

SHIVA RAHASYA



SHRI SHIVA RAHASYA

(THE SECRET TEACHING OF SHIVA)

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**In the Name of Shiva, the Most Glorious, the Most Obvious, the
Highest God, Master of the Universe, Lord of Yoga, Lord of Unity**

*To the Eternal Teacher and Master, Obeisance.
May He Enlighten the heart of all Seekers
And set their purified mind upon that Path which is straight
and not crooked!
May He forever guide us
From Delusion unto Truth,
From Darkness unto Light,
From Death unto Eternal Life.*

SHRI SHIVA RAHASYA

(THE SECRET TEACHING OF SHIVA)

**being
THE GLORIOUS MYSTERY
OF SUPREME REALITY**

**according to
HIS DIVINE HOLINESS
MAHAGURU
SHRI SOMA-NATHA MAHARAJ DEV**

*with
Abridged commentary
by
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THE FIRST LIGHT

(Chapter One)

1

*Wherein His Supreme Majesty Lord Shiva introduces
the Eternal Teaching of Yoga
to the Four Holy Seers*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Thus spoke Sage Vyasa, the divinely appointed Compiler and Disseminator of Sacred Scriptures:

1. OM. Adoration be to Shiva, the Essence of all Goodness, the Kindly, the Pure, the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Most Merciful One!

2. O you who have sought instruction in the Highest Truth! seek no more. For, I shall now speak to you the Word of God which was proclaimed for the deliverance of Souls from delusion, pain and sorrow. By hearing It men know what is right and tread upon the Path of Light.

3. Om is the Eternal Sound of Truth that ever abides in God's Heart. From That, the Will to Speak arose; from Will a Thought came forth; and Thought manifested as Word. Thus God's Word of Truth was born. His Holy Word shall not be doubted. For, he who follows It, is rightly guided.

4. Hear you now the Secret Lore revealed by the Lord unto the Blessed Yogis of yore. Desiring to bring knowledge of the Spirit into the World, the Sages Duravasa, Nageshanatha, Kapalin and Anandanatha addressed their thought to the Supreme Lord.

5. They intoned holy mantras and chants; their prayers went up to the lofty Gods and beyond them, to the God of Gods: to the Very Greatest One Whose Glory is measured by none.

6. Moved by their earnest devotion, the Great Ever-Living Ocean of Life sent forth a dazzling Stream of Light, like a redeeming River of Compassion, whereby the Lord of Mercy came down into the World.

7. A whirling Glow of Silver parted the Sky and lo! a mighty Orb of Light was descended from the Highest Height. A light so bright no mortal man had seen before. Even those that saw It from afar off were bedazzled and perplexed.

8. In the midst of that great Brightness the Lord of Life outshined all other lights. His sky-blue complexion was delightful and fair and His eyes shined like two Stars. A third eye, even brighter, illumined the World.

9. The Crescent Moon shined upon His radiant brow announcing the Dawning of Enlightenment. For He was the Glorious Lord of Light, the Fiery One Who has come into the World to dispel all darkness, pain and sorrow.

10. He was seated upon a royal lotus-seat with petals of blue sapphire and a middle part of gold. The Sky offered Him shelter like an azure canopy of silk whilst the Sun enveloped His head with a halo of golden rays. A threefold Bolt of Light rested in His mighty hand.

11. Thus the Great Compassionate One, the Embodiment of Beauty, Truth and Goodness, descended from the Secret Place in Heaven and appeared before His faithful devotees shining like unto the Sun as he rises over the Sea at dawn.

12. On seeing the Supreme Deity, the Three-Eyed, Moon-Crowned Lord of the Universe, the Four Quarters stood still and then trembled with Joy: Creation trembled in the Presence of its Creator.

13. Unheard-of heavenly sounds poured out of the Sky and filled the Three Worlds. All things in sight became translucent like crystal and precious gems. The whole World came alive with an inner glow of light.

14. A great gladness came into all beings' heart and their Souls rose up as high as the North Star and beyond. The Yogis made obeisance before the Lord and with joyful hearts spoke these wise words of praise.

15. There is no higher Truth than Shiva, the Universal Consciousness, Who is the Cause of all causes, Who at the beginning of Time created the World and the Gods who rule over the World. He is Eternally Higher than the highest and the One Who is worshipped by all men on Earth.

16. Hail to You, O Greatest God, O Shiva, Lord of all beings! Glory unto You, O Lord of Sages, O Master Who are worshipped by means of Knowledge of the Self!

17. You are the Soul of the Universe, You create all things by assuming a thousand forms. You are the One by Whose Power alone everything moves, O Infinite One! May You be Glorified, You Who are the Cause of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the World.

18. May Victory be Yours, O Lord of Life! You Source of Supreme Peace, All-Pervading One, Deity Whom the foremost among Yogis bow down to, Whom Mother Earth ever reveres as her Lord. Obeisance to You, Supreme God!

19. Having graciously listened to their praises, the Three-Eyed Lord Shiva, favourably disposed towards His devotees, spoke unto them with His delightful voice: O noble Sages! what good can I do to those who are perpetually immersed in the Light of Truth? How can I enlighten them?

20. On hearing those words of His, the Sages bowed down to the Eternal Lord of Life, the Very Soul of the Universe, and spoke to the Great God Who had appeared before them, graciously inclined to fulfil their every wish.

21. O Lord! by Your Grace, we lack nothing and are ever-satisfied. Yet though we know the Truth, our minds are not entirely free from doubt. We therefore seek shelter with You, the

Original Wise and Perfect One, the Unmanifest Being. For You alone have full knowledge of the highest secret teachings.

22. You are the Primal Ever-Living One Who preceded all other things. Except You, the Great Lord (Maheshvara), there is no other knower of Truth in all the Worlds. Therefore, pray dispel our doubts.

23. We desire to know, Where do all things come from? How did the World come into existence? What is the true Home of all Souls? What causes a Soul to be born and reborn into this World? What is the cause of suffering and pain? How is deliverance from sorrow attained?

24. What is the best Path in life for men to follow? What are the various planes of existence? Who is the All-Witnessing Self? What is the Highest Reality? How is Higher Knowledge attained? What are the means for gaining lasting Peace and Happiness? Kindly dispel our doubts by means of the dazzling beams of Your Eternal Glory.

25. O Lord of Unmeasured Greatness! we are your faithful devotees; with Pure Souls, we have sought refuge in You; if You be pleased with us, graciously grant us knowledge of Your Self Divine.

26. For, You Alone O Shiva! know Your Own Self. No one else does so. Therefore, deign to reveal Your Divine Self unto us.

27. O Jewel of Mercy! O Wielder of the Bolt of Light! You are the Comforter of the distressed, the Friend of the destitute, the Protector of the oppressed, the Lord of the Three Worlds. Whatever be a Soul's anxiety and pain, You offer him Salvation and make him hale again, You Who Are the Saviour of all! You are ever-gracious to those who seek refuge in You. Elevate our Souls with the nectar of Your Perfect Knowledge!

28. Bowing down to the God Whose Emblem is the Bull of Heaven, the Sages the foremost of whom was Duravasa, thus requested of the Supreme Lord.

29. The Supreme Sovereign, the God of Unmeasured Greatness, the Creator of the Universe and Lord of Yoga, illumined the World with His Radiance Divine.

30. The Lord of Life and Master of all beings, the Great One within Whom the entire Universe lies, and by Whose Power alone everything moves, the Most Compassionate One, the Greatest God, thus instructed the Sages concerning the excellent Yoga of the Self.

31. O pure ones! listen you now, with steady minds, to the knowledge of the Lord, being imparted to you that your heart may find peace.

32. Lord Shiva made the Secret Wisdom Sign (Jnana Mudra) and spoke: This Perfect Knowledge of Mine is an eternal mystery and secret. It cannot be adequately expressed. Those who follow other Paths do not know it though they may strive for it, O twice-born ones!

33. Resorting to this Perfect Knowledge, in days gone by, the first among Seekers of Truth attained unity with Truth. Having found Truth, their Souls have attained Perfection (Sampurnata) and are free from the fetters of the earthly World.

34. The Perfect Ones (Siddhas) know not delusion, nor pain, nor sorrow. For they have joined the Immortals (Amaras, the Deathless Ones) in the Firmament and shine like the Rays of the One Light. They have taken their seats among the Heavenly Guardians who ever watch over the World from on high.

35. This Knowledge which is the Secret of secrets must be carefully guarded. I shall declare it unto you who are speakers of Truth and full of devotion.

36. Listen well! In the Beginning I, the Great Life (Maha Satta) Alone Existed: the One Ever-Living, Nameless, Unfathomed Ocean of Being Who Eternally Is before all other things. Surveying My Infinite Self, I Eternally rejoiced at My Sheer Brightness and Might. It was by My Brightness that My Self was known and seen; and by My Might I established Myself as the Only Existing One (Ekam).

37. Being the One and Only, I wished in My Heart to be Many. My Thought was made firm by My Desire and was uttered as My Word of Power. Thereby what My Heart Wished was brought to pass. My Radiance spread forth into the World and filled the Skies like gemstones and gold. Thus My Divine Brightness and Might were manifested in a multitude of ways.

38. As Light is one in daytime - in the form of the Sun - and again many - shining as the Moon and Stars at night, so My Divine Radiance though being One in the Abode of Light, appears as Many in the Realm of Night.

39. For in My Abode of Light, wherein there is no darkness, the One Is Ever Awake. And Being Awake He Sees. But in the Realm of Night where all is dark, the Many are asleep. And being asleep, they see the One not but the Many. Thus while I ever Abide in the Light, the others abide in the Dark.

40. O you who are most wise! it is absence of Light that makes the One appear as the Many. When I, the Lord, conceal My All-Revealing Light, I Appear as the Many to those who abide in the Dark.

41. I Myself, however, ever See the One even behind the Veil of the Many. For I was One in the Beginning, I Am One Now, and I shall be One in the End and in All Eternity.

42. I, the One Lord, through My Play of Darkness and Light bring forth everything in sight. All created things are but sparks of My Divine Light. A part of Me, of My Infinite Self, lies hidden in all things.

43. Therefore, know all things to have an unseen inner core, an essence and a Soul that is the true nature and the life of every thing. That imperishable core, being part of My Eternal Self, has been called the Self (Atman). That very Self is the Lord of Life.

44. The Self is the True Man concealed within the body of blood, flesh and bones, and it is by nature Divine. It is absolute, pure, peaceful, subtle and eternal. It exists beyond the darkness of ignorance and beyond knowledge that is expressed in words.

45. It is the Inner Being, the Soul of the Universe, the Life-Principle, the Lord of Time, the Great Lord, the Perfect One. Though being unseen and unknown, yet He knows. For He is present everywhere and witnesses all things from within. He is the Eternal Witness of all.

46. The Universe is born of Him and in Him alone it dissolves. He is the Master of the Magic Power whereby He assumes various forms while remaining ever-unaffected and unchanged.

47. The Self is not subject to the cycle of birth and death. He is not the physical World, being neither Earth, nor Water, Fire, Wind nor Sky.

48. The Self is neither physical objects, nor the bodily frame; neither the breath, nor the mind; neither matter nor non-matter. He is neither sound, nor touch, nor colour and form, nor taste, nor smell, nor the Ego, nor yet a limited person who thinks, feels, speaks and acts.

49. O holy ones! the Self is neither a sense organ, nor the foot, neither the anus, nor the genitals. He is neither inanimate Matter, nor a living Person. In truth, the Conscious Self is neither the Breath of Life, nor the Void of sleep, nor even the Cosmic Play of Magic.

50. For all these pass away like waves upon the Sea. But the Self is the Imperishable, Changeless, Undying, Undecaying, Self-Existing, Self-Supporting Sea of Consciousness Itself. The Changeless Witness of all that passes.

51. This World consists of the five senses, hearing, seeing and the rest. The One Supreme Self is different from this even as light is different from darkness. As shade and light are different from each other in this World, so indeed the material World and the Self-Luminous Self are different.

52. Were the Self to be in any way soiled or impure, created and changeable, it could never become Perfect even in hundreds of lifetimes. Nor would there be any escape from that which is imperfect.

53. The Awakened Ones perceive their Perfect Self as intrinsically free from defects or change, free from the pairs of opposites such as light and darkness, cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They realise that the Self is eternally blissful and unchanging.

54. Such thoughts as, I am doing this or that, I am happy or unhappy, I am slender or stout and the like, are created by the mind of incognizant folk and superimposed upon the Perfect Self.

55. Having created a thought, through repetition man identifies therewith and believes himself to be that, regardless of his true nature. O Sages of broad understanding! Man is called Man (Manu) because he is determined by his Mind (Manas). Verily, what Man thinks, that he becomes. Under the influence of material existence, the Self who is by birth a God, thinks himself to be a Man, and a Man he at last becomes.

56. Elevating himself by noble thoughts, he becomes again Divine. Remembering Me, the All-Source, he and I are Reunited. For, all things come from Me and to Me they shall return. This is the Eternal Law (Sanatana Dharma).

57. Truly, those who know the Truth declare that the Self is the All-Witness, beyond the Sphere of Matter. It is the Universal Enjoyer, deathless, omnipresent, perfect and ever-free.

58. Hence, all embodied beings remain subject to worldly existence as a result of ignorance (avidya), which is not knowing the Truth. Due to ignorance and wrong knowledge, Reality is confused with Matter.

59. As a deluded king who believes himself to be a ploughman takes to ploughing a delimited field when the whole wide World is his, even so, though the ever-shining, self-luminous Self is immensely vast and all-pervading, due to the thoughtlessness and lack of discernment of the unawakened mind, man believes himself to be a limited, individual thing and lives a diminutive life.

60. The Sages realise that the Self is Uncreated, Unborn, Formless, Self-Existing, Changeless, Eternal and Pure, whilst Matter is Created, Born, Many-Formed, Dependent On The Self, Ever-Changing, Transient and Tainted. But the ignorant, immersed in worldly existence like a man enmeshed in a dream, sees nothing but Matter and believes that to be the Supreme. Thus, the Self, though pure, changeless and perfect, has the qualities of Matter attributed to It, by association.

61. Deceived by the deluded mind, the ignorant does not comprehend that his own Self is in reality the imperishable Ultimate, the Perfect One. Thus he confuses the Self with the not-Self and the not-Self with the Self. He knows not what is Real and what is only a Dream. Ignorant of what is good and what is evil, he shuns what is right and craves what is wrong. Hence he suffers like a man whose mind is overcome by delusion.

62. Verily from lack of Awareness, there arises Self-forgetfulness. From that springs wrong knowledge. From wrong knowledge comes greed, lust, envy, hatred and other defects of the mind. Moreover, man reaps the fruits of his own actions. And actions are done according to his knowledge. Therefore, the performance of actions that spring from wrong knowledge is the greatest defect of all.

63. It is due to this cause that men are invested with different kinds of physical bodies and minds. For, one is born with a body and mind that correspond to the inner latent tendencies one has developed in a previous existence. All bodies are born of mind. And the mind is nothing but the light of the Soul tinted by latent tendencies acquired in the past. Therefore, know that whatsoever corporeal form a Soul assumes in this life or the next, the same will reflect his mental state, even as the light that passes through a coloured gem (assumes that very colour).

64. Verily, this is a matter a million times true: whether in this World or the next, in Heaven or on Earth, whatever comes to pass in the Three Worlds, know that there is a meaning and a reason to all things. The World was not created in vain but with a purpose. And so it is with all other things: in every thing there is a sign that teaches man a hidden secret.

65. This is known to Me, the Wise One Who See all things from Above and to those (the Yogis) who dwell in Unity with Me but not to any others. For, the others, being as if asleep and ever immersed in vain thoughts, even if the Truth were shown them, they would see It not.

66. Therefore, let all those who yearn after knowledge of the Truth listen to My Word of Truth that they may see the Truth. For, only by seeing the Truth shall their Souls find Peace and never otherwise.

67. Truth is the remedy for all sorrows: It frees the Soul from the burdens of the World. By hearing the Truth, bound Souls remember their Self. Remembering the Self, they know that as air is present both within and without a jar, so the Self, being Omnipresent, lies both concealed within oneself, and pervades everywhere without. It is eternal, free and ever-stainless.

68. Although It is One, It appears as Many through Its Magic Power and not due to Its inherent nature. For this reason, the Knowers of Truth bear witness that the Truth is One (Satyam Ekam).

69. As the Sky does not become soiled through contact with clouds and the Sun is ever untouched by darkness, even so the various activities of the mind such as thoughts, feelings or sense perceptions, do not affect the Perfect Self. Only the mind and the body, being by nature imperfect, are affected thereby.

70. As a pure crystal shines by virtue of its own lustre, as the Sun shines unaided by any lamp, as the Lightning blazes across the Sky independently of man-made fire, even so does the pure Self shine independently of any conditioning cause.

71. Wise men regard this Universe as being made of knowledge. For it arises from the waves of thought dancing upon the surface of the Ocean of Universal Consciousness. That Great Intelligence Which is Boundless and Radiant Beyond Measure, fashions thought from Its rays of light. Thought gives rise to perceptions; and perceptions make up the objects of the World.

72. Thus men of Higher Vision know that the World is made of Knowledge. Yet the dim-sighted see it as nothing but physical matter and objects. Their vision being faulty and blunt, they see not beyond the surface. Verily, the Self or Spirit is by nature changeless, omnipresent Consciousness, beyond material attributes. But it is held to be insentient matter by men of wrong knowledge. For only the Perfect Ones can see what is Perfect.

73. As the pure crystal when in contact with a red object like the seeds of the Gunja-berry appears to be red, or a looking-glass appears to take the shape of the objects reflected therein, even so the Great Being is perceived in the form of objects though remaining distinct from, and unaffected by, the same. As sunlight shines in many colours as it passes through a shower of rain, so the Great Lord (Maheshvara) appears as this many-formed World when seen through the eyes of mortal men. Verily, the World is He and nothing else. This is the Truth and the Good Tidings that I Myself bring unto the World.

74. They who know this shall be safely guided to the Abode of That Which Ever Is. But the others shall abide in darkness. Verily you who have seen My Divine Self are very fortunate indeed! In My Visible Form you have a Sign from the Unseen that you may know His Glory and follow His Will. But those who have seen Me not, will be troubled by doubt and in their anguish will ask, My Lord, how may we know that the Divine Self *Is*? Now of these, there are three kinds, the stubborn and the proud that doubt My Word and seek to try you; the thoughtful that yearn for a reasoned answer; and the believers who desire to have their faith confirmed.

75. Say to the stubborn and proud: O you of little faith! life on Earth lasts but a moment. Before you know it, you are overcome by Death. Of this there can be no doubt. If, at the end of your life you find that there is no Afterlife and no God, then you shall have no reason for concern. For, he that no longer is, has no concerns. But if at the end of this life you find that there is an Afterlife and a God, then you shall be overcome by remorse. Thus you shall cry, Alas! would that I had not come hither unprepared. For, you will go to an unknown place unprepared, like a fool who sets off upon a long journey with no provisions and no knowledge of the land he is bound for. Therefore, beware! do not knowingly walk in the footsteps of fools. Think not that your knowledge is faultless and that there is no one above you whose knowledge is best. You have been forewarned.

76. Say to the thinking man: Do you believe in Love, Beauty and Joy? Do you believe in Truth, Justice and Goodness? If so, then you believe in God. For God *Is* Truth, Goodness and Beauty. He *Is* also the Force that drives man to seek, and empowers him to appreciate and enjoy, these things. Verily, God is all that and much more beside. If all this is, then God *Is*, too. Open your eyes and see! Up there, the Sun, the Moon and the shining Stars forever mark the day and night, the fortnight, the month, the seasons, the year and the space of many years. From the smallest atom to the Universe itself, all is established in Perfect Harmony and Order. Say, could all this be without a Wise Creator?

77. Furthermore, how does a new-born babe know how to suck at his mother's breast? and who taught the weaver-bird the art of building handsome nests? who teaches the duckling how to swim and the diver to dive in search of fish? who tells bird, insect and beast when and how to go to far-off places where they have never been before? how do a myriad ants in their nest, a flock of thousand birds and a shoal of countless fish all move without hindering each other, all as if one, and all in peace? How, indeed, if not by the Power of the Mighty One, the Lord Who lives in all things and upon Whom all things depend even as a kingdom rests upon a mighty king? Assuredly, there is a clear sign in all this.

78. But if you cannot see, then at least believe. Faith is the Guide and the Light of him that cannot see. And believing, you shall be guided and not go astray. Therefore, let those who are without sight follow the guidance of one who is wise. Verily, there is time both before and behind the present moment. Likewise, there is life before this life just as there was a life behind it. For life is neverending. That from Which all life comes is the Great Life, the Great Lord Who Ever *Is*. From Him we bring you this Revelation that you may know His Truth and follow His Will. Those who believe shall have nothing to fear in this life nor in the next.

79. And unto the believer, say: All life comes from the Lord, the Great Life. You, a living Soul, are but a Spark from that Great Light. Look deep into your heart and you shall find all that you seek. Verily, the Soul is the keeper of all great secrets. In the silence of your heart, listen to the Soul's whisper. He will enlighten you with Wisdom and Truth, whereas the mind only confounds you with its imaginations, delusions and its doubts.

80. Speak the plain Truth unto all men who wish to know and let the unbelievers go their own way. But by those who are Seekers of Perfection, the Self shall ever be worshipped, meditated upon and heard about as being Ever-Existing, Stainless, Unchanged, All-Pervading, Perfect and Free.

81. The Light Whereby both Day and Night are seen, Which sees Itself and all other things, Which depends on none other but Itself, That, O you who are most wise! is the Light of Consciousness, the Great Unseen.

82. Him Who is the Constant among the inconstant, the Intelligence among intelligences, the One among the many, the Unseen among the seen, Who grants all desires, Whom Yogis perceive as abiding in themselves, by knowing Him and not otherwise one attains Eternal Peace.

83. When by means of Yoga man comes to perceive nothing but Consciousness everywhere, he becomes a Perfect Knower of the Self. He abides in the Self and abiding Therein he *knows* It like unto his own self. When he perceives all living beings as abiding in the Self and the Self in all living beings, he realises the Supreme.

84. Having realised the Highest, the Soul abides in the state of Unified Consciousness (Samadhi), wherein he perceives not the multitude of living beings but only the One. Then he is One with the Supreme Self and has attained the state of Absolute Being.

85. When the Soul has perceived the Truth, all the passions that cleave to the heart drop off, and having become pure, he attains Perfection. Verily, he acquires a living body of light and becomes an Immortal in this very life. When he realises the whole diversity of living things as existing in the One and as born of that One, he attains the Highest.

86. When he sees the Absolute Self as a real experience, and the entire Universe as immaterial like an illusion, he experiences the Highest Bliss (Paramananda).

87. When one attains Perfect Knowledge of the Supreme Being (Para Satta), the Sole Remedy for the sorrows of birth, old age and all kinds of ailments, he becomes One with Shiva, the Lord of those who are Perfect.

88. Just as rivers large and small merge with the Ocean and become one with it, even so the Soul becomes one with the Deathless and Unblemished Reality.

89. As the diverse sweet juices are extracted from different flowers and mingled into honey by a bee, even so the Souls human and Divine are indistinguishably United with each other: as a Cloud joining another Cloud, as Water joining Water, and a Flame joining another Flame.

90. Verily, there is nothing in the Three Worlds save God, Soul and Mind. When the Mind has been stilled, Soul and God alone remain. When Soul is no longer distracted by Mind, he sees God face to face and is lost in His Infinite Embrace.

91. Therefore, Knowledge of the Supreme alone exists. Neither the World nor its existence is real by comparison. This fact is known to the Enlightened Ones in Heaven whose names are established among the Radiant Stars.

92. However, in this World, Perfect Knowledge lies in a shroud of ignorance as a lump of gold is covered in dirt and as the Sun is shrouded in clouds. Those who possess not the Perfect Knowledge of Yoga, are deluded and led astray by ignorance which is knowledge imperfect, defective and false.

93. Perfect Knowledge is without defect, subtle, free from doubts and ever-changeless. Everything else is imperfect knowledge (Ajnana). The thorough realisation of this is called Perfect Knowledge (Vijnana).

94. This, O noble ones! is the Teaching of the Insight into Reality which is called Excellent Knowledge. It is the essence of all Spiritual Teachings. The practice of Yoga is the single-minded concentration upon this Knowledge.

95. Knowledge is born of Yoga and Yoga is established by means of Knowledge. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by one who is endowed with both Yoga and Knowledge.

96. That which is attained by means of Yoga is also attained through Spiritual Knowledge. Therefore, he who sees Spiritual Knowledge and Yoga as one, sees things as they really are.

97. O you foremost among the faithful! other men being attached to material lordship, become engrossed in various activities conducive to such aims. So also, those whose intellects are impaired and dull. When physical life comes to an end, however, one who possesses Spiritual Knowledge and Yoga shall attain to the great and pure Lordship of Heaven which is honoured by all.

98. I Myself am that Great Lord (Maheshvara), Whose Lordship is attainable through Yoga. I am the Unseen Master of the Cosmic Magic (Maya), the Greatest God. I am glorified in the true Scriptures as the Self of all and having faces in all directions. I am the Perfect One Who See all things from Above, the Witness of all that passes.

99. I hold within Me all forms, flavours, fragrances and sounds. I am free from old age and death. I have hands and feet all around. I can reach where birds do not fly. I am the eternal Soul of all things. Without hand or foot I am swift and can grasp. I abide in the heart of all. I can see even without eyes and hear without ears. I perceive all hidden secrets from within. I am the Witness of all.

100. Though I know all these, no one knows Me. The Seers of Truth alone know Me as the One, Unique, Great Being. Only Sages endowed with perfect sight see the true nature of the Self. They see the excellent and immaculate Lordship of the Formless One. For only the Perfect Ones can see what is Supremely Perfect.

101. Now something else is to be understood by those who yearn to know the Truth. For there will be some among the mortals who will ask, If the Lord is Unseen, Formless and the rest, how then can He rule this World? Therefore listen you to the plain Truth. I rule the World by Dharma, the World-Supporting Law Eternal. Dharma is My Divine Power Supreme. From That all other Laws and Powers flow even as rays spring from the Sun.

102. Because It holds the Universe together and keeps all things under Its Sway, yoked as it were unto My Will, It is also called Yoga Bala (Power and Law of Unity) by the wise. As the unseen Wind, descending down from the Sky, moves trees and other things on Earth, so I, the Unseen Lord by means of My Power Divine animate and rule the World from My Secret Abode On High. I see and hold dominion over all things from beyond the sphere of the Cosmic Magic that renders Me Invisible to man even as a cloud enshrouds the Sun.

103. By means of this exalted Knowledge the Yogis who are My faithful devotees enter My Innermost, Omnipresent Heart and being Illumined by the Light of Truth, abide in Perfect Unity (Samyoga) with Me.

104. Having traversed the sphere of My Magic Work that constitutes the Universe of forms, they attain the great and pure Nirvana, the Extinction of all Cravings and all Sorrows, and join Me in My Everlasting Bliss. Graced by My Favour, they need not return to worldly existence even in millions of Ages.

105. O you who outshine the Stars! this is what I, the Lord and Author of all true Gospels, here declare. Those that follow My Word are rightly guided. But those that do not, shall go astray forever wandering in the darkness of Illusion. I, the Enlightener of the Three Worlds, have revealed the Truth that has been hidden.

106. Let this Secret Teaching be taught to those who are broad of understanding. Let it be imparted to one's own sons, disciples and those that believe in the Unseen, only. For, those whose understanding is narrow and defective will understand when the time has come for them to understand and not a moment before.

107. The Truth of God is beyond the reach of a mortal's mind. It can only be grasped by a pure heart in deep contemplation. Therefore, do not reject My Revelation for It is the Light that reveals the Road to Perfection. Follow what you understand and leave the deepest Mysteries to those amongst you who are Wise. As a child at first drinks only milk but gradually takes solid food, just so even the dullest mind shall understand the Highest Truth in the course of time.

108. The Perfect Knowledge which is Yoga-based Insight into Reality has been proclaimed by Me for the attainment of Perfection. It is the Great Rosary of Truth whereby Great Sages ascend to the Abode of Light that ever Is and ever Shines.

Commentary to Chapter One

This Holiest of all Scriptures begins with a dedication to Lord Shiva (God) Who is the Supreme Spiritual Teacher. Shiva is God, the Supreme Principle of Goodness. He is called the Most Glorious because He is the Source Light of all lights, because He dispels all darkness by illumining everything with His Unsurpassed Radiance and Glory, and because all Scriptural Revelations are Rays of His Infinite Light. (In the Sanskrit language Illumination and Revelation are expressed by the same word.) He is called the Most Obvious because the whole World is a Manifestation of His Glory and is perceived as such by those who are endowed with Spiritual Sight: everything we see is only the Light of God and nothing else. He is called the Highest God because He is the Supreme Divine Being. He is called Lord and Master of the Universe as well as Lord (Ishvara) or Supreme Lord (Parameshvara) because as the Supreme Being He is the Support and Ground of all things. In consequence, everything depends upon Him in the same way as a kingdom depends upon the King. He is called Supreme Spiritual Teacher (Parameshthi Guru) because all Spiritual Teachings come from Him and because He alone can impart the Highest Teachings. He is called Lord of Yoga because He is the Divine Author of the Original Revelation of the Glorious Yoga Path to Enlightenment, because He is the Supreme Teacher of Yoga, and because Yoga functions by His Power alone. He is called Lord of Unity because He holds all things in the Universe together and joins what has been separated, by His Power of Unity. The words, In the Name of Shiva, mean that His Secret Teaching (Shiva Rahasya) is now being revealed to the World at His Divine Command. A teaching can only be properly understood and assimilated if it is received with an open and receptive mind. This is even more so in the case of Spiritual Teaching. The Glorious Journey to Enlightenment can only begin if we allow the Light of God to touch our heart and awaken us to the Spiritual Life. The correct frame of mind is therefore established by means of a brief prayer for guidance in life and in correctly understanding the Divine Word. This having been done, the First Chapter is announced as the Light of God Which is being sent into the World by means of His Secret Teaching for the Upliftment of Mankind. This Teaching is Secret for three reasons: (1) in its original form it exists in the Heart of God which is known to Him alone; (2) it is Secret because in accordance with God's Plan it was originally revealed to a limited number of Souls; and (3) it is Secret because only by following this path, the Divine Path of Yoga, can a human being fully understand and experience the Truth revealed in it. This Secret Teaching is symbolised by the Mystical Sound Om. Om (pronounced as aum) represents the Unmanifest Sound that exists as an inaudible vibration in the Heart of God and which contains in itself all other sounds, audible and inaudible. It is the original creative movement from which all other activities, mental, verbal and physical,

arise. As the Bible puts it, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Scriptures of Ancient India similarly speak of "Highest Heaven wherein Speech abideth" (Rig Veda, Book I, 164:33) and stress the fact that God is Consciousness or Intelligence Which expresses Itself as Creative Sound, the "Command of God" whereby the World came into being. Thus the Shiva Rahasya is introduced as the Eternal Word of God made audible for the benefit of Mankind. As related in the Shiva Purana (The Ancient Gospel Of Shiva), Sage Vyasa was invested by Shiva Himself with the knowledge and power to record and disseminate the Scriptures for the benefit of the World. These Spiritual Records which are also known as Akashic Records (Akasha Lekha, from Akasha, Astral or Celestial Region) are kept safe for future generations on the Higher, or Akashic, Planes. They represent the Original Revelation of which all Scriptures known on Earth are mere man-made copies or imitations. Rishi Vyasa is now reciting The Secret Teaching Of Shiva, which is the Highest Spiritual Teaching, at the request of His Divine Holiness Mahaguru Shri Soma-Natha Maharaj Dev as It was originally revealed by the Supreme Lord and recorded in the Akashic Records.

4. *Of yore*: Of former times or, more precisely, at the beginning of the current World Age, that is to say just over five thousand years ago (3,102 BC). It is noteworthy that in the Maya tradition of Ancient Central America, the current World Age is said to have begun at approximately the same time (3,114 BC). Similarly, Judaism reckons the creation of the World to have occurred in 3,761 BC. Although it is clear that the World itself was created long before that, this chronological concordance between the various traditions of the World constitutes evidence that some important event must have taken place around that time, marking the beginning of a new era in the history of Mankind. There are four such eras of which the present one is the last.

6. *Moved by their earnest devotion, the Great Ever-Living Ocean of Life sent forth a dazzling Stream of Light, like a redeeming River of Compassion, whereby the Lord of Mercy came down into the World*: Two things become evident from this verse. First, that God does respond to human prayer, albeit at such time and in such manner as He alone deems fit. Second, that God, although ordinarily unseen to human eyes, does directly manifest Himself from time to time. Indeed, all religions teach that the Unseen can make Himself visible to man in human form: in the Pagan Tradition of Ancient Greece, Zeus often appears to humans in various shapes and forms; in Judaism, Yahweh appears as an Old Man; in Christianity, God appears as Jesus; in Islam, Allah appears as a human-like Angel. Says the Bible: "And above the Firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness of a man. This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1:26-28); "And the Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John, 1:13). And in the Quran God Says: "We sent Our Spirit in the semblance of a full-grown man" (19:18). Similarly, in Yoga, Shiva manifests Himself as a Yoga Master Who makes the Truth known to the World. The 5th century Svachchanda Bhairava Tantra (The Revelation Of The Tremendous Freedom God) explains: "Eternal God Shiva (Sada Shiva), God Incarnate, manifests Himself as both Master and disciple for the purpose of bringing to the World the Revelation of Truth in the form of questions and answers". This solves an important problem that often arises in the mind of Spiritually inexperienced readers: how can Shiva or God, as a Higher Intelligence existing outside relative reality, instruct a human being who lives in a World that is patently subject to the laws of time and space? Or, differently put, how can God descend to the level of Humanity? The answer is simple enough. Since everything is created by, and has its existence within, the All-Inclusive Universal Consciousness, all genuine Spiritual Revelation necessarily takes place on the impulse and through the medium of that very (All-Pervading) Consciousness Itself. Of course, Lord Shiva or His Power does not assume here a body of flesh and blood but one of Spirit with human-like appearance.

15. *There is no higher Truth than Shiva:* This verse is also found in the Shiva Purana (Vay. Sam., I, 35:25) where it is said: There is no higher Truth than Shiva, Who is the Cause of all causes, the Creator of all Gods, and Who is the Lord beyond all attributes. All Spiritual traditions teach that there are three basic Levels of Existence (or Worlds) which are inhabited by three distinct classes of beings: (1) The Supreme Plane - inhabited by the Supreme Being or God Who created all the other Worlds. (2) The Celestial Plane - inhabited by Spiritual Beings of Light. These are of two kinds: Gods, Angels or Radiant Ones (Devas) who were present on the Celestial Plane from the Beginning of Creation, and Awakened, Enlightened or Perfected Souls (Buddhas, Yogis, Siddhas) who elevated themselves to that Plane through Spiritual Practice and by the Grace of God. And (3) The Terrestrial Plane - inhabited by ordinary, Spiritually unawakened humans. The only difference between Eastern Traditions (Yoga, Hinduism, Buddhism) and Western Traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) is that while in the East Celestial Beings are known as Gods, in the West they are called Angels. Yet even this distinction did not originally exist and must be regarded as a later, artificial development. The older portions of the Bible (the "Old Testament"), for example, speak of the Supreme God as ruling over other Gods: "God stands in the Congregation of the Mighty; He judges among the Gods" (Psalms 82:1). However, irrespective of what the Scriptures call them, the Gods (or Angels) are universally recognised as the Creation of the Supreme Being. Says the Quran: "All praise is due to God, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, the Maker of the Angels" (35:1). Exactly the same teachings are found in the earlier, Eastern Scriptures. Thus, the Rig Veda declares: "In the beginning shined the Source of Light, the One Lord of all created beings. He established and supports this Earth and Heaven. Giver of the vital breath, of strength and vigour, He Whose Commands all the Gods acknowledge. The Lord of Life, He is the God of Gods, and none beside Him. What other God shall we adore with our oblation?" (X, 121:1-10). And in the Bhagavat-Gita, God says: "I am the Source and origin of the Gods (Devas) and Great Sages (Maharshis)" (10:2). In Yoga, the Gods (or Angels) are referred to by the title of Devas (Radiant Ones) - which is related to Latin Deus (God) - because they were the beings to be created first and therefore are direct emanations of the Supreme Intelligence or Light of God. As such they are properly called Divine Beings as opposed to humans who were created after the Gods and who are not ordinarily aware of their Divine Origin. As in the Western traditions, Yoga and other Eastern faiths teach that the Gods (or Angels) can sometimes descend upon Earth without being recognised by humans. All this clearly demonstrates the truth of the age-old Yogic teaching that there is, in fact, just One Original and Eternal Revelation that has been variously interpreted by different traditions down the centuries.

23. *We desire to know, Where do all things come from? etc.:* This series of questions must not be interpreted as implying ignorance on the part of the enquirer. Sages (lit., Rishis, God-Seers) are beings who by means of Spiritual Insight are quite capable of directly perceiving the Truth. This is already acknowledged by Shiva Himself Who, in verse 19, asks: "O noble Sages! What good can I do to those who are perpetually immersed in the Light of Truth?". These are therefore rhetorical questions whereby information is solicited not for the enquirer (who already knows the answer) but for the benefit of the audience who in accordance with the Divine Plan is to be now instructed in the Truth.

31. *Pure ones:* Sage Vyasa addresses those who with a pure heart, that is, with sincerity, enquire into the Highest Truth. In this case, Yogi Soma-Natha and, by extension, any other genuine listeners are meant. For the correct understanding of these questions and answers see Commentary to verses 6 and 23.

32. *Twice-born ones:* Man is said to be born twice, first, when he comes into this World and, second, when he is initiated into the Teachings Of Shiva. The title of Twice-Born indicates that

the Sages or God-Seers are beings who have already been initiated into the Highest Spiritual Truths.

42. *All created things are but sparks of My Divine Light:* One of the most important questions that an intelligent person can ask is: how was the World created or, in different terms, what is the World made from? The older, Eastern Traditions of Yoga, Hinduism and Buddhism say that the World was made out of the Creator Himself. The World therefore consists of the same substance as the Creator (that is, Intelligence or Consciousness). By contrast, the newer, Western Traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam maintain that the World is made out of nothing. How can these two apparently contradictory views be reconciled? First, we must understand that there is a difference between what people believe and what Scripture says. Second, a further distinction must be made between what Scripture appears to be saying and what it really says on closer examination. In the case of the Eastern view (Creation out of the Creator), the situation is very clear. The Eastern Scriptures say that "All this was born of God", "God became all this", etc., and this is also interpreted as such by their followers. In the case of the Western view (Creation out of Nothing) the situation is more complicated. The fact is that neither the Jewish, nor the Christian, nor the Muslim Scriptures actually say that the World was created from nothing. Strictly speaking, Nothing means no-thing, that is to say, an inconceivable "something" that is non-existent. And if it doesn't exist, then it has no substance, no value, no meaning, and nothing whatsoever can be said about it, let alone create things from it. If we were to accept - for the sake of argument - that God created the World out of Nothing, this would mean that the Nothing existed prior to the World in which case the question arises as to whether the Nothing (a) has always existed or (b) was only created prior to the Creation of the World. If (a), then it must be Eternal. But this cannot be since the only Eternal Reality is God. If (b), then it must be explained how or *from what* the Nothing was created. Was it created from another Nothing, perhaps? If so, where did that other, earlier Nothing come from? Thus the proponent of Nothing drives himself into a corner from where there is no escape. He must either openly admit defeat and accept the fact that the World is God's Own Projection or Extension into manifest existence, or he may attempt to avoid defeat by interpreting "from Nothing" as intended to mean a stage at which nothing was yet created. However, this interpretation would refer only to a state of being prior to Creation without describing *the substance* from which the World was created. Hence it does not constitute proof for the purposes of our investigation. In short, the Out-of-Nothing position is untenable and it must be admitted that the World cannot have been created from Nothing but must have been created from Something. All we need to establish is what that Something is. There are two conditions that must be fulfilled in this process. First, the investigation must be conducted on the basis of Scriptural evidence and second, the result must be acceptable to rational people. Beginning with the first condition, we may observe that all major religions or their Scriptures, admit that (1) in the beginning, God alone existed and (2) everything comes from God. Now, if nothing else existed apart from God (not even the Nothing discussed above) then He must have created the World out of Himself. To say that the World was created from something other than God, would give rise to a whole string of problems of which we may enumerate a few: (1) it would demand an explanation as to what that Something is, where it comes from, what are its attributes, etc.; (2) it would amount to denying the Unity of Life; (3) it would force God to assume a limited position to make place for a second Reality; (4) it would make God dependent on external factors and undermine His Omnipotence; (5) it would make the Creation fundamentally different from God and hence incapable of experiencing Unity with the Creator. And last, but not least, such a position would contradict the Scriptures and thereby disqualify itself as Scriptural teaching. On the other hand, if we admit that the World was indeed created by God out of Himself, then the following will happen: (1) we will remain true to the evidence of Scripture; (2) we will be true to the Unity of Life; (3) we will be true to the Supremacy and Omnipotence of God; (4) we will be true to Reason which was given to us by

God for the purpose of finding Truth; (5) we will rest assured that, being consubstantial with, or essentially of the same substance as, God we are capable of experiencing Unity with Him. Finally, we will establish harmony between all the various religions of the World. All this would be a formidable accomplishment indeed, and an unparalleled contribution to Unity and Peace on Earth! We have already observed that nowhere do the Scriptures state that God created the World out of Nothing. So let us see what the Scriptures really say. Says the Bible: "God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John, 1:5); "All things were made by Him; and there was nothing without (outside of, beside) Him. In Him was Life and the Life was the light of men" (John 1:3-4). The Essenes of Qumran, an important faith originated in pre-Christian Palestine with close links to Christianity, taught that: "From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be" (The Community Rule, IQS 3,15). The Bible says: "All things are of Him and through Him and for Him" (Rom. 11:36). The Quran: "All things in Heaven and on Earth are from Him and to Him all things return" (3:109); "Whichever way you turn there is the Face of God: He is Omnipresent and All-Knowing" (2:115). And again the Bible: "There is but One God, the Father (Creator), from Whom are all things and we in Him" (1 Cor. 8:6); "In Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16-17) ; "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts. 17:28), etc. The great puzzle which is Mankind's diverse religious heritage begins to fall into place when all the key passages in the various Scriptures are put together to form a harmonious whole! That God created the World out of Himself is even more clearly expressed in the Scriptures of the Ancient Egyptians, where it is said: "I am a Spirit who came into being and was created out of the Body of God, I am one of the Gods who dwell in the sunshine, whom God created from His Own Flesh (that is, out of Himself)", etc. (The Chapters of Coming-forth by Day). Since the Egyptian is the oldest among Western traditions, it is also the closest to the Original Revelation which today is most faithfully represented by the Eastern (Indian) faiths, having only survived in a diluted and often misinterpreted form in the West. This Original Revelation teaches that God created the World out of Himself, there being nothing else beside Him. The fact is that God is Light: the Light of Knowledge, of Consciousness, of Intelligence. And there is nothing else beside. Since we are created out of that Light, this means that Man and the World are consubstantial with God, that is, consisting of essentially the same substance as God. Are we not intelligent beings and the Creation of the One Supreme Intelligence? We are lights from the Light of God. Or, as our verse declares, we are "sparks from the Divine Light". The Scriptures of Ancient Egypt likewise say: "I am a Great One, the son of a Great One, I am a Flame, the son of a Flame. I indeed am the Great God, Lord of Eternity". Again, since nothing exists apart from the Light of God, it follows that all created things come into being, exist and pass away, *within* that Light. Is God not Omnipresent? Is He not everywhere? Wherever we look, there is God, manifested as a multitude of things. This position is in full agreement with Eastern traditions such as Yoga, Hinduism and Buddhism which teach the Unity and essential Identity of Man, World and God. As we have just shown, it is also in agreement with the Scriptures of the Western faiths. Those who claim that God created the World out of Nothing or from a substance other than Himself or that we exist somewhere outside of God, contradict not only reason but also their own Scriptures and create problems that are as unnecessary as they are impossible to solve. Now the purpose of true religion is not to create problems but to solve them. And this is exactly what Yoga with its insistence on Absolute Unity does. Even modern Science is beginning to accept the essential Unity of everything. Indeed, Reality can only be known from the perspective of Unity. A divisive, fragmentary perspective can only result in fragmentary knowledge of Reality. Therefore, the perspective of Unity alone enables us to correctly understand all religious traditions of the World and recognise the One Eternal Truth behind their superficial differences. The Unitive Perspective of Yoga even makes sense of the Western Creation-out-of-Nothing view. From the perspective of Yoga, this view simply represents a corruption of the Yogic teaching of Emptiness which says that the state immediately preceding Creation was Emptiness (Shunyata): in the same way as a lake without fish and other forms of visible life may be said to be empty even though it is full of water, or as a

hall may be said to be empty (of people and objects) even though it is full of light and air, or as the human mind may be said to be empty prior to the conception of a thought even though it is full of intelligence, that is, the power to know and to think, so also the Universe prior to Creation may be said to be empty of created things even though it is full of the Light of God. In Yoga, Emptiness has another sense also, namely, that from the perspective of God the World is empty of things other than Himself Who experiences all things as One with Himself and hence "empty" or devoid of separate existence. An admission to this fact is found even in the Western Scriptures such as the Bible, where it is said that in the beginning, "the Earth was without form and empty" (Genesis 1:1). This apparent Emptiness when incorrectly understood can give rise to the negative and erroneous notion of Nothing. In reality, there is no such thing as a Nothing out of which the World could have been Created. Finally, the expression Out of Nothing can also be taken metaphorically as an illustration of God's Infinite Power and a reminder of the creature's absolute dependence upon Him: Creation is Nothing without the Creator. This is a fact which nobody can reasonably deny. We have thus demonstrated that all religious traditions agree with the Teachings of Yoga or, if they disagree, then it is entirely due to their incomplete or incorrect understanding of the Original Truth.

