedness than all the hasty methods of meditation. A mind seasoned with *japa* is like tinned food which gets ready for consumption after a few seconds, warming up on the fire. A short period of meditation can take a *japa*-conditioned mind to unimaginable heights in an impossibly short time.

The Supreme Reality is experienced through meditation alone. But the boat to reach the goal, namely, meditation, is rigged with the practice of devotion through *japa*. In meditation one is mindless if one has not acquired a decent share of concentration-power and a perfect knowledge of how to fix one's mind at will at a single point for some length of time. Meditation is keeping the mind hitched on to one line of thought, to be complete exclusion of all other dissimilar thought-currents. To succeed in this, we must learn to stop at will all other 'dissimilar thought-currents'. This mental capacity is gained through *japa* when intelligently practiced along with a regulation of the normal life lived.

Don't waste your time in vain on the shores of life; get into the ocean of this Bliss and be refreshed. Inner renunciation consists in the mind becoming spiritual and Godly. This brings a wholesome transformation from worldliness to Godliness—the outcome being wrought by the assessment as to what constitutes Divinity, how the world is ultimately a Godly display, the seeker, the seeker too being included in it. In this wholesome process, the intelligence plays the key role of transforming and sublimating the mind.

Since Yoga, prior to *Patanjali*, was originally grounded in Vedanta philosophy, we have interrupted the aphorisms throughout, from a *Vedantist* viewpoint. In this we differ from *Patanjali* himself, who was a follower



of *Sankhya* philosophy. But these are merely technical differences and it is best not to insist on them too strongly, lest the reader become confused.

*Patanjali Yoga Sutras (aphorisms)* are not the original exposition of a philosophy, but a work of compilation and reformulation. References to yoga practices—spiritual disciplines and techniques of meditation which enable a man to achieve unitive knowledge of the Godhood—are to be found, already, in the *Katha*, *Svetasvatara*, *Taittiriya*, and *Maitrayani* Upanishads, very many centuries earlier. Indeed, the yoga doctrine may be said to have been handed down from prehistoric times.

The simplest meaning of the word *sutra* is a “thread”. A *sutra* is, so to speak, the bare thread of an exposition, the absolute minimum that is necessary to hold it together, unadorned by a single “bead” of elaboration. Only essential words are used. Mind purification is greatly advocated in these *sutras* and is a full time mission by itself, in line with Vedanta. When the mind becomes pure, I feel the entire blood chemistry will also change. It may not be detected objectively. One will definitely feel expansion, loftiness and delight. A pure mind will generate placidity. *Shankara* states that a set of qualities begins to grace anyone whose mind becomes exceedingly pure.

The Self that animates the body, is not generally felt. When the mind becomes sufficiently pure, one will feel the inner spirit (*svatmanbhutih*). With that one will experience supreme peacefulness (*parama prasantih*). There will be abundant contentment (*triptih*) and exhilaration (*praharsah*). All these result in ceaseless bliss (*sadananda-rasa*). My attempt is only to dive into ourselves and reach at the pearl of wisdom in our own Self. This choice of the *rishis* was not merely accidental. They too did exhaustively flirt with the external world, seeking the root cause of it, and came to discover that the secret of the world-of-objects lay in the heart-world of the subject.

When we are deprived of our thoughts, there are no actions performed by us. In deep sleep not even a confirmed criminal can be accused of having done any crime, nor would a seer in his bed, sleeping soundly, perform any social service. Once the thoughts have dried up, actions stop. Desires are the volcano from which the thought-lava erupts and flows out scorching the field into activities. The quality and texture of the desires determine the thoughts in the bosom; and the thoughts, we have found, the transcribed and echoed in our actions.

Neither did the great *rishis* stop their enquiries here. They delved deeper into the personality of man, searching for the source of his desires. Then they discovered that desires spring up like weeds upon the marshy lands of ignorance (*avidya*). However strong the delusion may be, there is, deep within ourselves, the awareness of the all-full nature of the Self. The attempt to regain this Self-hood is irresistible in all, and this attempt in the deluded is expressed in their trying to acquire, hoard and spend, procure and enjoy, court and gain, strive and win, and so on. The finite can never gain the Infinite through the acquisition of the finite world! This is the secret of the sorrows of life, and this can be cured only when the misunderstanding in us about ourselves is once and for ever rooted out in a blinding flash of the Knowledge of the Absolute. This is called the rediscovery of the Self.

All our cultural values are aimed at bestowing the three-fold enrichment—characteral might, behavioral majesty and performancial excellence. By their very nature, these are ever applicable to one and all alike. To blend “subject values” with “object education” thus becomes the goal before us. Distinct from external, material, professional and technical knowledge, which comes under “object knowledge”, the “subject knowledge” holds the potential to enrich and empower the mind, intelligence and heart.