48. *The Self is neither physical objects, nor the bodily frame; neither the breath, nor the mind, etc.:* Everyday experience consists of changes we register in things that are outside of us such as trees, mountains and people; in things that are close to us such as the physical body; and in things that are part of our inner being, such as emotions and thoughts. Now, every experience of change requires a changeless element or standard of experience to which any perceived changes are referred. Changes perceived as taking place in some external object, for example, a tree moving in the wind or fruit, leaves, etc., falling off a tree, can only arise with reference to some changeless background such as a lawn, a mountain or the Sky, against which the so changing or moving object is perceived. Similarly, changes in our body such as movement can only be observed against a motionless background such as the Earth, a wall, a mirror or the Sky, or again, the movement of a bodily part against the background of the body itself. This much is clear. But how are other, more subtle, changes such as losing or gaining weight, or growing older, being perceived? How do we register change in our emotions or thoughts? We can only do this by referring them to an inner, changeless principle against the background of which such changes are perceived. Moreover, the same changeless principle, apart from providing us with a standard of reference, also provides us with the capacity to memorise, that is, store within ourselves past experiences. Indeed, facts of experience tell us that there is something within us that has the capacity to hold within itself impressions of past experiences, consciously retrieve and build them into a coherent image, and refer such a recollected and remembered image or collection of images, to what is being perceived or experienced in the present. Thus we have established that the awareness of some things changing colour, shape, position in time and space, and so on, presupposes the existence of a changeless principle against the background of which such changes are observed, and to which they must be referred in order for us to experience them as such. We have also established that this changeless principle or entity is responsible for the phenomenon of memory upon which everyday experience and life depend. Furthermore, the fact is that: (a) some people remember events that took place prior to this present life and (b) from earliest childhood, all humans display certain characteristics that amount to individual personality the formation of which presupposes memory and experience. Which implies that the remembering entity must have already existed prior to the conception and birth of the physical body so as to have developed a distinct personality. And, since nobody remembers not existing first and then coming into being at a later point, we may safely conclude that the conscious entity within us, who is responsible for awareness, intelligence and memory, must not only be *changeless* as discussed above, but also *eternal*. Having, therefore, established the existence of this changeless, eternal (or ever-existing) Self or Soul, we may direct our efforts at gaining a

direct experience thereof. Knowing that, on account of our everyday dealings with transient, impermanent things and experiences we have come to habitually identify with these and have thereby subjected ourselves to a process of self-forgetfulness and self-limitation, we must return to the experience of ourselves as changeless, ever-living Souls by temporarily eliminating from our field of experience those elements that are "Not-Self" (Anatma), that is to say, everything that is not so changeless and eternal as the Self is, in the same way as, for example, we remove impurities such as dead leaves, algae etc., from the surface of a lake that we may see ourselves reflected in its mirror-like water. Indeed, although ordinarily we are only vaguely aware of it, the Self is always present in the background of our existence, as the true witness and agent of all our experiences and actions, as is evident from expressions such as "I am aware", "I understand", "I remember", "I know", "I am capable", "I am doing this" etc., in which the activity of experiencing or doing something is automatically referred to the conscious entity ("I") in the background. Moreover, through Yogic training such as logical reasoning, concentration and meditation, we can actually experience it as our Higher, Divine Self. The first step in this process of Awakening is the realisation that none of the things that are objectively perceived such as objects, body, sense perceptions and the rest, are the Self, for they all are subject to change. Even our awareness of them changes, whereas the Self, as we know, is ever-unchanging. Again, to be aware of the fact that our awareness of things changes, there must be an intelligence there that is permanent and unchanging. Awareness, therefore, may be said to be of two kinds: the awareness we have of the object or objects we perceive; and the awareness each of us has of himself as a conscious subject. While the objective (object-centred) awareness changes from one object or change in one object, to another, the subjective (subject-centred) awareness is as changeless as the subject itself. This is why every conscious being is (to various degrees) aware of itself as a conscious, changeless and ever-present entity in the background of all other experiences (such as thoughts, feelings, sense perceptions, body and other physical objects). The physical body clearly undergoes changes and so do our sense perceptions, feelings, thoughts and actions. But it is always the same original, changeless Self who is aware of all these changes. In consequence, our attention, intelligence and energy, must be concentrated on the changeless principle within us, until we realise it in direct experience. This is the essence of Yoga Practice which leads to Self-Realisation or Self-Knowledge. Faith, of course, is instrumental in motivating and consolidating our determination in everything we do, including Yoga Practice.

61. *He confuses the Self with the not-Self and the not-Self with the Self. Hence he suffers like a man whose mind is overcome by delusion:* The essence of Spirituality is to awaken to the fact that one is a Soul (or Spirit) and act like a Soul, that is to say, live life in the way of Spirit. Only then can man live a right life, a life that is straight and not distorted. It is man's awareness of himself as a Soul that enables him to see things rightly and walk on the right path in life. By contrast, if man believes himself to be a body-mind structure, then he erroneously projects the inherent perfection and changelessness of the Soul of which he is subconsciously aware, on to his limited, imperfect self which he then holds to be perfect and endeavours to protect from all changes. For this reason, man constantly seeks to change the World around him: he acquires new clothes, a new partner, new car, new house, new profession, new forms of enjoyment or diversion, he elects a new government, etc. In this way he subconsciously deflects his own attention from the fact that his own limited and imperfect self is what is in need of changing, of growing, of perfecting, so that he finally becomes truly Perfect. So long as this situation prevails he is, for all practical purposes, a deluded man and all his mental, emotional, physical and social problems stem from his condition of delusion (Moha) or Spiritual ignorance (Avidya). The antidote to this is Spiritual Knowledge which is Knowledge of the Self (Atma Jnana).

63. *Latent tendencies:* Imprints left upon the Soul by past experiences, actions or desires. They become active whenever the appropriate time and circumstances arise and prompt the Soul to act

in certain ways or cause him to go through certain experiences related to actions performed by him in the near or distant past, including previous lives. See also *Samskaras*, Ch. 9:13 and *Karma*, Ch. 9:16, 41.

74. *How may we know that the Divine Self Is?:* Verses 47-50 have explained how we may distinguish the changeless Self from things that are subject to change (see also Commentary to verse 48) and therefore establish the existence of the individual or personal Self or Soul (Atma). What remains to be established now is that the Universal Self is as real as the individual Self. There are three main points that need to be considered for this purpose: (1) the whole Universe, from the largest structures such as Solar Systems and Galaxies to the smallest atoms and subatomic energy particles, is constructed in a perfectly ordered and harmonious way that suggests purposiveness and hence intelligence; (2) the Universe appears to be designed to sustain life, in particular *intelligent* life; and (3) the Universe gives life to intelligent beings such as animals and humans. It follows from this, that the Universe (or the Force behind It) must Itself be Intelligent. This is sufficient to logically establish the existence of an Universal or Divine Self. Moreover, the two Selves, human and Divine, personal and Universal, are fundamentally one and the same (as the two aspects of the same Intelligent Being) a fact that becomes evident if we recognise the qualities of the Divine Self in ourselves. All these, however, are just provisional answers. Ultimately, it is practice and not theory that leads to true Knowledge of Reality, as will become apparent from the following verses and chapters.

76. *Say to the thinking man, etc:* Any religion, philosophy or belief that is worth its name ought to be logical. Otherwise, there is a real danger that its adherents are rendered vulnerable to all kinds of erroneous thinking with dire consequences to themselves and others. Yoga, of course, is as logical as human thought can be. This is why it has been said: *Yoga is Knowledge and Knowledge is Yoga*. This, also, is the reason why Yoga is praised in all Scriptures as the ultimate means for attaining Enlightenment and Salvation. The present verse appeals therefore to the reason in man in order to awaken it to a Higher Reality. Although there is much evil in the World, it is undeniable that there is a lot of Good, too. While evil is superficial and temporary, Goodness is fundamental and eternal. This Goodness manifests itself in the Order that underlies everything in the Universe. It manifests itself in the ways in which even animals behave intelligently and in harmony with each other and Nature. In consequence, Yoga invites all of Mankind to open their eyes and see how the Supreme Principle of Goodness (Shiva) manifests Itself in myriads of different ways.

78. *But if you cannot see, then at least believe:* Although most people are unaware of it, the fact is that belief is the prompting cause behind most human activities. Thus a man may take on work in the belief that it will be a reliable source of income; a woman may marry a man because she has faith in him as a partner and future father; a child may take a medicine because he has faith in the doctor's medical knowledge, etc. Even when we go to the baker's, we do so only because we believe that he will have bread for us to buy. Faith or belief is the very foundation of human life. Lack of belief indicates a negative and destructive attitude to life. If man did not believe in one thing or another, he would have no reason to live. By contrast, belief or faith is a power that impels us to get up and do things and achieve something in life, both materially and Spiritually speaking.

95. *Knowledge is born of Yoga and Yoga is established by means of Knowledge:* The Buddha also says: "Through Yoga Wisdom arises; without Yoga Wisdom is lost. He who knows this should see to it that his Wisdom increases (by practising Yoga)" (Dhammapada, 282). Yoga may be said

to have two aspects: Knowledge upon which practice is based, and Practice which leads to Knowledge. The two are inseparable and, therefore, one and the same.

96. *He who sees Spiritual Knowledge and Yoga as one, sees things as they really are:* This is essentially the same truth that was expressed before. Spiritual Knowledge or Atma Jnana is Knowledge (Jnana) of the Self (Atma). Yoga is that Knowledge which leads to Self-Realisation, that is, the realisation of one's unity and identity with the Self. Therefore Spiritual Knowledge and Yoga are one and the same.

98 (a). *I Myself am that Great Lord, etc.:* The reason why Shiva variously refers to Himself as I or The Lord, is that sometimes He speaks from the perspective of His present, temporal Manifestation and other times from the perspective of His Eternal, Unmanifest Self. Although the two perform apparently different functions, ultimately they are just two aspects of One and the Same Divine Being.

98 (b). *I am the Unseen Master of the Cosmic Magic (Maya), the Greatest God:* Maya or Magic is sometimes interpreted as Illusion. However, although Magic may have the secondary meaning of Illusion, this is neither the main sense of the word nor the sense intended here. Magic is, by definition, the ability to act or create things by means of supernatural powers. Indeed, the Sanskrit word Maya is etymologically related to English Magic just as Mayin is related to Magician. Both Maya and Magic derive from the root Mak or Magh, to make, to have power, to be great. Hence the Sanskrit Maha, Mighty, Powerful, Great. In consequence, Magic is the only accurate translation of the word. Even ordinary feats of magic cannot be said to be mere illusion as the magician who consciously and deliberately performs such feats is perfectly aware of what is happening and can hardly be supposed to be the victim of an illusion. Nor does the spectator *imagine* that the show is taking place but actually sees it happening albeit from a different perspective to that of the magician himself. Universal Creation or the "Cosmic Magic" is even less an Illusion in the case of the Creator Who by means of His Infinite Power actually brings about the Universe along with all the beings and things that exist within it. Magic shows involving trees instantly growing from seeds or objects materialising apparently out of thin air, etc., were a major form of popular entertainment in Ancient India. And so Shiva is said to create the World for His Own Diversion in the same way as a master magician might perform a feat of magic for the sake of displaying his own prowess to himself. Since a magic feat, in the eye of the spectator, is accomplished by means unknown to him, Magic signifies above all an unseen, secret power whereby Shiva creates and governs the World. Hence Shiva is called Maha Mayin, Great Magician and Maha Deva, Greatest God, as He alone as Supreme Being is able to bring about the Great Magic of Creation. Says the Shvetashvatara Upanishad: "This Whole World the Supreme Magician projects out of Himself. And in it by Magic the other (the human Soul) is confined. Now one should know that Creation is a Work of Magic and that the Mighty Lord is the Magic-Maker: this Whole World is filled with beings that are parts of Him (and who experience themselves as separate from Him due to His Magic Power)" (4:8).

106. *Let (this Teaching) be imparted to one's own sons, disciples and those that believe in the Unseen, only:* The Supreme Lord is not addressing here ordinary people but highly evolved beings (Rishis, Sages, God-Seers). In the same way as sound has various levels of frequency some of which can be heard by some recipients but not by others, the Word of God has various levels of meaning of which not all can be understood by everybody at all times. While Sages are by definition beings who are capable of understanding higher aspects of Truth, Spiritually untutored or inexperienced people are less capable of this. The latter therefore will receive the Truth when the time is right for them to receive It, according to the general principle that there is

a time and place for everything. Indeed, the Shiva Rahasya often refers to aspects of Truth that are difficult or impossible for ordinary humans to grasp. In consequence, these are advised to follow the guidance of those who do understand. As an illustration from everyday life we may take the fact that a person is legally bound to follow a universally accepted law even when its meaning, implications and purpose are not fully understood by him. To believe in the Unseen, that is to say, the Unmanifest Divine Power that governs the Manifest World, is in any event a mark of intelligence as only a narrow-minded man can hold that there is nothing outside his own field of experience.

End of Chapter 1 and Commentary

THE SECOND LIGHT

(Chapter Two)

2

Wherein the Secret of the Thirty-Six is revealed

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O noble ones! My Revelation is a Great Secret (Maha Guhya) that is unknown to other Gods worshipped by men. For had they known It, they would have long revealed It unto them. Hear you therefore the Secret Truth that I teach and declare, and having heard It, meditate upon It in your heart that you may see the Light.
2. Time, Matter and Soul originated from the Supreme. Now, since all objects of the World sprung from these three, it follows that the World of objects is identical with the Supreme.
3. That Supreme Reality has hands and feet on all sides (It can reach everywhere); on all sides an eye and mouth and head; It has ears everywhere; It stands enveloping the World.
4. Though being endowed with the power of all senses, It has no sense organs. It is the Ruler and Support of all. It is perpetual Bliss, unmanifest and free of duality.
5. It is incomparable, unfathomable and beyond all means of ordinary knowledge; It is devoid of all alternatives; It is free from appearances; It is the Ultimate Abode of all; It is the Supreme Deathless One; It is One with the Universe yet It exists separately, on a Higher Level. It is Eternally the Same. It is devoid of material qualities. It is the Highest Light. It is Perfect Knowledge, known to the wise.
6. It is the Self of all living things; It is both within and without; It is beyond all. I am that Self, the Omnipresent, Peaceful, the Great Lord and the Embodiment of Consciousness. This

entire Universe, consisting of moving and unmoving things, exists within Me. He who has realised this, is the true knower of all Spiritual Teachings.

7. O you who are at peace! Reality or Truth is Eternally One, without a doubt. Yet in order to manifest Its Eternal Glory, Truth creates the various Worlds out of Itself. Therefore It exists in different States or Forms. They are: Spirit, which is like unto Fire; Energy, which is like unto the Sun; and Matter which is like unto the Moon.

8. The Fiery Spirit is Self-Shining Intelligence, Awareness, Consciousness Itself. It is Shiva, the All-Encompassing, All-Illuminating Reality in Its Restful, Unmanifest State.

9. The Sunlike Energy is the Intelligent Power that flows from the Divine Fire even as rays flow from the Sun. It is the Power whereby Spirit creates the Worlds. It is Spirit in Its Active State of Pure, Flowing and Free, Creative Intelligence (Chit Shakti). It has two aspects, one likened unto a Bright Sun, the other unto a Dark Sun. The first named, the Bright Sun, gives rise to the Higher World of Spirit wherein dwell the Radiant Ones. The second, the Dark Sun, gives rise to the Dark World of Matter wherein abide the unawakened Souls. Embodied Souls are endowed with the quality of both brightness and darkness, and therefore they work good and evil deeds.

10. Verily, the same Sun-like Intelligent Power, having brought to pass the Creation of the Higher Worlds, materialises or solidifies to various degrees giving birth to the Material World from the Astral down to the Physical Planes. As such it is called Matter. It is Spirit in Its Materialised, Manifest State and is likened to the Moon.

11. The same Power Divine when elevating the Soul to the Abode of Light is called Shakti. When it envelops the Soul like a shroud and pulls him down into the Material World, is known as Maya, the Lord's Magic Power. In its aspect of Objectively Perceptible Substance, it is known as Matter (Prakarti). When experienced in dormant form, as in deep sleep, it is called Unmanifest Matter (Avyakta Prakarti) or Void.

12. Verily, everything perceived by the Soul is a manifestation of the Power of the Lord. The Universe consists of both Matter and Spirit which are the two Aspects of the One Reality. Time is the third aspect. The Great, Eternal and Beginningless Time which is One with the Lord, gives rise to Matter. Having given birth to Matter it manifests itself in the interaction of Matter and Spirit. Thus limited Time known to unawakened man, is born.

13. Spirit, Time and Matter form the World wherein reside all mortal men. I am both identical with and different from these three, which are eternally stationed within Me, the Unmanifest Supreme.

14. That which is known as Matter or Material Energy (Prakarti) gives birth to the Material Universe (Jagat) beginning with the Intellect and ending with the particularised forms. The Life-Principle called Soul (Atma) enjoys the attributes of Matter as he interacts with it, and falls under its spell.

15. Though being One, the Soul is given various names such as, Spirit, Real I, True Man or Inner Self, by those who contemplate the Things-That-Are (Tattvas). Though being One, it is seen as many through the Lord's Magic that enchants the World. The wise who have freed themselves from the spell of the World and who have risen above material objects, senses, ego and mind, they alone know that the Soul is their real Self.

16. Soul is the Radiant, Self-Existing, Self-Shining Witness regarding his material half in the mirror of his own Consciousness, even as the Sun reflects himself in the Sea. That mirror-like reflection is known as Material Energy or Matter. From that, all material things arise like the many reflections of one light: the Intellect, the Ego, the Lower Mind, the Five Senses and the objects of the senses.

17. As the Wind as it rushes over the Sea stirs the water into waves, so the Will of the Self rushing over the tranquil Sea of Matter stirs its waters into life. Waves of thought, feeling and perception arise therefrom and from that, the World is born. What was unseen comes to sight and what was unmade is brought to pass: thus the unborn springs to life.

18. The first emanation of Matter is the Intellect. It consists of knowledge based on thought. From that the Ego, the Thought of I and Mine, is born: every Ego fashioned according to the wisdom and power of the Intellect that gave birth to it.

19. The Ego makes a man what he is. It is through the Ego (or Personal Mind) that the Soul experiences pleasure and pain in this World and the next. Through repetition, man becomes accustomed to some experiences, craving some and shunning others. Due to the Ego, when he obtains what he craves, man experiences joy. When he fails to obtain the desired thing, he experiences pain.

20. Thus the Ego is made of knowledge based on feeling. It has as its instrument the Lower Mind. The Lower Mind consists of knowledge based on sense perceptions. Its field of experience are the objects (of perception) consisting of Sound, Touch, Colour and the rest.

21. When the Lower Mind perceives an object, the Ego gives rise to a feeling related to that object and the Intellect determines what is to be done. Thus man's life revolves on his perception of and reaction to material things.

22. Due to the Ego's tendency to make objects of experience his own, the Soul who is drawn to the Material World by the Lower Mind, identifies himself with worldly things. He thinks to himself, I am these thoughts, these feelings, this body and these material possessions. Thus worldly self-consciousness springs into life.

23. As a result, Soul becomes engrossed in worldly existence and is born and dies, life after life. This worldly existence with its endless cycle of birth and death is called Samsara or World-Wandering.

24. The Soul's false identification with material things has its origin in the action of Time upon Matter. Time measures out the Immeasurable and fashions limited things. Time determines the birth of living beings. Time, too, annihilates them at the appropriate hour. Everything in the Material World depends upon Time. Time is beyond the control of anyone.

25. Time is eternal and restrains everything from within. Hence, Time is One with the Supreme All-Knowing Lord. Indeed, Infinite Time is Eternal Truth Itself. It creates and destroys the finite time known to unawakened man. He who realises the power of Unending Time, for him limited time comes to an end. He attains Eternal Life.

26. But he who is pray to finite time, knows not the Limitless. He is bound to the limited things of limited life. Thinking, What is now being perceived by me: this Mind, this Body, these Possessions; they belong to me, they are part of me, I am these and nothing else. By this way of

thinking, the unenlightened Ego Mind leads the Soul to identify himself with these constituents of Material Reality.

27. O you who are most wise! know that the Universe is a well-ordered Unity of interdependent forms. All things therein, rocks, plants, fish, birds and beasts dwell in harmony with each other and according to My World-Supporting Law. Of all creatures, ignorant men alone act not by My Command.

28. For they are possessed by a vain Ego: not content with what I Myself allotted them, they yearn to be something else. Moreover, they lift themselves in pride above others and give themselves to works that are hateful and wrong.

29. Possessed by a defective Ego they break the Sacred Bond of Unity and go to the Abode of Discord where Sin is their God and sorrow their lot. Therefore, well do the wise ones know that Ego is man's greatest foe.

30. Thus, through association with the Ego, the deluded Sense of I, the Soul who is Pure Spirit comes to forget his true identity and succumbs to the conviction that he is non-Spirit.

31. Having forgotten that he himself is Pure and Perfect, Self-Shining Light, the Soul deems himself to be as dull and lacklustre as the material substance he identifies with. In this dull condition, having once shined like a Great Star in the midst of the Infinite Vault of Consciousness, he becomes dependent upon outer, physical light.

32. Having once soared like an Eagle in the Radiant Sky of Spiritual Reality, he now stands helpless upon the hard ground of physical existence, enveloped in gloom.

33. Due to this blind darkness that separates them from the Light of Spirit, the heart of un-Enlightened Souls is ever-restless, tormented and suffers all kinds of pain.

34. The only antidote to Separation is Yoga, for Yoga confers knowledge of the Self. By means of Yoga one knows oneself to be a Soul eternal, whereas the Mind and its delusions are born and die away.

35. Verily, know this to be a million times true: whilst Matter is like unto the Ocean whereof myriads of fleeting waves are born, the Self is the Immovable Ground of all things.

36. From Self, Matter flows forth. From Matter, all thoughts, feelings and sense perceptions arise. Like waves ever rising and ever subsiding in the Ocean or Sea, thoughts, feelings and the rest emerge from Matter and return thereto every moment anew.

37. The ignorant, observing this never-ending play, believes them to be continuous and permanent. Bound by their spell, he forgets himself.

38. But the Yogi who is a Knower of the Self, knows that his Self alone endures and that Matter, from which all things in this World arise, is but his own material half: dividing Itself twofold, the Self becomes on one side the observer and on the other that which is observed.

39. For this reason it has been rightly said that the Self alone exists. The Self is indeed the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Reality That contains everything within Its sphere of awareness. By Its power everything comes into being, endures for a while and before long passes away. He who

by means of Yoga knows this, attains Unity with Me, the Only Existing, the Perfect, Ever-Living One.

40. O noble ones! Yoga is the Power of Unity whereby Wholeness, Harmony and Happiness are established in the World. Unity is of three kinds: Human, Worldwide and Divine.

41. The Unity which is between Body, Mind and Soul, is of the Human kind. That which is between people and nations as well as between Mankind and Nature, is of the Worldwide kind. But the Unity which is between Man and the Lord, that, indeed, is Divine. There is nothing higher than this.

42. Thus the only remedy to ignorance-based disunity, disease and suffering is the Perfect Knowledge of Yoga that leads to Spiritual Illumination, to Life in Unity with the Divine. This Perfect Knowledge I now Graciously Declare unto the World for the Salvation of all Souls who are fit to be saved.

43. O you who have been granted Insight into My Eternal Truth! those who possess Spiritual Knowledge know that the Sense Organs are greater than the objects they perceive.

44. For, that which is perceived depends upon that which perceives. When the perceiver perceives not, then the object of perception vanishes like the Moon in the dark (that is, on a Moonless night).

45. But when the perceiver beholds an object either in direct perception, imagination, dream or recollection, then the object comes into existence and not otherwise. Therefore the Sense Organs are greater than the objects they perceive.

46. Likewise, the wise know that the Lower Mind (Manas) is greater than the Sense Organs. For it is the Lower Mind that puts together the diverse perceptions of the Senses and builds them into a coherent whole. Without the Lower Mind the perceptions of the Five Senses would be scattered across the Sky (of Awareness) like clouds in the wind.

47. The wise know further that the Thought of I and Mine (Aham-Kara, Ego Mind) is greater than the Lower Mind. For it is the Ego Mind by its power of appropriation that brings a perceived thing into relation with the perceiver. Otherwise the two would be for ever severed like the two halves of a broken twig.

48. The Intellect (Buddhi) is greater than the Ego for it determines the nature of the object and the manner in which the perceiver is to relate to it. Moreover, the Intellect that is infused with the Light of Truth, can awaken the Ego to its true identity.

49. The Unmanifest Matter (Prakarti) is greater than the Intellect, for Matter is that whereof the Intellect is born. Therein the Intellect rests in deep sleep and from that too it derives the power to think, feel and perceive whether in dream or when awake. The Soul Proper (Purusha) is greater than Matter for he is the perceiver and the agent whilst Matter is the object perceived and acted upon. Moreover, Matter itself is nothing but the Soul's sleeping half, as it were.

50. Greater than the embodied Soul is the Sphere of Maya, wherein My Power of Magic (Maya) holds sway. It envelops the entire Material Universe wherein dwell all embodied Souls, who possess physical or astral bodies according as they inhabit the Earthly or Astral World. It is Maya, the Lord's Wondrous Power that envelops the Soul like unto a veil and holds him under its

magic spell. Maya keeps the unawakened Soul in his embodied state. Verily, by its five Binding Powers, Maya envelops the Soul even as swaddling clothes envelop a newborn babe.

51. Greater than Maya, is the radiant Sphere of Shakti, Shiva's Infinite Power, inhabited by the Liberated Souls who have gone beyond the World of Maya. They are the Great Radiant Ones, endowed with bodies of Pure Spiritual Light. In the midst of that Sphere of Power stands the Threefold Stairway to Supreme Perfection. It has Three Steps, each leading to a Higher World and together leading to the Highest. Going up by the Three Mighty Steps the Soul acquires the Three Divine Powers of Shiva which are Action, Knowledge and Will, and ascends to the Highest Heaven.

52. Beyond the World of Power lies Shiva's World of Spirit (Shivalaya) and the Highest Heaven. Therein dwell those Divine Souls who, having acquired Shiva's Three Powers, acquire the last Two, namely Divine Intelligence and Bliss. Having gained Shiva's Five Powers they are for ever One with Him.

53. Over that Spiritual World, I, the Essence of all Knowledge, the Supreme Lord than Who nothing is higher, preside in all Eternity. My Infinite Abode of Spirit is all that exists when at the end of Time, I, the All-Consuming, Fiery God of Consciousness (Kalagni Rudra) dissolve all created Worlds and merge all Souls into My Supreme Self.

54. Verily, there is no living Soul greater than I. By realising Me, one becomes free. No living beings in the Universe, including the moving and unmoving ones, are truly eternal except I, the Unmanifest, the Great Lord Who is of the form of All-Pervading Infinite Space (Vyoman) and from Whom the Universe has no separate existence. The Seven Worlds (which are) the Earth with her Nine Continents, the Astral World, the World of Maya, the Threefold World of Power and the Abode of Shiva: all exist within Myself. I eternally create, sustain and annihilate all things. For, I Alone Exist.

55. I, the Lord, Master of Maya (Magic Power) and identical with it, am One with the Power of Time. Through this Power, the Power of the Infinite Self, I create and control all the Worlds.

56. When the moment of Creation has come and the Great Time (Maha Kala), the Great Life (Maha Satta), begins to measure out His Unmeasured Glory by dividing It as it were into measurable parts, that, O Sages! is when limited Time (Kala) is born. By the measuring out (Kalana) of the Lord's Unmeasured Glory, measured life springs into being. Time ignites the spark of life in all things.

57. Thus, in every Moment of Time (Kala-Anu) an Atom of Life (Jiva-Anu) comes into being and lives in the World. The span of Time required for the living Atom to take birth from the Ocean of Infinite Life is the smallest measure of Time. It is known to the Lord and to the Awakened Ones who are endowed with Sight Divine.

58. But to the unawakened, only that is known which is seen by the eye. And Time on Earth is reckoned by observing things that move such as the Earth, the Moon and the Stars. Therefore upon Earth, movement *is* Time.

59. Movement is the perception of successive changes that take place in a perceived thing, and so is Time. Time is a form of knowledge. For, it makes itself known by means of diverse forms of movement that appear in the knower's field (of perception).

60. The chief among all forms of movement that can be observed by all is that of the Vital Breath (Prana). Having descended at the moment of Creation from the Thirty-sixth and Highest State down to the nethermost, the Great Lord Himself, Who Is the Life and Soul of the Universe enters with His Power (Prana Shakti) an embodied Soul's form. He then animates it by means of the Vital Breath. Hear you now how the Great Wheel of Time (Kala-Chakra) comes into being by the power of the breath.

61. Man begins his life on Earth by breathing in the air of this World; breathing in and out, he lives his appointed time; then, breathing out his last, he goes to the Otherworld. Thus man's life depends upon breath. Breath is of three kinds: in-breath, out-breath and the holding of breath in between. Of these are born the Three Times, Past, Present and the Future.

62. By remembering the breath that was breathed in, man knows that which has been. Thus he comes to know the Past. By resting for a moment before breathing out, man knows the Present or that which is *now*. And by thinking on the breath that in a moment will be breathed out by him, he knows that which is not but is yet to be. In this wise he knows the three phases of Time by the phases of his own breath.

63. Second, one movement of the breath in and out makes one breath. One breath lasts ten Nimeshas (Moments). Six breaths make sixty Nimeshas or one Chashaka (a Cupful as unit of time). Sixty Chashakas make three hundred and sixty breaths or one Ghatika (Copper Jar used for measuring time). Sixty Ghatikas make twenty-one thousand six hundred breaths or one Day and Night. This divided six hundredfold, makes thirty-six finger-breadths that is, the distance covered by the movement of the breath on its way out beginning from the heart and ending in the outer space. Thirty-six divided sixfold makes six breaths or sixty Nimeshas (Moments of time).

64. For this reason, in accord with My Law, holy men who are ever absorbed in contemplation measure the time by means of a hundred prayer-beads and eight. When this is multiplied two hundredfold, it yields twenty and one thousand six hundred breaths. When divided threefold it gives thirty-six which is the number of fingers that measures the course of one breath.

65. Thirty-six divided sixfold makes six, and six multiplied tenfold makes sixty. A quarter of this makes the fifteen Days of a Fortnight (or Half Month). Of Fortnights there are two. That beginning with the Full Moon and ending with the New Moon is the dark Fortnight. That beginning when the Moon is New and ending when she is Full is the bright Fortnight. Two Fortnights make a Month of thirty Days, and two Months make one Season of sixty Days. Sixty Days multiplied sixfold make a Year of three hundred Days and sixty.

66. Verily, thirty-six multiplied a hundred times sixty (600) gives twenty-one thousand six hundred breaths breathed by man in a Day from sunrise to sunrise. Divided threefold it gives rise to the twelve Months of the Year. Multiplied a hundredfold it gives rise to three hundred and sixty Days. Three hundred and sixty human Years make a Year of the Gods. And this multiplied twelve thousandfold yields a Cosmic Cycle (of twelve thousand Divine Years).

67. In exhalation, the Sun rises in the heart and sets in the outer space. Therefore, the Outgoing Breath corresponds to a Day; to the Half Month (Ardha-Masa) wherein the Full Moon wanes (diminishes); the Half-Year wherein the Sun in his northward progression follows the Higher Path (Uttara Ayana) across the Sky (from March to August); and the Emission of a Cosmic Cycle.

68. In inhalation, the reverse is true: the Moon rises in the outer space and sets within the heart. Therefore, the Incoming Breath (Apana) corresponds to a Night; to the Half Month wherein the New Moon waxes (grows); the Half-Year wherein the Sun in his southward progression goes the Lower Path (Dakshina Ayana) across the Sky (from September to February); and the Absorption of a Cosmic Cycle.

69. The Standing Still at the beginning and end of the two breaths corresponds to the two twilights of Dawn and Dusk; to the beginning and end of the two Half Months; the two Equinoxes of Spring and Autumn that mark the beginning and end of the two Half-Years; and the periods of rest between the Creation and Dissolution of the Cosmic Cycle. Thus, O noble ones! a Day, a Month, a Year human or Divine and a Cosmic Cycle too, all arise out of the breath. Without breath, there is no Time. And the breath is born out of the Lord.

70. As man's life rests upon his breath, so does the life of the Universe itself. The Lord Himself, the Great Life, breathes and lives in and through all created things. It is the Lord Himself Who creates and beholds all forms of Time. Therefore Time is the Lord, the Ever Living, the Great Life, and none else.

71. They who by means of Yoga attain Unity (Samyoga) with Me, the Lord of Time (Kalanatha), go to the Supreme Abode of Shiva where all Souls long to be. For true Life is to be found alone in My Abode of Unity where Time is One. Death and Suffering belong to the Abode of Separation where Time is diverse, many-formed and a shaper of limited life.

72. O you who are followers of Unity with the Supreme! six multiplied by itself becomes thirty-six. But when divided sixfold, Nought only remains. Nought (Shunya) is the Great Unmanifest Void (Maha Shunya), the Great Point (Maha Bindu) and Secret Place whereof all numbers and measured things are born and unto which in due course they all return. I Am That. With the Out-breath of Creation I manifest the Thirty-Six Things which make up That Which Is. With the In-breath of Illumination I dissolve them into the Unmanifest One. He who knows the secret of the Two Breaths, knows that he and I are One. I, the Light of Reality, the Great Time, Supreme Spiritual Teacher and Enlightener of the World, declare this Eternal Truth for all to hear in this World and beyond.

Commentary to Chapter 2

6. *I am that Self, the Omnipresent, Peaceful, the Great Lord and the Embodiment of Consciousness:* The concept of God as Consciousness or Intelligence is the greatest contribution that Yoga has made to human religious thought. While most religions regard God as a Person endowed with supernatural powers, Yoga teaches that God is a Self-Existing Force the fundamental functions of which are Knowledge and Action. This is in agreement with the Hindu Scriptures (Vedas) which state that Consciousness (Prajnana) is the Supreme. A similar concept is found in the teachings of the great Sages of Ancient Greece who declared that "There is One God, always still and at rest, Who moves all things with the thoughts of His Own Mind" (Xenophanes).

9. *The Power Whereby Spirit creates the Worlds:* This is a point that is emphasised time and again in all Yogic texts. The World is a Creation of the Universal Consciousness, which accounts for its qualities of coherence and oneness. At the same time however, the individual consciousness or Soul creates its own, psychological, image or replica of the World, each Soul according to his capacities of perception and conception as well as position in time and space that

he occupies in relation to the World and to other Souls. This individual creation accounts for the qualities of limitedness and distinctiveness in different individuals' experience of the World and its various planes. Creation, therefore, takes place at two levels: Universal and individual. Though the higher and inner processes of creation only become apparent through Spiritual or psychological analysis of human experience, the material aspects of the same are clearly observable in everyday life. The Earth, for example, is already present as a creation of the Universal Consciousness (or some Higher Force unknown to man) whereas houses, pots, tools etc., are created by the individual out of the pre-existing, naturally occurring materials such as stone, mud, wood or metal. The two forms of Creation also differ in another essential respect that has important moral implications. While the Universal always takes place in absolute harmony with the Universal Will, this is not always so in the case of individual creation. Universal Will is admitted to be present, for example, in the creation of agricultural implements whereby the individual produces food for himself and his family, but absent in the creation of weapons whereby an individual or group of individuals may threaten, oppress or destroy others for selfish purposes. This also answers the fundamental question as to what is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, in terms of Universal (or Divine) Law: an action is lawful when and to the extent that it is done in Unity with Divine Will. What Divine Will is, we may know by means of the three universally recognised means of knowledge: firstly, Scriptural Authority (which includes the pronouncements of divinely inspired Spiritual leaders); secondly, Reasoning; and thirdly, Intuition or Inspiration (Inward Illumination, Yogically speaking). This will become clear in the following verses and chapters.

19. *The Ego makes a man what he is:* Self-Awareness (Aham-Vimarsha), Thought of I, Egoity (from Greek Ego, I) or I-ness (Ahanta) has two distinct aspects. Ahamkara (lit., I-Maker) is that which generates a made, created, artificial sense of identity which alienates the Soul from his true nature. By contrast, Ahambhava (Natural I) is one's true identity which is unmade, uncreated being, devoid of mental limitations and distortions. The former (Ahamkara) is Imperfect or Impure (Ashuddha), gives rise to the individual body-mind complex and brings the Soul down to the limited, unenlightened condition of earthly life. The latter, (Ahambhava) is the Ever Perfect or Pure (Shuddha) Universal Consciousness Itself Which lives in the heart of all creatures and elevates the Soul to the Enlightened State of Cosmic Being.

36 (a). *From Self, Matter flows forth:* The Self is the conscious Soul. "Matter" or Material Energy is objective reality, that is, what consciousness is aware of as distinct manifestations of itself such as mind, body and physical objects. One of the greatest unsolved mysteries in Western Science is how the brain generates consciousness. Yoga has long solved this problem by looking at it from the reverse perspective. Since it is consciousness who is asking the question, we may legitimately ask, how consciousness creates the brain. Indeed, in ordinary human experience, consciousness and the brain are never found separate. Logically speaking, this means that any one of the two may generate the other. However, consciousness is a subtle, non-physical substance or force that is characterised by its capacity for being aware of itself and of other things. The brain is merely a biological organ whose function is to receive, process and transmit electrical impulses. Now, there is no scientific evidence to support the view that the brain generates anything apart from the said impulses. On the other hand, consciousness is known to operate creatively, willingly generating thoughts, emotions and sense perceptions as may be seen in imagination, dreams or hallucination. Consciousness, therefore, is by definition a creative force. Moreover, no experience is ever possible without consciousness. This suggests that consciousness is the source and ground of everything that exists. What is the evidence to support this view? Firstly, consciousness has the capacity of experiencing itself: we all are aware of ourselves as conscious and intelligent beings. Nobody says "I am unconscious; I don't exist". All human beings say "I am conscious; I am alive; I can think, feel and perceive". The brain, on the

other hand, cannot be said to be aware of itself. It never says "I am a brain". It is very easy for a human being to identify itself with an intelligent entity, whether embodied or disembodied. To identify oneself with the physical organ called brain, however, seems both unnatural and extremely difficult if not impossible. Clearly, this would not be the case, were the brain the true seat of intelligence. Secondly, consciousness is aware of things external to itself such as the physical body. There are numerous authenticated accounts of extra-corporeal, exo-somatic or out-of-the-body experiences in which the human consciousness becomes aware of itself as a separate, independent entity that is capable of perceiving the physical body as something distinct and distant from itself. This is never the case in reverse, that is, there is no single instance of the body being aware of itself as separate and independent from consciousness. Indeed, for all practical purposes it is consciousness itself that imparts life to the physical structure called body, including the brain. Even in everyday language we instinctively call "lifeless" any thing that appears to be devoid of consciousness. Similarly, we say that certain inner thoughts or external events occur "out of the blue sky", that is to say out of the sky-like reality called consciousness. In other words, we are subconsciously aware of the fact that whatever comes into being, whether inner or outer, arises out of consciousness like clouds out of the sky. Which is only natural given that, as conscious beings, we all are part of the Universal Consciousness which constitutes the underlying source and ground of all things. In view of the patent capacity of consciousness to create thoughts, emotions and sense perceptions which together constitute the World we live in, it is not difficult to conceive of the World itself as a creation of Consciousness. Indeed, millions of Yogis, Hindus and Buddhists do just that. Intelligence must have existed prior not only to the brain but to physical matter in general, since the Universe is evidently constructed in a way that is suggestive of purposiveness and hence intelligence. Since the brain is a recent development in the history of the Universe, it cannot reasonably be supposed to have created the World. Logically speaking, the World must have been created by an Intelligence that is external to and independent from, the brain. Moreover, the findings of modern physics indicate the existence of levels of reality that transcend physical matter. While the brain as a physical structure cannot belong to metaphysical levels of reality, consciousness as a subtle, non-physical force, can and does. It follows from this that while the Yogic concept of consciousness as a self-existing, creative force explains everything, the official scientific hypothesis of the brain as generator of consciousness must be admitted to be unsatisfactory, unnecessary (except to defend a materialist agenda) and in the last analysis, untenable. The disbeliever in the Universal Consciousness would have to explain, among other things, what force created the Universe in a patently ordered and purposeful way long *before* the coming into being of the "conscious brain", etc. Whichever way we look at it, the fact is that the Universe creates intelligent beings, hence it must itself be intelligent. Intelligence must be inherent to the nature of the Universe and must have been there, in some form or another, from the very beginning. This is the invariable conclusion. A more detailed investigation of this complex subject may be found in scientific works such as *The Self-Aware Universe: How Consciousness Creates the Material World*, by the renowned physicist Amit Goswami. Suffice it to say here that as stated in the present verse, mind, body and physical objects arise from and merge back into, Material Energy which in turn arises from Consciousness, that is to say everything ultimately originates in Consciousness. This is the basis of all genuine Spirituality, that is, Spirit-based perception of reality. See also Commentary to Chapter 1, verses 42 and 74.

36 (b). *Like waves ever rising and ever subsiding in the Ocean or Sea, thoughts, feelings and the rest emerge from Matter and return thereto every moment anew:* The momentariness (or quality of lasting just one moment) of the material, objective World is a well-known Yogic concept various forms of which have passed into Hindu, Buddhist and even modern scientific thought. Firstly, to understand what Yoga means by material or objective, it is important to know that every experience (or act of awareness whereby we become aware of, or consciously register,

something) presupposes a subject and an object. The subject is that which experiences, or is aware of, a thing. And the object is that which is experienced by the conscious subject as being within the latter's sphere of experience or awareness. In Yogic terminology, the subject is called *pramata* (that which perceives or experiences) and the object is called *prameya* (that which is perceived or experienced). The subject's perception or awareness of the object is called *pramiti* (that which is perceived or known in relation to the perceived object), the object and our awareness thereof being two related yet distinct elements of experience like the two sides of a coin, for example. Armed with this knowledge, we may now investigate the nature of what we call experience so that we better understand both ourselves and the World "out there". Suppose I am looking at a flower which I see clearly before me and form in my mind the concept, "I see a flower". According to what has been said before, the flower is the object-element or factor of my experience, technically called *prameya*. As such, it has two aspects, the flower itself, growing in the garden, which is the external physical object, and the mental image I form of it in my mind. My awareness of this mental object is the *pramiti* or what I know about the object. I myself, as the conscious entity holding this awareness of the object within myself, am the subject (*pramata*). The faculties of perception, which convey the object's properties (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell) to the mind; the mind itself which turns its attention to, selects and builds these up into an image; the ego whereby I relate to this image as "mine"; and the intellect whereby I compare the image of this flower to that of others seen in the past, and whereby moreover I form a judgement as to whether I should carry on looking at this particular flower or turn my attention to other things; in short, what may be generally termed mind and its cognitive processes, is the means (*pramana*) whereby I come into possession of knowledge about the object (*prameya*). Now, although superficially speaking the object may be said to be a permanent, single and solid thing, a little reflection will show that this is not so. To begin with, the object consists of the five sense perceptions (touch, colour, smell, etc.). Which already means that the object is not solid but composite. Moreover, each of the component perceptions turns out to consist of innumerable, minute points of perception appearing and disappearing before my faculties of sight, smell, etc., at such a speed as to give the impression of permanence in much the same way as an electrical bulb emits rays of light, or a candle emits a series of flames that give the appearance of permanent luminosity. In the same way as each flame comes into being and vanishes in quick succession according as each particle of fuel is being lit and consumed, so also each mental image of my flower is created in quick bursts or pulses by the mind. This is not only observable as a fact of experience (with a little training) but is also a logical necessity. For, were the image of the object not recreated every moment afresh, we could hardly speak of an experience (any experience) as taking place in the present. Were the image to last any longer than a very brief moment, it would lose its freshness and its direct relation to the physical object and become like a still painting or photograph. That this is not the case, we know from the fact that as soon as a breeze starts, the flower slightly changes its position in space, a change that is immediately reflected in our mental image of the moving object. The objective image, therefore, which we form in our mind as a replica of the external object, must be admitted to be not permanent but momentary. As for the external object itself, even modern Science admits that it consists of component elements such as cells, molecules, atoms and energy particles none of which are permanent, so that too is impermanent. Not only this, but we cannot, in ordinary experience, directly perceive *any* external object but only a momentary *image* thereof (every perception taking place through the medium of our faculties of perception which can provide us with nothing more than an image made of the five sensory elements, sound, touch, etc.). And because all our mental processes such as perceiving, thinking or feeling are based on such momentary images, they also must be and, indeed, are momentary. Likewise, our knowledge, experience or awareness of the said object or objects must also be momentary. The only thing that is not momentary is the subject. The conscious entity who is aware of object, means of knowledge, knowledge of the object and their momentariness (*kshanikatva*) or impermanence (*anityata*) as

opposed to his own changelessness and permanence, is the Soul. In the final analysis, therefore, the Soul or the Consciousness-element of the experience alone qualifies as Subject while everything else, from and including Material Energy down to what is perceived by means of the senses and processed by the mind is, by virtue of its being objectively perceived, called object. And it is called material, because it consists of Material Energy (Prakarti) which is a condensed, "dormant" form of consciousness as opposed to the free, radiant, awake and self-aware consciousness of the Soul proper. In the same way as every experience requires a permanent, changeless and still principle (the conscious Soul) in order for the awareness of momentariness, movement or change in the object or objects to arise, it also requires a permanent substance out of which the momentary components of experience arise and to which they return once they have been experienced or consciously registered. This permanent substance or material is the Soul's own material, objective aspect called Matter or Material Energy. This is why it has been said: "From Self, Matter flows forth". Material Energy is that aspect of the Soul which provides the material of our experiences. From that permanent material, the momentary factors of experience (intellect, ego, mind, senses and sense objects) arise and to that they all return, Material Energy being both their source and place of rest. It will be remembered that the momentariness of the object of experience involves a series or sequence of mental images quickly following one after the other as to give the appearance of permanence. Now because the object is reflected on the mirror-like light of the Soul, by concentrating his attention on the point between the subsiding of one image or object and the coming into being of the next, that is to say, on the brief breaks or gaps in the rapid flux of objective awareness or perception, the Yogi can catch a glimpse of the light of the Soul and recognise himself as that. References to this teaching are found in some of the earliest Yogic texts such as the Yoga Sutra (3:52) and Vijnana Bhairava Tantra. Says the Vijnana Bhairava (62): "Let not the mind, having just quit one object of perception, turn to another. For, by means of that which is between them (i.e., between one perception and the next), the Great Realisation (of Reality) unfolds in all its intensity". As has been rightly said: it is through Yoga that Wisdom arises. It is only through Wisdom (or Higher Knowledge) derived from Spiritual Practice that the Self, the World, and everything else is truly known.

57. *Thus, in every moment of Time (Anu) an Atom of Life (Anu) comes into being and lives in the World, etc.:* The Universal Consciousness creates the World as a projection of Its own Creative Intelligence (Spanda Shakti). The component elements that constitute the physical World are therefore projected into being, withdrawn into their source and projected again at unimaginably small intervals (or high frequency), giving the impression of continuity and permanence. For this reason it has been said: "As waves from Water, as sparks from a Fire, as rays from the Sun, all life springs forth from Me, the Lord, the Source of all Life". The intervals at which the atoms or units of Consciousness are projected into "measured" or limited life are the smallest units of Time. In consequence, they represent the points at which limited time and life come into being as an inseparable unity. See also Ch. 3:19-22, p. 59 and Commentary to 6:5, p.101.

63-72. *36 finger-breadths, etc.:* The calculations in verses 63-72 are based upon the sexagesimal time-reckoning of Ancient India with 60 as a basic number upon which modern time-keeping is also based. Thus the modern reader will obtain 24 hours (or a Day and Night), by dividing 21,600 breaths by 900, a multiple of 60.

64. *Twenty-one thousand six hundred breaths:* This, divided by ten gives 2,160, the number of years in which the Sun's position at the moment of the Spring Equinox (21 March) moves backwards through the Zodiac, completing one Sign or thirty degrees. Multiplied by 20, 40, 60 and 80, it gives the number of years comprised in each of the Four World Ages. (See Ch. 11:203 and Commentary to 11:188.) Thus a mathematical relation between the number of breaths, the

movements of the Sun in relation to Earth and the Constellations, and all units of time, from the smallest to the greatest, is established.

65. *Sixty Days multiplied sixfold make a Year of three hundred Days and sixty:* The objection that may be raised here is that 360 is five days shorter than the actual length of the solar year (365). The fact is that no calendar in use today can claim to be mathematically exact. Thus the calendar currently used in most of the World, the so-called Julian Calendar (named after the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar), involves variations in the number of days in a month (31, 30 or 28) and requires the addition of one extra day every four years resulting in a "leap year" of 366 days. A year calculated as in the Ancient Indian system on the other hand does indeed appear to consist of only 360 days (12 months x 30 days = 360). However, this problem is easily resolved by the addition of five extra-calendrical, festive days, as was the practice in other parts of the Ancient World, including Sumer, Egypt and Central America and the addition of another extra day every four years, for example. As far as Yoga is concerned, this is ultimately irrelevant as religious holidays are determined by the phases of the Moon which occur independently of the Solar cycle (see Commentary to 11:46). Other calendars such as those used in Judaism and Islam exhibit even greater irregularity in the number of days comprised in a year in addition to the tendency of the months (which alternate between 29 and 30 days) to fall out of alignment with the seasons. Also, while there is no direct mathematical relation in other calendars between weeks and months, the Indian fortnight (or half month of 15 days) fits exactly in the 30-day month. More importantly, the 360 days of the Yogic calendar correspond to the 360 degrees of the circle. This calendar therefore, though older, seems simpler, more natural, more mathematically exact and is in no way inferior to any of its modern counterparts. From a Spiritual point of view, its relevance consists in the relation it bears to the thirty-six Realities of Yoga. It is noteworthy that in a jar containing jewellery from the Indus Valley period (2,000 BC) found in the 1980s near Karachi, there was a string of thirty-six elongated carnelian beads interspersed with bronze beads. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that it may have represented a form of portable calendar, one bead symbolising a period of ten days in the Ancient Egyptian fashion. It is also interesting that an allusion to such a calendar is found in the Rig Veda, apparently in the form of a riddle: "Twelve are the fellies, and the wheel is single; three are the naves. What man has understood it? Therein are set together spokes three hundred and sixty, which in no wise can be loosened" (Rig Veda, Book I, 164:48). Clearly, the single wheel is the Year; the twelve fellies, that is, the sections that form the outer circle of the wheel, are the Months; the three naves or hubs are the three aspects of time, past, present and future, upon which all time and all life revolves and from which all other divisions of time derive (the three times of the day, Dawn, Noon and Sunset, the three main seasons, Spring, Summer and Winter, and the three aspect of life, Birth, Life and Death); while the three hundred and sixty spokes are the Days of the Year. A more recent reference to this mystical calendar is found in Shri Abhinava Gupta's *Tantraloka*, composed in the tenth century of the current era. Although modern historians are unable to specify when this calendar was first introduced into India, it is clear that knowledge of it and its hidden meaning has been transmitted as an unofficial, underground revelation for thousands of years. And so another verse of the Rig Veda declares: "The holy Priests, by their seasons, know, O Sun God! those two wheels of yours: One kept concealed, those only who are skilled in highest truths have learned" (X, 85:16). Here the first two, visible wheels are the circle of the Earth and that of Heaven, respectively, while the hidden one is that of the 360 Rays of Reality which lies concealed in the heart of those who as the verse says, are skilled in the highest truths. Returning to Book I, Hymn 164, we find verse 11 which says: "Formed with twelve spokes, by length of time, unweakened, rolls round the Heaven this wheel of during Order. Herein established, joined in pairs together, seven hundred Sons and twenty stand, O Fiery One!". The twelve spokes, of course, are the Months. And 720 Sons (or Children) stand for 360 Days and 360 Nights who are the Sons and Daughters of God (the Light of Heaven), the nouns Day and Night in Sanskrit being masculine

and feminine, respectively. And, as if to confirm the importance of properly understanding the meaning of these verses, verse 16 of the same Book and same Hymn (164), declares: "He who has eyes sees this, the blind discerns not. The son who is a sage has comprehended: who knows this rightly is his father's father". That is to say, he who realises the *full* meaning of this, is unsurpassed in knowledge, authority and status.

72 (a). *Nought (Shunya) is the Great Unmanifest Void (Maha Shunya), the Great Point (Maha Bindu)*: The Sanskrit term Shunya means both "the digit 0" and "void" or "emptiness". It is represented in writing as a dot or point (Bindu). Hence it symbolises the Absolute, as the "Point" of departure in which all life originates and to which all life ultimately returns. It is noteworthy that in *The Secrets Of The Cross*, an 18th century Christian work, it is written: "Before all things were there was One Point. In the One there was implicitly contained the many". Western Science also teaches that the Universe was at first a single point of non-material substance that exploded into being and expanded to become the Physical World as we know it today. Eventually the Universe will be re-absorbed into its point of origin. In Yoga, this Original Point is used to symbolise the Original State of Universal Consciousness in which everything was Spirit while Matter was just a point or dot in the Infinite Ocean of Being. The Creation of the Universe out of an immaterial Point is illustrated in the Scriptures of India by means of the simile of a tiny seed that, though apparently containing nothing, grows into an immense fig-tree. The Christian Gospels similarly compare the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed which is "the smallest of all seeds", but "when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large plant and becomes a shelter for the birds of the Sky" (The Gospel of Thomas, 20). This is a fundamental Yogic teaching which must not be confused with the Western belief in Creation out of Nothing. Spiritual Void or Emptiness is not Nothing just as the seed is not nothing but the very potentiality of a tree in condensed form. It is Objectless Consciousness, a Higher Form of Intelligence devoid of created or manifested things yet containing in itself the potentiality of all conceivable and inconceivable things. It is God's Own Undifferentiated, Formless Intelligence out of which anything and everything may be born or produced according to His Own Will. Indeed, the Yoga Masters derive the term Point or Bindu (also spelt Vindu) from the root Vid, to know: Vetti iti Vindu (That Which Knows is the Point). It represents God's infinite Knowledge concentrated into a Point, as it were, prior to Creation, in the same way as the mind of a man who is about to create a work of art may be said to be concentrated into an undivided point of creative intelligence prior to his commencing work. Not only this, but the Point also represents the Unity and Oneness of That from which Creation is brought into being. Says illustrious Master Abhinava Gupta: "That Which is Undivided Light (of Consciousness), Which despite all differentiation is Ever-Changeless, Which remains Eternally Unaffected and does not deviate from Its Inherent Oneness is for us Bindu (Primordial Point)" (Tantraloka I, 3:3). This "Emptiness" is therefore not Nothing but God Himself. It is only called empty because it is impossible to categorise in everyday language. Says the second-century Saint Clement of Alexandria: "If we abstract all physical properties such as depth, breadth, length, position and the rest, all that remains is a Point which represents Unity or Oneness. If we then abstract all incorporeal properties and cast ourselves into the Greatness of God, and then advance into Immensity, we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not" (Stromata V, 11). And the South-Indian Master Nagarjuna: "To see Emptiness is to see the Buddha, because Buddha and Emptiness are not different" (Discourse on the Ten Stages, 33). In the same way as the human mind prior to the conception of a thought may be described as empty though in reality it is full of creative intelligence, so also the Universal Consciousness prior to Creation may be described as Empty though in fact It is always full to the brim of Shiva's Infinite Power of Intelligence that can create anything at any time according to His Free Will. To confuse this "Empty" Fullness with Nothing is a serious Spiritual blunder. Thus the Christian Church in the year 1215 declared Nothing to be the substance out of which

God created the World: "We firmly believe and openly confess that there is only one true God, the one principle of the universe, Creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal, who from the beginning of time and by His omnipotent power made *from nothing* creatures both spiritual and corporeal, angelic and human" (Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 1). That this cannot be so, even a child can see. A Spiritual creature such as an Angel, for example, is, by definition, made of Spirit and not of Nothing. To maintain that Spirit can rise out of nothing is to divest it of its true value and meaning. Such a stance therefore is wrong because it is contrary to Truth and because it creates confusion in the mind of sincere Seekers of Truth. For this reason, the 2nd century Mulamadhyamika Karika warns against the misunderstanding of subtle Spiritual Truths: "Emptiness (Shunyata) wrongly conceived destroys the dimly witted like a snake grasped by the head, or a wrongly uttered spell" (24:11). This being so, in the interest of clarity and truth, Yoga teaches that God created the World out of His Own Spirit. Surely, this would be an easy thing for God to accomplish! Indeed, irrespective of appearances, the Whole World consists of Spirit and nothing else precisely because there is no other substance *anywhere* but Spirit.

72 (b). *He who knows the secret of the Two Breaths, knows that he and I are One:* The Two Breaths, Exhalation (Prana) and Inhalation (Apana), here stand for Creation or Emission of the Universe from, and its Dissolution or Absorption into, the Universal Consciousness. Since one Exhalation and Inhalation run over a distance of 36 fingers each, the number ascribed to the present verse ($36 + 36 = 72$) symbolises the totality of the World-creating and World-absorbing Process as an activity of the Universal Consciousness or Shiva. The fact is that Spiritually ignorant man is out of tune with God, the Universe and himself. By cultivating an awareness of the natural rhythms of life, which are the creative pulsation of consciousness, man can elevate himself to higher stages of experience. Thus the Yogi who, by means of Spiritual Insight, realises that his own life which manifests principally as the breathing process consisting of in-breath and out-breath, and the Life of God which manifests as the Universal Creation-Absorption Process though distinct in degree and scope are nonetheless essentially identical, realises his Identity with the Creator from Whom he was born and attains the state of Supreme Unity and Enlightenment. This is what the Supreme Lord Himself declares for the upliftment of man.

End of Chapter 2 and Commentary

THE THIRD LIGHT

(Chapter Three)

3

Wherein the Glory of Lord Shiva is proclaimed

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. I shall now make known to you the Greatness of the Highest God from Whom everything emanates. Attend and listen to My Word, O you who are keen Seers of Spirit!

2. Men cannot realise Me by means of religious observances nor by means of charitable gifts nor by means of sacrifices. Without ardent and complete devotion I cannot be known.

3. Verily, I say unto you, I abide within all living beings, everywhere. But except the leading Sages, people know Me not, the Cosmic Witness.

4. I am the Creator and Dispenser of Destiny, the Lord of Time, the Fiery God facing all directions. The whole Universe exists in Me and I, the Supreme Deity, exist in the heart of all.

5. Neither the inhabitants of this World nor those of the Otherworld, nor the Demigods in the lower heavens truly see Me.

6. Though the Scriptures perpetually praise Me as the One Supreme Lord (Parameshvara) and the holy priests worship Me with various kinds of rituals and sacrifices, I am seen by no one save the Yogis who meditate upon Me as the Self-Luminous Lord of the Entire Creation, ever abiding within their own hearts.

7. Everything is immersed in Me and I am the Soul of all. Assuming the form of all the various Gods, I receive all sacrificial offerings and dispense the appropriate rewards.

8. Pious and learned men, who are well-versed in the Sacred Lore, see Me here itself. For, I am ever present near those who worship Me with devotion. Whether of noble or lowly birth, all men who observe their duties and worship Me with devotion are rewarded by Me with that Supreme Abode which is but the Bliss of the Self Divine.

9. Even those who formerly followed evil ways but have found and entered upon My Path, are liberated in due course and attain Unity with Me. I am Compassionate and Just and the Saviour of all.

10. At the beginning of the Universe, I created the Radiant Ones (Gods) and handed over to them the Scriptures (Agama) that came out of Myself. Therefore he who teaches the True Scriptures spreads abroad My Truth.

11. I alone am the Eternal Teacher (Sat-Guru) of all Yogis. I am the Protector of the virtuous and the Destroyer of those who transgress My Divine Law.

12. I am both the cause of worldly existence and the Liberator of Yogis from all worldly bondage. Yet I abide beyond all worldly ties.

13. I Alone am the Creator, Protector and Destroyer of the Universe. Maya, by which I enchant the Worlds, is My Own Power.

14. What is known as Higher Knowledge (Vidya) is My Own Transcendental Power whereby, stationed in the heart of Yogis, I unravel the Veil of Maya.

15. I am the Originator, Supporter and Restrainer of all powers. I am the Storehouse of Immortality and the Fountain-Head of all Glory.

16. O noble ones who have resorted to the Supreme Path of Yoga! it is through My Divine Powers that I govern this Universe. My Own Power of Creation, which inheres in all and is

identical with Me, assumes the function of Divine Creator, and fashions this Material World full of variety and diversity. Thus, in My Function of Creator I am called Brahma (He Who Creates and Makes Grow).

17. My other Great Power, that of Preservation, becomes the Divine Preserver who pervades and preserves the World. Hence, in My Function of Preserver I am known as Vishnu (He Who Pervades and Preserves).

18. The third Great Power of Mine is the Power of Time whereby I consume and dissolve the entire Universe. Therefore, in My Function of Destroyer, the wise ones know me as Rudra, the Fiery One.

19. O holy ones! as rays from the blazing Sun, as sound from a musical instrument, as pulses from a beating heart, even so the Material World notwithstanding its appearance of permanence is emitted by Me, the Lord, every moment anew.

20. As a painting is made of thousands of brush-strokes of colour, just so My Creation is made of innumerable pulses of Creative Intelligence (Chit Shakti).

21. Thus the Cycle of Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution takes place in waves constantly arising, culminating and subsiding, upon the Shining Mirror of My Eternal Self. I, the Supreme Lord, by the Power of Unity (Yoga Bala) unite all into a whole continuum.

22. As a River, at once ever-the-same according to its long-established banks and ever-new according to the water that freshly runs along its course, so the Stream of Creation though initiated millions of years ago yet is projected every moment anew by Myself.

23. He who knows this, with concentrated mind, enters My World of Uncreated Light by the secret gateway between two moments and goes to Everlasting Life. Verily, the present moment is the Door to Eternity and the Ford for crossing the River of Time. It is the only appropriate Time for Souls to meet Me, their Creator.

24. Some realise Me through Meditation (Dhyana), others through the Path of Spiritual Knowledge (Jnana), others through the Path of Devotion (Bhakti) and still others through the Path of Righteous Action (Dharma).

25. Among the devotees, he who constantly pleases Me through Spiritual Knowledge, is the most dear to Me. For, without Spiritual Knowledge neither right Meditation, nor Devotion, nor yet Righteous Action are possible.

26. By acquiring Spiritual Knowledge, pure Souls become devoted to Me. By being devoted to Me either in My Manifested Form or My Formless Transcendental Self, they attain to Me, the Supreme Truth. Having realised Truth, they fall no more under the spell of worldly existence.

27. For, this entire Universe consisting of Matter and Spirit is pervaded by Me, it exists in Me and I alone am its Ruler.

28. Verily, O noble ones! I rule the Universe through My Highest Power of Yoga (Yoga Bala). He who realises That, becomes immortal.

29. I observe this entire Universe as if existing of itself. I too, as Lord of Eternity and Master of great Yogis, Create, Maintain and Destroy it at the end of Time.

30. It is I Whom the wise ones in the Scriptures speak of as Yogi and Master of the Cosmic Magic: He, the Master of Yogis (Yogendra), the Great Lord of the Great Yoga Himself.

31. Verily, he who knows Me to be the Overlord of all Yoga Masters is united with Me through the sure Path of Yoga.

32. Such am I, the Divine Sovereign. Moved by the Highest Bliss, I, the Yogi, eternally dance the Cosmic Dance (i.e. continuously Enact the Cosmic Play of Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution). He who knows this, is a true Knower of Yoga (Yoga-Vid).

33. I, Lord Shiva, the Mighty One and the Most Good, am the Highest Truth. The Soul, having sprung from My Person, finally returns to Me. Whether this comes to pass in one lifetime or in many, depends upon My Will. Yoga is the Path by the following whereof Soul is reunited with Me. Verily Yoga is the Path, the Goal and the Guiding Light.

34. The Light of Truth that heralds the Nearing of the One even as Dawn heralds the rising of the self-shining Sun, is called by two names. When received outwardly, it is known as Revelation (Prakashana). When received inwardly, it is called Inward Illumination (Pratibha).

35. He who having received My Revelation follows the Inward Light, shall forsake all obscurity and join himself to what is Bright. Thus he shall attain Salvation in this very life. Therefore, follow you My Path of Light.

36. There is no other Revelation like Mine. This secret-most knowledge is the Supreme Teaching enshrined in the True Scriptures which are known to the wise. Let it be imparted to one with a pure mind, to one who is virtuous and to one who is a keeper of the sacred flame.

Commentary to Chapter 3

2. Men cannot realise Me by means of religious observances nor by means of charitable gifts nor by means of sacrifices: Prayers, rituals and religious observances, etc., are valuable means of establishing a link with the Divine but it is complete devotion to Spiritual life that leads to Higher Knowledge and alone can enable man to experience the Supreme. The highest form of devotion is self-sacrifice, that is, the subordination of the lower self or Ego to the Higher, Divine Self within.

5. Lower heavens: The lower reaches of the Spiritual World above Maya inhabited by Light Beings of great Spiritual purity. However, as their Spiritual Knowledge and Power are not fully developed they do not yet enjoy a full experience of Supreme Reality. They are akin to the saints and prophets of Western religions and on a par with not-fully-enlightened Yogis.

10. I created the Radiant Ones: It is often claimed by misinformed Westerners that Yoga believes in many Gods. Such claims can only stem from individuals who are either unable or unwilling to understand higher Spiritual truths. The fact is that Yoga believes in One Supreme Being (Shiva) Who created all other beings. The Radiant Ones (Devas or Gods) are Beings of Light created by the Supreme Deity. They are the first emanations of the Divine in the process of Universal Creation and therefore are Powers of God. In this capacity they assist in the upholding

of Divine Law, the governance of the Universe, the Spiritual Progress of Souls and the propagation of Truth. Being direct manifestations of the One God and essentially identical with Him just as rays are one with the Sun, they are also called "Gods" not in the sense of independent entities but of Higher Beings existing and acting in complete harmony with Divine Will. In biblical terminology they may be equated with Angels. See also Commentary to 1:15.

22. *As a River, etc.:* A river consists of water that issues afresh from a source and is therefore never the same. At the same time, however, it flows in a channel that undergoes relatively minor changes over time and may therefore be regarded as essentially the same. Similarly, the World is simultaneously projected into existence by the Universal Consciousness every moment anew *and* according to an already established pattern which constitutes the apparently permanent aspect of the World. While the projection of the World occurs at an unimaginably high frequency and therefore lies far outside ordinary man's sphere of perception, the patterns according to which this projection takes place are more permanent in character and well within man's perceptual capacity. As a result, human beings are under the impression that the World is a permanent reality. However, to the Universal Consciousness Who projects the World as well as to those advanced Souls who enjoy a state of identity with the Universal Consciousness, the World is as transient and immaterial as a dream. See also Ch. 2:57 and Commentary.

36. *Keeper of the sacred flame:* Priest or Priestess in charge of a sacred fire symbolic of Divine Light; one who guards and transmits Spiritual Knowledge (conceived as ignorance-dispelling light) to the initiated.

End of Chapter 3 and Commentary

THE FOURTH LIGHT

(Chapter Four)

4

*Wherein the Sages' Vision of Lord Shiva's Cosmic Dance
and their Ascent to the Higher Worlds are revealed*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Sage Vyasa said:

1. Having heard His Word of Truth, the sages worshipped the Lord with sacred mantras and chants and their prayers filled the Skies. The Three Worlds stood still and all was bright as if swathed in a shroud of shimmering mist.

2. A vast expanse of water covered the Earth and reflected the Sky so that one could tell not which was above and which below. For, the two were as if one.

3. But after a time the sages perceived a small light that was as if concealed between the Earth and Sky and shined at first dark, then bright blue, silver and white.

4. They followed that shining light and nearing it they found a secret passage whereby they entered the World that lay beyond.

5. Near the entrance were two great Trees and far afield a Lake with clear water. Further still, to the North of the Lake, there stood a Mountain. From the Tree to the left of the entrance a path went sunwise round about and up the Mountain.

6. Between the Mountain and the Lake there was a brightness like that of the Rising Sun. A beam sprung from that brightness and shot up into the Sky. It then grew into a great Pillar of Light that extended from Heaven to Earth and illumined the whole World.

7. A Voice that came out of that Light made itself heard and spoke: I Am the Light of all lights. I Am That save Which nothing exists. I Abide in the heart of all creatures and they together abide in Me.

8. I Am Shiva, the Stillness (Shi) Whereof all Movement (Va) is born. As Water, Fire and the Sun at once move and are still, so I, the Great Life both Move and Stand Still.

9. I Move in the Form of the Radiant Gods and myriads of living things; I Rest as My Infinite, Only-Existing Self. He who knows this, knows That Which Is True. I Am the Highest Truth and Yoga is the Path that leads to Me.

10. Having thus spoken, the Voice fell silent. Out of the Pillar of Light a great Ring of Fire came forth and encircled the World. In the midst of that Fiery Circle the Lord Himself was seen dancing the Cosmic Dance.

11. Verily, the Great Lord graciously proceeded to demonstrate His Supreme Divine Nature by means of a Celestial Dance.

12. With their own eyes, the Yogis beheld the Master, the greatest Treasure-House of Splendour, the Sovereign Lord, ecstatically swaying and whirling in the clear Firmament like a Great Wheel of Flaming Fire.

13. They saw the Lord of all living beings swaying to the beat of His Infinite Heart. The Lord Who is known only to those who are Self-possessed knowers of Yogic Truth.

14. Assuredly, indeed, the Sovereign Lord of the Universe (Vishva-Natha) Who, having created the World through His Magic, impels it into action, was seen enacting His Dramatic Dance of Life by the noble Sages.

15. They saw the Lord of Creatures (Pashu-Pati) dancing, the Lord the memory of Whose Lotus-like Feet suffices to drive away all fears born of delusion.

16. Shiva, the Great Yogi (Maha Yogi), was seen in His Divine Brilliance as only those who have conquered sleep and controlled their breath, who are calm and full of devotion, can see.

17. In the Firmament, they saw the Great Fiery One, the Liberator, the Delighted Lord, Who is gracious to His devotees and instantly liberates them from ignorance.

18. They saw the Lord's thousand heads, thousand feet, thousand arms and thousand shapes, His matted hair embellished by the Crescent Moon as diadem.

19. The Lord was wearing a tiger skin, holding in His mighty hands a blazing trident and a drum, and having the Sun, Moon and Fire as three eyes.

20. His Divine Brilliance had enveloped the whole of the Cosmos; shining like ten million Suns, He stood there, terrible and invincible in His appearance.

21. They saw the Lord, the Creator of the Universe, dancing His Cosmic Dance while emitting World-Creating and World-Consuming flames of fire.

22. They had a vision of the Greatest God (Maha Deva), the true Embodiment of the Supreme Eternal Mystery, the Deity of Celestial Beings, Master of all Souls, the Supreme Ruler (Parameshvara), the imperishable Bliss and Light.

23. They saw the Wielder of the Bow of Heaven, the Large-Eyed Lord, the Antidote to the Sorrows of Worldly Existence, the Soul of Time, the God of Gods, the Slayer of Limited Time.

24. They saw the Lord of Goddess Amma, the Great Deity Whose large eyes radiate Yogic Bliss, Who is the Abode of Knowledge and Detachment, the Eternal Lord of the Yogic Wisdom Path.

25. The Sages who were well-versed in the Holy Scriptures, saw the Lord of eternal Prosperity and Glory; the Lord Who is difficult to approach yet is the support of Spiritual life; Who is honoured by the Gods and worshipped by innumerable great Sages; Who lives in the heart of Yogis capable of instantly becoming One with God; Who envelops Himself in Yogic Magic and then illumines the path of Seekers after Truth; Who is the source and origin of the Universe; Who is the Highest God and ever free from all sorrows.

26. The Firmament Itself was split asunder as if a Great Veil had been removed from the Sky and they could look deep into the heart of the All. And they saw the All dancing to the beat of the Heart of the Lord. The All was dancing the Dance of Life at the Sheer Pleasure of the Lord, the Great Life.

27. Having seen that Lordly Form in which the identity of God's Transcendental and Immanent aspects became evident, the Sages who were teachers of Spiritual Knowledge felt that they had attained to the highest goal in their life.

28. Thus the congregation of great Sages, beholding the Fiery God of Consciousness and Master of the Universe, meditated upon Him Who was enshrined in their hearts.

29. They bowed down again and again, with folded hands. Uttering the sacred Sound OM, they saw the Lord abiding in the cave of their hearts and with minds overflowing with joy they praised Him with the most beautiful songs.

30. We bow down to You, Who Alone are the Highest Ruler, the Original Soul (Adi-Atman), the Lord of Life, the Fiery One of infinite Yogic Power, You Who live in all hearts, Who are All-Wise, Holy and One with the Supreme. (Holy, i.e., whole, complete, perfect.)

31. Having meditated in their heart on You, the Perfectly Immovable Wise One Who are Greater than the greatest, the Sages of tranquil mind and perfect self-control perceive You, the Pure, Sun-like God Who Created the World.

32. The Universal Energy, the Mother of the Universe, is born of You; though small like an atom, You pervade and experience everything. Smaller than the smallest atom, Greater than the greatest being, the wise ones declare that You Alone are All. Indeed, You Alone Exist!

33. Creation, Maintenance, Dissolution, Obscuration and Liberation: These are Your Five Powers Divine whereby You bring the Universe into being out of Yourself and cause it to revolve like a Mighty Wheel of Flames. Unity is the Power whereby You hold the All together like the rim upon a wheel. You Yourself are the All-Supporting Hub in the midst of all.

34. Of You are the Scriptures born and in You they have their ultimate support. You are the Cause of all: You, Who are in our hearts, are the Director of the Cosmic Drama. Everything moves according to Your Supreme Command, You Who are the Original Soul and Innermost Self of all.

35. You are the Master of the Cosmic Magic and the Only Lord of all the Worlds. We bow down to You and seek refuge in You Who are the very Soul of Yoga, of Universal Unity, You Who Dance the Divine Dance.

36. Perceiving You Who Dance in the midst of the Highest Heaven, we eternally remember your Glory. Ever relishing the Unique Bliss of Supreme Reality, You Who live in the Soul of all, permeate all corners of the Universe. Everything revolves round You, yet though everything else moves, You are Ever-Still.

37. The sacred Sound OM, the Seed of Liberation, is Your resonant symbol. Imperishable though You are, You lie concealed in the Primordial Nature. Such as You are, the wise ones here declare that You Alone, the Self-Luminous One of Divine Powers are Truth.

38. The Holy Scriptures perpetually sing Your praises. The Sages whose sins have been extinguished, bow down before You. Ascetics immersed in the Supreme, with tranquil Souls, full of Truth, merge into You, the Most Excellent One.

39. You, Who are beginningless and Whose Form is the Universe, destroy the Earth at the end of Time. You also are the Highest Creator and Most Excellent Preserver. Those who enter You, the Self-Luminous One, who have attained stability and are for ever free, experience the bliss of their Inner Self.

40. Although You are the All-Consuming Fiery God of Consciousness, You create and protect the entire Universe with all its forms. All these visible Worlds turn to You as their Ultimate Goal and Abode. Right Knowledge sets a man's mind right even as the arrow-maker makes the arrow straight. But of all Knowledge that of Supreme Shiva is best. We therefore make obeisance to and seek refuge in none other but You.

41. Verily, Spiritual Knowledge is like to the Tree of Heaven: It has many branches, it is infinite, and it is One: It reveals You Alone Who are of Single Form. By means of Your Supreme Knowledge Divine those saintly ones who take refuge in You and who are eternally worthy of praise, cross the ocean of Cosmic Illusion in this very lifetime.

42. They call You the Only Wise One, the Supreme Saviour praised by the Scriptures, God, Fire and Lord; they call You the Eternal Fiery One, the Divine Breeze that stirs the Sky of Consciousness into Creating, the Fashioner of all created things, the life-bestowing Sun God Of Many Forms.

43. You are the Supreme Ever-Existing One That ought to be known in their heart by all. You are the Ultimate Receptacle of this Universe. You are the Changeless One Who Protects the Eternal Law of Life. You are the Most Excellent Being, the Infinitely Good One.

44. You Alone are the All-Pervading God of Preservation, the Four-Faced Deity of Creation and the Divine Fire of Annihilation. In truth, You are the Master of everything that is. As Primordial Nature, You are the Material Basis of all. You again, as Supreme Master, are the Lord of All.

45. The wise ones declare that You are the Original Soul, the One Without A Second, shining like the Midnight Sun beyond the mists of ignorance. They call You, Consciousness Itself, the Unmanifest, of Limitless Form, the Void, the Firmament, the Supreme beyond the Material World and its attributes.

46. Your Form is inconceivable. It is beyond the reach of thought and speech. Within It, all these Worlds appear as in a Great Dream. Yet, O wonder! It abides ever unchanging, stainless and unique. You Alone shine within Yourself as all things.

47. Seeking shelter with You, we make obeisance to You, the Merciful Lord of Yoga, the Greatest One, the All-Powerful, Origin and Goal of all, Ancient One Incarnated as the Creator God. O Mighty One! Lord of all Creatures! be gracious unto us.

48. Enchanted by the Ever-Revolving Wheel of Existence, all beings are bedazzled and perplexed. Yet the memory of Your Lotus-like Feet burns up the seed of worldly life and renders it powerless like parched grain. You are the Cause of the Great Fever of Existence and its Only Antidote. This being so, with controlled body and concentrated mind, we meditate upon You, the Highest and Only Lord, the Boundless Ocean of Effulgent Bliss. Verily, equal to Yourself are the wise ones who know the Secret of Your Mighty Wheel!

49. Obeisance to the Great Source, Who originated the Three Worlds; to the God of Time, to You, Who Destroy Ignorance with Your Arrows of Light. Obeisance to You, the Fiery One with matted hair. Obeisance to Shiva, the Great Lord!

50. This having been said, the Bull-Bannered Lord with matted locks joyfully withdrew His Cosmic Form into Himself and resumed His former appearance, seated peacefully upon the summit of the Mountain at the root of the Tree of Life.

51. On seeing the Origin of All, the Lord of everything past, present and future, present before them as if nothing had occurred, the Sages were filled with wonder and bowed down before Him. Then, raising their brows that bore the mark of salutation, they uttered these words.

52. O Eternal Lord! O Master of Past, Present and Future! O God Whose emblem is the Mighty Bull! the Vision of Your Divine Person fills us with infinite joy.

53. Through the power of Your Grace, there is born in our heart an unswerving devotion to You, the Supreme Master, the Stainless One.

54. O Lord of Peace! we have bathed in the Nectar of Your Sacred Words and have fed upon the Light of Your Vision Sublime. Our eyes have become open. Our hearts have been lifted up. Our bodies have been rendered free from sin and perfect. Our Souls are mighty and wise. Yet we crave to know more.

55. O Enlightener of the unenlightened! do grant us the delight of learning about Your Supreme Glory Divine, O Highest One!

56. Hearing their words the Lord, Who Bestows all kinds of wondrous powers upon Yogis who are adepts of Unity with Him, gazed with great compassion upon them and rising from His royal seat, led them deep into the Mountain through a cleft that lay hidden in the wall of rock.

57. Going by a secret path, they came to a Great Vault that arched overhead like the Sky wherein they were befittingly received and saluted by the Assembly of Holy Immortals and the Lord Himself showed them the Wonders of the Higher Worlds.

58. First He showed them the World of the Planets, the Earth, Moon, Sun and countless myriads of Stars, where mortal men live their daily lives. Next they were taken by the Lord up to the Astral World where disembodied Souls go in their dreams; whereto they go when this life comes to an end; and where they abide before they are reborn on Earth. In that World also there lived the First Woman and Man before they descended into the earthly World and there too the Souls meet their departed forefathers. It is therefore also known as the Ancestors' World (Pitar Loka) to the wise.

59. Thence the Sages proceeded to the World of Sleep (Nidra Loka) which is the Dark Void whereto Souls go when in their deepest rest; where they abide before descending to the Lower Worlds (Astral- and Earth-World); and through which they pass when by the Grace of Shiva (Shiva Prasada) they go up to the Higher Worlds. Having thus left behind the World of Sleeping Souls, they ascended to the Threefold World of Power where the Awakened Ones by the Command of Shiva work many a righteous deed: Souls who have attained the Plane of Pure Vision, work by the Divine Power of Action; those who have attained the Plane of Higher Vision work by the Divine Power of Knowledge; and those who have attained the Plane of Perfect Vision work by the Divine Power of Will. Thus they all carry out Shiva's Will, each according to his Spiritual Attainment.

60. Last, the Sages entered the Highest World of all: the Infinite, Ever-Existing World of Supreme Intelligence and Bliss which is the True Abode of Shiva, wherein Souls ever abide in Eternal Unity with Him. Having graciously granted them a Vision of the Seven Worlds, the Lord made the Sign of Ultimate Reality and spoke: O you who are endowed with Wisdom! all the Worlds and their great wonders you have just beheld have their existence within Me. They arise, endure and subside like unto waves within Me, the Great Only-Existing Ocean of Life. They who know this, know the Highest Truth.

Commentary to Chapter Four

10. *In the midst of that Fiery Circle the Lord Himself was seen dancing the Cosmic Dance:* In the Yoga tradition, one of the Thousand Names of God (Shiva) is Nataraja, that is, Lord Of The Cosmic Dance. This Beautiful title designates one of the fundamental functions of the Divine. Shiva is the Creative Intelligence that underlies everything in the Universe. As such, He

performs the Cosmic Dance of Creation and Destruction, of continuous change and transformation. Holy Images therefore traditionally show Him as being surrounded by a Ring of Flames which symbolises the Light of Universal Intelligence That rends the veil of mundane existence to reveal the Supreme Truth. On a different level, the Flaming Ring represents the heat or energy generated by Shiva's dynamic movements, by the rhythm of existence or the eternal pulsation of life. Shiva's Dance reminds us of the fact that everything in the Universe is subject to continual change as Energy constantly assumes new forms of life in the Eternal Play of Creation. As the Creative Energy of the Universe, Shiva spins and whirls round and round through time and space in a complete abandon to the sound of His Own Cosmic Music which is the rhythm of Universal Motion that beats in His Infinite Heart. Indeed, how could it be otherwise, since all sounds in the Universe ultimately derive from the One Eternal Divine Sound? The Eternal Vibration or Pulsation of Life is represented by Shiva's long, wavy hair radiating in all directions like lines of force from His Head - the Centre of the World - and causing the entire Universe to vibrate with life and energy. In spite of the infinite number of movements and steps performed by His Body, at the very centre of this wild whirling dance, Shiva's Head always remains completely motionless, with a serene smile on His lips, reminding us of the centre of our own being, deep inside us, where we can find perfect stillness, peace and happiness. The purpose of Yoga Practice is to connect us with that still centre of our being so that we too can remain always calm, detached and full of love and joy amidst the endless activities and experiences that constitute the great drama of life.

33. *Creation, Maintenance, Dissolution, Obscuration and Liberation: These are Your Five Powers Divine whereby You bring the Universe into being out of Yourself and cause it to revolve like a Mighty Wheel of Flames:* The Shiva Purana explains: "This Wheel of the Universe is glorified in the Scriptures as a Five-Spoked Wheel. It consists of the Five Divine Acts, Creation and the rest which flow from Shiva's Own Power. It is called a Wheel because it incessantly revolves with each Dissolution and Re-Creation like a whirling Firebrand" (Kailasa Samhita 15:40-42). The above-mentioned Powers are the Activities of the Supreme Being whereby He Emits, Maintains and Re-absorbs the Universe back into Himself. Obscuration and Liberation are the Activities whereby Shiva, for the purpose of Creation, apparently separates the Universe-to-be along with the living Souls from Himself and then re-unites everything with Himself at the end of a Universal Cycle (Yuga). At the same time, Shiva Himself remains eternally still at the Centre of the Universe, causing the various stages of Creation and Dissolution to revolve round Him like a luminous wheel of life. For this reason He is known in the Scriptures by the titles of Yugavarta (He Who Causes The World Ages To Revolve), Chakra Samvarta (He Who Turns The Wheel Of The Universe), etc.

42. *They call You the Only Wise One, the Supreme Saviour praised by the Scriptures:* Lord Shiva is called Saviour (Taraka) in the Mahabharata and other Scriptures because as the Supreme Eternal Being Who is Ever Changeless, He saves all beings by graciously bringing them over the turbulent waters of worldly existence into His Divine Presence Which is like an Infinite Island of Peace. For this reason He is also referred to as Maker of Fords for crossing over (Tirthankara), Lord of Fords (Tirthadeva), Bestower of Fords (Tirthada), etc.

45. *Shining like the Midnight Sun beyond the mists of ignorance:* The Midnight Sun is the Sun as he is visible at midnight in the Northern regions close to the Earth Pole. He represents the Light of God Who is Ever Awake even when the whole World is shrouded in darkness and fast asleep. Due to His capacity of being Always Awake, Shiva Who is the Eternal Sun of Reality, is called The Sleepless One (Vinidra), He Whose Eyes Never Close (Animishayya), etc.

48. *Verily, equal to Yourself are the wise ones who know the Secret of Your Mighty Wheel:* Wheel or Circle (Chakra) stands for the Pulsing Activity of the Supreme Lord and its five phases which succeed one another like the spokes of a wheel. This cyclic movement begins with the Act of Obscuration or Veiling (Vilaya) whereby Shiva conceals His Divine Nature from that which is to constitute Creation. This stage corresponds to that of Emptiness (Shunyata) immediately preceding Creation as described in Commentary to 2:72 (a). Second comes Shiva's Manifestation or Emission (Sarshti) of the Universe out of Himself. Third, the stage of Maintenance, Preservation or Duration (Sthiti) of the Created Universe. Fourth, Shiva's Dissolution or Absorption (Samhara) of Creation into Himself. And fifth, Grace (Prasada) or the Act of Liberation (Anugraha) whereby the Souls are awakened to Shiva's World of Light and re-united with Himself. Together, they constitute Shiva's Fivefold Act (Pancha-Kartya) whereby He continuously creates and dissolves the World. The Secret of this Wheel of Divine Activity consists not only in the mere intellectual understanding of its fundamentals but in the actual realisation of these five phases as they take place in every experience or activity of one's own consciousness. Every thought, feeling and sense perception arises from the Tranquil Sea of Consciousness, is held before oneself for a while and then returns to its original source. Becoming engrossed in any of these and forgetting one's Self as the Source of all is the act of obscuration. Remembering the Self is liberation. Thus the Five Acts are constantly performed by all.

52. *O God Whose emblem is the Mighty Bull:* The Bull has been a symbol of Divine Power from earliest prehistoric times and was seen as such by most religious traditions of the Ancient World. In Ancient Egypt, Greece and the Near East, God was said to appear to His devotees in various forms, that of a Bull being one of the most powerful (and popular). In India, both Lord Adinatha, the founder of the Jaina tradition and the Hindu God Shiva have a Bull as a symbolic mount, the title Vrishabha-Gati (He Who Goes On A Bull) being one of Lord Shiva's many Names. The same may be said of the Chinese Taoist Master, Lao Tze, and of the South-Indian Master Boddhidharma (Bodhitara) who in the 6th century introduced Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism to China. While this may seem surprising to modern city-dwellers, in ancient times when most people were farmers or herdsmen, bulls which are rather impressive animals would have been a common sight. In consequence, it would have made sense for the Deity to assume a form with which the believers were familiar. In Ancient India, the Bull was associated with the great Indus Valley Civilisation and cattle which are regarded as sacred are still allowed to roam the streets of modern Indian villages and cities. In Yoga, the Bull as Shiva's emblem is a symbolic embodiment of Spiritual Realities: his four legs represent the Four Yogic Truths; his body represents Steadfastness on the Path of Dharma; his sexual organ symbolises the Divine Power of Creation; his two horns represent Right Action and Right Knowledge; his powerful voice represents the Revelation of Divine Truth. As the Bull performs the functions of procreating as well as leading and protecting the herd, he symbolises not only God's Divine Power of Creation but also of Protection and Guidance and, by extension, Universal Sovereignty. See also Shiva Purana, Vid. Sam., 15:86, where it is said: The Bull of Dharma has forbearance for his horns, restraint for his ears, faith for his eyes, etc. In agricultural terms, the Bull (Vrishabha, from vrish, to rain, to make fertile, to have manly power) is associated with rain and the re-awakening of vegetation on Earth. Festivals during which bulls are let loose among the people or bullfights are held are still observed in India today. Indeed, so great is the suggestive power of the word Bull, and so deep-rooted its influence on the Indian mind that in Sanskrit, a highly symbolic language, it has come to stand for everything that occupies a prominent position among others. The expression "the Bull among the cows" (Vrisho-gavam) can be extended to literally everything that is chief or salient among other things. The thumb, for example, is called "Bull-finger" (Vrishangaulinam) that is, the Bull (or chief) among all fingers. "Having The Bull For An

Emblem" (Vrishabha-Ketu) therefore, means, He Whose Emblem Is The Mark Of Supreme Leadership (or Excellence) Over All Things.

56. *Hearing their words the Lord... led them deep into the Mountain through a cleft that lay hidden in the wall of rock:* Going into a mountain and, in particular, entering a cave situated near the summit of a mountain symbolises entrance into a higher state of consciousness or higher dimension of reality.

58. *He showed them the World of the Planets, etc.:* The Seven Worlds correspond to the seven levels of experience which are mastered through inner knowledge of the Seven Energy Centres or Chakras in the human body.

End of Chapter 4 and Commentary

THE FIFTH LIGHT

(Chapter Five)

5

Wherein the Greatness of Shiva's Divine Power is taught

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O noble ones! know that this World is like a Dream within a Dream. And many are those who are led astray by the delusions of this World. But he who is a master of the Dream becomes a master of the World. A King was once strolling through the palace gardens on a sunny and delightful day. Having walked for a while he wished to rest in the shade of a tree. As he sat listening to the song of birds, and enjoyed the pleasant colours and fragrance of various flowers, vines and shrubs, he was overcome by sleep.

2. In his sleep he dreamed that he was a beggar and forgot that he was the King. He wandered from land to land begging for his food, clad in rags and barefoot. Thus he passed a long time until one day a Yogi came to him in his dream. The Yogi taught him the Perfect Knowledge of the Self. Impelled by that Knowledge the King remembered his true self and awoke.

3. The un-Awakened Soul, O great Sages! is like unto that King, dreaming the dream of limited life. Thinking himself to be a mortal body and being immersed in the material World, the Sleeping Soul is unaware of his Self. But his other half, the Waking Soul, is ever aware of his Self and wide awake.

4. Mortal men identify themselves with the Sleeping Soul and therefore are as if asleep. But the Yogi who is one with the Waking Soul, is ever watchful even when he seems asleep. Whilst his body rests on Earth, he goes to the Lofty Stars where he feeds to his heart's content upon the Milky Radiance of Heaven. Having fed upon that Splendid Light he becomes full of the Power of

God whereby he rises higher and higher until he finds That than Which there is nothing higher: the Supreme Abode of Truth.

5. The Sleeping Soul is like the Moon and the Waking Soul like the Sun. The Moon which is the left eye shines by Night, far off from the Sun; and when the Sun, the right eye, rises, the Moon is gone. But when the Fire of Knowledge which is the Third Eye of Wisdom burns away both night and day, then Sun and Moon become one and are seen by no one. When neither Moon nor Sun are seen then the eye is not two-sided but one. By means of that Single Sight he who is one sees the True Man in the Sky. He, verily, beholds Truth as It Is.

6. Knowledge is the Light whereby Truth reveals Itself. Without Knowledge there is no Truth and no Life. For those that are devoid of Knowledge are as if asleep. And who can tell a sleeping man from a lifeless stone? But he who sleeps not, is ever awake. He is an Awakened and Wise One (Buddha).

7. Verily, the Soul sleeps in stones, dreams in beasts and plants, and is awake in man. But he who is a knower of Truth is the true Waking One. He who has Knowledge has both Power and Wisdom and is a Mighty One. He is a Great Light that ever dwells amongst the Stars.

8. Earth is the abode of those who are asleep; the Moon is the abode of those who dream; and the Sun is the abode of the Awakened Ones. But the Abode of Shiva is the Highest of all for therein Abides He Who Is Ever One. They who walk the Path of Earth stay asleep and at the end of their life go down into Earth; those who walk the Lower Path of the Moon go to the forefathers; those who walk the Higher Path of the Sun go to the Radiant Ones. But they who choose the Highest Path of Light, they come to Me, the One Supreme Sky of Reality.

9. The Yogi who has mastered his dreams is a Ruler of the World. Though born upon Earth, he goes up to the Moon by the Power of his thought; he then traverses the Night Sky and goes to the Threefold Sun; and further still he rises up into the Great Sky (of Universal Consciousness). Thus he attains to the All-Encompassing One. Having attained Thereto, he abides in Everlasting Peace.