### ***Know the Accidental and the Essential:***

Life has two layers: the essential, and the accidental. The essential is never born, never dies. The accidental is born, lives and dies. The essential is eternal, timeless; the accidental is just accidental. We become attached to the accidental and we tend to forget the essential. You become attached to money but money is accidental. It has nothing to do with essential life. You become attached to your house or car; spouse, children and relationships. Relationship is accidental; it has nothing essential in it. It is not your real being.

You have become attached to 'my' and 'mine'—to possessions. And you completely lost track of your being. You have completely lost track of 'I'. 'My' has become more important. When 'my' becomes more important then you are getting attached to the accidental. When 'I' remains more important and 'my' remains a servant, then you are a master. Then you live in a totally different way. Using the word 'I', in an absolutely non-egoistic sense it means your being. The accidental man lives on the periphery. The essential man remains centered.

You create a world of illusions around you. You get attached to things which are not going to be with you when you die. You go on being identified with the things which are going to be taken away from you. Infinite 'you' never gets detached from finite 'you'. Other than Infinite, everything changes is the only changeless law. Ridiculous indeed is the paradox of this age. Infinite world, unfortunately, cannot be explained through finite words. Language is the most imperfect tool to convey your experiences of the spirituality.

Try to become more and more essential and less and less accidental. Only that which is eternal is true; only that which is going to be for ever and ever is true. That which is momentary is untrue. The momentary has to be watched and not to be identified with. This game of 'my' and 'mine' is an absurd game—but this is the whole game of life. This earth was there before you ever came here, and this will be here when you are gone. The diamonds that you possess were there before you ever came here, and when you are gone those diamonds will remain here—and they will not even remember you. This game of possessiveness is the most foolish game there is—but this the whole game.

People who become certain about the accidental, are going to be frustrated, their certainty is going to create much frustration for them. Their certainty will create expectations, and they cannot be fulfilled—because the universe is not there to fulfill your expectations. It has its own destiny. It is moving towards its own goal set by its own destiny for certain destination. And there is no uncertainty in that. It does not bother about your private goals.

All private goals are against the goal of the Universe itself. The essential man comes to know, to feel, that I am not separate for the Whole and there is no need to seek and search for any destiny on my own. Things are happening, the world is moving; in fact, these days moving at a terrific speed. There is no need for me to make any struggle, any effort; there is no need for me to fight for anything. I can relax and be with "My" self or just be. Our universe is a sea of energy—free, cleans energy. It is all out there waiting for us to set sail upon it.

The essential man is not a doer. The accidental man is a doer. The accidental man is, in anxiety, tension, stress and anguish, continuously sitting on a volcano—it can erupt any moment, because he lives in a world of uncertainty and believes as if it is certain. This creates tension in his whole being as he does not understand the Whole; he knows deep down that nothing is certain. When things are no longer important, only consciousness becomes important. When things are no longer significant, a new search, a new door opens. Then you are not rushing towards the without: you start slipping into the within, the kingdom of godliness is within.

Vedanta and Yoga Combine: Vedanta being not only a theory of perfect Life, but also being a technique of perfect living, the Hindu culture can be imparted efficiently and successfully only to those who are willing and ready to *live* these values. This is indicated by the demand of the worshipper that students of *Brahma-vidya*, who reach the halls of study, must have ample self-control in their outward life and calmness in their inward living. And for this Vedanta seeker must practice Yoga (Hadha-Yoga) to eliminate all obstacles that come in-between to seek Vedanta.

In order to become thus pure in living, the individual must gain a clean and divine heart, and the method by which one can purify oneself and keep that bright shine in the inner world is available in *Ashtanga* Yoga. The only way we can redeem ourselves from our past mistakes is to correct our way of thinking and rewrite the entire pattern of thought in ourselves by practicing meditation everyday. This erasing of the wrong patterns and rewriting the unhealthy lines of thinking are both accomplished by the same divine process which is prescribed in the sacred textbooks of Yoga. Sometimes the methods advised are the constant and repeated chanting and *japa* of the sacred mantra of *Pranava*, known as *Om*kara.

From the cowshed to the skies, from the jungle to the wide expanse of the world, from the clothes that have not been washed to the endless concept of space, and from the unfinished ploughing to the concept of the atmospheric air—embracing at once the heaven and earth ardently into its ample bosom—is indeed a glorious avenue through which the practitioner's mind is made to expand into a thrilling freedom and exuberance by Yoga. In order to raise the attunement to the necessary pitch the methods of '*Upasanas*' are advised in all the *Yogas*. Without the minimum amount of intellectual sharpness and mental tranquility, it is certainly impossible to understand the scriptures as they should be understood if our studies were to fulfill themselves in brining out the beauty that is now lying concealed within ourselves.