10. Earth, O Sages! is the World of Men (Manu Loka). It is that which is seen by the human eye. Therein live the dwellers upon Earth and the inhabitants of other Planets. It is ruled by the Lord of Men (Manu Raja) who resides in the Great City of Worldly Bliss (Lokananda Puri). Moon is the Supernatural World. It is the Astral World (Tara Loka) which is seen by the Yogi's second sight. It is the Otherland (Para-Desh) and the World Beyond this (Para Loka). It is called Astral because it is ever bright as if pervaded by Starlight. Therein abide the Souls who have departed from this World until they are reborn on Earth. It is ruled by the Lord of Souls (Tara Natha). He is the Lord of Peace (Shankara) who resides in the City of Disembodied Bliss (Akayananda Puri).

11. Night Sky is the World of Sleep (Nidra Loka). It is thus called because it is dark like as the Night Sky that lies beyond the Stars. Therein Souls rest at night and before they go up into the Light. Its Ruler is the Lord of Infinite Sleep (Ananteshvara) who resides in the City of Empty Bliss (Shunyananda Puri). Threefold Sun is the Great Beyond (Maha Para Loka) made up of the Three Worlds of Light inhabited by the Radiant Ones, the Luminous Lords of Power who shine bright like the Sun. The Three Worlds are: the World of Pure Vision wherein abide the Radiant Ones who work good deeds (satkarma) for the welfare of the Worlds. It is ruled by the Lord of Purity who resides in the City of the Bliss of Righteous Action (Kryananda Puri). Higher than this is the World of Higher Vision wherein abide the Radiant Ones who think good thoughts for

the welfare of the Worlds. It is ruled by the Lord of Wisdom (Vidyeshvara) who resides in the City of the Bliss of Righteous Knowledge (Vijnanananda Puri). Higher still is the World of Perfect Vision inhabited by the Radiant Ones who generate good intentions for the welfare of the Worlds. It is ruled by the Lord of Will-Power (Ishvara) who resides in the City of the Bliss of Righteous Will (Svacchandanda Puri). These Three taken together form the Great World of Power.

12. Sky is the World of Truth (Satya Loka), thus called because it is boundless like the Sky and because therein dwells the Great Truth, the Great Life, the Great Power and the Great Light: Supreme Lord Shiva Himself and those who are One with Him. He resides in the City of All-Encompassing Intelligence and Bliss (Chidananda Puri). These, O you who are knowers of the Great Secret! are the Seven Worlds with their Seven Capital Cities which are Greatest amongst Centres of Power (Bala-Chakras).

13. In the midst of each of the Seven Cities there is a Radiant Temple of Truth wherein lies a secret chamber. A great Stream of Living Light that runs from Earth to the Highest Heaven joins the Seven Temples (Sapta Devalaya) to each other like pearls upon a string. The Yogi who enters the inner chamber of his heart and rises up by that upward-going Stream of Light enters the Seven Temples of Truth and obtains the secrets that lie hidden therein. By the power of that Secret Knowledge he becomes a Universal Monarch and Supreme Master Equal to Myself. For I am the One in Whom all the Worlds abide and nothing exists apart from Me. He who by means of Yoga awakens to My Highest Truth is Ever One with Me.

14. O foremost amongst devotees! hear you My Word of Truth. I Alone am the Creator of the Universe, I Alone am the Protector of all Souls and I Alone am the Annihilator of all the Worlds. I am the Ever Living Universal Self. Though everything exists within Me, I am seen by no one. For I am the Greatest God, the Inner Ruler stationed in the heart of all. I am known only to those who seek the Truth in their heart.

15. The Wonderful Cosmic Form along with the Seven Worlds - Which has been witnessed by you - is My Own Projection. Verily, O noble ones! My Wondrous Might has been clearly demonstrated by Me.

16. Stationed in the heart of all beings, I animate the Entire Universe by My Power of Action according to My Infinite Wisdom.

17. The Whole World moves through my Own Power and follows My Will. As Lord of Time, I govern the Universe made of elements.

18. O you of clear vision! by one aspect of Mine, I Create the Universe and by another I Annihilate it, while at the same time My Permanent Aspect remains eternally the same.

19. Although I have no beginning, middle or end, I am the Activator of the Cosmic Play of Magic whereby, at the beginning of Creation, I cause the interaction of Matter and Spirit.

20. Through the union of these two, the Universe is born beginning with the Cosmic Intellect and the rest, whereby My Splendour and Glory become manifest. Out of My Own Immeasurable Light I fashioned all this: a most Glorious Sight!

21. The Primordial Golden Seed of Life, the Divine Sun of Consciousness who is the witness of all Worlds and who sets the wheel of Time in motion, is My First Manifestation.

22. Through the Power of Time, I the Ever-Living, the Immeasurable, the Undivided One, Appeared to My Self as the Perishable, Measured and Divided Many like to a myriad rays flowing from the one Sun.

23. As a Reflection of My Unmanifest Glory Divine, I created Heaven where all is ever One: the World of the Mighty Gods which is the Abode of the Deathless Lords of Light. Dividing Myself twofold, I Created the first Couple Divine, the Lord (Ishvara) and Lady (Ishvari) of the Lower Sky, and gave them dominion over all things that are born and die.

24. As a mirror of Heaven I Created the Lower Worlds including Earth. I Created the Sun, Moon and the distant Stars. I Created rocks, plants, fish, animals, birds and the race of Man. I, the Lord, Created human beings beginning with the First Woman and Man, Manu the Wise and Adorable Manavi of Many Charms.

25. I made them of two kinds that they might know separation when they are apart and unity when they are of one heart. Thus they are both two and one. Having created man kind, I commanded the Radiant Gods who are Manifestations of My Own Light to instruct all men in the secrets of Spirit, each and every one according to the power of his own mind.

26. O noble ones! from the Gods down to a blade of grass, this World I Created for the benefit of Man, who, like the Sky reflected in a Lake, is an image of My Own Self. Verily, the World itself is nothing but the visible countenance of My Invisible Self.

27. I, the Self-Born (Svayambhu), Self-Existent (Niradhara), Self-Manifest (Sva-Prakasha), All-Wise God, the Creator of all the Worlds, bring forth the Universe through My Power of Creation and according to My Divine Will.

28. I, the Infinite One, the Immutable Source of all Worlds, protect the Universe through My Power of Preservation.

29. I, the Fiery One, Whose Essence is the Dissolution of all temporary forms into the Great Eternity, Annihilate the Universe at the end of Time.

30. It is due to My Own Divine Power that Fire carries oblations to the Gods, food and other offerings to the Ancestors, as well as performing the functions of cooking, heating and the rest.

31. Through My Own Power, the fire of digestion consumes the food eaten by day or by night.

32. Through My Own Power, Water gives life to all things that live.

33. Through My Own Power, Wind sustains all those that breathe.

34. Through My Own Power, the Moon gives her soothing light to men by night.

35. Through My Own Power, the Sun illumines the World of men by day and brings them welcome rain.

36. Through My Own Power, men are born and die. Through My Own Power, they live according to each one's merits and demerits.

37. Through My Own Power, some laugh and others cry.
38. Through My Own Power, Savitri, the Great Prayer to the Sun illumines the heart of men and redeems them from sin.
39. Through My Own Power, Parvati, the Great Goddess who is ever devoted to Me, awakens Spiritual Love in those who meditate upon Her. Verily, she inspires all Souls with her boundless Love of Me.
40. Through My Own Power, the Infinite, Serpent-like Ananta rules over the Immortal Beings.
41. Through My Own Power, the Fire-like Samvarta maintains the fires that burn underground and causes them to flare up in an all-engulfing blaze at the end of the World.
42. Through My Own Power, the Fourteen Mighty Ancestors protect those who pray to them.
43. Through My Own Power, all the Celestial Beings are appointed to perform their various functions.
44. Through My Own Power, all the divisions of Time from Universal Ages down to the briefest of time-units, arise and pass away.
45. Through My Own Power, all four categories of beings live their lives in their respective States of Consciousness.
46. Through My Own Power, all the Worlds, Lower, Middle and Higher function according to their respective laws as Commanded by Me.
47. All the different Universes of past, present and future times exist for the fulfilment of My Divine Will.
48. The Material Energy and its products, Higher Mind (or Intellect), Ego and Lower Mind, the Five Basic Elements of Nature, Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether, and the human body too, operate as per My Command.
49. What gives the body solidity such as in bones, flesh, skin, arteries and hair, that is of the Earth. What gives the body fluidity such as in saliva, urine, blood, semen and sweat, that is of the Water. What gives the body burning power such as in hunger, thirst, digestive power, energy and heat, that is of the Fire. What gives the body wind-like strength such as in breathing, moving, growing, shrinking, and excreting, that is of the air. And what gives the body an aura of greatness, vibrancy, beauty, radiance and loveliness, that is of the Ether, for Ether is like unto the radiant Sky and the essence of all goodness in things physical.
50. All these Life-Principles constituting one's body, mind, inner and outer life, are held together by My Unitive Power of Yoga (Yoga Bala).
51. The World from The Universe itself down to the smallest atom is held together by My Power of Unity.

52. As the Infinite Universe, even so the individual Soul exists by the selfsame Power. He in whom, by My Grace, the Power of Yoga is strong, his life is held together and set in good order. But he in whom it is feeble, his life is not in order and it comes asunder.

53. Verily, Yoga is living in Unity with Truth. He who lives in Unity with Truth can accomplish everything. Therefore, Yoga is the Power whereby one attains the Four Goals of Life: Righteousness (Dharma), Material Prosperity (Artha), Love (Kama, literally one's heart's desires) and Spiritual Liberation (Moksha).

54. It is by the Power of Yoga, which is Unity with the Divine, that Divine Righteousness is established in man's heart. It is by the Power of Yoga that man's material life is kept in order. It is by the Power of Yoga that man is united with the object of his heart's desire. It is by the Power of Yoga, too, that man is united with Me. Thus, Yoga or Unity (Samyoga), which is My Own Divine Power, is the essence of all life.

55. The human Soul, who enjoys the lower Life-Principles and is regarded as the chief among them, takes birth, lives and dies at My Command. By the Power of Yoga, he attains Immortality.

56. The Power of Cosmic Magic, the true Material Cause of the entire Universe, which enchants and fascinates all embodied Souls, forever assumes new shapes according to My Wish. By the Power of Yoga, the enchanted Soul awakens to Life Eternal.

57. Even the Spiritual Intelligence, whereby Enlightened Souls, having overcome all mental delusions enjoy a vision of the Higher Worlds, abides by My Will, I Who am the Greatest God and Lord of the Yogic Power of Enlightenment.

58. O saintly ones! of what avail are words? The entire Universe consists of My Divine Powers and nothing else. Through My Power of Yoga, I Create, Maintain and Destroy the Universe for My Own Delight. It is born of Me and into Me it merges again at the end of Time.

59. I am the Lord God, the Eternal, Self-Luminous One. I am the Highest Self, the Supreme Reality. I, the Lord of Yoga, Alone Exist and Yoga is the Path that leads to Me.

60. Thus, immortal ones, I have declared unto you this Supreme Knowledge of Yoga, whereby a living being is liberated from the bondage of limited life (Samsara) and is United with Me, the Great God and Lord of Immeasurable Life. Verily, Yoga and Unity (Samyoga) are one and the same.

Commentary to Chapter Five

5 (a). *Moon and Sun are not seen:* When the Sleeping Soul (here referred to as the Moon) recognises the Waking Soul (Sun) as its higher half, the two are united and merge in the Sky of all-pervading Consciousness. They are "not seen" because they have been replaced by a new awareness that is higher than both.

5 (b). *Sees the True Man in the Sky:* He sees his own Self (the Original Soul, Adi-Atma) in and as the Sky of Consciousness.

6. *Awakened and Wise:* Buddha means Awakened as well as Conscious and also Wise.

7. *Great Light amongst the Stars:* Maha Prakasha (Great Light), which can mean both a Soul who is eminent among other Souls or the Great Light Itself Which is the Greatest among all other lights.

8. *Highest Path of Light:* The Path that leads to the Light of Divine Consciousness.

10. *Tara Loka:* Star or Soul World. The disembodied Souls are here compared to Stars due to their star-like appearance. Hence the leading entity of that plane is called Tara Natha which means Lord of Stars and, by analogy, Lord of Souls.

13. *Stream of Living Light:* Stream of Consciousness; Consciousness is the light of perception because it illumines things rendering them perceptible to the senses, as well as the light of understanding whereby that which is perceived, felt or thought is understood; and it is living because it possesses the capacity to know and to act which capacity is the fundamental attribute of life. In Yoga, a thing that possesses knowledge or awareness and is capable of moving or changing shape of its own accord is regarded as living. Consciousness is endowed with both a) knowledge or awareness as it knows or is aware of both itself and the things it perceives and b) capacity to change shape or move as when it creates thoughts, feelings or sense perceptions. Therefore Consciousness must be admitted to be a living thing.

23 (a). *As a Reflection of My Unmanifest Glory Divine, I created Heaven where all is ever One, etc.:* God is Intelligence and the whole of Creation is but a Manifestation of that Supreme Intelligence. At the highest level of experience, therefore, Life is God's Own Pure, Infinite and Absolutely Free Intelligence, and Its Awareness of Itself as such. The first step in the process of Universal Manifestation is the Awareness the Supreme Intelligence has of Its Own Power of Creation or Manifestation and the Will to create or manifest. As such it is technically called Unity or Non-Duality (Abheda), the Supreme Intelligence being so far completely free of all difference or distinction. It may be compared with the state of mind of an artist who has just come to the decision to create a work of art without having as yet formed any notion as to the details of his undertaking. The second step represents the coming into existence within the Supreme Intelligence, of a World of Beings known as Radiant Ones or Gods (Angels, in biblical terms) who though possessing qualities that make them barely distinct from the Original, Infinite, Unmanifest Intelligence, yet exist in full Identity and Unity with It. This stage therefore belongs to the state of Duality-in-Unity (Bheda-Abheda), with an emphasis on Unity, and may be compared to the mind of an artist who has only begun to form in his mind an outline of the work he intends to create, which mental outline is not yet clearly distinguished from his other thoughts but is still very much submerged in his mind. The third step is that in which distinction - the awareness living entities or Souls have of themselves as distinct from the Supreme Intelligence and from each other - begins to gain prominence over Unity. This may be compared to the clear mental image an artist makes of the work he is about to produce, immediately before he begins his work. This Ideal World may be said to constitute a model for the Physical World that is about to be brought into being in the next and final stage of Creation. It is therefore inhabited by luminous beings living in pairs and larger communities, just as those on Earth, the difference being that they and the World they inhabit consist of pure intelligence and energy (as opposed to physical matter). For this reason, they belong to the Class of Higher Beings known as Radiant Ones. The state of Pure Love and Unity among Souls as well as between Souls and God that characterises this World is exemplified by the Divine Entities called, Ishvara and Ishvari. Like their human counterparts on Earth, they are "both two and one". By contrast, on the higher planes, as the Souls proceed higher and higher in their ascent to the One, the last vestiges of duality are shed. In consequence, the emotional need for living as a couple is no longer felt and the Supreme Being is recognised as the True Soulmate of all Souls. This is a view that Yoga

shares with all other faiths once their teachings are put in the right perspective. Thus, according to the Quran, the righteous will go to Heaven where they will be "wedded to dark-eyed virgins". On the other hand, Jesus makes it clear in the Bible (Luke 20:34-35) that on Earth, men "marry and are given in marriage, but they who have attained Heaven neither marry, nor are given in marriage, for they are equal to the Angels (or Radiant Ones of the Higher Heavens, in Yogic terms)". Hinduism in turn teaches that upon attaining Enlightenment, the Soul simply merges into, and becomes One with, God. These apparently mutually contradicting views are beautifully harmonised by Yoga with its teaching of various layers of Heaven, each of them being inhabited by Souls who have reached a different level of Spiritual development: in the Lower Heaven, a Soul may still seek to form a close relationship with another Soul; in the Middle Heaven this is replaced by an ever-closer relationship with the Supreme; and in the Highest Heaven, Absolute Unity and Identity with The Supreme is attained. Thus the creational stage prior to the coming into being of the Material World belongs to a state of Duality-in-Unity (Bheda-Abheda), with an emphasis on Duality. Finally, the fourth and last step in Creation is that of the Physical World including Earth, where distinction or the awareness of difference and separation between created beings and God is the only mode of experience. It is therefore technically called Duality or Difference (Bheda).

23 (b). *Dividing Myself twofold, I Created the first Couple Divine, the Lord (Ishvara) and Lady (Ishvari) of the Lower Sky, and gave them dominion over all things that are born and die:* It is an established fact that man can best relate to things that are familiar to him. For this reason, most people among the ancient races worshipped the more accessible manifestations of the Supreme Unmanifest Being Who remains beyond ordinary man's sphere of perception and conception. These manifestations were the First Divine Beings known to mankind. They were revered as Ishvara and Ishvari in India, Ashur and Ashera in the Near East, Zeus and Diona in Greece, Osiris and Isis in Egypt, etc. They also represent the Divine Prototype after which the First Man and Woman (Manu and Manavi) were created. It is important to understand that humans were created by God out of Himself as His Own Manifestations and were not made from dust or other such materials as some have believed. What the original Scriptures mean by dust, clay, earth, etc., is *material substance* or *energy*. To maintain that the Supreme Being requires dust to create anything is a blasphemous notion that only the Spiritually ignorant can entertain.

24. *I, the Lord, Created human beings beginning with the First Woman and Man, Manu the Wise and Adorable Manavi of Many Charms:* This is comparable to the biblical story of Adam and Eve as the Ancestors of the human race. However, the Bible states that their son Cain, having killed his brother Abel, went eastwards of the Garden of Eden where he took a wife (Genesis 4:17). This suggests that a human population may have existed prior to Adam and his family, hence Adam and Eve could not have been the Ancestors of the entire human race but only of the Jewish people, at the most. Indeed, the Creation accounts of most nations are each concerned primarily with the birth of their respective ethnic group, outsiders only being included to account for variations in physical features such as skin colour, etc. For example, certain East African traditions which are geographically and culturally close to Ancient Palestine, state that God created white men from white sand, red (or brown) men from red (or brown) mud and black men from black earth. Now, the Hebrew word Adam literally means "red earth" and must therefore refer to that particular ethnic group to which the ancient Hebrews (and Egyptians) belonged. In consequence, the biblical story can only mean that some conflict existed among the Semitic nations which resulted in some of them being forced to leave their original homeland and settle among populations already existing elsewhere. One such population could have been the inhabitants of India, the descendants of Manu, the First Man who was also known as Manus or Manusha. Indeed, the English word man as well as Mandaean, an ancient sect of the Middle East may have their origin in Manu ("thinking One"). In the Bible, Jesus himself refers to his

person as "Son of Man". This seems to have been an Indian rather than Hebrew tradition as Indian Scriptures habitually refer to humans as "Sons of Manu, the First Man", Manu himself in the Indian tradition being not a mere mortal but a Divine Being. Baptism or "holy bath" (snana) itself, which is central to original Christianity, is an ancient Indian practice that goes back at least to the Indus Valley Civilisation (2,000 BC) and is still observed today by many Hindus as part of their daily ritual. This is done as follows: the faithful rise early at dawn and briefly submerge themselves in a river, in the Sea, or in specially built water tanks near temples. They then re-emerge and say a prayer to the rising Sun who is regarded as a physical manifestation of the Light of God. Not only has this ritual bath or "baptism" a purifying and uplifting effect on the faithful but it can also easily give rise to experiences such that described in the Bible, where, upon coming back up from the water, the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus like a dove. As one re-emerges, one can actually see the sunlight shining through the water overhead like a white dove. The fact is that we cannot reasonably exclude the possibility of baptism having been introduced into Palestine from India. Moreover, there is a tradition in India and the Near East according to which Jesus (known as Isa) was initiated in his youth by Indian Masters either in India herself or some part of the Middle East, such as Egypt or Persia. (The Bible tells us that he was taken to Egypt by his parents and the presence of Indian sages in the Egyptian Capital of Alexandria at that time is supported by historical evidence.) Having survived the injuries he sustained at his crucifixion, he is then said to have travelled to Persia where he studied with the Magi (Yogis) and then to North India (Kashmir) where he lived to an old age. His body reportedly lies buried in an ancient tomb in the old town of Shrinagar, which can be viewed even now. In light of the fact that Rome - of which Ancient Palestine (or Israel) was a province - had close commercial and cultural links with India, and that Jewish settlements appear to have existed in India, as elsewhere, since the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC, this tradition cannot be reasonably dismissed as mere myth. Early-Christian sources such as Pistis Sophia (Faith Wisdom) testify that Jesus lived and taught on Earth long after crucifixion. The Acts of Thomas relate how Jesus appeared to his disciple Thomas at a wedding, in India. Whether this appearance was in the flesh or in Spirit is difficult to ascertain. However, one of the founding fathers of the Christian Church, the 2nd century Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, who was a native of Asia Minor, mentions a local tradition according to which Jesus lived in Asia (i.e., India) with his disciples, to an old age (Adversus Haereses II, 22:5). The connection between Jesus and India, therefore, was established from the very beginning of the Christian faith. The fact is that in addition to baptism, such teachings as "God and I are One", "God is in you all", "You all are Gods" and "Be you perfect like God", patently belong to the teachings of Indian Yogis, only fragments of which seem to have found their way into modern Jewish (or Christian) Scripture. (What the discerning reader must bear in mind is that the present-day Bible represents a small selection of writings out of hundreds of original texts that initially existed side by side with the official version but were subsequently either ignored or deliberately destroyed by the religious and political authorities.) Indeed, the above-mentioned teachings although clearly present in the Scriptures, are not as a rule found in the official doctrines of either Judaism or Christianity. This suggests a deliberate attempt to obliterate the Eastern origins, and true essence, of these traditions. And yet it remains an undeniable fact that Jewish historians of the time (Flavius Josephus) confirm that reincarnation, a patently Indian doctrine, was widely taught in Ancient Palestine (Israel). It remains a fact that prominent personalities among the Early Christians (Saint Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Synesius of Cyrene) were keen proponents of reincarnation. It remains a fact that the belief in reincarnation was expressly suppressed by the Church centuries later so as not to diminish Jesus's own "Resurrection"; that while the Bible itself nowhere rejects the concept of reincarnation, certain passages may be taken to support it; and that original Christianity sought to assert its own legitimacy, among other things, by relating that "Wise Men from the East" came to see Jesus. However, these Wise Men are described as Magi or Magians, which identifies them as belonging to the Persian branch of Yogis (also called

Mayins, Magicians, in Sanskrit) who were World-renowned for their Mastery of Astrology, Magic and Medicine (the modern word Medic comes from Media, Persia, just as Magic comes from Magian). Obviously, as truly Wise Men, they would not have come to honour young Jesus as it is claimed but, rather, to instruct him (along with many others) in Spiritual matters in their capacity as Spiritual Teachers. In the same capacity, they would have come to warn Jesus, as heir to the throne of King David and rightful King of Israel, that the impending Jewish Revolt against Rome was destined to fail and that the future of his people depended on peaceful coexistence with other nations. A final but no less significant detail is the fact that Jesus was anointed with oil extracted from the Indian plant spikenard (jatamansi). Since the act of anointment was a highly-symbolical ritual, the choice of Indian in preference over local oils can hardly be dismissed as accidental. Other essential oils such as that of the sandal-tree were also imported into Ancient Palestine from India. As so often, the truth may be said to lie in the detail and can be found there by all who care to look. History, in any case, shows that whenever there is an import of material goods (via the celebrated Silk or Spice Route), cultural influences are never far. But to return to the biblical account of Creation involving Adam and Eve. As we shall presently show, this may also be taken in a symbolic sense. The Bible states that God created man from dust and then breathed life into him. Now language is, by definition, symbolic and symbolic language has been the medium for the transmission of Spiritual teachings from times beyond human memory. Thus Adam (lit. Red Earth) may simply mean physical matter in which case humans are the product of Matter (Earth) and Spirit (the Breath of God). Nor is the biblical version according to which Eve was created from Adam's rib, necessarily the correct one. The notion that God (as an All-Powerful Being) needed to remove a part of one human to create another human seems strange and artificial. The fact is that the Hebrew word Eve is not a personal or even human name but actually means, She Who Gives Life. A Sumerian (Ancient Persian) account which is universally accepted as predating the Bible, states that man was created, at the command of God, by the Goddess Who Gives Life - whose name can also be translated as Lady Of The Rib (the ribcage being regarded as the seat of life). The older, Sumerian sequence seems to be the correct one as physical matter does actually arise from Spirit or Life itself. The error must have occurred with the adoption of the Sumerian tradition by the ancient Hebrews and its translation into their own language. Incidentally, similar Creation accounts according to which Mankind is the product of the union of a male (or Spiritual) and female (or Material) principle are found in the Scriptures of India and are universally accepted as predating the biblical story. Having rectified these popular misunderstandings, we may now accept this revised (and more coherent) biblical tradition as essentially identical with the Teachings of Yoga: man is made from both Insentient Matter (Adam, Red Earth) and Living Spirit (Eve, Life). In Yogic terms, a human being consists of Spirit (Atma), and Matter (Prakarti). Prakarti or Primordial Matter literally means She Who Brings Forth (or manifests, what was conceived by Spirit). This also agrees with the teachings of the Sages of Ancient Greece like Pythagoras and must therefore be regarded as the correct view. In consequence, we may safely reject the literal interpretation of the biblical story.

26. *From the Gods down to a blade of grass, this World I Created for the benefit of Man:* The creation of male and female, though representing the last or "lowest" point in the Process of Manifestation, has the function of awakening in the individual Soul the desire for Unity so that he eventually returns to the original state of Absolute Oneness enjoyed by the Supreme Intelligence or God. In an ordinary, that is, Spiritually untutored individual the inborn tendency towards Unity or Wholeness is largely unconscious and often misguided. Thus it may manifest itself as a desire to consume large quantities of food, to accumulate material possessions, to acquire more and more intellectual knowledge, to travel extensively or even to have a large number of sexual partners. In consequence, the individual is assisted in his journey of return to Divinity (Shivatva) by various Higher Intelligent Entities known as Radiant Ones (Devas), Lords of Light or Perfect

Souls (Siddha Purushas) who help him to focus his unitive or whole-making impulse and channel it in the correct direction, that is, towards the Spiritual Wholeness that is found in Unity with the Supreme. In those cases such as in modern, materialistic society, where the individual has become disconnected from a higher guidance, this is replaced by psychology, psychiatry or conventional religion which can only ameliorate the symptoms without addressing the underlying root causes of the condition. Indeed, in most cases, the human need of Unity and Wholeness is often exploited and misused by various groups for financial, political or religious purposes. The higher perspective of Yoga which is the Original Science of Unity (Yoga Vidya) alone can enable the Seeker to avoid such deplorable pitfalls.

49. *What gives the body solidity such as in bones, flesh, skin, arteries and hair, that is of the Earth, etc.:* The Five Basic Elements of Nature (Earth, etc.) described here as elsewhere in the Shiva Rahasya must not be confused with the physical objects or substances whose names they bear. Rather, they are a form of energy (or active intelligence) which assumes properties that give rise to, and are commonly observable in, these objects and so are *symbolically* known by the same names. A more detailed description of their nature is given by J. C. Chatterji in his excellent introduction to Indian philosophy, Kashmir Shaivism.

End of Chapter 5 and Commentary

THE SIXTH LIGHT

(Chapter Six)

6

*Wherein the Mystery of the Supreme Lord's
Wondrous Power (Maya) is revealed*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O Sages! listen you now to God's Great Work of Magic, by knowing which, man is sure to become a Deathless One.
2. All unenlightened Souls in this World are known to be Bound Creatures (Pashus). I am worshipped as their Lord (Pashu-Pati).
3. For My Own Pleasure, I the Lord, bind these Souls by means of My Cosmic Magic. For My Own Pleasure, I also set them free.
4. I, the World Soul, the Eternal Overlord of living things, am the sole Liberator of those who are bound by Maya (God's Magic Power). Knowers of Spirit, therefore, know Me as the Liberator of the World. Hear you My Supreme Knowledge!
5. Though Truth Is Ever One, of Its Own Free Will It manifests Itself as many. Thus out of the One Supreme Self, Knower, Knowledge and Known Object are born. Though appearing to be

different, the three are but One. For, the Known Object is the product of Knowledge; and Knowledge is the activity of the Knowing Self.

6. The object is made of the Five Material Qualities (Bhuta-Gunas) which are well-known to the Wise. They are Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. They are born of the Mind in this way. That activity of the Mind that gives rise to the experience of an emptiness that spreads out in all directions like the Sky and wherein other things may be seen to exist, is the Quality of Space (literally, Sky, Akash-Guna). That which gives rise to the experience of nearness or distance, location in space and movement, is the Quality of Air (Vayu-Guna). That which gives rise to the experience of form, shape and size, is the Quality of Fire (Agni-Guna). That which gives rise to the experience of softness, moisture and fluidity, is the quality of Water (Apas-Guna). And that which gives rise to the experience of solidity, stability and firmness, is the Quality of Earth (Dhara-Guna).

7. All objects of the senses are known by these Five Qualities. When an object such as a Water-Jar is perceived, it is seen to spread out and fill up a portion of space as well as being surrounded by emptiness and being itself empty, either partly or fully, inside. Thus the Mind-created Quality of Sky (or Space) is plainly seen in the perception of Jar. The Quality of Air is manifest in the Jar's nearness or distance in relation to other objects and to the perceiver himself. The Quality of Fire is likewise clearly perceived in the Jar's form, shape and size. The Quality of Water is perceived as being absent in the Jar itself but present in the water contained therein. And the Quality of Earth is perceived in the Jar's stability and firmness that make it an earthlike experience, as it were.

8. Thus it is established that an object consists of the Five Material Qualities I have described. If they ask you, My Lord, is a Jar not made of clay? Say to the doubter: Verily, what is true of the Jar that also is true of clay. For, the physical things called, Earth, Water and the rest that make up clay are themselves the product of the Five Qualities. And these are made of Mind as explained before. All material objects are made of the Mind-created Qualities. There shall be no doubt about this.

9. Listen you now how the Material Qualities are born of the Five Primary Perceptions (Tanmatra-Gunas). These are: Scent, Flavour, Colour, Touch and Sound. Without these, no Material Qualities would be perceived. When the Mind emits a sound vibration in the Sky of Consciousness, it spreads out in all directions, producing the perception of a wide expanse like that of Sky (or Space). Thus, from variations in Sound there arises the Quality of Sky. When the Mind creates changes in the feeling of Touch, there arises the experience of movement like that of Air. When the Mind produces changes in a Colour, it beholds various forms, shapes and sizes like the flickering flames of Fire. When the Mind tastes various Flavours it perceives moisture and fluidity as in Water. And when it smells various Scents, as a result of their lingering on, there arises within the Mind a feeling of permanence, stability and firmness like that of Earth.

10. Thus it is established that the Five Material Qualities are the product of the Five Primary Perceptions: Sound produces the Quality of Sky; Touch produces Air; Colour produces Fire; Taste produces Water; and Scent produces Earth. A material object is a combination of these five.

11. The Five Primary Perceptions in turn are made of the Mind's Five Powers of Perception which are: Smelling, Tasting, Seeing, Feeling by Touch and Hearing. The Power of Hearing produces Sound. For, when the Mind wishes to hear there arises within it the sensation of Sound. Thus the Power of Hearing produces Sound. Feeling produces Touch. Seeing produces Colour.

Tasting produces Flavour. And Smelling produces Scent. Thus it is established that the Mind's Powers of Perception bring forth the Five Primary Perceptions and these bring forth the Material Qualities that make up the objects of the World.

12. Now, the Soul acts upon the object by means of his Five Powers of Action which are: Speaking, Grasping, Moving, Discarding and Procreating. When the embodied Soul hears a Sound, he wishes to give answer and emits a Sound. Thus Speech (Vak) is born. When the Soul senses a Touch he wishes to grasp that which has touched him. Thus Grasping (Hasta) is born. When the Soul perceives a Vision of a thing, he wishes to move nearer or further in relation thereto. Thus Moving About (Pada) is born. When the Soul has tasted, eaten and digested some food, he wishes to discard the same from his body. Thus Discarding (Paya) is born. When the Soul senses the Sweet Fragrance of a person of the opposite gender he is overcome by a desire to produce offspring. Thus Procreating (Upastha) is born.

13. O noble ones! of the Soul's desire to know, the Powers of Perception are born; of these are born the Primary Perceptions; of Perceptions, the Material Qualities; and of Qualities, the object. Likewise, when the Soul desires to act the Powers of Action are born. Thus a Soul's Powers of Knowledge and Action are born of the Soul's Power of Will.

14. Verily, everything is born of will. As the Soul, so the Lord too, has a Will. Only whereas the Lord Wills out of Plenty, the Soul wills out of lack thereof: Whilst the Lord creates the World, the Soul creates limited things.

15. It is only when the Soul is impelled by the Lord's Will, that he desires to accomplish great things. Therefore a man of Spirit is known by his will. A great man is ever desirous to know things of the Soul. Whilst the others follow their craving for material things, he seeks for a Higher Truth.

16. O you who are most wise! know that Knowledge is of three kinds: Lowly, Middling and High. The lowly is that knowledge acquired from others. It is called Tradition (Agama) or Hearsay (Shabda). The middling is knowledge acquired by oneself through reason. Hence, it is called Reason (Anumana). And the highest is knowledge acquired neither from others nor indirectly through reason but in direct experience. Hence it is called Direct Experience (Anubhava).

17. As the Knowledge, so men too are of three kinds: the lowly who never reason but live their life by Tradition or Hearsay; the middling who make use of their Reason; and the highest who wish to know for themselves.

18. When, impelled by the Lord's Will a Soul wishes to know the Truth, he is instructed into Truth. By the Power of that Truth he lifts himself up to Higher Planes like a bird soaring in the Sky. Having attained to Higher Worlds he becomes Awakened and Wise. Therefore, hear you My Word of Truth that you may attain the Highest!

19. The Awakened Soul beholds the Glory of Him Who Is One. But the Sleeping Soul sees only the World which is born of his own Power, like a dream. That Power is called Material Energy (Prakarti). Oblivious to the Joys of Heaven and wishing to experience worldly life, the Sleeping Soul descends into the World of Matter. Therein he abides as if enveloped in a dark shroud. The upper part of the shroud is the Intellect or Higher Mind, called Buddhi; the lower part is the Lower Mind, called Manas.

20. Buddhi is that aspect of Material Energy which has the capacity to reflect Intelligence. It reflects the Soul's Power of Knowledge and illumines the Lower Mind. The Sleeping Soul abides between the two. Looking upwards he perceives the Light of Knowledge. Looking downwards, he sees the Activities of the Lower Mind. As the Sun abides between Heaven and Earth, so the Soul, having become an Ego (Limited Person) abides between the Higher and the Lower Mind.

21. From the will to live, Knowledge and Action are born. Verily, both Knowledge and Action are born of desire. Desire is the activity of the Mind. And the Mind is that aspect of the Soul which desires. For, when the Soul rests in himself, he is happy, peaceful and still. But when he desires a thing he rests not till he has obtained the object of his will.

22. He impels the Lower Mind to seek out sensations and the Mind abides by the Soul's will. Like an obedient servant, the Lower Mind sends out the Senses into the Soul's Field of Perception and returns forthwith with a great array of objects fashioned by it from the aforementioned Qualities. Thus the unawakened Soul lives his life in a World of Qualities which are mere shadows of the Heavenly Glory and his Original Home.

23. Thoughts, Feelings, Senses and the Qualities that make up the objects of the World, arise out of the Soul's own Subconscious Energy.

24. Each and every Soul is endowed with his own Energy, inseparably attached unto him as his own material aspect and object of experience. The Material World perceived by each Soul is born of that Energy. It consists of Three Constituent Qualities (Maha Gunas).

25. Luminosity, Activity and Darkness, these are the three Primary Qualities of Matter (Maha Gunas). They are the Life-Strands whereby, in countless combinations, I weave the Fabric of the Universe of Conditioned Existence, warp and woof.

26. Being the subtle strands that make up the living Web of Life, these three are seen only by the Wise (Jnanis) who are possessed of Higher Knowledge. The others only see their effects. Listen therefore to their attributes and functions, that they may be known and seen by all.

27. Light (Sattva) is knowledge. Darkness (Tamas) is insentience. Activity (Rajas) is the combination of the two. They are experienced as pleasure, insentience and pain, respectively.

28. When a man has a perception of a person dear to him as being near him, his mind is pleasurable affected. He thinks to himself, Happy indeed am I. This is the Primary Quality called Pleasure.

29. When he is devoid of all perception, as when intoxicated or in deep sleep, his mind is overcome by dark numbness. He thinks nothing at all. This is the Primary Quality called Insentience.

30. But when he perceives himself alone, without the dear one, his mind is tormented with pain. He thinks to himself, Alas, my dear one is gone. Unhappy indeed am I. This is the Primary Quality called Pain.

31. Thus, Pleasure is consciousness of a desired object, Insentience is absence of consciousness and Pain is consciousness combined with the absence of the desired object. They are the constituent elements of all experience in worldly existence.

32. A man bound to worldly existence constantly goes through these three states and their countless combinations. All his experiences are born of these. Verily, there is no way out for one who knows nothing higher.

33. Before the creation of the Material World; when the World is in a state of Dissolution; and in Deep Sleep, the Three Qualities lie undifferentiated in perfect equilibrium and inactive.

34. When in perfect equilibrium, they constitute what is known as Unmanifest Matter (that is, Material Energy in its not-yet-manifested potentiality).

35. At the time of Universal Creation, at birth, and upon waking from deep sleep, I stir them into action and they begin to affect the Soul according to Karma and in conformity with My Cosmic Plan.

36. At the time of entering deep sleep, at death, and in Universal Dissolution, I suspend the interaction of the three and the Soul remains unaffected and inactive.

37. There is no happiness in the World of men without knowledge of the three constituents of life. For, ignorance thereof produces imbalance among the Gunas and leads to suffering. Spiritual Knowledge creates balance among the same and leads to happiness. Therefore, the wise strive to increase both knowledge and happiness.

38. The wise know that what is commonly regarded as Desirable and Undesirable tempts one into the bondage of ordinary Action (Karma).

39. Each thought, word or deed, leaves a latent trace in the Soul, like a seed left in the earth by a plant. In due time, it springs to life affecting one according to its nature, good, indifferent, or bad.

40. As a King who, being forced by a great fire, earthquake, or flood to abandon his Capital City, gathers his subjects round his person before departing thence, so the Soul who is the Spiritual Sovereign of the Material City called Body, descending into the heart, assembles his mental powers round himself, when Death approaches.

41. As the King, followed by his people, departs by the Northern Gate, the Eastern Gate, the Southern Gate, or the Western Gate as the circumstances may require, so the luminous Soul goes out by the crown of the head, eyes, or other bodily parts according to his state of mind. As he leaves, he is followed by his life-breath, intelligence and knowledge of things present and past. They all go with him like a swarm of fireflies or bees.

42. As the King, surrounded by his people, having left the old City behind, gives orders for a new City to be built upon a suitable spot, like a hilltop or riverbank, and according to the knowledge of his priests, architects and masons, so indeed the Soul, the Lord in the midst of life-breath, intelligence and the rest, makes for himself a new body when the time is right and according to his mental powers. Then he re-enters the World.

43. According to the Universal Law which says that man is what he thinks, one's future life, body and circumstance depend upon one's last thoughts. Therefore, he who at the time of departing from this World thinks of Me, the Lord, that one shall go to My Supreme Abode. But he who thinks of other, lower things, shall go the downward way. For only two ways exist: one that leads to Me and one that leads away. What applies to thoughts, that applies to speech and physical deeds.

44. Thus, as the fruits enjoyed by a farmer at harvest time are born of the seed planted by him at sowing time, even so one's present life is born of past actions, whereby one is bound. This bondage is called Karma.

45. Having performed an action with a view to obtaining some object or another, one is bound to the result of one's action according to the Inexorable Law of Cause and Effect (Karma). But that Action which springs from Knowledge (and not ignorance), which is selfless and is aimed at Me, the Highest Goal, leads to Liberation and not to bondage.

46. Ignorance, Egotism, Passion, Aversion and Attachment shall be known as Bondages (Pashas). They obscure the Soul's Light of Knowledge and lead him to perform actions that bind him to his painful condition.

47. Maya (Cosmic Illusion) is the sole cause of these Bondages. It is the Divine Power (Shakti) whereby I Create Limited Existence. Through My Power of Maya, I first bring forth the Unmanifested Material Potentiality whereof all material things are born. Through the Power of Maya, I divide Myself into Spirit, the Conscious Soul, and Matter, the unconscious Object.

48. I Alone Am the Eternal Supreme God. I Am at once Matter and Spirit and their products such as the Intellect and the rest, too. I Alone Am the Bondage and the Creator of Bondage; I Who Create both Bondage and the Bound Souls; I Who Know everything but Am known to none. I Am the Primordial and Ever-Living Ancient One.

49. O you who are Tigers amongst men! of My Own Free Will I Envelop Myself in Maya, even as the Sun envelopes himself in Clouds. Like the Sun behind the Clouds I surround Myself with the Veil of Maya and hide Myself from the World.

50. Divested of My Light, the whole World goes to sleep. Having put the Souls to sleep, I the Ever Awake, enchant them all with My Great Dream. Verily, there is no greater Work of Magic than the World wherein all Souls dream.

51. No Soul shall ever rouse from the Great Sleep of Maya save by My Divine Command. But My Word of Truth shall work in those who hear It and they shall stir in their sleep. The chosen ones shall be ready for My Call. And hearing the Sound of Awakening they shall rise from their sleep like deer at the call of a great stag.

52. O you who are the Jewels of the World! he that understands the Twenty-Five Life-Principles from Soul down to Earth, perceives himself as a free and happy Soul. But he who understands the Great Secret of Maya, he is a Knower of all Thirty-Six Principles and is One with the Great God.

53. The Five Material Qualities, Five Primary Perceptions, Five Powers of Knowledge and Five of Action; Lower Mind, Ego, Intelligence, Material Energy and the Soul above these: they are the Twenty-Five. He who knows this is a Wise Soul indeed. But he who knows Maya and what lies beyond, is Three Times Wise. For he knows the Five Fetters, Maya which is their Support, and the Five Powers Divine. Verily, such an one knows the Secret of the Thirty-Six which Is the Greatest Secret of all. There is naught to be known beside the Thirty-Six. He who knows these, knows everything and all.

54. As many birds build their nests in a great Tree, so countless Sleeping Souls weave the dream of their lives in Maya's Great Abode of Slumber. As cave-dwellers dwell in their caves within a great Mountain, so myriads of Dreaming Souls dwell within the Great Cave of Maya which is the Souls' own Heart. The Yogi who knows this, meditates upon the Truth within his heart and beholds the Greatest Light.

55. By His infinite Power of Freedom, the Great Power, the Great Light, creates the Great Cave of Maya. Of Maya are born the Five Fetters that tie down the Soul to the Material World.

56. As a Great Star shines from afar through the dark Night Sky, so the Supreme Sun of Consciousness, the Great Light from the Highest Height, passes down through the dark Veil of Maya and becomes a Star-like Soul shining with Five Rays of Light: That Light of Lights Which having enveloped Itself in the Great Veil of Maya, makes a mere mortal of a Deathless Soul, is the Power of Limited Time (Kala). That which binds an All-Pervading Soul and determines the fruits of his deeds is the Power of Limited Efficiency (Niyati). That which makes an All-Wise Soul know only limited things, is the Power of Limited Knowledge (Vidya). That whereby an All-Powerful Soul can accomplish only few things, is the Power of Limited Action (Karma). And that which causes a Perfect Soul to crave for worldly things, is the Power of Attachment (Raga).

57. Thus, having become many, the One Great Light shines in the Cave of Maya like as a myriad of Stars: each sending out its Fivefold Light into the dark.

58. Now, the Soul who meditates in his deepest heart upon the Uppermost Star, rises by its light into the dark Maya Sky and passing through it goes far beyond, to the World of Light wherein he shines like the One Sun Bright; he then goes higher still where he is One with the Great Life, the Infinite All-Supporting Sky. Drinking of the cool waters of the Lake of Remembrance that lies beyond the boundaries of this World, the Soul remembers his Five Powers Divine and attains to the Most High.

59. Verily, he who by means of Yoga knows that I am the Lord of Maya and that he is Identical with Me, he rises above the World and is forever Free.

60. As a serpent casts off his slough, as an elephant draws himself out of the mud, as a sick man (upon recovering) rises from his bed, even so the Yogi shall rise above the World and go to My Supreme Abode. Thus I, the Great Lord, teach and declare.

Commentary to Chapter Six

5. *The Known Object is the product of Knowledge and Knowledge is the activity of the Knowing Self:* Everything that can be said about something we experience, be it a physical object, a sense perception, emotion or thought, for example: shape, size, colour, hardness or softness, fullness or emptiness, distance or nearness in time and space, pleasantness or unpleasantness, etc., is nothing but an activity of Consciousness and hence a function of Knowledge, that is, the power Consciousness has of relating to itself and to other things. For this reason, in Yoga, such activities or creations of Consciousness are known as Abhasas or Appearances (from bhas, to shine), that is, what shines or appears to the experiencing Consciousness, like one's reflection in the mirror. As manifestations of Consciousness - some basic, others more complex - the Abhasas represent the fundamental units of experience that constitute all things from the Universe down to

the smallest possible object. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that everything is a creation of the Conscious Self.

14. *Verily, everything is born of will:* Will is the power whereby Consciousness is aware of Itself as a force that is capable of performing action (that is not yet specified). In practice, will-power means: (a) the power of willing, desiring or intending to do something, (b) the exercise or use of this power and (c) the capacity to consciously direct, or exercise control over, a mental impulse, tendency or inclination. Desire is held to be an unsatisfied longing for something. But longing is itself, by definition, a wish or act of will. While will-power represents primarily the general capacity or power to consciously and deliberately generate, exercise and control a particular volitional impulse, desire may be said to be an expression of this power in relation to a particular aim or object, which expression may moreover be less deliberate, controlled or conscious. (For this reason, we sometimes speak of involuntary or subconscious desires but never of involuntary or subconscious will.) In this sense, desire may be regarded as more emotional and will as more rational. Apart from this, any distinction between will and desire must be admitted to be merely conceptual rather than actual or real, the two being expressions of the same one psychological capacity, called will-power. This is only natural, for although ordinary people may sometimes be inclined to differentiate between will and desire, from a Yogic perspective desire always presupposes and hence equals will. For example, when we say, "God Wills", we clearly mean to say, "God Desires". The same also applies in the case of Yogis or Enlightened Beings whose inner life functions in complete harmony and unity, whereas in the case of Spiritually untutored people, distinction between will and desire is only perceived due to insufficiency of inner harmony and unity. To children also, desire and will are one. Having clarified this point, we may now briefly explain the process whereby, as our verse says, everything is born of will. We have already shown elsewhere that Consciousness is the ground, or fundamental substratum, of all things. As such, It has two aspects: one that is unmanifest, constant and still, and one that is manifest, changing and active. While the unmanifest aspect consists of Intelligence and Bliss which is the natural state of Consciousness, the manifest consists of Knowledge and Action which is the state Consciousness assumes every time It becomes active (Knowledge, etc., being activities of Consciousness). There are two points or phases that may be distinguished in this. The first, consists in a kind of indescribable, barely perceptible ripple or vibration (spanda) that stirs the tranquil waters of Consciousness blissfully resting in Itself. The second, is a clearly defined movement, like a wave rising above the surface and moving in a particular direction. It is this second moment in the process of transition from the unmanifest to the manifest, or from the potential to the actual, that constitutes volition (or will) properly speaking, the preceding moment being practically identical with Consciousness resting in Itself. The Power of Will holds within itself the potentiality of all future manifestation. For example, a potter or a weaver, having resolved in his heart to make a pot or a cloth, makes a mental representation of the object he is about to make according to his resolve, and then translates that representation into action (shaping of clay or weaving) which results in an actual object. The resolve or will manifests itself as knowledge of the desired object and then as the action that brings about the creation of the object, the object being in the final analysis born of will. And so is man's life. Says the Upanishad: "A person is made but of desires. As is his desire, such is his resolve; as is his resolve, such the action he performs; what action he performs, that itself he becomes (or obtains)" (Brihad-Aranyaka IV, 4:5-7). As man creates an object, so too, God creates the World as an activity of His Free and Independent Will: "He desired, Would that I were many! Let Me procreate Myself! Thus He created this whole World. He became whatever there is here" (Taittiriya Upanishad 2:7). However, since the very nature of Consciousness is Pure, Undifferentiated Intelligence and Bliss, Consciousness wills not only to act or manifest Itself but also to return to, and rest in, Its natural, unmanifest state. Therefore, the return to the original, blissful tranquillity of Primordial Consciousness is in harmony with Divine

Will. By attuning himself to this, the Yogi returns to the very source and ground of all existence. Says the Vijnana Bhairava: "If, having perceived the rise of a desire, one puts an end to it, it will merge back in that very place whence it arose" (96). When the Yogi's awareness has been enhanced and refined through Spiritual Practice (Sadhana), he can observe the surge of a volitional impulse long before it has taken a definite shape. Then, by letting go of that impulse and directing his attention to its source, it will subside therein like a wave falling back into the Sea. Having done this, all that is needed is to remain in that Thought-Free, Tranquil and Blissful Sea of Consciousness from Which all movement such as desire, thought, feeling, sense perception and physical action arises and to Which all movement returns. Thus he returns to his Original State. Concentration on the initial stir, vibration or pulsation (prathama spanda) of Consciousness that precedes all other activity is therefore a key Yogic Practice. By constantly returning again and again to the Divine Will which is the Source of all things, the Yogi becomes one with it and acquires Infinite Power. Says the Shiva Sutra: "The will of a Yogi who has realised the Divine Shiva Consciousness, is one with the Supreme Will-Power of the Lord which manifests and dissolves the Universe at will" (I, 13); "Being united with the Divine Will-Power, the Yogi can create whatever kind of body he desires" (I, 19); and "By the union of his consciousness with the Divine Will, the Yogi acquires the power of joining and disjoining things and events including those that are far away in time and space, according to his will" (I, 20). And the Tripura Rahasya explains: "Just as dream creations are images moving upon the screen of the mind, so also this World including yourself is nothing but a reflection of Pure Intelligence, like an image seen in a mirror. Realise that the Self is the Self-Contained Mirror projecting and manifesting this World. The Self is Pure, Unblemished Consciousness" (XIII, 90-91); "Do you not know that this World is the result of the Lord's Will? It appears real and permanent due to the Power of Divine Will. Whereas your own creation no one takes seriously and is of no avail due to your own mistrust. A new thought is effective and durable only so long as it is not obstructed by a previous one. When it is made strong and effective it dissolves and replaces that which has gone before: in that way great things can be achieved. Your thoughts do not materialise for the aforesaid reason. Therefore, you should practise concentration of thought if you desire your own creations to endure" (XIV, 7-16).

16. *O you who are most wise! know that Knowledge is of three kinds: Lowly, Middling and High:* Yoga recognises other, more detailed classification systems of knowledge or cognition (Jnana) such as that which distinguishes six forms thereof: indeterminate cognition, determinate cognition, recognition, remembrance, imagination and doubt. (1) Indeterminate cognition (Nirvikalpa Jnana) is that which arises prior to the formation of thought and corresponds to a state of mind in which nothing can be said about the object of perception, as for example, in deep sleep, in meditation, when we are just born or when we have just opened the eyes and have not yet formed a clear image of the World before us. At this stage the object is a uniform mass of perception that is barely distinguishable from the perceiving subject. (2) Determinate cognition (Savikalpa Jnana) is that which arises after a particular object has been selected out of the uniform mass of perception, compared to the memory of similar or identical objects perceived in the past, given a name and attributed certain qualities which enable us to make a positive assertion in respect of the object such as: "I know this", "This is such and such", "I like/dislike this", etc. (3) Recognition (Pratyabhijna) is that form of knowledge which arises by bringing into relation past and present perceptions of an object. (4) Remembrance (Smriti) is that knowledge which is born of the revived impressions of past experiences. (5) Imagination (Utpreksha) is knowledge consisting of mind-created perceptions. (6) Doubt (Samshaya) is an incomplete or indecisive knowledge that arises from conflicting notions with regard to an object, and which may be expressed as: "It may be this or that", "It may be so or so", etc. These six may be further expanded to include all forms of human knowledge such as perception, inference, analogy,

presumption and so on. However, for the purposes of establishing proximity to, or distance from, the Self, the three Kinds of Knowledge described in verse 16 are quite sufficient.

49. *O you who are Tigers amongst men:* Man-tiger (Mano-vyaghra) is a title given to persons of great Spiritual power.

58. *The Soul remembers his Five Powers Divine:* Consciousness is Ultimate Reality. According to the experience of accomplished Yoga Masters, the Universal Consciousness, Supreme Intelligence or God (Shiva) is an infinite, eternal, independent, self-luminous, self-aware and creative Entity that contains everything that exists within Itself and upon which all experience depends. The Universe we live in is but the expression of the unlimited Power and Freedom of Consciousness. Everything that is perceived or conceived to exist is the creation or manifestation of the Universal Consciousness, which is an infinite Power, Force, or Energy. The natural and essential function of Consciousness is to illuminate or know Its own existence as well as that of all other things. Consciousness has the unlimited power and freedom to know and to act. This unlimited power and freedom, known as Para-Shakti (Supreme Power), has five main aspects:

- (1). Intelligence (Chit), or the Power whereby Consciousness can understand or perceive Itself, as well as feel, reflect on and examine the events that occur within Itself.
- (2). Joy (Ananda), or the Power whereby Consciousness experiences Its own eternal, independent and infinite peace and satisfaction.
- (3). Will-Power (Ichcha), or the Power whereby Consciousness realises Itself as an infinite and independent Force that is able to perform any action.
- (4). Knowledge (Jnana), or the Power whereby Consciousness can shine upon, or reveal the existence of, what is conceived of as objects, holding these in conscious relation with Itself and with one another.
- (5). Action (Kriya), or the Power whereby Consciousness can assume different forms, while remaining essentially a Unity. More specifically, Action is an offshoot of Knowledge which gives rise to the experience of a fixed series of forms (in which a thing appears), which (forms) do not shine, or appear, simultaneously, but in succession.

These are the Five Powers of God which exist in a greatly limited, dormant form, within us as the natural powers of the Soul. Through Spiritual Practice (Sadhana) the Divine Powers in us come to life and we return to our original state of Divinity.

End of Chapter 6 and Commentary

THE SEVENTH LIGHT

(Chapter Seven)

7

*Wherein the Secret Knowledge of the Thirty-Six Life-Principles
is praised as a Means of Union with the Supreme*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O foremost among the pure-hearted! I shall now make known to you the Secret Teaching of the Thirty-Six Realities whereby a living being can cross the stormy Waters of Worldly Existence and go to the Island of Eternal Peace.

2. In the Beginning, there was just Radiant Intelligence: Boundless, Undying and Free. Being full to the brim with Freedom, Wisdom and Might, It was Alive, a Living Being, the Great Life Itself. This Great Being, Wishing to use His Freedom and Power, shaped the Universe within the infinite expanse of His Own Radiant Intelligence, even as a man fashions a thought or feeling in his heart.

3. For this reason, the Wise Ones have called Him Shiva which means, That in Whom everything rests (Shi) and by Whose Power everything moves (Va). I Am that Shiva, the Original Ever-Living One; the Unseen and Uncreated Who Ever Is before everything that is seen and created is born or dies.

4. From the Stillness of My Heart a Wish was first heard and then brought to Light. The Wish was made firm in the form of Thought. The Thought was made audible as a Word. And the Word was made visible as the World.

5. Thus, from Wish, to Thought, to Word, the World came into being at My Divine Command. Everything is born of That Supreme Sound. Even the Divine Form you are now beholding with your eyes is a Manifestation of That.

6. I Am That Supreme Reality. I am Boundless Freedom and Might and My Powers are Five: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinite Fullness-and-Satisfaction, Omnipresence and Eternity. These are My Five Powers Divine. When obscured by My Mighty Magic they become limited and the being who holds them is known as Soul. Thus the Soul is born as the sixth in the midst of the five. He is the power-holder and their master even as I am the Holder of the Five Powers Divine.

7. O Sages! first I created a Glorious World of Light, radiant as tens of millions of Suns. Therein abide the Radiant Ones and all beings that are fair and bright. Then, I enveloped Myself in Mighty Magic and created the World of man.

8. Of My Own Free Will I Envelop Myself in My Wondrous Power, even as the Sun conceals himself behind the Clouds created by his own heat. Verily, like unto the Sun that stands concealed behind the Clouds, even thus I conceal Myself from the World.

9. As in the day the light in the Sky, the Sun, is ever one but at nightfall the dark Firmament is bedecked with myriads of Stars, even so, behind the Veil of Magic I am One: ever shining in the boundless Sky of Universal Consciousness. But enshrouded in the Veil of Maya, I am myriads of Souls shining each like unto a Star in the dark night sky that envelops the Earth.

10. Verily, Night and Day, the Stars and the Sun, all are My eternal signs. I gave them to man that he might know the Truth at all times. The World being a manifestation of My Truth, it teaches and reveals the Truth to all who have an open heart. Unto those who follow the Path of Yoga, the World is a treasure house of precious gems, each scintillating sparks of Truth.

11. But to the others it is like a sealed chest that no one can open and whose secrets no one understands. The Sealed Chest is Maya. The Key is My Word of Truth. The Treasure in the Chest is the Supreme Light.

12. Divested of My Light, the World is enshrouded in darkness and goes to sleep. I, the Ever Awake, having put the Souls to sleep, enchant them all with the Great World Dream. This is My Great Work of Magic. No Sleeping Soul ever rises from the Sleep of Maya save at My Divine Command. Verily, there is no Greater Work of Magic in the Three Worlds than that brought to pass by Maya.

13. O noble ones! in the Great Abode of Truth, Truth is Ever One. But in the abode of double-sided reality, It is twofold: the Truth perceived by the unawakened and That perceived by the Perfect Ones. Of these two the latter shall be regarded as True by the Wise, and not the first-named which is a mere shadow of the True Light.

14. Earth is the World of man, where everything is limited, divided and dark. It is not a real World being only like a dream, a World of shadows cast by a Higher Light.

15. I, the Great Light, am the World-Father. Maya, My Mighty Magic is the World-Mother. From our Union innumerable living Souls, all identical with their Creator, are born. Yet, deluded by My Power of Illusion, they do not recognise Me as their Maker. The Awakened Ones, the Buddhas, they alone know that Maya is the Mother and I Alone am the Father of the multitude of creatures born in this World.

16. He who abides under Maya's Spell is a bound Soul. He who rises above Maya is its master. Therefore, Maya is the fetter to be conquered through Sadhana or Spiritual Discipline. He who knows the Great Secret of Maya, knows how the World comes into being. He knows how, though the Souls appear to be many, they are in reality One.

17. He who knows the Secret of Maya, knows that I create the World and man creates his own perception of the World. For this reason, although the World is one, every Soul has his own perception thereof. Through My Magic Might what is One appears as many and what is many appears as One. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by Maya, the Power of the Supreme Sovereign. But he who by the power of his thought creates a World that is equal to mine in clarity, radiance and greatness, he is Equal to My Supreme Self. Verily, he who is a Master of the World-dream, is a Master of the World. Therefore, listen you to this Great Secret of Mine.

18. The Soul is born of Me. His powers are born of Maya, My Great Power. From that also springs the Material Energy, the Soul's Twin. And of that, the Soul's World is born. The Five Powers Divine; Soul, Material Energy, Intellect, Ego and Lower Mind; Five Senses; Five Powers of Action; Five Perceptions; and Five Material Qualities: these are the Six Groups-of-Five. In each of these I am the Sixth, the Hidden One ever abiding in their midst. I am the Unseen Witness Who knows them each and all. Thus the Five with Myself in their midst, are Six times Six.

19. The Thirty-Sixth is That Which contains all, pervading and animating them from within. It consists of all Powers Divine. It Is That-Which-Alone-Is, the Unsurpassable, the Only Existing Truth known to Yogis but unknown to all others. Yogis are the People of Unity who ever strive for Union with Truth. Whatsoever does exist in Heaven, on Earth and betwixt, is a product of the

Thirty-Six. Verily and without doubt, there is naught else besides. He who teaches otherwise is a deceiver and most unwise. For he is only deluding himself.

20. O you who are ever Wise! in this World some laugh and others cry. But the wise Yogi is ever serene and content. For he is endowed with Knowledge that others claim not to possess even though it was revealed by Myself unto the World. Those who feed upon My Light of Truth, are nourished by It and grow Real. But the others, who reject My Truth, become unreal and mere shadows of true men. They resemble evil Spirits and ghosts that feed upon foul things.

21. The unawakened who deny My Revelation are as if dead. For in their delusion they know neither their true Self nor anything else that is of worth, but only the imaginations of their own mind. For them, Death is like a serpent that envelops man in his deadly coils and devours him while still alive.

22. But the Enlightened Yogi is never touched by Death. As he who is awake to the World is not overcome by sleep, so he who is awake to Truth is not harmed by Death. Verily, Sleep and Death cannot touch one who is Awake, even as darkness never touches the Sun.

23. O Sages! the body knows only itself. The mind knows the body. And the Soul knows body, mind and himself. It is for this reason that the Soul (Atma) has been called Self (Atma). For he is the Self of all three and the true Self of man.

24. The Soul is the Twenty-Fifth Principle, the Inner Witness who beholds the Mind, Body and outer World within his own Field of Knowledge. For this reason, he has been called, the Knower of the Field.

25. Beyond that, Ten more Life-Principles remain to be known. In truth, they are naught but the Glorious Powers of God: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinite Fullness-and-Satisfaction, Omnipresence and Eternity which are the Offshoots of His Boundless Freedom.

26. When obscured and greatly reduced by Maya, they are imperfect human powers. When free and unobstructed, they are indeed Infinite and Divine. They are the Yogic Powers of Buddhahood.

27. Above everything else I, the Thirty-Sixth Life-Principle, like the Sun shining above the Summit of the Mountain of Reality, Eternally Abide in the Highest Glory as the One, Self-Effulgent Supreme Deity. Looking outwards through the Veil of Maya, as through a magic crystal, I see Myself in the form of innumerable Souls. Turning My Gaze within, I again see Myself as the Only-Existing One.

28. O you who are Seers of Truth! though Uniform, Undivided and Eternally One, of My Own Divine Will I become Many. Dividing Myself into Two, Three, Four, Five and Seven-times-Five, by My Own Power I Create the entire Creation out of Myself.

29. Two-Formed, I am the Creative Light of Consciousness and also Its Creation, the Sovereign and His Kingdom, too. For, into these two I divided Myself at the Beginning of Time.

30. Churning the Primordial Ocean Of Consciousness with the Churning Rod of My Boundless Might, I manifested Ethereal Spirit and Material Matter, Heaven and Earth, Soul and Body, Creator and Creation, Shiva and Shakti, the Lord and His Infinite Power.

31. Three-Formed, I am the Powers of Will, Knowledge and Action, the functions whereby I, the Universal Consciousness, having created the World, operate therein at will. By these three, I rule over the World like a Mighty Sovereign over his Kingdom. They are the Trident-like Symbol of My Sovereign Power.

32. Four-Formed, I am the Four States of Consciousness. The first of these, Waking, is known to man. Dreaming, Deep Sleep and the Fourth, Enlightenment, are known only to Yogis and Beings Divine.

33. Five-Formed, I am the aforementioned Four and the Universal Consciousness that contains them all.

34. Six-Formed, I am the Six Powers Divine: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinite Fullness-and-Satisfaction, Omnipresence, Eternity and Infinite Freedom, their Source.

35. Now, concerning the Seven Groups of Five or Pentads, as the First of these I am the Four Universal Masters and their Overlord. They are called: the All-Pervading One (Vyapi Natha), the All-Encompassing One (Vyoma-Rupa Natha), the Infinite One (Ananta Natha), the Sovereign One (Anatha Natha) and the Self-Existing One (Anashrita Natha), their Supreme Ruler. They abide in the World of Perfect Vision, known to the Wise.

36. As the Second Pentad, I am the Five Universal Powers limited by Maya. As the Third Pentad, I am the Soul, Material Energy, Intellect, Ego and Lower Mind. As the Fourth Pentad, I am the Five Faculties of Action. As the Fifth Pentad, I am the Five Senses. As the Sixth Pentad, I am the Five Perceptions. As the Seventh and Last Pentad, I am the Five Material Qualities from Space down to Earth.

37. Above and beyond these Thirty-Five, transcending and at the same time containing all within Myself, I Eternally Abide as the Thirty-Sixth Life-Principle, the Unsurpassable, Unfathomable, Unutterable, Supreme Shiva (Parama Shiva) Himself.

38. I Alone Pervade everywhere. I Alone Encompass everything. Everything moves, breathes and lives by My Power.

39. In the human being, I am the breath upon which his life depends. Going in and out, it covers a space of thirty-six finger-breadths.

40. Multiplied Tenfold according to the Ten Powers, five human and five Divine, I am the Three Hundred and Sixty Rays of Consciousness that constitute the Fullness of Reality.

41. In earthly time, I am the three hundred and sixty days of the human year. In Celestial Time I am three hundred and sixty human years that constitute a Year of the Gods. The same, multiplied twelve thousandfold, is a Great Age or Cosmic Cycle.

42. In Space also, I am the three hundred and sixty degrees in the All-Encompassing Circle described by the Great Firmament itself.

43. I am the Self-Existing Light of all lights, ever shining in all directions with three hundred and sixty Rays: One hundred and eighty Rays belong to the Fire (of Consciousness). One hundred and twenty Rays belong to the Sun (of Knowledge). And sixty Rays belong to the Moon

(of the Known Object). Together they make three hundred and sixty Rays of light that reveal the World. I Am all things that shine. There is nothing else beside.

44. Thus, O immortal ones! there is none other but I, the Supreme Lord. I Alone Exist as Everything. I am the Human Soul, the Path of Thirty-Six Steps leading to My Supreme Abode and the Self-Shining Guiding Light Which is the Ultimate Goal of all.

45. There shall be no doubt about this. When through the power of Yoga the Soul who is none other but I, penetrates the dark Veil of Maya, he shall behold Me Face to Face and come to know himself as what he really is: the Embodiment of Truth and Identical with My Supreme Self.

46. Verily, what is covered in many veils cannot be seen at a glance. Let no man expect to see My Truth at once. True it is that ordinary men do not know Me, the Lord. But the Self-Realised Yogi who by My Grace elevates himself to Divine Status shall become his Own God, that is, the Supreme Ruler of his Inner Universe.

47. Such one, by virtue of his Sovereign Freedom shall become God-like and, in consequence, shall be well capable of knowing Me. For, only like can know like.

48. Even ordinary men can know God deep inside themselves, in their heart of hearts. For every one of them is a Spark of Heaven, a Ray of Divine Sunlight and a Dewdrop of Universal Intelligence.

49. Yet this Divine State cannot be reached at once, save in extra-ordinary cases. It is to be attained gradually, ascending the well-trodden Steps of the Thirty-Six Yogic Principles, guided by the Light of the Right Means of Knowledge and adding one Ray of Light after another to one's Royal Crown of Sunlight. And finally, United with Me, being seated upon the Effulgent Throne of Heaven.

50. He who knows the Thirty-Six knows the secrets of all numbers and of everything that is. Nothing is unknown to him. By means of this Secret Knowledge the Bound Soul shall awaken to his own Divinity. He shall cast off his limitations imposed upon him by Myself for the purpose of Limited Creation.

51. Liberating himself from the bondage of the Mind by means of Yoga, he shall enter upon the Great Journey from finite to Infinite, from speck of stardust to Sea of Divine Radiance. From Man-God to God-Man. From Individual to Universal. Yoga, therefore, is to be known as the Expansion of the limited human Soul to Cosmic Dimensions.

52. By the Power of Yoga, man attains Identity with Me. Having attained Identity with Me, he becomes the Lord of Yoga, which is the Power that holds all things together and by means whereof one can know and accomplish all things. Yoga is the Union of things that stand opposed and the Power whereby two things that were divided become one again.

53. I, Supreme Shiva, the Soul of the Universe, the Adorable Sun of Consciousness, Shine with dazzling Rays of Light in Seven Forms radiating downlight from their Source according to their degree of Self-Luminosity and Unity with the Supreme.

54. Firstly, I am the Highest, Lord Shiva Himself, the Unique, All-Inclusive and All-Pervading Light of Lights. Secondly, those Souls who are endowed with a high degree of Unity with Me

and with other Souls. Thirdly, Souls who, although they possess a strong sense of Unity, begin to experience some distinction.

55. Fourthly, Souls with a fading sense of Unity. Fifthly, Souls in a state of transition, who are beginning to leave Unity behind. Sixthly, ordinary Souls who can experience distinction only. Seventhly and Last, insentient objects which, though made of Intelligence, do not experience themselves as such.

56. I, Lord Shiva, the First and Highest Form of Consciousness, Eternally Experience Myself as One with all Thirty-Six Life-Principles. The rest, the myriads of beings populating the Universe, occupy each their particular Place in the Universal Sky of Consciousness according to the Principles they experience by a process of Identity.

57. Verily the higher the Principle or Principles one identifies oneself or becomes one with, the higher the position one shall occupy in the Universe. For thus I have declared, The fearless one who Life's Stairway to Eternity would scale, him Shiva's Light shall make Divine without fail.

58. Such One alone is Reality, the Great Yogi, the Divine Self, the Sky-Encompassing Infinite One, the Ancient One Who can only be known through the Highest Spiritual Knowledge. He Alone is the only Saviour (Taraka). He is the Cause of Universal Dissolution. He is the Origin of All. He is the All Itself.

59. Some say that I, the Divine Self, am One, others that I am Many. Some say that I am that Self, others that He is another. But I, the Greatest God, declare that I am at once smaller than the smallest atom, yet greater than the greatest. Formless, yet endowed with Form. Uniform, yet of innumerable forms. I am All and Everything.

60. Verily, the Wise one who realises that Supreme Master in his heart, who beholds that Eternal Being Who manifests Himself as the Universe and is the Highest Goal of Sages, he alone shall be fit to ascend to My Supreme Abode beyond the plane of ordinary knowledge where he shall enjoy Bliss Undying and Divine.

Commentary to Chapter Seven

5. *Everything is born of that Supreme Sound:* See Chapter 1, Commentary to introductory verse.

9. *As in the day the light in the Sky, the Sun, is ever one, etc.:* When the Sky is clear as during the day, the World is illumined by one Light only. But when the sunlight is obstructed, as in the night, not even the myriads of Stars can dispel the darkness. Why this great contrast between Day and Night? As the World was created by the Greatest Intelligence in the Universe, it can hardly be supposed to be a random and meaningless collection of things. Indeed, Day and Night exist for a purpose, which is to remind us of a Higher Truth. This Truth is that Reality has two aspects. One in which It reigns Supreme, as the Only Existing Truth, and another in which It apparently assumes a secondary position, leaving the stage free for others to unfold their own life drama, while Itself constantly observes the World Show from behind the ever-changing scenes. The sage understands that while both realities have their value, only that is really true in which One Reality outshines all others. That reality is the Condition of Divinity, Godhead, Enlightenment, Awakening or Truth. Whatever it may seem, everything else is just a dream, fashioned by the Supreme Reality Itself. Not only this, but just as Day follows Night, so also

Reality returns to Its natural state of Supreme Sovereignty every moment anew before returning to the Grand Show of the Universal Drama. More permanently, It returns to Its True Self at the "End of the World". This End of the World takes place on two levels. On the personal level, when the Enlightened or Awakened Soul sees through the plot of the World Drama and stands face to face with the Sun of Reality Whom he recognises as his own Higher Self. On the Universal level, the End of the World Drama comes when, at the time of Universal Dissolution (Maha Pralaya), the Divine Show Master dismisses the actors, the audience and Himself and merges everything back into His Infinite, Unmanifest Self.

11. *But to the others it is like a sealed chest:* The question that arises here is whether Enlightenment can be attained by means other than Yoga. The answer, of course, is no. As the word itself suggests, Enlightenment is the condition of living in and by the Light of Universal Consciousness (or Divine Intelligence). Yoga is both the experience of that state (of Absolute Unity and Identity with the Supreme) and the means that leads to it. Although Spiritually ignorant man cannot escape a sense of isolation that leads him to feel abandoned and forlorn, the truth is that he is never alone. The space between man and Shiva is never empty. It is always full to the brim with the radiant Intelligence of myriads of Yogis who are rays of the Supreme. The All-Embracing Sky of Universal Consciousness from here to Infinity is ever ablaze with Yogic Light which is the Light of Universal Unity. These Yogis, of course, are not limited beings with physical bodies like those seen on Earth, they are Pure Luminous Beings of great Spiritual Power. The fact is that the Higher Reaches of Existence are occupied exclusively by Yogis who are more and more Identical with Shiva in ascending order. Now, supposing, for the sake of argument, that a non-Yogi somehow succeeded to reach those Higher Planes of Universal Unity, he must necessarily have shed his non-Yogic ideas which are, by definition, divisive, in order to acquire the unitive purity that entrance on the Higher Planes naturally demands. And, having entered those Planes of Universal Unity, he will, by force of circumstances, have been transformed into a Yogi, that is, a Follower of and Participant in Universal Unity, and Pervaded and Enlightened by Shiva's Unitive Light of Truth which is Yoga, and transformed into a Being who is One with Shiva Himself. In consequence, and as everybody will agree, it is a logical necessity for the Higher Reaches of Existence which are Abodes of Pure Universal Unity and ever free of even a shadow of disunity, to be inhabited by Yogis and Yogis only, since otherwise the Universal Unity would cease to be such. To deny this would amount to denying the ultimate Unity of Being and this in turn would expose the denier as being ignorant of the most fundamental Spiritual Truth, which is, that Reality is One.

12. *I, the Ever Awake, having put the Souls to sleep, enchant them all with the Great World Dream, etc.:* Says the Shiva Stotravali: "Obeisance to You! the only lamp for worldly beings blinded by the darkness of delusion. Obeisance to You, O Supreme Being! Ever Awake in the midst of a sleeping World" (14:18). Likewise, it is said in the Ishvara-Pratyabhijna: "When the whole World is asleep only the Highest Lord, the Creator of the World-Drama, is Awake".

16 (a). *Maya is the fetter to be conquered through Sadhana or Spiritual Practice:* Sadhana literally means that which leads to Perfection (Siddhi). Any activity, physical, mental or Spiritual that leads to a higher state of consciousness constitutes Spiritual Practice. It is the perfecting of the apparently imperfect Soul and leads to a Perfect Experience of Life which is identical to the Experience God has of Himself and of His Creation.

16 (b). *Though the Souls appear to be many, they are in reality One:* In reality, there is only One Supreme Soul (the Universal Self or God) and all individual Souls are one with each other in and through the One Supreme Being. External, object-centred consciousness as experienced in everyday life imposes on the mind an awareness of distinctiveness and separateness between

Souls. It is to a large extent a matter of identity. If we identify ourselves with limited physical bodies, then we cannot help feeling distinct to and separate from others. If we identify ourselves with the mind then the self-imposed delimitations are less rigid and become more fluid allowing us to identify in thought and feeling with those with whom we share certain thoughts and emotions. If we identify ourselves with the Soul, the conscious entity at the centre of our being, who consists of pure light, intelligence and energy, then we cannot avoid feeling one with other Souls who are all essentially the same as we are. Finally, if we identify with the Supreme, Universal Being, then logically One Being Only exists and the Oneness of Life becomes the underlying substratum of all our experience.

20. *Knowledge that others claim not to possess even though it was revealed by Myself unto the World:* In the same way as the function of the Sun is to radiate light, the function of God is to radiate Truth. Truth or Knowledge of Reality is constantly transmitted (or transmits Itself) to the World in many different ways yet the recipient's power of perception or conception is not always sufficiently developed for him to fully understand the meaning of what he has received. Elements of Yogic Teachings may be found in all Spiritual traditions of the World yet they are not always recognised as such and their existence is denied by the ignorant. For example, the Christian religion recognises that God is One. Islam also teaches that there is no other God besides God. However, Yoga goes one step further and asserts that God alone exists. This clearly establishes the Absolute Unity of Life and Supremacy of God in a way no other religion does. While this teaching is implicitly contained in all other traditions, it is eminently evident in Yoga alone. It is as if non-Yogic traditions were afraid of exposing the full Truth and attempted to cover it up or dilute it beyond recognition. This is perhaps due to the fact that they are transmitting the Truth to non-Yogis, that is to say, to persons who are not yet ready to assimilate the whole Truth and therefore must be fed diluted versions thereof just as a babies are fed diluted food.

27. *Turning My Gaze within, I again see Myself as the Only-Existing-One:* The diverse forms of existence from the highest to the lowest are nothing but Shiva's Own Universal Consciousness manifesting Itself as the Thirty-Six Realities. When, at the Time of Dissolution, Shiva re-absorbs everything into Himself, the Eternal, Thirty-Sixth Reality alone remains as the Only-Existing-One. The Enlightened Yogi who identifies himself with the Supreme, Unmanifest Reality, likewise no longer sees the Thirty-Six Realities but only the One. Says the Shivastotravali: "O Lord! how glorious is Your Great Festival of Worship (Puja-Mahotsava) which consumes even the Thirty-Six Realities" (17:30).

32. *Dreaming, Deep Sleep and the Fourth, Enlightenment, are known only to Yogis and Beings Divine:* The English word Enlightenment is the translation of the Greek Photismos (Illumination) which was the term employed by the Sages of Ancient Greece to describe the condition of elevated Spiritual Awareness, a condition that is often accompanied by visions of light (photisms). In the Yoga tradition itself, the term Illumination (Pratibha) is reserved for the light of Intuition (or Insight) that illumines the mind, as it were, and enhances its faculties prior to Enlightenment proper. The latter is commonly referred to as Moksha (Liberation), Mukti (Release), Nirvana (Extinction of Mental Fluctuations), Duhkanta (End of Sorrow), Bodhi, Sambodhi (Awakening), Sampurnata (Perfection), Shivatva (Oneness with God) or Shiva-Sthana (Being Established in God). The term Enlightenment or Illumination, therefore, may be said to have three levels of meaning corresponding to three degrees of experience: (1) visions of light (photisms), (2) state of enhanced mental awareness and clarity prior to Enlightenment proper and (3) Enlightenment itself, that is, the Highest and Fullest Possible, God-like State of Consciousness or Being. In the final analysis, however, all these are just mental concepts that do little more than vaguely pointing to a condition that surpasses all mental conception. As the Buddha himself has said: The objective field of the Enlightened Ones is unthinkable, it cannot be

thought out; anyone who tried to think it out would reap madness and frustration (Anguttara Nikaya ii, 80). The present verse says this much by stating that dreaming, deep sleep and Enlightenment are known to Yogis and Divine Beings only. Although ordinary people may have glimpses of these, they are far from possessing full knowledge of them, which is the exclusive prerogative of those who have attained higher states (Saints, Siddhas, Perfect Souls).

34. *Six Powers Divine: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinite Fullness-and-Satisfaction, Omnipresence, Eternity and Infinite Freedom, their Source:* These are the Powers of the Supreme Being. In relation to the Universe, they manifest themselves as the Five Powers, Intelligence, Bliss, Will, Knowledge, Action and Infinite Freedom (from which they arise) as described in Commentary to 6:60. As all Divine Powers are included in Infinite Freedom, they may be counted either as six with Infinite Freedom taken as a separate Power or as five with Infinite Freedom implied as the ground and source of the other five.

41. *I am the three hundred and sixty days of the human year:* See Commentary to 2:65.

42. *The All-Encompassing Circle described by the Great Firmament itself:* This refers to the great circle of the Celestial Sphere which is described by the line of the horizon (where Earth and Sky are seen to meet). Alternatively, the circle described by the Sun as he passes through the twelve Constellations of the Zodiac in the course of one year.

49. *The Effulgent Throne of Heaven:* The Throne of God is also mentioned in Western Scriptures such as the Bible and the Quran. In Yoga, it represents the State or Condition of Godhead (Shivatva, Shiva-Sthana) which is attained by ascending heavenwards through a series of States of Consciousness or "Steps". In the Bible (1 Kings 10:19), the Throne of the People of God is said to have six steps, which clearly agrees with the Yoga Tradition. The six steps are the six levels of existence that ultimately lead to the Seventh and Highest State of All-Encompassing Divinity. If we multiply the six steps by the six powers which unfold as the Soul progresses on his journey towards Unity with God, this gives a total of thirty-six, that is, the totality or fullness of experience which restores the human Soul to his Divine Status. In the human body, these steps correspond to the Seven Energy Centres or Chakras the first six of which are progressive steps to the seventh and highest. See also verses 4:58-60 and Commentary.

End of Chapter 7 and Commentary

THE EIGHTH LIGHT

(Chapter Eight)

8

Wherein God's Undivided Nature and Man's Oneness with Him is proclaimed

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O noble ones! the Universe exists within Myself like a mind-created thought. Just as a man, through his own intellectual power, creates a thought in his own mind, even so I, the Lord, by means of Maya, My Own Power, cause the Universe to appear within My Own Infinite Self, without My Inner Purity and Peace being thereby disturbed.

2. Maya is a Creative Power without beginning or end. Arising from My Unmanifest Self, like a wave out of the Ocean, it creates the Universe. Thus the Universe is born of My Unmanifest Self by means of Maya.

3. As a multitude of waves, ever-rising, ever-subsiding, come into being upon the surface of the Ocean which, deep down, remains ever-still, so the multitude of breathing and non-breathing things that constitute the World constantly arise out of Me, the Infinite, Ever-Peaceful Ocean of Universal Consciousness and Bliss.

4. It has been rightly said that the Unmanifest, Which is Eternal Light and Bliss, is the Cause of all. Indeed, apart from Me, the Supreme Reality, nothing really exists.

5. Although I am Ever One, due to My Apparent Diversity, some have concluded that I am Manifold like the Universe. O saintly ones! I nevertheless remain the Supreme Reality, the Eternal, Changeless Self.

6. My Divine Powers are Infinite, Unmanifest and Permanent except when, by means of Maya, they appear to act in limited ways. I, the Absolute Unmanifest, Eternally Shine in the Celestial Regions beyond this World.

7. I, the Unmanifest, Eternal Self, being devoid of beginning or end and One with My Wondrous Might, am called diverse and divided due to My Manifold Power, though I am Eternally One, Undivided and Whole.

8. As Water, hidden within Air, entirely unseen at first, becomes a cloud, then rain, snow and ice, even so I, the Lord, though Unknown, Secret, Hidden and Unseen, Assume the Form of Soul, Mind, Body and a thousand things. In truth, it is not hard to see: what Water can, that I, the Lord, Can better still.

9. Though the manifestations of My One Power are many, they neither conceal each other, nor do they obscure My True Nature Which remains Ever-the-Same.

10. That Supreme Unmanifest, adorned with a Halo of Radiance, that Eternal Light, is My Supreme Abode. Upon That, the entire Universe is woven like a cloth, warp and woof. That Alone is Reality. He who realises That, is liberated.

11. The Supreme Being is that Entity Which words and thoughts, due to their limitations, cannot reach. He who has experienced the Bliss of the Supreme, becomes freed from all ailments, all fears and all doubts.

12. I am that Great Being shining like the Sun beyond the thought-created clouds of ignorance. He who realises Me as such, is liberated from worldly existence. Becoming One with Me, he enjoys undying Bliss.

13. Knowing that his own Self surpasses everything and is the Source Light of the lights of heaven, the knower becomes Identical with Me and becomes established in My Bliss Divine.

14. Those who know, and have become established in, Me, bear witness that I am Impenetrable, Subtle, Supremely Blissful and the Eternal Support of the Universe. And that, having attained Me, one needs not return to worldly existence.

15. The radiance that is seen to shine in the Sky is a reflection of that Self-Luminous Life-Principle residing in the Highest Heaven. In their supreme wisdom, the Sages meditate upon That as the Resplendent, Immaculate Abode of Heaven above the Mountain of Reality.

16. As many Moons, deformed and ever-moving, are seen reflected in troubled water, but only One, perfectly shaped and still appears in the mirror of calm water, just so I, the Pure and Perfect One, the Only Reality, appear in the inward mirror of the Yogi who has stilled his mind.

17. Having stilled their mind through meditation, God-Realised men experience the Universal Lord Himself, the Self of the Universe, the Greatest One, in their own Soul and upon seeing That, merge in the Supreme Bliss of Heaven.

18. I, the Lord, the One God, though being Unique, lie hidden in all beings. I am the Omnipresent, Immanent Soul of all. The Self-Realised men who see Me as One enjoy Boundless Bliss for ever.

19. I, Who can see, hear and speak everywhere, am the Highest Goal of all. Being Omnipresent, I dwell in the heart of all living beings. Nay, I *Am* all living beings. Verily, there is nothing other than I.

20. O foremost among the wise! this Revelation is the Greatest among Great Secrets, the Knowledge proclaimed in all true Teachings as the Word of God. Being difficult to understand even for Yogis, let it be guarded like a great treasure.

21. For, Truth has many enemies. They detest the Light of God and thrive in the shadows of doubt. They seek to deceive and ensnare the righteous and feed upon their Souls like vampires and ghosts. Therefore, My Truth shall be kept secret and revealed unto the faithful when the time has come.

22. I Am the Greatest of all. Among the Knowers of Spirit, I am the Great Spirit Himself, Self-Born and All-Knowing. Among Magicians I am the Original, Eternal and Greatest, the Master of Cosmic Magic and Lord of all Magicians. Among Yogis, I am the Lord of Yoga, the Abode of Supreme Unity and Peace. Among Immovable Things, I am the Himalayas.

23. Among Men, I am One Who is Equal to the Gods. Among Women, I am the Lady of the Mountain (Goddess Parvati) Who is ever devoted to Me. Among Suns, I am the Radiance of Knowledge. Among Fires, the Light of Consciousness.

24. Among the Beings presiding over the Spiritual Worlds, I am the Lord of Peace. Among Birds, I am the great Eagle sacred to the Gods. Among Elephants, I am the Royal Mount. Among Warriors, I am the Divine Hero.

25. Among Sages, I am the Wisest. Among Gods, I am the Lord of Heaven. Among Craftsmen, I am the All-Skilful. Among Spirits, I am the most Virtuous.

26. Among Ascetics, I am the most Austere. Among Divine Attendants, I am the most Efficient. Among Heroes, I am the Avenger of the downtrodden. Among Self-Realised Beings, I am the most Accomplished.

27. Among the Mountains, I am Heavenly Mount Meru. Among the shiny Stars, I am the Moon. Among striking Weapons, I am the Thunderbolt. Among Religious Practices, I am Truthfulness.

28. Among Serpents, I am Ananta. Among Military Leaders I am the Supreme Commander of the Hosts of Heaven. Among the Stages of human life, I am that of Householder. Among Sovereigns I am the King of Heaven.

29. Among the Units of Time, I am the Universal Aeon. Among World Ages, I am the Golden Age. Among Guardian Spirits, I am the God of Wealth. Among Priests, I am the Chief.

30. Among Lights, I am the Rising Sun. Among Sentiments, I am Selfless Love. Among Months, I am Margashirsha (November-December or sowing time, in India). Among Seasons, I am fruit-bearing Spring (or harvest time).

31. Among Ancestors, I am the Father of Mankind. Among the Guardians of the Quarters, I am the Northern One who guards the Gates to the Abode of all Powers Divine. Among the Forces of Nature, I am the rain-bearing Wind. Among the Nine Continents, I am the Land of Glory (Bharata or India, also known as the Land of Righteousness).

32. Among Animals, I am the Lion. Among Plants, I am the Mahaushadhi. Among Fishes, I am the Dolphin. Among Rivers, I am the Most Holy One. Among Seas, I am the Ocean.

33. Among composite Weapons, I am the far-shooting Bow. Among Letters, I am the Vowel Ah, abiding as the inner essential sound in all others. Among Holy Scriptures, I am the Original and Only True. Among Prayers, I am the Prayer to the Sun (Divine Light).

34. Among Mantras, I am the sacred Sound OM. Among Knowers of the Holy Scriptures, I am Manu (the First Man) endowed with Knowledge Divine. Among Holy Cities, I am Varanasi (also known as Kashi, Shiva's City of Light).

35. Among Sciences, I am the Science of Spirit. Among kinds of Knowledge, I am the Supreme Knowledge of God. Among secrets, I am Silence. Among the Five Elements, I am Space, the most subtle. Among Judges, I am the Righteous Lord of Death (Dharma Raja, who administers divine justice to the departed Souls).

36. Among Bondages, I am the Cosmic Magic. Among Calculators, I am Time itself. Among the Three Times, I am the Present. Among Goals, I am Spiritual Liberation. Among the Greatest, I am the Supreme Lord.

37. O noble ones! whatever else in the World stands out through its shining excellence, know that to be a Manifestation of My Radiance Divine.

38. All the things in the Three Worlds were created that My Glory might be made known. But those that are greater than others are My Especial Signs given by Me unto man. For they illumine

and uplift the mind of men and set it upon the Path of Truth that leads to the Highest Greatness of all. It is by means of great things that man rises above other creatures.

39. Therefore, having perceived My Supreme Perfection in those things that outshine all other things, man shall strive to become Perfect even as I Myself am The Most Perfect. Verily, man is born to strive for Perfection. For he that seeks Perfection is a Seeker of Truth.

40. All things are born of Truth and shall return to Truth. He who seeks Truth seeks his True Home. No Soul shall ever find peace till he has found his True Home. Home is that Place where a man finds Peace. Therefore the life of man is a quest for Peace. And Peace is found in Perfection, there is no Peace where there is no Perfection.

41. Having been put to sleep at the moment of creation, man begins his worldly life in the form of an inanimate thing made of space, air, fire, water or earth. He abides in that condition for forty-two thousand lifetimes. He then enters a state like that of dream and assumes the form of half-sentient things such as plants or trees. Thus he passes fifteen thousand lifetimes. In the form of insects or worms he abides for twelve thousand lives. Nine thousand in the form of a sentient beast such as land-borne, water-borne or air-borne creatures; and six thousand lifetimes in human form.

42. Having thus passed through eighty-four thousand lives, man is born only three more times: once as a Yogi and twice as a God. Then, having attained the Supreme Perfection of Heaven (Para Siddhi), he is born no more.

43. O Sages! I grant many lives to a Soul that he may steadily grow in wisdom and become wise. For, no creature that is born imperfect attains Perfection in one lifetime. To expect man to become Perfect after one brief life would be unjust and unwise. I, the Lord, am Ever Just and All-Wise, and so is My Work.

44. In the Beginning, I created the Upper World, the World of Light wherein abide all Beings Bright. I am the Eternal Ruler of that World. I then created the Lower World wherein abide the dwellers upon Earth. That World is ruled by the Radiant Ones who are the Rays of My Own Light and who rule over the World by the Power of Yoga and in accord with My Command.

45. Yoga is living in Unity with Truth. He who abides in Unity with Truth shall know neither fear nor grief; nor pain, nor yet disappointment shall he know but he shall ever rejoice in Heavenly Bliss. And rejoicing Therein he shall bring Joy unto the World even as the Sun brings joy to the flowers in the field.

46. Verily, the Yogis who have attained Perfection and have risen above earthly life are equal to the Gods. They are the Jewels of My Creation and rule the World together with the Gods.

47. The Yogis' task is to make My Will known unto the World. They shall ever work for the establishment of Righteousness on Earth. They shall live a holy life and ever be an example of Divine Perfection unto all men. They shall sit in the Assembly of Holy Sages and be a guiding light unto the King. For they are My Messengers and I am their True Sovereign. This was ordained by Me for the welfare of all. I am Compassionate and All-Wise.

48. That land shall be known as Land of Righteousness (Dharmabhumi) wherein Yogis are honoured by all. For he that honours a Yogi who is ever immersed in Unity with Me, he honours none other but Me. This is My Eternal Law.

49. O Sages! the World is My Own Creation and a Manifestation of Truth. Therefore, righteous men honour and revere My Creation and live in Harmony with it. Verily, he who lives in Harmony with My Creation lives in Unity with Me. He who honours a work, honours the workman too. I and My Work are One and the Same.

50. It is out of Love that I created the World. Out of Love for My Creation I set the World in Order and I established My Law. I created the Day, that man might wake and Night that he might rest. I created fruit-bearing trees and rich fields of golden grain. I created milk-yielding cows and cool waters full of fish. I made forests and caves for shelter, the Moon that man might measure time, the Great Stars for direction and the light-bestowing Sun. And I gave him the Law whereby he might live in abundance and peace.

51. Verily, My Love for man manifests itself in that I give him life of my Own Life and that I offer him sustenance, guidance and protection. And man's love of Me shall be seen in his following of My Law. By the following thereof he abides in Unity with Me. Therefore, he who desires a long and happy life in this World and the next, shall ever abide by the Law of Unity. He who abides not thereby goes the Path of Separation which is the Path of Sin and Discord.

52. The Farmer tends and tills the earth. The Merchant trades the fruits of the Farmer's labour. The Warrior protects the land. And the Priest conducts the holy prayers. In the midst of the above four, the Yogi proclaims my Word of Guidance for the welfare of all. In this way, Righteousness is upheld upon Earth. This is My Eternal Law.

53. Let Earth be honoured at Sowing Time with festive song and fair dress. For, it is Earth that bears the seed, that it may grow and yield fruit. But Heaven shall be honoured at Harvest Time. For it is from Heaven that the life in all seeds comes and Heaven it is that sows the seed.

54. But I the Lord shall be honoured at all times. For I am both Heaven and Earth: I Create, I Make Grow, and I set the Harvest Time too. I set the Wheel of Time in motion. I determine the beginning and end of a day, the seasons, the year and the age of many years. I ordain both life and death. Therefore, let all Souls worship Me with devotion in temples, holy places, in their homes and in their heart. In every fortnight, they shall set aside the eighth and the fourteenth for My Devotion. Likewise, when the Moon is Full. But that worship which is done upon a Moonless Night shall be regarded as the best of all. These four shall be My Holy Days.

55. He who wishes to obtain the Four Goals (of Life, see Ch. 5:53: Righteousness, Material Prosperity, Love, Spiritual Liberation) and attain Perfection in this very life shall always follow My Law. He that earnestly follows My Law is a Yogi and a True Man. He lives in Unity with Me, with the World, and with his true self. He indeed is a blessed one! Verily, there is nothing that a follower of Unity cannot obtain. This is My Eternal Law.

56. Supreme Perfection is attained by abiding in Unity with Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Truth is That Which is Good, Which is Above all other things and Which Ever Is. Goodness is the Constant Abiding in Truth. Beauty is the Recognition of Truth and Goodness in all things that are good.

57. When the Great Life, the Great Lord, Perceives Himself and nothing else beside, that, O Sages! is the Supreme Truth. When God Establishes His Law, that is the Supreme Goodness. When He Beholds Himself in all things, that is the Supreme Beauty.

58. Therefore, O noble ones! let man also seek Truth, do Good, and love Beauty. By discarding all things that are false, perishable and wrong, man shall attain to Truth. By striving to establish My Law (Dharma Shasana) upon Earth, man shall do works that are Good. By seeing My Glory in all things that are both true and good, man shall see the Beauty of Him Who Is the One True and Truly Good.

59. Man is born of My divine Perfection and unto Perfection he shall return. This is the Eternal Law. Perfection is attained by the following of My Law. He who ever strives to be Perfect is a Yogi and a True Man. Him I shall elevate above all other men and to him I shall grant entrance into My Abode of Truth.

60. O you who are Rays of My Own Light! My Word of Truth shall not be doubted. For he that follows It is rightly guided. But he that follows It not, goes astray. Verily, no one can find the right path (satpatha) save he who is guided by the Guiding Light. I, the Lord, am that Eternal Light.

Commentary to Chapter Eight

30. *Among Months, I am Margashirsha (November-December or sowing time, in India). Among Seasons, I am fruit-bearing Spring (or harvest time):* India is one of the World's largest countries, extending over most of South Asia, from the Himalaya Mountains in the North to the Indian Ocean in the South and from Iran in the West to Burma (Myanmar) in the East. As such, she enjoys a great variety of geographic and climatic conditions. Although the climate may vary from temperate (in the Himalayas) to sub-tropical (on the Indo-Gangetic Plain) and tropical (in the Peninsular Region), generally speaking, Indian weather is dominated by the seasonal winds which in summer bring rain from the Ocean in the South-West, and in winter cool, dry air from the Mountains in the North-East. This results in hot, wet summers and cool, dry winters. In consequence, field crops such as wheat and barley - the staple food of Ancient India - are sown in Autumn (September-November) when the Rainy Season (July-August) is over, while the harvest takes place in Spring (March-April). As the greater part of the country's population subsists by agriculture, such activities as sowing and harvesting are occasions for colourful festivities which have been observed for millennia by Indians from all walks of life. The Month of Margashirsha or Agrahayana (mid-November to mid-December), therefore, would represent the beginning of the agricultural year, while Spring as already observed would celebrate the gathering in of the harvest.

31. *Land of Glory (India):* While other nations have exported Colonialism, Capitalism or Communism, India has given Mankind the World's greatest Spiritualities and continues to be the Spiritual homeland to over two billion Yogis, Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs from all over the World. She is the birthplace of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Bhagwan Mahavira, Lord Buddha, Shri Shankaracharya, Shri Abhinava Gupta, Guru Nanak, Shri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Shri Ramana Maharshi, Bhagwan Nityananda and thousands more great beings. No other country has produced as many Enlightened Souls as India. Visitors to India cannot fail to notice the great Spiritual Energy emanating from that land. Moreover, the variety of experience, Spiritual and material, as found in India is unparalleled in the whole World. As the Scriptures declare, "it is difficult to obtain birth in India. Those who are born in other countries, enjoy the reward, good or bad, of their actions. But he who is born in India can accomplish things beyond imagination. The greatest variety of castes, life-stages, customs, pleasures and suffering are found in India. Therefore, he who is born in India can easily attain to other Worlds, from the nethermost to the most high" (Tantraloka).

32. *Among Plants I am the Mahaushadhi:* The Mahaushadhi herb, literally, Most-Efficacious, valued for its manifold medicinal properties. Mahaushadhi (Supreme Medicine) is one of Shiva's thousand names listed in the Shiva Purana. As the name implies, Shiva is the Best Cure for all the ailments of the Soul whom He heals by destroying disease or disunity and creating Unity.

39. *Man shall strive to become Perfect even as I Myself am The Most Perfect, etc:* The Bible also says: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father (God) Who is in Heaven is Perfect" (Mat. 5:48). According to Yoga, Life originates in the Perfection of God, where it exists in an unmanifest state, that is to say, it is known to God only. Then, at the beginning of Creation or Manifestation, that Supreme, Unmanifest Perfection manifests itself first in the Higher Spiritual Worlds (the Abode of Gods and other Enlightened Beings); it then descends to the Astral and Terrestrial Planes, where due to the limitations of material existence its glory becomes only a shadow of itself. Finally, Life returns to its point of departure in Heaven where it regains its Supreme Perfection. Indeed, it is an undeniable fact that all living beings consciously or unconsciously strive to achieve Perfection. When we have completed a particular task well, we feel at peace and content. It is obvious, therefore, that true happiness lies in Perfection. This is only natural for since we are, by nature, Divine and hence essentially Perfect, we cannot find happiness in what is imperfect. For this reason, all authentic Religions, Scriptures and Revelations, teach that the Ultimate Goal of man is to attain the Perfection of Heaven. Thus says the Bible: "All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in Righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Furthermore, since Heaven is the Abode of Perfection, it can only be entered by those who have attained Perfection. If Perfection is not sought and attained, then he who is imperfect must remain outside of Heaven, in the Abode of Imperfection, so to say, where he will continue to undergo many kinds of suffering: mental, physical and emotional, until such time as Perfection and hence fitness for the Higher Worlds is attained. Therefore, for their own good all people are advised to strive for Perfection. To attain Perfection we need not leave this World and go somewhere else. Perfection can be attained right here and now. Just as Creation manifests God's Own Glory, man must manifest what is good, true and beautiful in himself. The cultivation of these attributes leads to Perfection. By abiding in that state of Perfection, we enjoy a Perfect Life, regardless where we happen to be in time and space. In this way, Heaven can be experienced everywhere. This, in short, is the timeless Teaching of Yoga and the essence of all genuine Spirituality.

42. *Once as a Yogi and twice as a God:* As manifestations of God's Own Powers, the Gods were brought into being for the specific purpose of assisting in the governance of the World. This is their first manifestation or coming into existence as distinct beings. In the second manifestation, having completed all or most of their tasks they, like all other created beings, enter upon the Path of return to the Supreme according to the Universal Principle that everything springs from and merges back into the Universal Consciousness, like waves in the Ocean. Yogis, on the other hand, may attain Unity with the Supreme instantly, if they so choose. Indeed, the Gods themselves having in their second manifestation become Yogis properly speaking, that is, beings that are intent on attaining Union (Samyoga) with the Supreme, attain Supreme Perfection in one lifetime. In the last analysis, therefore, there is practically no difference between the two. Both Gods and Yogis are beings who live in Unity with Truth.

46. *Equal to the Gods:* The Gods or Radiant Ones are Beings of Light who came into existence as such from the beginning of Creation. Yogis on the other hand may have started as humans who then advanced upon the Spiritual Path that leads to Union with God. However, by virtue of their having attained Perfection, Perfect Yogis are equal with the Gods who are Perfect

by birth. Moreover, the Gods themselves are Yogis in so far as they are beings who live in Perfect Unity with God. In consequence, since both Yogis and Gods share the same degree of Spiritual Awareness and Power and indeed fulfil the same function as governing entities over the Lower Worlds, they are rightly said to be equal in the same way as various rivers whether they come from nearby or from afar, become equal once they have reached the Sea. An exact parallel to this gradation of Intelligences may be found in Christianity where Spiritually unawakened man represents the lowest level of experience, after which come (in ascending order) the Souls of men who have perfected themselves (corresponding to Yogis or Siddhas, Perfect Ones), then Angels (or Gods, the Radiant Ones) who are created Perfect, and finally, the Supreme Being (God, Shiva) Himself.

47. *They (the Yogis) shall sit in the Assembly of Holy Sages and be a guiding light unto the King:* Yogis means here not just any person who follows the Path of Yoga but Enlightened Yogis, that is, Souls who have attained Unity and Identity with the Supreme on the basis of which they are qualified to guide even the Ruler of a country himself. As an alternative interpretation, the King may be taken to mean the Soul and the Yogi one's own Higher Self. In other words, the Soul must allow himself to be guided by his own Higher Self rather than follow the conditioned and hence defective opinions of the mind.

53. *Let Earth be honoured at Sowing Time, etc.:* Autumn or Sowing Time is the period immediately following the rains, when the Earth is saturated with moisture and begins to cool down after the scorching heat of the summer, while the days are becoming shorter and the nights longer. It is the time of the year when the forces of Nature are associated with the moist, cool, dark, downward moving, lunar or "feminine" aspect of the Divine Spirit (Shakti). It is therefore the time of the great festivals in honour of Mother Earth, such as Durga Navami (also known as Dashami). It is not by accident that Autumn is named after the Goddess Sharada. Spring or Harvest Time, on the other hand, is the period immediately following the cold weather, when the Earth is dry and begins to warm up after the winter chills, while the days are getting longer and the nights shorter. It is that time of the year when those forces of Nature become active as are associated with the dry, hot, bright, upward moving, solar or "masculine" aspect of the Divine (Shiva). Says the Shiva Purana: "The Day is the Trident-Bearing Lord and Night is His Consort. The Sky is Lord Shiva and Earth is His Beloved" (Vayaviya Samhita II, 4:63). In agricultural terms, Heaven (Svarga) represents the "male" Spirit of Vegetation who returns to Earth to re-awaken her to life after her winter rest. It is a time, therefore, to celebrate the return of the Heavenly Father to the woods, fields and homes with festivals such as Maha Shiva Ratri, Holi (Vasantotsava), Gangaur, Ram Navami and Ananga Puja (the Feast of the God of Fertility and Love).

54. *These four shall be My Holy Days:* The Shiva Purana also says: "The Great Worship of Shiva shall be performed on the eighth and fourteenth of every fortnight as well as on New and Full Moon Day" (Vayaviya Samhita II, 28:2-3). The 14th lunar day (Chaturdashi) of each fortnight is really a preparation for the actual holiday (New or Full Moon) falling on the next day (15th). Thus the four holidays are the 8th (Ashtami) and the 14th of the bright fortnight plus the 8th and the 14th of the dark fortnight including Full and New Moon, respectively.

End of Chapter 8 and Commentary

THE NINTH LIGHT

(Chapter Nine)

9

Wherein the Transcendental Nature of the Supreme Lord is established

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all othersounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. O you who are followers of Unity with the Supreme! it will be said by those that lack understanding and wisdom, God may be Almighty and All-Wise but All-Good He Is not, for He lets the innocent suffer. To them that speak such foolish words, answer in this way: Man has two aspects (or parts), a body and a Soul. The body is born from the mother's womb, but what of the Soul, which is the true man: where was he before being born into this World? who were his companions? what deeds did he accomplish? If you knew, it were different; but if you know not, how can you speak of innocence or otherwise? Verily, who knows best, you or the Lord? Beware! say not things about God that are sinful and wrong.

2. Verily, I the Lord give not one life unto a Soul, but eighty-four thousand lives. I also give him Guidance that he may find the straight path. Then I reward him according to the works he does in each life. Some are rewarded straightway, others after a while, and still others in a future life. Each at his own time. For, there is a time and place for all things. Thus I reward all Souls that they may steadily grow in wisdom and become Wise.

3. Therefore, know that men are not born perfect but with defects acquired in former lives, even though you may see these not. When children have grown, the defects that lay concealed in their heart come to the fore and are seen clearly by all. The same is true of grown men. Some that seem innocent enough, may be found to be liars, murderers and thieves. Others still are puffed up with pride. I Alone am the All-Seeing and All-Wise. I see deep into all creatures' hearts.

4. Say to the doubter: Does suffering make a Soul better or worse? If worse, how can that be? For, what is all-good and perfect, being free from corruption, cannot become worse even as gold cannot stain or decay. If better, then assuredly something good will be achieved through suffering. For it is a known fact that Soul often grows stronger at those times when the body is weaker and suffering renders an unyielding heart receptive to that which is right. Verily, as fire harms not but merely purifies gold, so pain makes a Soul humble, patient, forbearing and strong. Some learn through pain in one day what others learn not through pleasure even in a space of hundred years. A loss makes a man love and appreciate what he does have: it opens the windows of the mind and the doors of the heart and gives wings unto the Soul that he may rise above this World. Therefore, do not doubt the Wisdom of Him Who Is All-Wise. Beware! for doubt is the door to the Abode of Discord. He that enters therein shall be a Soul lost.

5. Say unto the doubter: You may not remember existing before, but do you remember ever not existing? Do you remember the moment that, having been non-existent, you came into existence? Is it not true that deep in his heart of hearts every man knows that he is a beginningless and

everlasting Soul? Even in this life, man knows that there is life before and there is life behind. Life has neither beginning nor end. If the Sky (or Space) has no bounds, why should life? Verily, I say unto you, Never is there such time where life is not.

6. As to why he forgets, know that man is born to ever aspire for things that are higher and not to dwell upon things of the past. As the nourishing essence of food is extracted by the digestive fire whilst the rest is discarded from the body, so the essence of many lifetimes is guarded in man's innermost heart whilst what is not needful abides enveloped in gloom. I Myself enshroud man in a dark veil of forgetfulness that he may not be confounded and tormented by a myriad memories whereof some are pleasant but most are sorrowful and glum. It is for this reason that man forgets. Thus, I, the Compassionate, the All-Wise, declare.

7. Even thus, know that whatever seems forgotten in no way is lost for good. Every experience leaves its trace upon the Soul and is known by his heart even though his mind may know it not. Verily, in unawakened man, heart and mind are not one but abide asunder; and being asunder, the one never knows the other. But in early childhood man recalls his former life or portions thereof, awhile. Only that his senses are overpowered by his new existence and before long he forgets even as he would forget a dream.

8. As for grown men, they may know their past lives by the practice of the Great Yoga of Recollection which is known to the wise. Listen you to this secret practice. With a concentrated mind, let the Seeker of Truth take hold of the thought that has just passed through his mind; then let him grasp the thought that went before and the thoughts that arose earlier still; thus he will remember all his thoughts of a day, a fortnight, a month, and a year; proceeding further back he remembers many years up to the moment of his birth into this World; going further still, he recalls one by one all his lives up to the beginning of Time. Going even beyond that, he attains to the Great Life Whereof the World was born. Verily, such an one is a Knower of Truth and I Myself lift him up in Glory above all other men. I Always remember those that remember Me. Therefore, have faith in the Word of God, for faith is the Stairway to the Most High. Doubt is a burden upon the Soul that leads him to the Downward Path. A fallen man is lost.

9. Of Souls, there are three kinds: those that know the Truth by their own power of Insight; those that know by the mind's power of Reason; and those that, having heard My Word, know by the power of Faith. Therefore, have faith and doubt not, for I never speak in vain. He that doubts My Word of Truth shall have no share in My Knowledge. For, doubt is the enemy of Wisdom. He who wilfully chooses to doubt, ever abides in darkness and sees not the Light that I, the Most Merciful, have sent him for the Salvation of his Soul.

10. O you who are noblest among men! know that Evil is not My Creation, but that of men and other creatures that are endowed with evil inclinations. I Myself give man the freedom to do works that are good and works that are evil, that he may learn what is right and what is wrong. Verily, every man and woman upon Earth has the power to choose between evil and good. Never is there any compulsion. And, as man's works are, so too are his rewards. I am Compassionate and Just.

11. A man's works are forever inscribed upon his Soul, though he may know this not. The Soul is pure Intelligence, ever happy and content like unto the Full Moon that passes across the Star-lit Sky at night. Yet due to Shiva's Wondrous Magic that enshrouds him like a dark Cloud of Obscuration, a desire begins to stir in man's heart. At first it is only faint and aimless so that, perceiving it, man asks himself, What might I want? And then, as it grows quite plain and clear,

he thinks, Ah! this is what I should like. This is the subtle form of desire which is called *Impulse* (Vasana) by the Wise.

12. Next, as he nourishes that wish with the power of his own thought, it grows into a strong desire that captivates his heart so that he resolves to fulfil his wish. This longing that culminates in a resolve is called *Yearning* for a Desired Object (Priya). Having resolved to fulfil his wish, man performs the appropriate actions that are needful for the obtaining of the desired thing. This is called the *Obtainment* of the Object of Desire (Moda).

13. Having obtained the object, man enjoys the same in peace. This is the *Enjoyment* of the Desired Object (Pramoda). The enjoyment thus had, leaves an impression upon the Soul which is called *Essential Imprint* (Samskara). And the Imprint gives rise to a craving for the repetition of the past Enjoyment. This is called *Thirst* (Trishna). These, O Sages! are the six aspects of desire.

14. Every experience leaves an Imprint upon the Soul. The more actions man performs in the pursuit of desired objects the more Imprints will be left upon the Soul. The more an Imprint of the same kind is repeated the deeper it will sink into the Soul. As the seed of corn springs to life when the season has come, so the Imprints, the seed of one's actions, come alive each at their appointed time. As they come alive, they give rise to a field of desires which man spends a lifetime to fulfil.

15. At the end of this life, if only man had no desires, he could easily ascend to the Higher Worlds above. But as he fulfils only a fraction of the total sum of desires, a great many remain to be fulfilled. Thus he is forced to descend back upon Earth by the force of his desires. This repeats itself again and again. Only when he rises above worldly desires, can man ascend to the Higher Worlds and not otherwise. This is the Eternal Law.

16. O noble ones! man acts to fulfil his desires, both bad and good. As the desires, so his works too, may be right or wrong. And as his works, so his rewards are pleasant or painful. Righteous works that are done in unity with My Law and for the sake of good desires, result in good rewards. But evil works, done in disobedience to My Law and for the sake of sinful desires, result in painful rewards. This is the Law of Cause and Effect, called Karma by the Wise. Every creature, whether on Earth or in the Otherworld is justly rewarded according to its works. I am Ever Compassionate and Wise.

17. I gave man the Day, that he might wake and Night that he might rest. I gave him fruit-giving trees and rich fields of golden grain. I gave him milk-yielding cows and cool waters full of fish. I gave him forests and caves for shelter, the Moon that he might measure time, the Great Stars for direction and the light-bestowing Sun. And I gave him the Law whereby he might live in abundance and peace. Know that all these are My Signs (Lakshana).

18. As a King speaks to some of his subjects face to face but to others through his ministers, envoys or messengers and to still others through signs, so I, the Lord, at appointed times reveal My Law unto the World either in Person or through My faithful devotees. They roam the Earth and bring My Word of Truth to those that wish to hear; who having heard, have the power to understand; and who having understood are moved to follow that which is True. And I also reveal My Law through certain signs that are known to the Wise.

19. The Wise see how the Moon follows the Sun and the Sun is stationed in the Great Sky. They see how the young calf follows the mother cow and how the herd follows the leading bull. They see how one season follows another, Night follows upon Day and Death follows Life. They

see how parched fields become green again and how dense jungle turns to dust. In all this there is a sign of guidance and of warning. To some I reveal My Law overtly and to some covertly. And to still others by clear signs that are seen by all but understood only by a few. Let the Wise take heed. For he who follows My signs shall be rightly guided. As for the others, assuredly, indeed, they shall go astray.

20. Thus My Law is made known unto every nation in the World. Amongst these there are some that deny My Revelation and stubbornly adhere to their own law. Others accept My Law but then forget It and follow any false prophet that may come their way. Others again will seek to change the Truth. As if Truth could be changed like unto a painting on the wall! Verily, only a few hold fast unto My Truth. They shall ever be an Eternal Lamp unto the World and an Abode of Righteousness on Earth. Amongst the Righteous Nations the Holy Land of India shall ever be the first. For, amongst her noble sons and daughters dwell the most faithful followers of Truth. They ever abide by My Law even if the World were to fall to pieces or be drowned by a great flood.

21. Verily, My Law is heard by every Soul according to his own Karma. The righteous ones that on account of their good Karma are born amongst the Righteous Nations receive My Law in full. But those that on account of their evil Karma are born amongst the unfaithful, must content themselves with whatever fragments of My Law they may come by. For, having done a work for the sake of obtaining an end, man must reap a reward according to the nature of his intentions. Thus every man is born in the land that he deserves on his merits or sins. This is the Eternal Law. I am Ever Compassionate and Just and so is My Law.

22. Would that at the end of this life, man remembered My Law! He would fare far better in the life to come. For this life is a mere child's play: a rehearsal for the life that is yet to come. When Death overcomes him, man who was proud of his possessions, knowledge and strength, sees how his World vanishes away. His senses grow dim and his body grows numb. The Five Material Qualities that constitute his body detach themselves from the same and merge one into the others in ascending order: Earth merges into Water, Water into Fire, Fire into Air and Air into Space.

23. When Earth sinks into Water, the body loses its firmness and grows lifeless and limp. When Water sinks into Fire, the blood, saliva and other fluids begin to dry up and man feels a burning and a dryness in his limbs, nose and mouth. When Fire sinks into Air, the body begins to grow cold. When Air dissolves into Space, all awareness of the body disappears and man breathes his last.

24. Having left the body, the Five Qualities merge back into the Primary Sensations whereof they were born, and these merge into their respective Senses: Sound merges into the Faculty of Hearing, Touch into Feeling, Colour into Seeing, Flavour into Tasting and Scent into Smelling. And the Senses merge back into the luminous Mind whence they came. The Mind (Manas) merges into the Higher Mind (or Intellect, Buddhi) and that into the Soul. Thus, Light merges into Light. For what is born of Light must return unto Light. This is the Eternal Law.

25. At that moment, man feels as if sinking back into a bottomless well and becomes unconscious. He abides in that state for a few moments or a few days, according to his Karma. But to his kinsfolk that are watching him die, he is a dead man: a lifeless corpse to be discarded. When he emerges from the darkness of that unconscious state and the light of consciousness returns to him, all the links with his earthly body have been severed and he sheds his mortal coil

as a serpent sheds its skin. Unencumbered by the body, he passes like through a veil, a cloud or sheet of water into the Otherworld which is the Abode of Disembodied Souls.

26. There the Soul is received by his guardian and guide appointed him according to his Karma. In the case of ordinary men it is their departed parents, kinsmen or such companions or friends as they may have known on Earth. But in the case of Yogis, it is their own Guru or one of the Immortals. He is then led by his guardian and guide to the Mountain of Truth that shines bright from afar like a great mass of gold bedecked with precious gems. On their way, they pass by two Lakes: to the right, in the East, the Lake of Remembrance; and to the left, in the West, the Lake of Oblivion. Upon the crest of the Holy Mount that lies towards the North which is where the Hidden Sun resides, there grows the Tree of Everlasting Life, with mighty branches spreading heavenwards. Beneath the Tree, from the depth of the Mountain, the Flame of Justice ever flares up. Before that stands the Law Eternal (Dharma) inscribed upon leaves of shining gold.

27. At this time the Soul being divested of a material body, he is a mere Orb of Light consisting of three parts: the outer part shimmering like as the Moon, is the Lower Mind which is the seat of the Five Senses and Five Powers of Action; the inward part blazing like the Midday-Sun is the higher Mind which is the seat of Reason; and the innermost core resembling a brilliant Fire that ever burns with an unworldly glow, is the Soul proper which is the seat of Memory and Self-awareness. Thus he shines like a Star.

28. Because his Mind is now his outer covering or body, as it were, all his thoughts, fears and desires are plainly seen by all. For in the Otherworld nothing is secret or hidden. As everything is made of Light, every thing shines with its own radiance, even inanimate things. Only that the brightness of some is greater than that of others, according to each thing's power of awareness. Therefore, nothing is kept hidden or concealed away but is revealed openly like in the clear light of Day.

29. On his way to the Mount of Truth, the Soul is given a drink from the limpid water of the Lake of Remembrance that he may clearly recall the life that he just lived and has now left behind. He is then taken to the Flame of Justice which, from close by appears as high as the Sky and as broad as a wall and through which the Soul must pass to reach the Tree of Everlasting Life.

30. First, to the righteous who are free of sin I shall show My Blissful Mean. Verily and without doubt, those endowed with good Karma, who have worked good deeds (satkarma) and faithfully have followed My Law, pass through the Flame of Justice as easily as through an open door. For, the Flame is not scorching to the Righteous Soul but soothing like the cool rays of the Moon. Having come to the Tree of Life they are given to eat of its heavenly fruit and with a Soul thus refreshed by the Flame and invigorated by the sweet Fruit of Life Eternal, they go up to the Higher Worlds by the Radiant Path of the Immortal Gods.

31. But those that are burdened with evil Karma, who have failed to work good deeds (satkarma) and have rejected the Holy Dharma, are overcome with shame and fear. Much as they try to pass through the Flame, they are scorched by its great heat and they draw back in pain. A Voice that comes out of the Flame summons them to confess their evil deeds. But the Soul, being accustomed to concealing the Truth, denies all his misdeeds against his better knowledge.

32. The Voice then grows louder and speaks: I have given man a World of things. And I gave him the Law whereby he might live in abundance and peace. To some I reveal My Law overtly and to some covertly. And to others still I reveal It by clear signs that are seen by all but

understood by only a few. You have seen the newborn babe sucking at the mother's breast. You have seen the youth being instructed by his Guide. You have seen that some men are afflicted with disease and others are hale. You have seen that some die before time and others live to a ripe old age. You have seen how the once-dead cornfield comes back to life in spring. And you have seen the wise Yogi roaming the Earth or sitting still in contemplation: ever serene, ever content and ever in Unity with Myself. But when Death overtakes him, man denies all this.

33. O Soul! will you not confess even now? Who, having seen My signs, can claim that he knew not? Surely, his words would be but a lie! And he that follows the Lie cannot walk upon the Straight Path that leads to My Abode of Truth. For the Lie itself leads him astray like a bound beast or a captive slave. Even thus you shall be led away.

34. At the sound of those words heavy with Truth, the Soul will remember all the good things that were done for him or given him on Earth. Righteousness will dawn upon him and strike him like a bolt of lightning so that he will sink to his knees even as a tree felled by the woodman's axe. With tears streaming from his eyes he will pray for his fathers and for all the kinsfolk and friends that are long dead and forgotten. His heart will burn with shame and remorse. This shall be his just reward, unless he has committed worse. Verily and without doubt, a Soul's plight shall be equal to his works.

35. No sooner will he have recovered from his shock, than he will be taken down by the Path of the Fathers to those quarters of the Otherworld that were allotted him. Therein he is given various tasks, some pleasant, others painful, that are needful for the perfecting of his Soul: each Soul according to his own Karma. Even the most painful tasks that seem to last forever in truth last only awhile. I am Compassionate and Just and so is My Law. But those tasks that are best performed in the Earthly World are saved for a future life and given unto him when he returns to Earth at the appointed hour. For no creature that is born imperfect can become perfect in a single lifetime.

36. Those that are burdened with grievous defects are sent back to Earth sooner. For in their case there will be much perfecting to accomplish in many a lifetime. But those that are stained only by slight imperfections abide in the Otherworld for longer. For only few lifetimes remain for them to dwell upon Earth. And what is one year in the Otherworld is a hundred upon Earth.

37. Those that are nearly Perfect are endowed with full knowledge of their past and future. They return to Earth at will and enter their mother's womb whilst fully conscious. But those that are still imperfect, have scant knowledge of their future and even less of their past. On their way down to Earth they are given a drink from the Lake of Oblivion, for their weak Soul cannot bear much knowledge of too many things: neither of the past, nor of the future. And no Soul is given more than he can bear.

38. Even thus, no Soul that sojourns in the Otherworld is left in complete darkness. He is granted a brief glimpse of his life to come. He can see his future place of birth, country, nation, family and parents. If he is to be born a man, he feels an attraction for his future mother; if the Soul is to be born a woman the attraction will be for the father.

39. When his future parents are about to beget offspring, the Soul draws near to the mating couple though they see him not. For the disembodied Soul clearly perceives what passes in this World even from a distance, but Earth-dwellers perceive him not. As he draws closer, his Senses and Powers of Action that in the Otherworld are radiant and mightier by far than in his earthly life, so that he can see far and travel faster than the wind, are once again dimmed. His light of

consciousness is overcome by a darkness that envelops him like a veil. Then, at the moment of conception, when the two bodily essences mingle and unite into one, the Soul to be born enters the woman's womb and his links with the Otherworld are cut off. Thus he is trapped within the womb wherein he must abide until such time as has been appointed for him to see the light of day, which is usually at the end of nine months. Then he is reborn into this World, each Soul according to his own Karma.

40. Verily, as a perishable plant sheds its leaves, withers away and turns to dust only to spring back to life year after year, so the Soul does shed his body and dies, only to be reborn again in future lives. Though the plant itself may perish, the seed will survive, ever ready to start a new life. Whilst the perishable body is like the stem and the leaves, the deathless Soul is like the imperishable seed. As the seed carries within itself the distinctive features of its kind, so the Soul carries both the defects and perfections of his past lives.

41. As a lake gives birth to various things such as the fish, the frog, the lotus and the reed, even so children born of one womb differ in intelligence, temperament and bodily frame. Some things in a child are passed on to him by his parents and some are from his past Karma. But even that which is from the parents as well as which parents he is to be born to, is determined only by his own Karma. For no Soul needs to bear another's burden but only his own. I, the Great Life and Creator of all living things, am Ever Compassionate and Just. And so is My Eternal Law.

42. I do not create evil, but man himself does so, when he chooses another path instead of following My Law. Evil (Adharma) is a force that arises from opposition to what is right (Dharma). It enters the sinner's heart and takes hold of his life. Thus he suffers until he takes to the right path. He that follows My Law, shall never suffer except for his own good. For until Perfection is attained, (the experience of) pain may still be needful for the perfecting of the Soul and the mending of his life. But when man has become Perfect neither pain nor Death shall ever touch him. As for the others, who are unfaithful to My Law, they shall each fare according to his Karma. This is the Eternal Dharma.

43. Dharma is Righteousness Itself. It is the World Order whereby Truth governs everything that It creates and whereby It makes everything abide in Unity with Itself. Dharma manifests Itself in all things that are true, just, beautiful and good. In those that are not thus, It is dormant and unmanifest. It is by the following of Dharma that good works (satkarma) are done and good rewards are enjoyed in return. Those that follow It not, shall abide in the shadow of Discord. Their works shall come to naught and they shall suffer an ill fate. But he that follows My Eternal Dharma shall not be harmed by evil Karma. Dharma is the World-Supporting Law.

44. Therefore, know that there are two kinds of pain suffered by man. That which is a punishment for evil deeds and that which is for a good end. For sometimes man himself willingly goes through hardships to attain a desired end. But in the end both kinds of pain are for the perfecting of the Soul. I am Ever Compassionate and All-Wise. Doubt not My Wisdom, for to do so is a great sin. Follow not in the footsteps of the weak-hearted. If doubt enters your heart, know that it is doubt itself that is to be doubted and not Truth.

45. O you who are Tigers amongst men! in this World some laugh and others cry. But the wise Yogi is ever serene and content. For he is endowed with Knowledge that others reject. Amongst all nations on Earth, the Righteous ones ever follow My Law. They shall prosper and thrive, but the others will surely go astray. Those nations that have forgotten My Law will say, There is no Afterlife. Say unto them: You may go your own way but, remember! we shall meet again. For all Souls come from the One and unto Him they shall return.

46. Others will proclaim that dead men lie asleep in their grave and will be brought back to life in their former bodies even if these have turned to dust. Heaven forbid that such falsehoods be true! Deluded as they are, they are blind to the Truth and in their madness they deny even the facts of life. For the body that was committed to earth, water or fire, or was left to decay in the open air, seldom remains undisturbed but is eaten by worms, fish and other such creatures. These are themselves eaten by others of their kind and at times even by men. And what to say of him that is devoured by the lion, the tiger or a serpent, even whilst still alive?

47. Now, the substance of one body having passed into other bodies and having become their very sustenance and strength, can hardly be returned to the original without being removed from its present place of abode, thus depriving many a body, both dead and living, of a limb or even more. Assuredly, this would be unjust and repugnant to Dharma, as even a fool can see. Therefore, know that it is a sin for thinking men to believe such foolish things. The power of right thinking was given to man that he might think rightly and not foolishly believe what is repugnant and wrong. Verily and without doubt, those who follow My Eternal Path shall be given deathless bodies of light and not mere shells of lifeless dust.

48. Other deluded mortals, wishing to raise themselves above others, will proclaim false religions and say, Follow me and you shall go to Heaven. How perverse they and their followers are! Can they not think? How can he who is unripe and imperfect gain admission to the Abode of the Perfect? Can a mere bird fly into the Sun? Can a fly come near a burning lamp? Is grain harvested before its time? They are only deluding themselves.

49. From God all things do come and unto Him they shall return. This is the Eternal Law. Having descended from Heaven down to Earth, the Soul must return to God. And how else is he to return if not by the very same path whereby he came? Verily, let those that follow the Truth not be deceived. God converses not with the imperfect save to call them to the Path of Perfection. When, in due time, they have become Perfect, *then* they shall be called to Him and not a moment before. Therefore, let no man speak things about God that are sinful and wrong.

50. Perfection is attained by abiding in Unity with Truth. I Am that Truth. I create the Soul out of Myself by enveloping him in Six Veils (Avarana). The Sixfold Veil of Maya is what separates man's Soul from the Perfect One. Six multiplied twofold, two being the mark of Duality, gives twelve. And twelve multiplied seven thousandfold, that is, one thousand veils to each of My Seven Worlds, yields eighty-four thousand. Thus the Soul is covered in eighty-four thousand veils that separate him from My Supreme Self. And he returns to My Supreme and Perfect Self by shedding one veil in a lifetime.

51. Forty-two thousand veils are shed in as many a lifetime passed in inanimate form such as stones, rocks and other things that are made of earth, water, fire, air or space. Fifteen thousand are shed in the form of half-sentient things such as plants and trees. Twelve thousand are shed as a sentient thing such as insect or worm. Nine thousand as land, water or airborne creatures. And six thousand in human form. When, after eighty-four thousand lifetimes he has shed the last veil, the Soul goes beyond Maya and is born only three more times: once as a Yogi and twice as a God.

52. O you who are ever wise! man's fate is determined by his Karma. Karma brings two Souls together or asunder; it brings health, fame and possessions and also takes them away. Good Karma depends on good deeds (satkarma). But whether man abides in darkness or rises up to the Abode of the Great Light, that depends upon naught but My Own Will. Therefore, the Soul

attains Perfection at the appointed time and not a moment before. When, having received My Revelation, man is moved to follow My Law and enters upon the Righteous Path of Unity, then the Great Goal is not far. It is through Unity with Me that Perfection is attained. Only he that abides in Unity with Me, goes beyond the Veil of Maya. For he alone is a Man of Unity (Yogi) and a Perfect One (Siddha).

53. The joys of the mind are greater by far than those of the body, and the joys of the Soul are greater than those of the mind. But he who attains Perfection knows the Highest Joy of all. The Pure Ones who through righteous deeds and a pure heart deserve to be lifted up beyond Maya, go to the World of Pure Vision wherein dwell all Souls who do good works (satkarma) for the benefit of all. Being endowed with clear sight, they see the World as it really is and no longer hanker after bodily joys. They have also conquered the cravings of the Mind. Their only craving is to act in Unity with the Lord.

54. Being pure-hearted, whatsoever their Soul desires is presently fulfilled without the need of material things. For in that World, all things are made of Spirit and naught else. The Pure Ones abide in that Abode of Pure Sensations in the company of Beautiful Souls like themselves. Thus they pass countless ages. A just reward for those that work good deeds (satkarma). Once in five hundred years, their ruler descends to Earth to reveal My Truth and guide the righteous. For he is a Mighty One who has seen the Lord and knows His Secrets. The others only see Me from afar, like the first light of Dawn. But as they feed upon that Divine Light, they begin to leave behind the World of Pure Sensations and pass to the World of Pure Thought.

55. In that World, otherwise named the World of Higher Vision, they pass countless ages absorbed in righteous thoughts for the welfare of the Worlds. Their sustenance is the Light of God Whom they perceive as being nearer than before, like unto the rising Sun. As they feed upon that Light they become one with the Thought of God and pass to the World of Pure Will. They are ruled by one who is near Me and Mightier than he of whom I spoke before. He descends down to Earth to reveal My Truth and guide the righteous at the beginning of each World Age.

56. Having risen to the next Higher World, otherwise known as the World of Perfect Vision, the Perfect Ones pass many ages absorbed in righteous intentions for the welfare of the Worlds. Their sustenance is the Light of God Whom they behold face to face, like unto the blazing Midday Sun. The chief amongst them betakes himself into the World of men to establish My Truth at the beginning of an Aeon. He is My Highest Emanation and the Mightiest of all. He is Equal to Myself.

57. Verily, the Light of God is the food of Yogis and Gods. For earthly food is for the body but Spiritual Food is Nectar for the Soul and the Food of the Immortals. By feeding thereupon, the Soul grows mighty and wise: a Radiant God he becomes! Having thus been nourished by the Light of God and having fully grown in Wisdom and Might the Enlightened Souls are Perfect like unto God. Having attained Perfection, they pass to the Supreme Abode of Shiva (Maha Shiva Laya) Whom they perceive like unto the Boundless Sky and with Whom each and every Soul is One.

58. I am that Supreme Shiva. I am Formless, Unmanifest and Divine. Being Self-Luminous, Supreme and First among all else, I dwell in the Sky of Consciousness, the Highest Heaven. That is My Eternal Abode. I am the Self dwelling therein: the Unmanifest and Unseen, the Origin of all things. I am known only by means of Pure Knowledge to those that abide in Unity with Me. I am realised in their heart by the Wise who are not possessed by a false Thought of I and who are forever absorbed in meditation.

59. O noble ones! it is impossible to see Me otherwise. There is no other way whereby the Supreme Self is realised. Only by means of Higher Knowledge that arises from within can I be known to the Sages. Worldly knowledge, being under the spell of Maya and obscured by ignorance, must be regarded as worthless in this respect. That Knowledge which is immaculate, pure, free from doubts and undivided is My Divine Self. Thus I, the All-Wise, declare.

60. Whether My devotees perceive Me, the Highest Principle, the Lord, as either One or Many, they are to be known as Identical with That. For they behold their True Self, the Supreme Lord full of Undying Bliss beyond all doubts, Reality Incarnate. This is the Truth. They who are thus established in their Own Self Which lies beyond the manifested World, attain to Peace and enjoy the Supreme, All-Pervading Bliss that arises from the awareness of one's Identity with the All. Verily, this is the Greatest Liberation: the Excellent Identity with My Divine Self. It is variously known in the Scriptures as Extinction of Conditioned Existence (Nirvana), Identity with the Supreme (Shivatva) and Absolute Oneness (Kaivalya).

61. I, the Greatest God, am the Only Eternal and Infinite Being and the Supremely Auspicious One (Shiva literally means, Auspiciousness, Goodness, as well as Purity). By realising Me, Who Am one's Higher Self, one is liberated. O you who are deserving of the Highest Heaven! he is a true Yogi who is One with Me and who perceives the World as one with himself. As an ordinary man perceives his head, hands and other limbs as one with himself, so the Yogi looks upon moving and unmoving things as one with himself.

62. He is a true Yogi who knows that I, the Supreme Being Alone Exist as God, Soul and Mind. Looking heavenwards, the Soul knows Me, the Infinite Sky of Consciousness. Looking earthwards, he sees the Mind. Verily, there is naught else to see beside. When the Mind is animated by the Soul's power of outward attention, it brings forth the sense perceptions that make up the objects of the World. Sound, Touch, Colour, Flavour and Scent combine to give rise to Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. This Group of Five constitutes what is perceived objectively. Perceiving them, the ignorant mind forgets That Which Ever Is.

63. O Sages! many are those who are deceived by the delusions of this World. An old rope lying in the grass is easily mistaken for a snake. And not everything that shines is gold. Which means, that not all things are what they at first appear. Verily, the ignorant are easily deluded by the objects of the World. Indeed, for them this whole World is an Abode of Delusion. But the wise Yogi, knowing that I am the Source of All, knows that everything springs forth from a higher source. As Mist rises from Water and Waves rise from the Sea, as Lotus-Flowers rise from a Lake and Dreams rise from the dreamer's Mind, so the World rises from Me, the Ocean of Universal Consciousness, the All-Powerful, the Ever Free.

64. All things reflect this Truth. As the Sky reflects in Water and the Moon reflects the Sun, so the World reflects the Consciousness Which creates all this out of Itself. As Earth through her firmness supports all that stands upon her, so Consciousness Which created Earth is the Immovable Supporter of all things. As Water through its moisture nourishes and makes grow, so Consciousness Which created Water is the Life-Giver of all things. As Fire by burning consumes, so Consciousness Which created Fire is the All-Consuming Power that annihilates all things when their time has come. As Wind by its power moves things though itself is never seen, so Consciousness Which created Wind is the Unseen Mover of all things.

65. As Ethereal Sky envelops and pervades Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, as well as Sun, Moon and the Stars, so Consciousness Which created the Sky is That Which Envelops and Pervades all

things. As the Human Mind perceives all this, so Consciousness Which created the Mind is That Which Knows and Understands all things. Thus I, the All-Enveloping, All-Pervading, All-Creating Universal Consciousness reign supreme.

66. For I am the Sun that blazes in the Sky and the Fire that burns upon Earth. I am the Lightning that flashes amongst the Clouds and the Moon that shines amongst the Stars. I Myself am also the imperishable Light of Consciousness that illumines the thoughts of men. It is by My Divine Light alone that everything is seen. As things that are unseen in the dark are seen when the Sun shines upon them, even so all things that were previously unseen become visible when My Light of Consciousness falls upon them. Verily, all things come into being and exist when I the Great Unseen see them and not otherwise. For I am the Seer, the seen and the act of seeing, too. I Am everything and all.

67. He who understands that everything is made of Consciousness, knows everything. He who understands that Consciousness Alone exists, knows the Highest Truth. He knows both himself and all other things. He becomes the All-Knowing Truth. Such an one is the One who Sees and is Awake while all others are asleep. Verily, when Consciousness is asleep, It knows not Itself. Therefore, know that Sleep is a form of Ignorance and the greatest impediment on the Path. For he who sleeps can never be Awake and he who is Awake sleeps not. Beware therefore of Sleep for Sleep is like unto Death.

68. Having descended down into the earthly World from the Abode of Life, the once-Watchful Soul is overcome by the multitude of worldly things and falls pray to the slumber of nescience. In that state he deems himself Awake and calls his condition Waking. Yet in that state he is neither Awake nor truly Alive. He who knows this, enters upon the Path of Awakening. He is like unto a man who first stirs in his sleep, then awakens and opens his eyes to the clear light of day.

69. O noble ones! one State is known to all men and Three to Yogis. But the Fifth is known Alone to the All-Knowing One. Listen you now what these States are. First, Waking: that State wherein the Conscious Soul perceives the outer things of the World and perceiving them becomes caught in the mesh of feelings and thoughts aroused by the things perceived, is called the Waking-State. For therein Soul is awake to the World of objects even though he is asleep to himself.

70. Second, Dreaming: that State wherein the Soul perceives not the outer World but is absorbed in mind-created dreams is called the Dream-State. Therein Soul is awake to the World of Dreams but asleep to both himself and the outer World. Third, Sleep: that State wherein the Soul perceives neither the objects of the outer World, nor the inner World of Dreams, nor yet himself as a Conscious Soul, is called Sleep. For therein Soul is unmindful of all things but abides in a state of blissful slumber.

71. Fourth, Awakening: that State wherein Soul is awake to himself as a Radiant Being of Light who is endowed with great Wisdom and Might, who is freed from the delusions of the inner World of mind, and freed also from the dark torpor of Sleep, is called Awakening. For therein the Soul is Awake to himself and to the Abode of Spirit wherefrom all Souls come and unto which they all return.

72. I have proclaimed to you the first Four States wherein the Soul abides in the various stages of life. But that State wherein the Soul, having overcome the Worlds of Matter, Mind and Sleep awakens to the World of Spirit; and having awakened to the World of Spirit beholds the Effulgent

Lord of Life face to face and is lost in his Master's Infinite Embrace, that, O Sages! is the State beyond all states. Therein Life lives in everlasting Oneness, Peace and Bliss.

73. Verily, I say unto you, what is waking in the World of men is sleep in that of the Awakened Ones (Buddhas). And what is like unto sleep to men is waking to those who are Awake. Therefore, so long as the Yogi abides in that State called Waking by men, he shall be an Unawakened (Abuddha). And when the Yogi pierces the veil of Dreams and becomes aware of himself, then he is an Awakened One (Buddha). But he who conquers Sleep is a Great Yogi and a Well-Awakened (Prabuddha). He is a Great Hero (Maha Vira) and a Vanquisher of Death. Verily, he who conquers Sleep, conquers Death too. For what is Death but a kind of sleep?

74. He who has conquered Death is a Fully Awakened One (Suprabuddha), a Perfect Being (Siddha Purusha) and an Immortal. He attains the Fourth State wherefrom he beholds the other three known to mortal man. But the Yogi who rises up to the Highest State is the best of all. For, in that Supreme State he is One with the Ever Awake (Sada-Buddha) and for ever watches over all states. He is the Original Waking One (Adi Buddha), the Lord of all Yogis (Yogendra) and the Greatest God (Mahadeva) Himself.

75. The Awakened Yogi knows that when Earth has dissolved in Water, when Water has been consumed in Fire, when Fire has been quenched in Wind, when Wind has merged into the Sky and the Sky becomes one with the Mind whereby it is perceived, all that remains is the Light of Consciousness Which has created all this out of Itself and illumines everything by Its Self-Effulgent Light. For him who knows this Secret, the World becomes the Abode of Bliss. In the Fire of his Higher Knowledge, the World dissolves in Consciousness which is Pure Intelligence and Bliss.

76. He who knows this, returns to the One of Whom he was originally born and becomes One with Him. Having become One with Truth, he goes beyond earthly life, beyond Karma, beyond Death. He attains Immeasurable Wisdom, Unsurpassed Perfection and Endless Peace. Such an one indeed is a Free and Perfect One.

77. He is free from imperfections, free from doubt, free from sorrow, free from sin. He illumines everything wherever he goes, like the Radiant Sun on his Heavenly Path. He shines like the King of Kings and is a true Ruler of the World.

78. He becomes an Enlightener of the unenlightened and a Vessel for crossing the Ocean of Suffering. He becomes the All-Supporting Lord of Light and One with the Supreme. Having attained the Highest Goal, he empowers others to attain the Same. He bestows all kinds of boons like the very Wish-Fulfilling Tree of Heaven.

79. O noble ones! the existence of no other Reality save the Supreme Consciousness of Shiva is the Holy Truth of Yoga. Of this Exalted Truth (Arya Satya) all other Truths are born. First, since Consciousness Alone exists, it follows that all created things, those that breathe and those that breathe not, are the creation of the Supreme Consciousness, the Unique, Self-Existing, Uncreated One.

80. Second, being born of Shiva, man is essentially identical with That. As a spark of fire is identical with Fire, a ray of sunlight with the Sun and a raindrop with the Sea, so man is identical with the Supreme All-Consciousness (Parasamvid), the Mind of the Great One God (Mahadeva).

81. Third, the Goal of human life is to realise this Unity and Identity, called Yoga by the Wise. For Unity is the essence of Life: Life without Unity would be just Chaos and the Universe would fall apart. Nor can any man live in disunity with God.

82. And Fourth, Unity is to be realised through the Practice of Yoga and by the Grace of one's Spiritual Master, human or Divine. For nothing is achieved without practice nor is any goal in life attainable without a guide. Thus I have spoken the Fourfold Truth of Yoga by means whereof man goes to My Supreme Abode.

83. In My Abode of Spirit, neither Sun, Moon, Stars nor Lightning shine, nor yet physical fire. All being Identical with Me, the Immaculate Supreme Radiance, everything therein shines by the Light of My Own Conscious Self. That Which is called the All, Which is Indivisible, Immutable, Pure and Great, That Alone Shines by Its Own Self-Luminous Light. That Immovable Reality which the Enlightened Ones permanently see within themselves, is the Universal Consciousness, My Own Self.

84. All Scriptures declare that I, the Supreme Self, am Pure, Sweet, Perpetually Blissful and the Embodiment of Truth. Those who have understood this by hearing My Revelation, meditate upon Me, the Lord, by means of the sacred Sound OM, as their true Self. Neither Earth, nor Water, Fire, Wind nor Ether; neither Mind, nor Intellect, nor Vital Breath, nor indeed anything else shines in the Firmament. Verily, I, Lord Shiva, shine Alone in the Great Sky of Reality.

85. O you who are worthy of My Grace! know that those teachings that deny My Truth are false. They are the mind-created aberrations of the mad and the deluded who seek to lead the righteous astray. Do not listen to what they preach but watch their evil deeds: you will see how they transgress My Law. Verily, in this World, some are mad and others are sane. One who is mad with delusion will lead many a Soul astray. Therefore, beware! do not follow false teachings that promise an easy way to Salvation. The wise know well that everything is for a price. If gold and precious stones do not come cheap, is Heaven going to be free?

86. Just think! had I only wanted, I should have granted Salvation to all. Know that the faithful following of My Law, and a pure heart, *that* is the price for a dwelling-place Above. Therefore, be patient and forbearing for this is the sign of a truly wise man. Follow not the falsehoods of the misguided, for their works shall come to naught. Follow the Path of Perfection and you shall not be harmed by grief.

87. The Soul having become imperfect on his descent to Earth must become Perfect again to return unto the Perfect One. For only that which is Perfect can join Perfection. The imperfect is doomed to ever abide in separation from Supreme Perfection. Yoga is the means whereby a Soul is made Perfect and pleasing to the Lord. The Lord will not embrace those Souls that make themselves repugnant and unpleasant to behold. By following the Path of Righteous Unity, Perfection is attained even in this lifetime. There is no other way. He who seeks another way to Heaven is like the man who digs a well on the banks of the River Ganges instead of drinking straight from its holy water.

88. O you who are the first among noble Souls! My Revelation is the Mightiest and Most Great. There is no other one like It. It is Truth Itself. It shall bring to pass the destruction of false teachings even as the Rising Sun destroys the dark. Those that dread My Revelation will seek to corrupt It and debar the faithful from following It. Therefore, It shall first be kept secret. But when the time has come It shall be openly revealed to all. When other faiths have passed away, Yoga will prevail. Then Perfection shall rule over the World.

89. There shall be neither poverty nor ignorance; neither untimely death nor disease; neither cruelty nor yet any kind of pain. If My Law of Truth prevail, Happiness shall reign supreme on Earth, even as it reigns in the Higher Worlds. Verily, Evil (Adharma) shall be banished from this World. Every man, woman and child, nay, every creature upon Earth shall be happy and wise as well as healthy, beautiful and strong. A just reward for the righteous Souls who live in Unity with God. Let every Soul follow My Law for there is nothing that cannot be achieved through Holy Unity with Me.

90. O you who are rays of My Light! so long as the Sun and Moon endure, you will find no Revelation like Mine, much as you may seek. As a mighty Bull that leads the herd, as a Mountain that supports the Earth, as a Star that shines from afar, even so I am the Supreme Leader of the World. I lead, guide and protect all Souls. He who, having received My Revelation, be moved by the Love of Shiva to follow the Path of Truth, shall attain the Highest Good. This is the Eternal Law.

Commentary to Chapter Nine

3. *Know that men are not born perfect but with defects acquired in former lives:* People imagine themselves to be perfect and therefore entitled to a perfect and easy life. However, closer investigation will reveal that few humans are perfect. Most exhibit a number of defects of which some are obvious to all and some are known to God alone. In consequence, they cannot reasonably expect to have a perfect, problem-free life. Rather, in order to have a perfect life man must make himself perfect first. Perfection (and perfect life) is attained by living in harmony with God.

4. *Suffering renders an unyielding heart receptive to that which is right, etc.:* Suffering (Duhkha), unpleasant and unattractive to the mind though it may be, does not actually harm the Soul. On the contrary, it often helps free the Soul from certain psychological blockages that prevented him from realising a higher truth. As verse 10:189 says, the Self is purified by the fire of Wisdom even as gold is purified by the smelting of ore. Thus an interesting and instructive story is told of the 12th century South-Indian Sage Allama Prabhu. He was once a Yogi and Devotee of Shiva, but because he had neglected his practice he was reborn as an ordinary man who earned his living as a temple-drummer. Moved by compassion for His faithful devotee, Shiva designed a plan to help him. And so, He sent down the Goddess Parvati from Heaven in the shape of a young village girl. And they say that her dazzling beauty was so great, that she outshined even the Sun. Allama fell in love with this beautiful "village girl" whose name was Kamalate (Love's Tendril) and they got married. Together, they enjoyed the highest bliss of love. So much so, that all thought the couple had found Heaven on Earth. Yet the girl suddenly fell ill with a fever and died. Unable to bear the pain, and not finding any peace of mind, Allama was roaming the fields and the woods like a madman. One day, while he was sitting all alone in a forest grove, he saw something jutting forth from the ground: it was the golden top of an ancient temple, buried beneath the jungle floor. Thinking that it must be some sign from God, he dug up the place and deep down found the closed door of a shrine. Allama kicked the door open and entered. Right in front of him he saw a Yogi, sitting in a trance, absorbed in deep Communion with Shiva, completely oblivious of the World round him, for whom time and space no longer existed. The Yogi's eyes and face were aglow with a mysterious power that was streaming in all directions, filling the Universe with a magic light. Even his long locks were glowing and he had a string of Holy Rudraksha Beads round his neck, while heavy, snake-shaped earrings were hanging from his ears. Like the Divine Wish-Fulfilling Tree, he sat there in the heart of the

temple. His name was The Ever Awake or He Whose Eyes Never Close (Animishayya). While Allama just stood there in astonishment, the Yogi put an Image of Shiva into Allama's hand and then, having accomplished his mission, left his physical body to return to the secret place he had come from. In that moment, Allama, remembering his true identity, became Enlightened and wandered from then on wherever Shiva called him and wherever Shiva took him. He became one of India's most celebrated poets, singing his experience of the secret cave-temple and praising the Name of Shiva, the Lord of Caves (Guheshvara). The word Cave stands first, for natural caves like those in which Yogis meditate; second, for the Cave or Inner Sanctum of a temple; and third, for the Cave of the Heart, in the Centre of which our Inner Self perpetually shines. Though some of the beauty of Allama's verses is lost in translation, the words still convey some of the power of his Spiritual Experience: "Some say they saw It. What is It, the circular Sun, the circle of the Stars? The Lord of Caves lives in the City of the Moon Mountain". (The "City of the Moon Mountain" refers to the Ajna Chakra or Shiva's Eye, the Energy Centre between and behind the eyebrows.) "For all their search they cannot see the Image in the mirror. It blazes in the circles between the eyebrows. He who knows this has found the Lord of Caves." "If it rains fire you have to be as water; if it is a deluge of water you have to be as the wind; if it is the Great Flood, you have to be as the sky; and if it is the Very Last Flood of all the Worlds, you have to give up self and become the Lord Himself." Shiva, the Supreme Universal Teacher and World Liberator, teaches His devotees in many wonderful and mysterious ways. In His Infinite Compassion, He infects us with the Ecstatic Fever of Union with the Supreme (Shiva-Samyoga), and liberates us once and for all from the feverish activities of the deluded mind.

5. *You may not remember existing before, but do you remember ever not existing?:* The objection that is often raised on the subject of Reincarnation or Rebirth (Punarjanma) is that most people appear to be oblivious of any previous existence. It may be observed, however, that non-remembrance does not constitute positive evidence. The fact that a person, as a result of alcohol consumption, for example, is unable to remember committing a crime does not mean to say that he is innocent of that crime. Strictly speaking, the only relevant statement the denier of Reincarnation can make is, "I do not remember existing before", and nothing else. But as this statement does: (a) not of itself constitute proof, it is incapable of establishing the denier's position and as it: (b) amounts to an admission of ignorance, it destroys the whole basis of his argument. Indeed, closer examination of the statement, "I do not remember existing before" will actually establish the contrary. Since in its negative sense it is rather pointless, the above statement must be read in a positive sense, that is, "I remember not existing before". This is a grammatically and logically legitimate reading that apart from expressing essentially the same idea, has the advantage of revealing the true meaning of what the doubter is saying. Above all, it will clearly constitute an admission of previous life, the words, "I remember", presupposing the speaker's existence at the time in question. Having obtained this admission, all we need to establish now is precisely who remembers what. The fact is that Spiritually untutored people ordinarily identify themselves with the physical body. In consequence, when speaking of themselves as "I", they mean above all the body as evidenced by numerous common expressions such as: "I am standing", "I have washed myself", "I am taller/thinner than you", etc. The statement, "I did not exist previously" is thus correct in so far as "I" refers to the current physical body which clearly did not exist before its present conception. As for the mind, it is an established fact that it often cannot even recall more recent events such as occurred in early childhood or, for that matter, the events in last night's dream, let alone what happened while in the womb or before. It follows from the above, that only when we identify with the conscious Soul, are we in a position to make a valid statement on the subject of previous life. Indeed, the Soul, the higher intelligence in us which is aware of both body and mind, never says, "I did not exist at such and such time" or "I cannot remember". It is only the mind or thinking faculty who says so. Now, if the mind did not exist previously, then: (a) it is not in a position to say anything

and (b) it must have come into existence at a later stage. But the mind cannot remember that either. In consequence, its capacity of recalling past events must be admitted to be either selective or altogether defective, and therefore it can hardly make a reliable witness. Thus the argument advanced by the opponents of Reincarnation is not only insufficient for the purposes of establishing their own position but it does actually support the position of Yoga. The true reason why there usually is no remembrance of past existence is firstly, because the active recollection of many lives would create confusion in the mind of an ordinary person who often finds even the events of a single life - or a day - confusing enough and secondly, because it would be unnecessary. The evolution process generally requires that a particular episode in one's existence be left behind as soon as it has discharged its function of advancing the individual's growth and development, in much the same way as food is eliminated from the physical body once its essential nutrients have been extracted by the digestive system. Even so, those who are sufficiently curious, can by means of certain Yogic techniques (as described in verse 8) extend their capacity of remembrance beyond the current existence. Indeed, advanced practisers of Yoga do as a rule have the capacity to recollect at least fragments of previous lives, while accomplished Masters like Lord Buddha can clearly remember all their lives right back to the beginning of time. Furthermore, recent scientific research has established that a number of people, in particular young children, can often remember aspects of previous lives. Studies have shown that while such memories are usually dismissed by parents in countries where Reincarnation is not generally accepted, they are sometimes followed up in those communities such as Hindu and Buddhist, the cultural background of which renders them more receptive to this, and are verified on further investigation (See "Where Biology and Reincarnation Intersect", by Dr. Ian Stevenson). Consequently, the following may be said about Reincarnation: (1) it is a fact of experience that cannot be denied; (2) it is logically tenable in itself and it explains certain situations or experiences, hence it makes sense both logically and psychologically; and (3) it is accepted in various forms by most religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, the Pagan Traditions of Ancient Europe, Africa and America, original Christianity as well as some branches of Judaism and Islam. Indeed, as we shall have occasion to demonstrate at a later point, the Western belief in Resurrection is nothing but a simplified version of the Yogic teaching of Reincarnation. This teaching, therefore, must be admitted to fulfil all generally accepted criteria of knowledge (Tradition, Reason, Direct Experience), no further argumentation or proof being required. From a purely Spiritual point of view, it is evidently of great value in that it opens the human mind to wider dimensions of existence and promotes freedom of consciousness thereby facilitating the return of the Soul to his natural state of freedom, knowledge and power.

16. *This is the Law of Cause and Effect, called Karma by the Wise:* The word Karma is often interpreted as "Destiny" or "Fate" (lit., that which has been ordained, or pronounced, by a Higher Power), that is, an external force over which man has little or no influence. In reality, however, Karma literally means action. And since every action or activity is known to produce a particular reaction, result or effect, Karma has a secondary, implied meaning of effect. Karma, therefore, stands for both the actions performed by a person *and* their effect. Everything we do, whether mentally (thinking, feeling, perceiving), verbally (speaking) or physically (performing physical actions) has an effect on, and elicits a response from, the object of our actions. Negative (or bad) Karma is the result of negative actions, that is, actions that are out of harmony or unity with the Spiritual Law of the Universe, while positive (good) Karma is the result of positive actions which conform with Universal Law. This, in short, constitutes the so-called Law of Cause and Effect which, far from being mere belief is an undeniable fact of experience. The same Law, the validity of which may be scientifically established through systematic observation of facts, demands that a particular action lead to a particular effect in time and space unless the effect of the said action be modified or even altogether cancelled by an equal or stronger, opposite action or force. For example, environmental, physical or mental balance and health that were disturbed

by human agency may be restored if and when, adequate, powerful and immediately effective measures to that end are taken. Karma, therefore, may be said to have three distinct phases. (1) The sum total of past actions, mental, verbal and physical, whose effect is still to come into actualisation and which is technically called Sanchita Karma. (2) Those actions done either in a past life or earlier in the present life, the effect of which is already being experienced by the agent such as bodily constitution, place of birth, parents, professional occupation, etc., called Prarabdha Karma. And (3), those actions which are being performed by a person at the present moment and whose result or effect, if nothing is done to counteract it, will be experienced by him in the future (in this or next life) as what is termed Agami Karma. While it is clear that a person can do little about some aspects of his actualised Karma (Prarabdha Karma) such as bodily constitution, parentage or place of birth, there is much he can do to avert the negative effects of past Karma that is still to come to fruition (Sanchita Karma) and even more to improve or altogether cancel his future Karma (Agami Karma), provided he understands and follows the Principles of Universal Law (Dharma), or Cause and Effect. Fully-Enlightened Souls are, of course, beyond Karma. See also Commentary to 9:5, above.

19. *Clear signs that are seen by all but understood only by a few:* A girl once saw a friend dying of cancer, then a dead body being taken away, and finally, her own dead father. Each sign was a warning and a preparation for what was to come. Similarly, prior to taking up a Spiritual life, the Buddha is said to have seen several signs. He saw an old man bent down with age, a sick man suffering from his condition, a dead man being carried in a funeral procession, people taking part in festivities apparently oblivious of their fate and finally, a Yogi whose renunciation of worldly things endowed him with unsurpassed peace of mind and bliss. From this he understood that the pleasures of the World are transitory, that suffering is inevitable without higher knowledge, and that higher knowledge can only be obtained by renouncing the World, that is, by looking for Truth beyond material things. Thus, at the age of twenty-nine the Buddha left home in the quest for Truth. He practised certain physical disciplines and meditation with forest Yogis for six years after which, at the age of thirty-five, he became Enlightened or Awakened (Buddha).

32. *You have seen the new-born babe sucking at the mother's breast, etc.:* That is to say, he ought to have observed, had he been sufficiently attentive, that there is a certain order of things which is obeyed by all. Only by obeying that order can man live in Unity with the Supreme and enjoy the fruit thereof.

41. *As a lake gives birth to various things such as the fish, the frog, the lotus and the reed, even so children born of one womb differ in intelligence, temperament and bodily frame:* The fact is that we are not all given the same starting chance in life. We are endowed with different bodies, different parents, different teachers, friends, etc. Even when bodily constitution, parents, environment and upbringing are identical as, for example, in the case of identical twins, the outcome is not always the same. Now, if we say that it is a matter of luck, we have to explain what luck is as well as why some are favoured by luck more than others. To date, no satisfactory scientific explanation has been offered. We cannot say that it is due exclusively to Destiny or the Will of God either, for God is, by definition, Good and Just. There must be another factor, therefore, that accounts for the perceived inequality and injustice of the apparently arbitrary difference in the basic conditions of people's life. If we exclude external factors such as Divine Will, as we have shown we have reasons to do, then we must assume that the prompting cause for our course of life is internal. In other words, there is something *in us* that attracts, or prompts the creation of, certain conditions and circumstances in our life. Indeed, we know from the observation of everyday life that every action gives rise to a corresponding reaction. This much is confirmed by modern physics. But it is not only our physical actions that produce an effect. Our words can also produce pleasure or anger in others and we can, for example, be held

responsible for what we say in a court of law. And, of course, our thoughts are likewise capable of producing an effect on ourselves and on our environment. Every state of mind, being a form of energy, necessarily interacts with other energies in and around us. Every part of our body, from vital organs like the heart and brain to the smallest biological cell, vibrates or radiates energy in a certain way at a particular frequency, and so do our thoughts and feelings. The sum total of these energy vibrations forms a general, harmonious pattern the balance or harmony of which can be easily disrupted by disharmonious activities and this disruption can result in imbalance and disease. This is explicitly admitted by all religious traditions. Thus, the Quran says: "Whatever misfortune befalls you, it is the fruit of your own labours" (42:27). Equally, the Bible declares: "Whatsoever a man sows, that he shall also reap" (Gal. 6). In the Dhammapada (165) the Buddha says: "By oneself, indeed is evil done; by oneself is one injured; good and bad belong to oneself". The great Sage of Ancient Greece, Heraclitus of Ephesos (6th century BC) also said: "A man's character is his fate". Throughout the Scriptures, man's present condition is consistently said to be the fruit of his own actions. However, while we may, under circumstances, easily accept this in an adult person, a new-born baby cannot be said to have had occasion for much mental or physical activity, whether harmonious or otherwise. We must therefore logically conclude that any actions as are capable of producing certain effects in the new-born's mind, body, etc., must have occurred prior to his conception and birth. It is precisely for this reason that the concept of Reincarnation is introduced and the differences in people's bodily constitution, etc., are explained as being the result of energy patterns that were developed in previous lives and carried forward to subsequent rebirths in the form of Samskaras (or Karmic Seeds). The 10th century North-Indian Master Abhinava Gupta explains: "Karma constitutes the seed or cause of existence in all created beings, determining their birth, duration of life, as well as all experiences, both good and bad... The fruits of the land cultivated by a farmer at sowing time are enjoyed by him at harvest when his body (due to its momentariness or impermanence) is no longer the same (its cells, molecules, atoms and other constituent parts having in the meantime been replaced by new ones). Thus even in this World, though actions are performed in one body, their fruit is enjoyed in another. This being so, it is legitimate for us to conclude that experiences enjoyed in this lifetime are the result of actions performed in a previous existence" (Tantraloka, IX, 88-89, 124-126; XIII, 230, etc.). It follows from this that in conjunction with the Law of Karma, Reincarnation goes a long way in clarifying a number of important issues. It explains, for example, why some people are born in certain circumstances while others are not, especially in those cases for which official science and religion are either unable or unwilling to provide a valid explanation. It explains suffering in apparently "innocent" people as well as in animals, a problem that remains unsolved in Western religions. It explains certain apparently inborn and otherwise inexplicable phobias or attractions in children. Finally, it explains why some children display extraordinary skills (in music, mathematics, etc.) that would normally take years of systematic practice to acquire. For a more detailed explanation of Reincarnation and Karma see Commentary to verses 5 and 16, above.

46. *Others will proclaim that dead men lie asleep in their grave and will be brought back to life in their former bodies even if these have turned to dust:* The official position of Bible-based, Western religions is that the dead lie asleep until they are all physically resurrected at some point in the future called Judgement Day. On closer analysis, this belief in Physical Resurrection proves to be merely an over-simplified version of the Yogic teaching of Reincarnation: while the original, Indian version correctly states that under normal circumstances a Soul is reborn again and again until he has sufficiently evolved to become re-united with his Creator, its Western counterpart maintains that all Souls are reborn into the Realm of God after just one lifetime. The fallacy of the Western view becomes apparent if we consider the fact that very few Souls actually acquire a sufficient degree of perfection in one lifetime to qualify for entrance into the Perfect World of God. Moreover, Enlightened Yoga Masters who are capable of consciously entering the Higher Worlds, tell us that the dead, even though they may at times enter states akin to sleep, are

generally fully conscious and that they possess bodies of luminous energy ("bodies of light", in the Christian tradition) until such time as they are reborn on Earth. Regarding the End of the World (or Pralaya, World Dissolution) when the so-called Judgement Day is supposed to take place, Yoga teaches that in such an event the Material World will be re-absorbed into the Higher World in the same way as ice melts and evaporates in the Sun or salt dissolves in water, thereby excluding the possibility of any physical bodies being brought back to life. To claim anything else implies that Souls who have reached Heaven, for example, continue to lead a material life and that the Spiritual World is in fact material and not Spiritual, which is absurd. It follows from this, that the Western view must be rejected as contrary to both logic and experience. Indeed, irrespective of official doctrine, it becomes evident from a number of historical sources that Reincarnation or Multiple Rebirth was the higher and only true teaching of all Western faiths including Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and that any teachings to the contrary are promoted by traditions which are confusing certain Spiritual facts. The fact is that the testimony of millions of people, from the Enlightened Yogis of India (Bhagwan Mahavira, Lord Buddha), the Sages of Ancient Greece (Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato) and Rome (Cicero, Virgil) to the Early Christians (Saint Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Synesius of Cyrene), the Sufis of Medieval Persia (Rumi) and Mystics of Medieval Europe (Jacob Boehme) to countless men, women and children of today, constitutes conclusive proof that reincarnation is the normal, natural process of life after death. Apart from individual reincarnation when a Soul, having remained for some time in the Astral Plane, is reborn on Earth, the only time when Souls are collectively reincarnated after a period of sleep-like existence, is at the end of a Universal Dissolution and beginning of a New Creation. Yet even then, this involves only those Souls who still have to work out residual Karma, the others having ascended to the Higher Worlds at the moment of Dissolution of the Material World, and constitutes assumption of *new*, rather than old, physical bodies. As for the Judgement of the Souls, this would have to take place *before* and not after resurrection or reincarnation. This is only logical, there being no meaningful function for the physical body to perform on the Astral or Higher Planes even if it were capable of existence on such Planes. Souls, after all, are quite fit to be judged without a physical body. Consequently, a physical body is required on the Physical Plane only - at the moment of reincarnation or rebirth - and that solely for karmic purposes. In this respect, therefore, Yoga does not teach anything new or contrary to Truth but, rather, re-introduces Knowledge that has been lost and that alone can bring harmony and coherence to the various religions of the World so that Unity and Peace may once again prevail on Earth.

47. *Verily and without doubt, those who follow My Eternal Path shall be given deathless bodies of light and not mere shells of lifeless dust:* It is well to understand that the laws operating on the non-physical plane where the Soul sojourns in the intermediate state between one life and the next, are somewhat different from those that apply on the physical plane. Thoughts are much more powerful and provide the primary force that shapes a Soul's life on the Astral Plane. Thus, if a person believes that he will be endowed with a physical body, or even that he is a body, his belief will generate a powerful stream of psychic force which in turn will create an apparently physical structure (really consisting of mental energy) around him and prevent him from experiencing life as a free and blissful Soul. The same belief will also force a person to return to earthly life in a physical body. For this reason all genuine Spiritual traditions advise against excessive attachment to physical things. Needless to say, certain beliefs can also affect the mind of the person who holds them and give rise to problems of a psychological as well as Spiritual nature in the present or future life. Attachment to erroneous beliefs can therefore be as damaging as attachment to material things. For this reason, the Supreme Lord says: "The power of thinking was given to man that he might think rightly and not foolishly believe what is repugnant and wrong".

69. *O noble ones! one State is known to all men and Three to Yogis. But the Fifth is known Alone to the All-Knowing One:* Yoga teaches that there are five basic States of Consciousness, namely, waking, dreaming, deep sleep, Enlightenment and Supreme Enlightenment, of which the subsequent ones are closer to and more identical with the Universal Self, than the preceding ones.

73. *When the Yogi pierces the veil of Dreams and becomes aware of himself, then he is an Awakened One (Buddha). But he who conquers Sleep is a Great Yogi and a Well-Awakened (Prabuddha):* Sleep is the gate of entrance into Reality. By consciously entering the state of Deep Sleep we come face to face with the Veil of Darkness (Maya) that separates us from our true Self and from God. If by means of a high degree of concentration upon the Light of Consciousness we succeed in penetrating the Veil of Maya, we suddenly awaken to ourselves as a free and happy Soul, made of Light, Intelligence and Energy. We are then almost automatically drawn to the Supreme Soul and immerse ourselves in Him. This penetration of the Veil of Sleep may be effectuated either while sitting in Meditation or when lying down to sleep provided in the first case that the body and the mind are sufficiently relaxed and in the second, that we remain conscious (and do not fall asleep). Relaxed mental states like those of sleep or Meditation are particularly suited for entering into the deeper layers of reality, because at such times our awareness is undistracted by sense perceptions and thoughts and the mind is more in tune with the Higher Intelligence of the Soul. Thus says the Vijnana Bhairava Tantra: "When the mind enters into that (intermediary) state wherein sleep has not fully arrived but all external objects have faded out of sight, then the Supreme Divine Intelligence reveals Itself" (75). And the Vijnana Kaumudi: "By contemplating on that state which appears at the beginning of sleep and at the end of waking, one will experience an imperishable Joy". Furthermore, "The Fully Enlightened Yogi experiences always and uninterruptedly the Vibration of Pure Consciousness (Spanda) in all the three states (waking, dreaming and deep sleep). But the others (the partially Awakened) only enjoy It at the beginning and end of these states" (Spandakarika, 17). For in the more advanced Yogi, the state of half-sleep assumes the form of Spiritual or Yogic Sleep (Yoganidra): "The Lord of the Universe appears clearly and unveiled in the heart of the Yogi who enters the Mystical Sleep (Yoganidra) and who (while in that state) devotes himself unflinchingly to an alert and ardent Meditation" (Spandanirnaya). "The assiduous practice of Absorption in Shiva (Shiva Samadhi) so thoroughly purifies the mirror of consciousness that the Yogi, despite of his (apparent) sleeping, becomes deeply immersed either in the Divine Energy or in Shiva Himself for he is no longer, at any time, unconscious" (Spandanirnaya, III, 1-2). When falling asleep, the Yogi withdraws his mind into the heart and breathes several times slowly and loudly while concentrating on whatever he wishes to accomplish; then, instead of sinking into normal, unconscious sleep, he enters into the state of Yoganidra, which is pervaded by a subtle form of consciousness. He is then able to direct his dreams in whatever way he desires. For example, if he wishes to appear to another person in a dream, this will happen accordingly. The Tantraloka designates this kind of sleep by the term Vyapti (Pervasion) as the Yogi who practises it "having his foundations in Knowledge itself, becomes All-Pervading during his sleep" (X, 256). Says the Vijnana Bhairava: "When one fully knows the Form of the Supreme (Which is experienced in the Fourth State) in the waking-state (as well as the others), that is to say, limited knowledge productive of duality (as when awake), impressions of the external World (as when dreaming), and complete darkness (as when in deep sleep), one is then filled with the Splendour of Infinite Consciousness" (86). When, therefore, the Yogi knows all the three states as only the expression of the Fourth State which is the Light of the Self, he becomes full of the Infinite Light of Shiva, the Universal Consciousness. The just quoted verse refers to the three conditions of man: (1) the waking-state in which he perceives the multiplicity of the Universe, (2) the dream-state during which man lives in the subtle body and outwardly appears to project what in fact is a purely internal vision, and (3) dreamless sleep wherein man, being immersed in the source (or originating) body remains in a state of complete darkness and is therefore unaware of the external

World. In consequence, when the Yogi remains absorbed in the Light of Universal Consciousness during the three other states, he is Liberated in this very life. The Shaddharma Samgraha explains how this is to be accomplished in practice: "Under all conditions during the day, hold to the concept that all things are of the substance of dreams (i.e., mind-made) and that you must realise their true nature. Then, at night, when about to sleep, pray to the Guru that you may be enabled to rightly comprehend the dream-state; and firmly resolve that you will comprehend it. By meditating thus, one is certain to comprehend it"... "If one attain mastery of this (dream) process, then, all phenomena whether in the sleeping-state or in the waking-state will be known to be born of the Clear Light (of Consciousness) and phenomena and mind will become one" (3:4, 5, 32). Thus, in the waking-state, the Yogi endeavours to realise the fact that the World he lives in, both inner and outer, consists of sense perceptions, feelings and thoughts and that these are but particularised forms of the Universal Consciousness just as rays of light are particularised forms of the Sun. In the dream-state the Yogi must become aware of himself as the conscious author of his own dreams. Whereas, in deep sleep, he must remain awake to himself as identical with the Light of Consciousness. When this awareness becomes uninterrupted in all three states, he attains the Fourth State (Turya Avastha) of Buddhahood. This practice of "lucid (or alert) dreaming" is therefore of paramount importance in Yoga as in all genuine Spiritual life. This is why it has been said: "When the state of dreaming has dawned, do not lie in ignorance like a corpse, enter the natural sphere of unwavering attentiveness. Recognise your dream and transform illusion into luminosity. Do not sleep like an animal, do the practice which mixes sleep and reality" (Tibetan prayer).

89. *Untimely death*: Death may be said to be of two kinds, timely and untimely. Timely Death is that which occurs when the stock of Karma to be worked out by a Soul in a particular life span has been naturally exhausted. Untimely Death is that which comes about unexpectedly or "before time" and interrupts the natural Karmic processes that form the basis of human life. The following of Yoga, Dharma or Universal Law, by a Soul, ensures that his life is not interrupted or disturbed by Untimely Death, Disease, etc.

End of Chapter 9 and Commentary

THE TENTH LIGHT

(Chapter Ten)

10

*Wherein the Eternal Yoga Path to Liberation
is declared by the Supreme Lord for the good of all beings*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. I shall now make known to you a Yoga Teaching that is easily understood by all. Therein every Seeker shall find a Path to his heart's desire and as taught by his Spiritual Guide. By means of this Teaching, My devotees see their Self, the Highest Lord, shining like the blazing Sun. The

fire of Yoga quickly burns the fetters of ignorance and sins. Perfect Knowledge that leads to Liberation springs from this Yoga even as dawn springs from the Sun.

2. Verily, Knowledge arises from Yoga and Yoga functions by means of Knowledge. I, the Greatest God, am Delighted when one is devoted to both Yoga and Knowledge. Those who practise the Great Yoga of the Greatest God, either once, twice, three times a day or even constantly, are themselves to be known as Great Beings Divine.

3. First, let it be understood that Yoga is of three kinds. The first is called Bhava Yoga (the Yoga of Being), the second, Abhava Yoga (the Yoga of Non-Being) and the third, Maha Yoga (the Greatest Yoga), it being the greatest among all.

4. The Yoga whereby one's own inner Self is meditated upon as a living Soul in the midst of mind, body and worldly possessions is spoken of as Bhava Yoga (the Yoga of Being). It leads to the realisation of one's own individual Self, unencumbered by mental delusions. Being the Yoga of Phenomenal Existence, it should be practised by those who are attached to worldly life and who wish to remain in the World in this life and the next.

5. The Yoga, whereby one visualises oneself as infinite, eternally blissful and beyond the Physical World, is known as Abhava Yoga (the Yoga of Non-Being). It leads to the realisation of My Divine Transcendental Self and is higher than the former. Therein all manifested things are absorbed in the Original Source Whence everything comes and Whereto everything does return, even as thoughts come to rest in the emptiness of deep sleep and waves subside in the silence of the Ocean deep. It should be practised only by those who wish to leave the World behind and merge for ever in the Formless Being.

6. The Yoga, however, wherein one meditates upon oneself as identical at once with My Transcendental and Immanent Being, that I regard as the highest Yoga leading to true God-Realisation. It is called Maha Yoga because it is the Yoga of the Great Life (Maha Satta).

7. The Great Life is Greater than both Being and Non-Being. It is the Supreme Being (Para Bhava or Para Satta) Itself. It is Higher than, and at the same time contains within Itself, all other forms of being. Therefore the Yoga that leads Thereto is known as Maha Yoga (Greatest Yoga) and Arya Yoga (Higher Yoga). It is also called Shiva Yoga (the Yoga of Shiva) as it leads to Identity with Shiva Who is both God and the World in One. It is called in three ways because it is Three Times the Greatest among all.

8. This Greatest of all Yogas shall be practised by all who wish to attain Perfection in this very life. Verily, this Yoga is practised even by the Gods. For, thereby one obtains the Joys of Heaven even now.

9. Those Paths of Yoga one sees being followed by others or one hears about in other Teachings, are not worth as much as one-sixteenth of this Divine Yoga. The Yoga whereby Enlightened Souls directly experience everything as One with God, that Yoga alone shall be known as the greatest of all Yogas. Those who follow it, see God in each other and at the end of their earthly life go to the Supreme Abode.

10. But those followers of the Yogic Way (that is, of Bhava Yoga), who, even though they have brought their mind under control still consider themselves to be separate or different from the Lord, shall not perceive Me as One without a Second. Thus I, the Lord, declare.

11. O you who shine like the radiant Stars! Man is born of the Perfect One and unto Him he shall return: this is the Eternal Law. Let every man who desires to abide in Unity with Me, do that which is most profitable for his Soul, which removes all imperfections, and which makes him worthy of the Highest Heaven. It is called Spiritual Practice (Sadhana), it leads to the perfecting of the Soul and is of eight kinds.

12. Hear you now what the Eight Practices of Yoga are. Three Preliminary Practices which are called, Self-discipline (Yama), Spiritual Observance (Niyama) and Posture (Asana). And Five Advanced Practices which are called, Breath-control (Pranayama), Detachment (Pratyahara), Concentration (Dharana), Meditation (Dhyana) and Inward Absorption (Samadhi).

13. The Three Preliminary Practices (Prathamika Nityakarmma) or Yogas beginning with Self-discipline. Self-discipline is of five kinds: Truthfulness (Satya), Non-violence (Ahimsa), Not Stealing (Asteya), Right Sexual Conduct (Dharmacharya) and Disinterest in material possessions (Aparigraha). These five develop will-power and purity in the mind of men.

14. Truthfulness. Unswerving adherence to Shiva (Who Is the Highest Truth) and thinking, speaking and acting in conformity with His Eternal Truth, is Truthfulness. Since everything is based upon Truth, there is nothing that cannot be attained by the power of Truth.

15. Non-violence. It has been declared by the great Sages that Non-violence is the refraining from causing harm to any living being, whether in deed, word or thought.

16. In truth, there is no greater virtue on Earth than Non-violence. Nothing is more conducive to happiness than Non-violence. But that violence that is done in accordance with Dharma (moral and Spiritual Law), leads to Non-violence and is to be practised as such by the righteous without fear of sin.

17. Verily, violence that is done in defence of one's own life or that of others or in defence of My Truth shall be regarded as lawful. For My Law is ever on the side of the righteous. He who acts in obedience to My Law shall not be touched by evil Karma. This is the Eternal Dharma.

18. Not Stealing. Taking what belongs to another, either through deception, stealth or force is called Stealing. Refraining from such is Not Stealing. It is a means of acquiring merit.

19. Right Sexual Conduct. Refraining from improper sexual conduct, whether mental, verbal or physical, in all circumstances, occasions and places, is called Proper Sexual Conduct (lit. conduct according to Spiritual Law, Dharmacharya). Abstinence from sexual intercourse in body, speech and thought is the right conduct for one who has taken the Vow of Chastity.

20. But enjoying physical union with one's wife during her monthly courses or on holy days; or with a maiden who has not attained womanhood; or with another man's wife; or with another man; or with a subhuman creature; or with one who is not a follower of My Law; these six are the deeds to be avoided by all righteous men.

21. Disinterest in material possessions. Non-acceptance of material gifts save when compelled by need and being mentally detached from the same, is called Disinterest in material possessions. This virtue must be carefully guarded.

22. Spiritual Observance (Niyama) is likewise of five kinds: Austerity (Tapas), Spiritual Study (Svadhyaya), Purity (Shaucha), Contentment (Santosha) and Worship of God (Ishvara-Pujana). These five bestow Spiritual powers (Siddhis) upon the Yogi who practises them.

23. Austerity. Fasting and eating according as the Moon wanes and waxes, developing endurance to heat and cold, insensitivity to pain, sleeping on the bare ground, dwelling at the foot of a tree, etc., is known as Austerity.

24. Spiritual Study. The hearing and repeating of, and the thinking on, My Word of Truth, is Spiritual Study. It develops the mental quality of intelligence and happiness (Sattva) in those who practise it.

25. There are three kinds of Spiritual Study: audible, inaudible and mental. Due to differences in their efficacy, they are regarded as inferior, medium and superior, respectively.

26. The Spiritual Study wherein the words uttered by the student are clearly audible to others, is called vocal.

27. That which involves the movement of the lips without audible pronunciation of the words, is called silent. It is of superior kind to the audible one.

28. The attentive contemplation of the Words of Truth as revealed by the Lord, without any movement of the lips is called mental repetition. It is to be regarded as the best of the three.

29. Purity, O noble ones! is that which is achieved by means of bathing (snana) and is of two kinds: outer and inner. Outer Purity is attained by such means as rubbing the bodily frame with water and clay, cow dung (on account of its antiseptic properties) or ashes. Inner Purity is attained by bathing in a holy river or temple bath, praying and adhering to pure thoughts. He who daily observes these two shall be free of sin. But that purity which is attained by means of Yogic Bathing which is steadfast concentration on Lord Shiva shall be known as supreme.

30. Contentment. The attitude whereby one accepts whatever comes to one without much effort, and is conducive to inner peace, is called Contentment.

31. Worship of God. Expressing respect and devotion to Supreme Lord Shiva through physical, verbal and mental activities such as bowing down before Him, singing His praises and remembering His Name, are known as Worship of God.

32. The five Self-disciplines and five Spiritual Observances have thus been made known to you. Listen now to what is called Physical Posture (Asana). It is that steady position of the bodily frame whereby calmness, stable-mindedness and happiness are attained.

33. The Physical Postures shall be known to be eighty-four in total or the same multiplied ten hundredfold. The most excellent among them are the following three: the Swastika, the Lotus and the Half-Lotus.

34. Sitting down with the soles of the feet placed between the knees and the thighs, is known as the excellent Swastika-Posture (the Posture of Well-being). Sitting down with each foot resting sole-up on the opposite thigh, is called the excellent Lotus-Posture (Padmasana). And that posture, wherein one sits cross-legged with one foot resting upon the opposite thigh, is known as Half-Lotus-Posture (Ardha-Padmasana).

35. Of sitting postures the Lotus shall be regarded as the best. For it drives away hunger, sloth and fatigue. By the regular practice thereof the Yogi reverses the effects of earthly life and overcomes disease, old age and untimely death. But of all postures that I call the most excellent and greatest wherein the Yogi rests within himself. By abiding therein he becomes a Great Hero, an Immortal and a God. Hear you now the practices that lead to perfection in the greatest of all postures (Mahasana).

36. The Five Advanced Practices (Kartagama Nityakarmma) or Yogas beginning with Breath-Control. Pranayama or the practice of Breath-Control. Prana is the air circulating within the body. Control is known as Ayama. Therefore, control of the breath is known as Pranayama.

37. Breath-Control is of three kinds: inferior, medium and superior. It may also be classified into two kinds depending on whether it is done with or without mental repetition of a Mantra (Mystical Formula) such as the sacred Sound OM: Sagarbha (with Mantra) and Agarbha (without Mantra).

38. The inferior kind of Pranayama is that practised for the duration of twelve time measures; the medium, for the duration of twenty-four measures; and the superior kind is practised for the duration of thirty-six measures. The time required for opening and closing the eyes is the measure of time (matra) called Twinkling (nimesha) by the wise.

39. As he advances in the practice of these three, the Yogi experiences perspiration, trembling and jumping, in due course. Success in the practice of Pranayama shall be judged by the bliss it produces.

40. Pranayama has three parts: inhalation, retention and exhalation. They are well-known to all accomplished Yogis.

41. Inhalation is called Puraka (Filling) and exhalation Rechaka (Emptying). The middle part is known as Kumbhaka (holding the air in, as within a Pot).

42. Restraining one's breath, let one repeat three times the Prayer To The Divine Sun (Savitri) after duly reverencing the Primordial Sound OM, as well as Earth, Air, and Sky. This is known as breath-control.

43. The ultimate goal of Yogic Breath-Control is called Maha-Yoga, the Great Union (Maha Samyoga) wherein Perfect Harmony with Me, the Universal Being, is experienced. It is attained through suspension of the breath in conjunction with mental repetition of the Mantra as instructed by one's Teacher (Guru).

44. The breath flows evenly through the left and right nostrils six times in a night and day. Know that to be the best time for the practice of Yogic breathing. At the meeting-place of Day and Night, when the hot Sun of exhalation moves upwards and the cool Moon of inhalation moves downwards while in the middle shines the Flame of Illumination;

45. Or, when neither the Sun nor the Moon are seen; for the Sun (of Knowledge) in the form of exhalation and the Moon (of the Knowable Object) in the form of inhalation together have merged into the Fire of Shiva's Consciousness;

46. Then, the Spiritual Serpent Power (Kundalini) that enters into one's body even while in the mother's womb and lies dormant like a sleeping serpent in the energy centre (Chakra) at the base of the spine, is awakened through the Spiritual heat produced by Pranayama.

47. Thus awakened, it rushes up the spinal column like an effulgent flash of lightning to reunite itself with the Soul that resides in his luminous lotus-like abode at the crown of the head. Then Liberation is attained. This is called the Union of the Moon (Ha) and Sun (Tha) or Hatha Yoga. This, verily, O learned ones! is the essence of Yogic Breath-Control. He who realises this, obtains the fruit of Yoga Practice.

48. Now, Detachment. O excellent ones! the mind of the ignorant flows towards the objects of the World even as water flows from a pot with many holes. But when by means of breath-control the inner life-force is awakened, detachment arises therefrom. As a tortoise draws its limbs into the middle of its body, so the Yogi withdraws his senses from their objects and brings them back into himself. This is Sensory Detachment (Pratyahara).

49. Concentration. By abiding in the state of detachment, the Yogi attains to Concentration (Dharana) which is the focusing of the mind on certain places within the body, such as the top of the head, the forehead, the heart, the navel and so forth.

50. Meditation. By abiding in the state of concentration, the Yogi attains to Meditation (Dhyana). It is the prolonged, uninterrupted and undistracted concentration of the mind on a particular object. The highest meditation shall be known to be that which has My Divine Person as object.

51. Inward Absorption or Trance. By abiding in the state of meditation, the Yogi attains to Inward Absorption (Samadhi, lit., Unified Consciousness). It is the merging of the mind in the object of contemplation to the complete exclusion of everything else. The highest kind thereof shall be known to be Absorption in the Supreme (Shiva-Samadhi). Samadhi is that state wherein the winds of change are stayed and Changelessness is obtained. By becoming established therein, the Yogi attains the Great Nirvana and becomes One with the Supreme.

52. Twelve Pranayamas amount to Concentration; twelve times the duration of Concentration equals one period of Meditation; and twelve times the duration of Meditation constitutes Absorption (Samadhi). Having put away all imperfections by means of Yama and Niyama; having hardened his body by means of Asana and awakened his inner life-force by means of Pranayama; having stilled his mind by means of Pratyahara and Dharana; and having united his mind to his Soul and his Soul to the Supreme Self by means of Samadhi and Dhyana; having thus perfected himself by means of the Eightfold Sadhana, the Yogi attains to the Great Nirvana.

53. Verily, as a lamp shines without a flicker when placed in a spot that is free from wind, even so the Yogi who has merged with the Supreme knows neither suffering nor sin but is ever happy and serene. Such an one is never disturbed by outer perceptions nor by inner agitation; he ever abides in a state of Supreme Perfection.

54. O wise ones! an accomplished Yogi is not perturbed by time or space. But they who have newly entered upon the Path shall not practise Yoga at inappropriate times or in inappropriate places. The best time to begin the Practice of Yoga is in the seasons of Spring or Autumn, when Nature is not harsh but gentle, when the Stars are favourable and when the Teacher gives his blessings.

55. He who desires success should not indulge in improper food, nor take that which has turned sour and stale, but eat what is wholesome and pure. Fried grains and flesh should be avoided, above all, that of humans, human-like beasts and the sacred cow.

56. But grains like barley, millet, wheat and rice, as well as nuts, pulses, roots, green leaves and fruit, eaten either boiled or raw; food that is not too salty, pungent or bitter; neither overcooked nor burned; which is pleasantly prepared, possessing nourishing properties and is agreeable with one's constitution, that can be eaten to one's heart's content.

57. As for place, one should not practise near fire, in water or on dry leaves. Nor in places infested with vermin or full of insects, ant-hills, dilapidated cowpens and houses, crowded places, crossroads and border lands, the meeting-place of unbelievers (dharmaatyagis) who reject My Law Eternal nor yet places sought by Spirits, ghosts and evil folk.

58. Nor should Yoga be practised when the body is ailing or the mind is troubled. Yoga is best practised at dawn when the body is strong and the mind is clear; otherwise it may be practised at dusk.

59. With a mind concentrated upon Me, let one practise Yoga in a land ruled by a righteous king, in a secluded place such as a forest, rock or mountain cave, on a river bank or open space, in a holy spot, a well-kept cowpen, a hut made of leaves or mud, in a graveyard or cremation ground, at the foot of a tree, in a place that is clean, tranquil and free of all vermin.

60. After bowing down to the Leading Yogis, their disciples, his human Guru and Me, let the Yogi commence his practice with a composed mind.

61. Firmly seated in any of the sitting postures, the Swastika, the Lotus or the Half-Lotus, with open or closed eyes, let him concentrate his mind by focusing upon the place between the eyebrows.

62. With a mind thus calmed and free of worldly desires, worries and fears, let one then meditate upon the Supreme Lord within one's own self.

63. Let the Mystic Lotus or Chakra be conceived of as being at a distance of twelve finger-breadths from the top of the head. For thus it has been said, From one hundred and one channels of the heart, one leads to the crown of the head; going up by it, the Yogi attains Immortality.

64. Therefore, know that Mystic Lotus to be brilliant white in colour and exceedingly beautiful. Its root represents the Spiritual Law of the Universe, its stalk is Spiritual Knowledge and eight Divine Powers form its petals.

65. It has Detachment for its calyx. In the calyx of that Lotus, let one meditate on the golden pericarp. Within that, let one meditate upon Me as the Lord Who is Divine and Changeless, Who is All-Powerful, Who is expressed by the sacred Sound Om, Who is Unmanifest and surrounded by a halo of blazing rays.

66. In the heart of that Lotus, let him meditate upon that great Eternal Radiance, the Lord of Unmeasured Splendour, the All-Source and conceive himself as being One with That. He shall discard all other thoughts. This is the most secret of secrets.

67. Having become One with the Cosmic Self, the Yogi shall then perceive the Self as living in and through all things. Thus he attains the Highest Vision Divine and the Goal of Maha Yoga.

68. Listen you now to another form of meditation whereby, having purified the body by means of the sacred Sound OM, one contemplates upon one's own essential Self as the luminous twenty-fifth Life-Principle, beyond Material Energy. The Divine Self, the Light of all Lights and Bestower of Life Eternal, shall then be meditated upon within oneself, as one's own true Self.

69. Verily, the physical body, man's outer shell, is born at the beginning of earthly life, lives for awhile and then it dies. The mind also, rises like to a wave and then subsides. The Soul only, man's true Self, ever shines like as the Sun. Therefore, he who meditates upon the Inner Sun becomes Immortal, like the Sun.

70. O you who shine like Suns in the Firmament of Stars! the Soul is known as having three different bodies, gross, subtle and originating. The Originating Body (or Source Body, Karana Sharira) consists of the Life-Principle Maya and Five Limited Powers. It is the first cover that envelops the Soul upon his birth into the Material World. Therein one abides in Dissolution and Deep Sleep, retaining it as a limiting cover, from birth to birth. Of this body, the other two are born. Hence, it is called Originating (Karana), being the material origin or source of these two.

71. The Subtle Body (Sukshma Sharira) is that whereby the Soul is covered during the Dream-State as well as (in the state) between death and rebirth. It consists of those aspects of the Soul that are hidden to the physical eye. Hence it is called Subtle (Sukshma) and also City-of-Eight (Puryashtaka), its elementary parts being eight: Reason, Thought of I, Lower Mind and the Five Mental Faculties of Knowledge or Action, according as one's experience is active or passive.

72. The Gross Body (Sthula Sharira) is the third material cover. It envelops the Soul upon entering his future mother's womb from whence, when the months of gestation have passed, he goes forth into the dim light of Earth. Therein the Soul abides in the state called Waking. Being made of the Material Qualities, Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth, it is known as Gross (Sthula). It dies upon departure from earthly life and is replaced by a new one upon rebirth on Earth. Its properties such as size, shape, skin colour, gender and duration are in accord to the Law of Karma.

73. Now, the Yogi who knows the Perfect Science of Spirit, having found a quiet and secret place away from the din of the World, seats himself upon a comfortable seat and, with quiescent mind, applies himself to the Great Practice (Maha Abhiyoga) of the Yogic Way.

74. Realising that he is not the Gross Life-Principles such as Earth and the rest, realising himself to be higher than these, he detaches himself from the Gross Body and enters the subtle City-of-Eight.

75. Therein, like a Great King in his Palace, like a Hermit in his Cave, like a God in his Heaven, with great devotion and a pure heart he reverences the following thought: I am not this bodily frame, I am not this mind, I am the Light within. I am greater than the Earth, greater than the Atmosphere, greater than the Sky, greater than all the Worlds. I am the Very Being Supreme. The Universe is My Own Creation.

76. Thinking thus, one quickly attains the Highest. Having attained the Highest, one does not return to worldly life. One soars in the Infinite Firmament of Consciousness like an Eagle in the Sky, thinking to himself, O wonderful! my Soul has been freed from the fetters of the World and I

am United with Shiva, the Supreme Lord. Verily, indeed, I am Shiva: I am Pure Consciousness and Bliss.

77. One is then Liberated While Living. One is endowed with a body of light and lives like a God upon Earth. Upon departure from this World, one goes to Shiva's Home Which is the Abode of Supreme Purity and Goodness (Shivalaya) and returns no more. He, verily, who knows this secret, becomes One with Me, the Highest God. Therefore, let one practise diligently, with devotion to Me and one's Spiritual Teacher. Having begun this Perfect Practice, one should not give up.

78. Verily, as a young Swan stays at first close to his nest and then flies ever further and higher according as his wings gain strength, even so the diligent Yogi by the power of Meditation gradually reaches the Highest Goal.

79. O you who are most wise! the constant recitation of My Holy Name is known as Mantra-Japa and is of three kinds: voiced, whispered and silent, the last-named being the best among the three. When during Meditation the mind grows either sluggish or restless, Japa should be performed. And when the same (i.e., the mind growing sluggish or restless) occurs during Recitation, Meditation should be done again. Thus the Yogi steadily advances on the Path.

80. Looking within, one shall see a dark Cave, a great Void, or an inward Light shining like unto a swarm of Fireflies, grains of Camphor, a fluffy Cotton Flower, a white Lotus, a bright Cloud, a scintillating Mist, a Looking-glass of burnished silver or a Dish of (mother-of-) pearl, a flickering Flame of Fire, a snow-clad Mountain, a wave-less Pond, a Full Moon, a radiant Human Form, a blazing Sun and a Sea of Light. These shall be known as the Sixteen Signs of Progress on the Yoga Path. They are the road marks that tell the traveller that he is approaching the Goal even as the Morning Star heralds the approaching of Dawn.

81. O noble ones! pleasures born of the senses have a beginning and an end. They bring joy while they last and pain when they pass away. But the Bliss of the Lord has neither beginning nor end. As the Sun always shines in the Firmament even when his light is obstructed by clouds, night or dark blindness, even so I, the Supreme Lord, Eternally Shine in the Boundless Sky of Universal Consciousness.

82. As sunlight is obscured by various things, even so My Divine Bliss is obscured by many kinds of pain that afflict Souls who are bound to worldly existence. The suffering that severs bound Souls from My Undying Light and Bliss is of three, five, seven and of countless kinds.

83. The three-fold suffering is Spiritual, self-inflicted and divine. Spiritual suffering is born of ignorance of Higher Truth. Self-inflicted suffering is naturally created by one's own actions done in the past, present and future. Divine suffering is that which comes about through divine intervention, as when one is struck by lightning, hit by a stray missile or is stricken with an illness or misfortune.

84. Spiritual Knowledge that flows from the Practice of Yoga is the only remedy to the first (kind of suffering). Right thinking, right intention, right action, right speech, right livelihood, right food and right medical treatment are the remedy to the second. Restraint of the mind, atonement, prayer, propitiation (of the God whose wrath one has incurred), magic incantations (mantras), auspicious observances, charitable gifts and solemn vows are the remedy for the third. Verily, these sixteen are the remedies for all kinds of suffering that afflict man. But of these, Spiritual Knowledge shall be known as the best and the remover of all pain.

85. Now, the five-fold suffering. It is that which consists of dullness, delusion, great delusion, darkness and blinding darkness. Dullness is vanity and self-pride; delusion is thinking that one is the physical body; great delusion is thinking that one is family or possessions; darkness is hating those who harm oneself or one's family or one's possessions; blinding darkness is being afraid of death.

86. Yet another, seven-fold kind of suffering is known to the wise. It consists of fear, attachment, greed, anger, sadness, lassitude and doubt. All these are impediments upon the Path. They are to be conquered by Spiritual Practice (Sadhana).

87. O Sages! how can he, who is punished even by the Gods, who is ignorant, fearful and who doubts, who is thus afflicted, advance upon the Path trodden by the righteous and the unafflicted?

88. Indeed, there is no end to the kinds of suffering that befall those who are separated from Me. But those who, by My Grace, have entered upon the Royal Road of Yoga, shall overcome all obstacles and enjoy the Bliss of Union with Me.

89. There are four limbs to the Yoga Path: Entrance (upon the Path), Becoming Established, Advancing and Arriving. When all impediments have been burned in the fire of Yoga and the Yogi, having discarded wrong knowledge, is well-established on the Path, the signs of progress begin to appear and he develops great Spiritual Powers such as the ability to hear, feel, see, taste and smell things unknown and divine.

90. The chief among these Powers is Pratibha, the Inward Flame of Illumination, whereby one perceives things that are hidden, subtle or far away; things that have been or are still to come. In truth, Pratibha is the Supreme Power Divine. There is nothing that the Yogi cannot know or accomplish thereby.

91. Whilst thought-based knowledge is a mere modification of the mind, the Sunlike Lamp of Inward Illumination is the Soul's own Light. It is the Light of True Man's Inner Wisdom and a Radiance Divine.

92. Inward Illumination is but the One Power of the Lord that abides in all living things. When kindled by His Grace, it flares up like as a flame that has lain concealed beneath the ashes, and at once enlightens the World.

93. He in whom the Flame of Illumination has been kindled, can enlighten other men if they be righteous even as the flame of a lamp kindles another flame. Verily, such an one shines like unto a Lamp, a Fire, a Star, the Moon or the Sun and enlightens the World according to the Grace of the Mighty One. As the Sun, the Moon and other things that shine bestow light upon all, so shall every man bring Light into the World, each one according to his means. This is My Supreme Command (Parama-Shasana).

94. When the Inward Radiance Divine dawns upon the horizon of the Yogi's pure mind, then the Sun of Awakening shall not be far. For as the Morning Star announces the coming of the Rising Sun, so the first flashes of Inspiration herald the Dawning of the Great Illumination and Liberation of man.

95. O immortal ones! this is the Yoga of the Lord of all Creatures. It liberates the Soul from the bondage of worldly life. Verily, it is the Path taught by all true Teachers of Spirit and can be

walked upon by all and everyone. It is the greatest Spiritual Truth and it bestows Union with Me (Sayujya) Who am the Truth.

96. Yet even before attaining Union with Me, My devotee shall enjoy the Bliss of Heaven. For he who practises Yoga diligently in a secret place, conquers Old Age and Death, and becomes Master of his own life. He becomes a Perfect One (Siddha).

97. He can understand the secret tongue of wild beasts, Spirits and Gods. He can traverse the Sky at will and congress with the Deathless Ones. He obtains the Eightfold Supernatural Power called Ashta Siddhi and becomes one of the Gods.

98. Verily and without doubt, by the Power of Anima, the Yogi makes himself small as an atom and perceives the inner workings of Matter; by the Power of Laghima, he makes himself weightless or rises up in the air; by the Power of Garima, he makes himself exceedingly heavy or impossible to move; by the Power of Mahima, he can stretch himself forth in space and see or touch even the remotest of things like the Sun, the Moon or the Stars.

99. By the Power of Prakamya, the Yogi acquires irresistible will-power; by the Power of Ishitva, he gains absolute power over body and mind; by the Power of Vashitva, he has control over all creatures and elements; and by the Power of Kama-Vasayitva, he can fulfil all his desires.

100. Endowed with Yogic Powers, My devotees shall ascend to the Celestial Regions wherein they shall enjoy all the pleasures known unto the Immortal Gods.

101. Provided with Celestial bodies, translucent, shining and imperishable like the best of gems, the Enlightened Yogis shall hear the most beautiful sounds. They shall enjoy the most exquisite tactile sensations, sights, flavours and scents.

102. All this they shall enjoy in the company of Celestial Beings of Light whose unsurpassed beauty is beyond what mortal man has ever seen; who shine like corals, diamonds and pearls; who are ever blissful, radiant and fragrant; and who gladden the hearts of all. Thus they shall abide in My Glorious Heaven to their heart's content for countless Ages.

103. With Souls resonant with Divine Sound, with hearts satisfied to the brim and overflowing with Celestial Delight, they shall be fit to drink of My Infinite Ocean of Bliss Supreme. For otherwise, they would be overwhelmed and drown like flies in a milk jar.

104. Verily, they only shall enjoy Celestial Delight that have emptied their heart of worldly pleasures. And they only shall relish My Bliss Supreme who have fortified their senses in the Joys of Heaven.

105. But My devotee shall attain the Bliss of Heaven even in this lifetime. Turning his gaze within, entering the secret cave of his heart, he shall find the Luminous Path that leads to My Celestial Abode (Arya-Laya) wherein the Noble Ones reside.

106. But those who are not My devotees, who follow other paths, who are not thus guided by My Inward Light, shall go astray and wander in the dark recesses of their own mind. Verily, for countless Ages they shall wander in that darkness like travellers on a moonless night.

107. O Sages! I accept all who approach Me with a pure heart and reward them according to their sincere effort.

108. I, the Most Benevolent, Most Merciful God Shiva, the Embodiment of Goodness, accept even the greatest of sinners, regardless of what crimes or sins they have committed.

109. I accept all who accept My Word. For My Word shall work in those who accept It and not in the others.

110. To attain My Heavenly Abode, My devotee must first accept the Divine Word. It can be heard either from Myself, a Divine Guru, a Superhuman Guru (Siddha or Accomplished Yogi) or a human Guru.

111. Avoiding the Path of those who go astray, following the Path of the righteous ones, the devotee shall come across one of the four. For thus I have declared, Whosoever the disciple is ready, even then the Teacher shall appear: as the disciple, so shall be the Teacher.

112. O you who ever see the Truth! the Universe, resting upon Consciousness, is made of Knowledge. Knowledge is of two kinds: Awake and Dormant. When awake, it is called Knower. When dormant, it is called the Known. The Knower is he who has the power to know himself and others. The Known is that which is known to others, but itself knows not.

113. The Known is born of the Knower's Knowledge, for what is insentient, like Matter, is born of what is Sentient, like Spirit. First there was Spirit and Matter was born thereof.

114. They who know not themselves and others, are like the knowable objects of the World. But they who know themselves and others are true Knowers. They are Possessors and Masters of Knowledge. Though living upon Earth, they abide in My Highest Heaven, for they are equal to Me, the Supreme All-Knowing Master.

115. Therefore, let him who would be a Master, be well-versed in Higher Knowledge. For he alone is worthy to be called a Master, who knows all things like to Myself.

116. It is knowledge of all things that constitutes the Perfect Knowledge of Enlightenment. He who has mastered the Perfect Knowledge of the Self, becomes a Universal Master, a Lord of the Wheel of the Universe (Chakravarti) and Supreme Sovereign like Myself.

117. Living Souls are of two kinds: those whose Wisdom is broad and deep like to the Ocean are called Masters; but those whose Wisdom is shallow and narrow like a mere Stream of Water are called disciples. Whilst a Master's duty is to lead, the disciples' is to follow even as rivers flow unto the Sea. Therefore, let him who is desirous of Knowledge be a disciple first. For only he can be a Knower and a Master, who has been sitting at his Master's feet. One becomes a Master worthy of My Highest Heaven through association with the worthy and not in any other way.

118. Hear you now the qualities of one who is fit to be a Master. Him I call a True Master (Sat-Guru) who ever abides in unbroken awareness of God; who has attained Mastery of Magic Spells and Speech; who has Control over the elements; who has the Power of accomplishing all desired ends; who is a Knower of all Scriptures; and who has the Power of transmitting the Truth.

119. These, O Great Sages! are the six most excellent signs whereby a Yogi is known to have attained the Highest Truth. They are like to the six flavours, sweet, sour, salty, bitter, astringent and sharp, that bring perfection to a meal; like to the six quarters, sunrise, midday, sunset,

midnight, upper and nethermost, that make the Sphere of the World complete; and like the six two-monthly seasons (which are) Spring, Heat, the Rains, Autumn, Cold, and the Dews, without which the circle of the year is never full. Such an one shall be regarded as an Incarnation of my Self Supreme and the Greatest Master of all.

120. Having by My Grace and good Karma encountered such a Guru who is an enlightening Source of Truth, let the devotee first listen to My Word with an open heart. This is known as Hearing the Truth (Shravana).

121. Having heard and listened to the Truth with an open heart, he shall then ponder over It with a pure mind and act according thereto. This is known as Thinking upon the Truth (Manana).

122. Having thus thought upon the Truth, he shall next let his mind become absorbed in That so that his entire life may be pervaded, enlightened and elevated thereby. This is known as Living in the Truth (Bhavana).

123. O you who are awake! these three steps only are needed to be taken by My devotee. The fourth and highest shall be accomplished of its own accord.

124. When the devotee's heart has been purified by the practice called Living in the Truth, I, the Lord, shall appear unto him and grant him an actual Experience of My Supreme Self. This Highest State, which is a direct perception of Truth, is known as Shiva-Jnana (Direct Knowledge of Shiva), Shiva-Bhava (God's Own Being) or Shiva-Samdhana (Union with the Supreme).

125. My devotees are of three kinds. First, those who wish to renounce the World and who have My Supreme Abode for their only Goal. Second, those who wish to remain in the World. And third, those who remain in the World solely for the purpose of propagating My Word, that is, for the purpose of functioning as Gurus (Spiritual Teachers).

126. For those who wish to renounce the World, who desire to devote themselves to the things of the Spirit and who have taken the Vow of Renunciation, the observances to be followed are these. Chastity, Non-violence, Compassion, Self-control, Contentment, Truthfulness and Faith. The non-observance of even one of these shall be seen as a violation of the Holy Vow.

127. Having renounced the World and dedicated his Soul unto Me, the Yogi shall apply ashes from the holy fires unto all his limbs as a mark of Renunciation while reciting the appropriate Mantras such as that of Fire or Sun. Then he shall meditate upon My Supreme Self in his heart.

128. With his mind concentrated upon Me to the exclusion of everything else, the renunciant shall abstain from much talking, eat for the upkeep of his physical body only, give up all other knowledge (than Yoga) and the company of worldly men. Indeed, such an one will quickly attain My Eternal Abode.

129. Even non-celibate Yogis, by wisely adopting the Yogic attitude of detachment, will before long attain perfection in the Path.

130. Practising in secret, abiding in the World but not having their heart in it, discharging the duties of their profession, caste or station for the sake of Me, they shall be free of sin.

131. Many Spiritually-minded mortal men, having cast off wrong knowledge, lust, fear and anger, and taken refuge in Me, were in the past purified by My Divine Knowledge and became One with Me.

132. Therefore, O noble ones! let all reverence Me, the Supreme Lord, by means of the Paths of Knowledge, Devotion or Detachment, each according to their abilities.

133. In this connection, know would-be Yogis to belong to one of four kinds, lowly, moderate, keen and supreme.

134. The lowly, being afflicted by ailments of body and mind, unstable, unreliable, selfish, unintelligent and given to the pleasures of the senses, shall attain success in twelve long years. They are to be taught the Path of Mantra (Mantra Yoga, the easiest) by the discerning Teacher.

135. The moderate, Spiritually-minded, kind and averse to extremes, shall meet their goal in nine years. Let the Teacher initiate them in the Path of Contemplation (Dhyana Yoga).

136. The keen are steady-minded, courageous, full of energy and faith. They shall attain success in six years and are fit for the Path of Effort (Hatha Yoga).

137. The supreme are intelligent, reliable, devoted to God and their Teacher, loving, well-bred, strong, talented and learned. There is no doubt that such Souls will succeed in merely three years and are deserving of being initiated in all Paths.

138. Those who, while still in this World, do not follow the Path of Yoga, live merely like beasts and cannot expect better even in the afterlife. The others, however, who follow the call of Spirit, they ascend high in this life and higher still in the next.

139. Thus I, the Lord, make a Path for all Souls and having assumed the form of a Teacher, I guide them homewards to My Heavenly Abode. I Myself, to re-establish the Eternal Law of Heaven and to save My devotees, appear in some quarter of the World, Age after Age.

140. He who is devoted to Me, who takes refuge in Me and who abides in My Truth, shall not perish. He shall not be harmed by evil Spirits, nor by beasts nor yet by men. He shall ever be endowed with life and afforded guidance and protection from all ills. For I Myself abide in him and illumine his World from within.

141. Through My Grace, through the practice of the Great Yoga and the Path of Devotion, My devotee shall attain the Highest Goal. Whether one be a God, a Demon, a Beast or Bird, a Worm or a Germ, one is liberated through My Grace.

142. Without doubt, a foetus in the womb, a newborn child, a boy, a youth, a young, old or dying man, a Soul in Heaven or Hell, one who is fallen or pious, a fool or a wiseman, is forthwith freed from imperfection when touched by My Grace Divine.

143. When pleased with their devotion, I, the Lord, remove the faults of My devotees even though they be unfit for the Spiritual life. As base metal turns to gold by means of a magic spell, so a mere mortal by My Grace becomes a Perfect Man. By the Power of My Grace My devotees shall be equal to the Gods and enjoy Eternal Life.

144. Know that My devotees' devotion is due to My Grace and My Grace descends upon them due to their devotion. This is clearly understood by the Wise.

145. After many a lifetime, the seed of My Grace takes root, grows and blossoms in the heart of righteous men. Following the inner impulse of devotion, they turn to Me and attain the Great Perfection in the course of a few births.

146. Being pleased with them, I, the Highest God, awaken in My devotees the awareness that I exist. Due to this, they seek to approach Me by various means prescribed in My Gospels (Shiva Agama).

147. Due to Spiritual practices, their devotion becomes greater. As their devotion becomes greater, so My Grace also increases. Due to an increased Grace, Liberation is attained. Liberated Souls enjoy Eternal Bliss.

148. As seed brings forth a plant and the plant brings forth seed, just so Grace (Prasada) and Devotion (Bhakti) mutually generate and make grow each other. O Sages! let there be no doubt that through devotion even a man of mediocre virtue is liberated in three births.

149. Verily, Devotion is the highest human emotion. Some name it Love. And such it is. For Love is a feeling of unity between lover and beloved and so is Devotion, whether it be towards a fellow-human, one's country or God.

150. The first sign of Devotion is Faith. He who believes even for the sake of appearances or feigns belief for the sake of some material gain, shall in the end be cleansed of his sins and drawn to the Path of Truth even as the bandit who became a Yogi through deceit.

151. Hear you how this came to pass. A great King desired to give his daughter in marriage to the most pious man in the land. He therefore let it be known to all, that he who could abide absorbed in My Contemplation for a full year, would be entitled to his Kingdom and to his daughter's hand.

152. Hearing this, a Bandit who was famed for his misdeeds made up his mind to deceive the King through a cunning trick. Thus thinking, he disguised himself as a Yogi and mingling with the others sat down in meditation at the foot of a tree on the bank of the Holy River Ganges.

153. Though at first it was mere pretence, as the months passed by he began to meditate in earnest and before long entered into the deepest absorption. At the end of the appointed year, the King came to inspect the achievement of every contestant and perceived such great inner peace and happiness radiating from the Bandit's person as he could find in no other. The King bowed down before him and with great reverence offered him his Realm and his daughter in accordance with his royal promise.

154. But the Bandit-become-Yogi opened his eyes and spoke with a gentle smile: With your gracious permission, O Great King! I shall continue to meditate upon the Lord of Yoga by whose Contemplation a man has all his desires fulfilled.

155. Having thus spoken, he fell back into meditation wherein he remains even now. Such, O pure ones! is the power of Devotion. It makes even the greatest sinner into the holiest of men. He who is devoted to Me even in his dreams shall assuredly attain Salvation.

156. But no Devotion is greater than that of Parvati, the Mountain Maiden who was the youngest among three sisters. On a bright morning in Spring, being bound homewards after having taken their daily bath in a gushing mountain stream, the young maiden and her mother passed a certain holy shrine that lay by a well in a grove of ancient trees. Many a time the righteous and the wise came there to offer prayers before a Likeness of My Person Divine.

157. And it came to pass on that day that as the two neared the shrine the first signs of womanhood appeared on her. Mindful of the fact that her married elder sisters had prayed at My Shrine for the fulfilling of their innermost desires, young Parvati wondered aloud who her future groom might be. Her mother being a pious Soul, answering said unto her: Lord Shiva Himself, my dear. He is the Lord and Husband of all Souls. He shall be your Chosen One!

158. Thenceforth, Parvati came to My Shrine every day with the rising Sun to anoint My Image with holy oil, to deck It with handsome flowers and to pray. When four years had passed in this way, on the night before New Moon, when she was about to enter her sixteenth year, a vision was sent by Me unto her in a dream.

159. A golden Serpent appeared from behind the shrine and carried her off to a cave under the Earth where, being all alone and undisturbed, she immersed herself in deep contemplation. When a great water flooded the cave, the maiden was carried across the waves by a Bull as white as the Moon's rays. Having reached dry land, a Leopard took her into the forest. The forest was engulfed by flames and she mounted a Swan that flew to a mountain top beyond the clouds.

160. There she meditated upon the Sun by day and upon the Moon by night. And when neither Sun nor Moon were to be seen she meditated upon the Flame within. From that Flame My Own Spirit That dwells in all things that shine sprung forth and Parvati met the Soulmate after Whom she had long sought. As the two forms embraced, Light suddenly inundated the World and a great wave of Bliss transported them both through ever-higher Worlds to My Supreme Abode.

161. Thus in a secret place among the blue clouds, on that Moonless night I made her My Bride. For I, the Most Great and Merciful Lord, grant My devotees whatever their heart desires. But Parvati, moved by compassion for Mankind, descended down to her native land and built a Shiva Temple (Shivalaya) upon a mountain top with her own hand.

162. From that time she has been known as Mountain Maiden (Parvati) while I, her Divine Spouse, am known as Mountain Maiden's Lord (Parvati-Pati) to the wise. Verily, to this day Mountain Maiden is remembered by all on every Full-Moon and New-Moon day. When the Moon is Full and Round her smile brightens the World but when the Sky is Moonless and dark she enters the secret chamber within the (World-Supporting) Mount of Heaven (Mount Meru) wherein she abides in Holy Union with My Self Divine.

163. Thus I reward all for their Devotion and make them a sign and a guidance from the All-Wise that the whole of Mankind may grow in wisdom and might. Verily, all obstacles are burnt to ashes by the Fire of Devotion that has been kindled by My Grace. For when a Flame has been kindled by Me, the Heavenly Fire, what in the Three Worlds could stand in its way?

164. O twice-born ones! know that the rendering of service unto Me constitutes the practical aspect of Devotion. It is threefold due to the means of body, speech and thought. Meditation upon My Form is mental devotion. Repetition of My Name (or Mantra) is verbal devotion. Ritual worship of My Image is physical devotion. This threefold devotion is called the Holy Rite of Shiva, which is the jewel of all Sacred Knowledge. By diligently following any of these three

according to one's natural inclination, one is sure to attain the Abode of Shiva, the Ultimate, the Higher than the highest.

165. Now there is another great secret to be known. The Soul, being made of Spirit, nay, *being* the Supreme Spirit Itself and Identical with Me, is eternally happy, all-wise and free. Yet as he descends at My Divine Command into this Material World, as he must in order to participate in My Creation, he passes through the dark veil of Maya, My Cosmic Magic. In the course of his descent, he becomes tainted by the Threefold Impurity called Mala.

166. Anava Mala, the Impurity of Imperfection, is the first product of Maya. Thereby, as in a dream, the Soul though being Identical with Shiva deems himself and everything else to be limited and imperfect. Impelled by this impurity, he desires limited and imperfect things. O you who are endowed with Wisdom! know this to be the seed of worldly existence.

167. The second, Maiya Mala, is the Impurity of Delusion that develops from the first even as a plant sprouts forth from a seed. It causes the Self to see all things as different and separate both from each other and itself.

168. Karma Mala, the third, is the Impurity of Limited Action. Growing from the previous two, it is their fruit, as it were. Having been rendered imperfect and endowed with limited knowledge, the Soul acts in limited and imperfect ways. Having performed such action, the latent seed thereof comes alive in due course, binding him to this World and its endless cycle of death and rebirth. Thus the Soul is forced to enjoy the fruit of his imperfect actions, both bad and good.

169. In respect of impurity, know that the impure Souls are of three kinds. They are with one impurity, two, or three. Those with one impurity are the highest, those tainted by two are middling and those afflicted by all three, the lowest. Thus they are established on the scale of life, in due order, each as I have written in the Stars at the beginning of Time.

170. The Souls afflicted by all three impurities are under the leadership of those with two, and these in turn are led by those with one. Thus the Universe is arranged in different spheres according to the purity or otherwise of the Souls residing therein. I, Lord Shiva Himself, the Most Pure (Shiva means Pure), am the Lord of all, forever abiding in the Highest Heaven.

171. O noble ones! the Holy Sun casts his radiant light upon all lotus-flowers, impartially. Yet they do not blossom all at once. They do so according as they become ripe. Likewise, I, Lord Shiva, liberate those Souls whose impurities are ripe and not the others.

172. For those that are unripe are not ready for Liberation and must remain in a life of bondage until their time has come, just as unborn children must remain in the darkness of their mother's womb until they are ready to see the light of the World.

173. Just as the food eaten by men is of two kinds, undigested and digested, even so is the Impurity. Verily, in Yoga as in worldly life, Spiritual Impurity is the real food to be digested.

174. For when undigested, one feels heavy and dull. One goes downwards on the scale of life. But when digested, one feels light and wide-awake. One moves upwards on the scale of life. Thus life depends on the degree to which the Soul's impurity has been consumed. Listen you now how impurity comes to an end.

175. O immortal ones! it is for the sake of Purity, of Infinite Happiness, Wisdom and Freedom, that man takes recourse to devotion and renders service unto Me according to My Eternal Teaching (Shiva Agama). My Knowledge kindles the Fire of Right Belief, Right Knowledge and Right Action that consumes all impurities and sins.

176. Verily, the antidote to the disease of worldly existence, to which man is bound by the three impurities, is the Perfect Knowledge of Shiva and none other. I, Lord Shiva Himself, am the Supreme Physician fit to heal the afflicted Soul.

177. Therefore, let the Yogi who has discharged his duties and who is ripe for My Abode, renounce worldly activities, accept alms given voluntarily and, with a pure mind illumined by wisdom, reverence Me, the Lord, his Creator. He shall then attain Identity with Me. For thus I have declared, The Fool believes he is this body; the Wise thinks he is both body and mind; but the Yogi, beholding his true Self in the mirror of his heart knows, I am a Soul, a living orb of light.

178. Indeed, him I call a Yogi who thus knows that he is not the body, who understands himself to be a Soul, who sees others as Souls too, who hates not but is kind and friendly to all living Souls, who has cast off selfishness and who, self-controlled, devotes himself to Me.

179. Him I call a Yogi who knows that I Am the Highest Truth, who takes refuge in Me, who follows My Law and who has entered the Path leading to My Self.

180. Him I call a Yogi who has cast off false knowledge, false desire, false attachment, false cravings, false hope and false beliefs.

181. Him I call a Yogi who can discern what is good and what is evil and also what lies between.

182. Him I call a Yogi who consorts not with fools, sinners and men of ill faith, but cultivates the company of the truthful, the good and the wise.

183. Him I call a Yogi who harms not the World and is unharmed by the World, who remains even-minded in happiness as in distress and fear.

184. Him I call a Yogi who unperturbed by either fame or shame, unconcerned about any dwelling-place, silently accepts what is given him and, with a steady mind, devotes himself to Me.

185. Him I call a Yogi who expects nothing, who is pure, efficient, free from cares and troubles and performs his duties irrespective of rewards.

186. Him I call a Yogi who is ever mindful of his thoughts, mindful of his intentions, mindful of his words and deeds, who has subdued his lower self (ego) and is a master of himself.

187. Him I call a Yogi who delights in a quiet mind like as a dark forest where even bird (thought) and beast (anger, fear, desire) go not.

188. Him I call a Yogi whose mind is tranquil and clear like unto the water of a wave-less pool.

189. Him I call a Yogi who ever purifies his Self by the fire of Wisdom even as a smith purifies gold by the smelting of ore.

190. Him I call a Yogi for whom the thought of Enlightenment is like to a Magic Gemstone that fulfils his every wish.

191. Him I call a Yogi who has ceased to believe in delusions and has seen the One Who is the Only True; who having seen the One behind the many is distracted no more.

192. Him I call a Yogi who having calmed his thought, pacified his desire and silenced his tongue, abides in the cave of his own heart like in an impregnable fort.

193. Him I call a Yogi who is ever engaged in guarding My Law Eternal even as a Mighty Dragon guards a secret treasure in his mountain cave.

194. Him I call a Yogi who has attained perfect evenness of mind, who is ever peaceful, unshaken and firm, who is the very image of the World-Supporting Mount of Heaven (Mount Meru).

195. Him I call a Yogi who conquers anger with non-anger, evil with non-evil, not-giving with giving and untruth with truth.

196. Him I call a Yogi who is free from false pride but is ever compassionate, humble and kind.

197. Him I call a Yogi who like as a flower-garden in the breeze fills the Four Quarters with the sweet fragrance of his dharmic (righteous) deeds.

198. Him I call a Yogi who purifies his vision of the World with the radiant seeds of Yogic Wisdom even as water is purified by means of the seeds of the Kataka fruit (which cause impurities in the water to settle, leaving the upper portion thereof clear and fit for drinking).

199. Him I call a Yogi who having renounced the perception of things seen by the physical eye, abides in the state of the One Who Sees.

200. Him I call a Yogi who though residing in a body, is still One with the Supreme Lord; who though residing in the World is ever untouched by the World even as the Sun is ever untouched by darkness or clouds.

201. Him I call a Yogi who is ever awake, who forgets not his Self even in sleep; who has conquered both Sleep and Death and has taken his seat among the Immortal Ones in Heaven.

202. Him I call a Yogi who delights in silence, who has become tranquil, who has come to the end of his journey through the earthly World and has made the pathless Sky his permanent abode.

203. Him I call a Yogi who rejoices in the fate I allotted him, who rejoices in the performance of his duties, who is ever satisfied and full of joy, who brings Joy to the whole World.

204. Him I call a Yogi who is a vessel for navigating the River of Life and a ford for going beyond; who illumines the World like the Full Moon and a Great Star; who grants boons to supplicants like a Wish-Fulfilling Tree.

205. Him I call a Yogi who is far-seeing like the Sun, who knows his past, present and future; who with his inward Wisdom-Eye beholds the stream of existence from the beginning to the end of all the Worlds.

206. Him I call a Yogi who creates, supports and dissolves the World by the power of his will; who has attained the Supreme Perfection of Heaven (Parasiddhi) and is an All-Powerful One.

207. Him I call a Yogi who has polished the mirror of his heart with the thoughts, I am not this body, I am not this mind, I am a Free and Happy Soul; and who perceives himself as That.

208. Him I call a Yogi who as an arrow-maker makes an arrow straight, even so makes straight his body, his speech, his thought and his Path.

209. Him I call a Yogi who has discharged all his duties, who has put away all other states such as waking, dreaming and sleep and who abides in his natural state of Unity with the Supreme.

210. Him I call a Yogi who has renounced what is before, who has renounced what is behind, who has renounced what is in the middle and who has gone beyond.

211. Him I call a Yogi who thinks not, contemplates not, imagines not, but ever abides in his Natural State (Atma-Satbhava).

212. Him I call a Yogi who has no master and fears no one; who is free from all cares and has laid aside the burden of limited life.

213. Him I call a Yogi who fears not Hell nor hankers after the joys of Heaven, who rejects not nor craves anything, but who, immersed in the Effulgent Ocean of Unity with the Supreme, abides in his essential Self like an Elephant happily bathing in the cool waters of a lake in the midst of a blazing forest fire.

214. These, O you who are most wise! are the thirty-six excellent qualities of a Great Yogi. Such an one, having dedicated all his actions unto Me, gives up false hopes and Egoity and, taking refuge in Me, the Highest Goal, reaches by My Grace the Supreme Abode of Shiva.

215. Having cast off attachment to the fruits of action, ever content and free, he finds Enlightenment in whatever activities he performs in Unity with Me.

216. Verily, one who has brought his mind under control and has abandoned all possessions and vain hopes, shall reach the Highest Spiritual Plane while engaging in physical activities with a detached thought.

217. Remaining unaffected by the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, happy with what he obtains without much effort, whatever actions he performs for My Sake, they shall bring him Liberation before long.

218. Let the Yogi concentrate his mind upon Me, be devoted to Me, render worship unto Me, become absorbed in Me. For I am his God, the Lord of Yoga, the Supreme Truth.

219. They call Me the Light of lights. For I am the light of Fire as well as Lightning, Stars, Moon, Sun and the Light of Knowledge, too. I am the Light of all things that shine. The Sun gives light unto the Moon and the Divine Fire in the Sky illumines the Sun. He who knows

this, goes up from light to light and finally attains to the Light of lights Which is the Supreme Splendour that never dies.

220. By the Shining Lamp of Knowledge I dispel the darkness in those who are devoted to Me. Having seen the Light, it is every man's duty to bring Light into the World, each one according to his means. Enlightening each other, thinking of Me, speaking of Me, thus they abide in Unity with Me.

221. They who concentrate their mind upon Me, honour Me, and bring My Light into the World, shall be given by Me all that they lack and what they already possess shall be increased by Me.

222. They who seek enjoyment and pleasure shall also be granted their wish according to their merits. Indeed, since I am all and all belongs to Me, I Alone am the All-Giver, the Wish-Fulfilling Lord of Justice. Even they who seeking to fulfil their desires worship other Gods, worship Me Alone, though they may know it not.

223. For thus I have declared, As waves from Water, as sparks from a Fire, as rays from the Sun, all life springs forth from Me, the Lord, the Source of all Life. Verily, the Gods are just diverse manifestations of Myself. I Myself am all the Gods.

224. Therefore, it would be better for My devotees to worship Me directly, for well it is known that water drunk from the source is purer and sweeter than that taken from further downstream. Resorting to Me, the Source of All, they shall go to the Abode Supreme.

225. Avoiding those paths that are crooked and following the straight path, casting off all other forms of knowledge and concentrating upon the Truth of Yoga, My devotee shall rise to the Stars and be a Lamp unto the World.

226. Abandoning too much attachment to possessions, family and friends, performing his duties only, let the Yogi worship the Highest Truth in this life and the next.

227. O you who are masters of your mind! Worship of My Divine Person shall be known to be of two kinds, outer and inner. That which is performed in the view of others and has as object a material Image or Symbol of My Divine Self, is to be known as outer worship. That which is performed in the secrecy of one's own heart and has as object a mental Image or Vision of Myself, is to be known as inner worship.

228. As to which of the two is better than the other, let it be a matter for the philosophers and the logicians to debate. It behoves not a Yogi, who has entered upon the Path of Unity, to indulge in such disputes. Whatever action, whether physical or mental, brings one closer to Me, that very action is dear to Me. For whatever power brings two beings together, the very same is a manifestation of My Divine Power of Unity (Yoga).

229. I therefore declare unto you that inner and outer worship are each to be seen as equally efficacious, profitable to the faithful and pleasing to Me as the other.

230. As a man's works are manifestations of his inner thoughts, just so all forms are manifestations of My Formless Self. They express My Unmanifest Glory. They reflect Truth even as a lake reflects the Sky.

231. My Image, when revered with a pure heart, enables the devotee to rise above himself and come closer to Me, the Supreme Lord. It is by My Divine Power that he does so.

232. Verily, outer, physical worship consisting of bowing down, ringing bells, chanting, offering incense and flowers and piously gazing upon a material Image of My Person, is but an expression of My Divine Power of Action with which I, the Lord, have endowed the human Soul for My Own Pleasure and out of compassion for him.

233. Likewise, inner, mental worship consisting of imagining Me in the secret chamber of one's heart, contemplating, meditating upon Me and uniting one's Soul with Mine, is but an expression of My Divine Power of Knowledge which I, the Lord, have infused into the human Soul for My Own Delight and out of love for him.

234. All these actions and powers are aspects of the Power of Yoga. By that Power I hold the Universe together. By the same, too, I bring the Soul closer to Myself.

235. Unto those who say that My inner worship is a hundred times more excellent than outer worship, reply that it is not easily attainable by all. For every action depends upon the capacity, physical, mental or Spiritual, of the agent.

236. But devotion makes every act of worship holy, O noble ones! In whatever way one worships Me with devotion, that I am greatly pleased with. Whether it be a prayer, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, gold or mere water, if it is offered unto Me with devotion by a faithful devotee, he is dear to Me.

237. For I am the Lord Who can see into the heart of My devotee. And the flame of his devotion shall fan the Fire of My Grace, without fail.

238. Know that devotion is the direct expression of My Grace and the power whereby I Myself elevate My devotee into My Presence. The question of inner or outer does not arise in Me, the Universal Consciousness, Who Hold all things within Myself.

239. Therefore, censure not one who is devoted to Me. For, whether he answers My Grace as a babe answers his mother's caress or as a grown woman answers her sweetheart's embrace, is all the same to Me.

240. Let no man harm or disparage My devotee for the fool who does so disparages Me, the Great Lord Who ordain the life and death of all creatures. He shall himself curse his own lack of faith when the time has come for him to meet Me face to face. But he who honours My devotee with devotion, that one honours none other but Me.

241. Whether one seeks Liberation or success in worldly life, let the wise one develop unconditional devotion for Me. For every man is rewarded according to his devotion, and not according to his expectations. I Alone determine what the reward shall be.

242. Therefore, let not the devotee be devoted to Me only for the sake of the desired fruit. Rather, let the wise one devote himself to Me for My Own Sake. For even the unbelievers and the unfaithful might become devotees for the sake of some desired object. But he is a true devotee who is devoted to Me irrespective of the reward. And if a man through devotion to My Divine Self obtains Me, Who am the Highest, what more can he desire?

243. Now, concerning the worship of My Image, it will be said by some, Lord Shiva lives in the heart of all beings; of what avail is the worship of an Image to those who know thus?

244. Well, My Form is both Subtle and Gross and so shall be My Image. The Flash of Lightning is at once a mighty fire and also one that is distant. Those who are far off cannot reach it and those who are too near cannot touch it. Even so it is with My Divine Splendour.

245. When wishing to make fire one takes not a flash of lightning or a whole blazing forest but the burning power is taken from the source to some combustible material by means of a firebrand. Just so My Divine Splendour cannot be brought down among the dwellers upon Earth, only an Image thereof.

246. If someone says, Bring me some fire, no one will seek to bring the whole fire, but only a burning twig. Likewise, the illumining power of My Divine Light is transmitted by means of artistic skill and imagination to a material likeness wherefrom it shall inspire and enlighten the devotees' mind according to every one's capacity and receptivity.

247. Those who can see Me without the help of an Image, shall do so in peace, without disturbing the others with too much useless talk. For so long as one cannot *see* Me one can only *imagine* Me, that is, see the thoughts one conceives about Me in one's own mind. And an Image is an Image, whether fashioned by thought or by hand.

248. It is true, the power of the mind is greater than that of the hand. But what is fashioned by the mind is often unsteady, transitory and deceptive whereas a thing fashioned by the hand is steady, longer lasting and clearly visible to all.

249. And, has it not been professed by the wise that Shiva exists everywhere? How then do they say that I reside not in an Image? If they follow the Path of Unity, it becomes them not to speak words of disunity. If they find fault in the Worship of My Holy Image they shall be made to answer this, Do they believe in the One or in the Many?

250. To believe in the Many is to deny the Unity of Life. For Life is One and so is God. Everything is a manifestation of the One. The Many exist in Me, Who Am One. And I, the One, reside in the Many. Beware! they who say otherwise sin against Me Who am Almighty, All-Pervading and Free.

251. Naught would exist if I, the Lord, did not abide hidden therein. All things, whether vile or holy, exist by My Power Alone. They only differ in this, that those that are endowed with beauty, have greater power of manifesting My Glory.

252. I Am Shiva. I Am the One in Whom all things rest (Shi) and by Whose Power all things move (Va). Since I Am all and everything, each act of worship is but I Doing Worship unto Myself.

253. Verily, I, the Lord, am the Worshipper, the Worshipped and the Act of Worship too. Naught exists beside Me. He who knows this is a true believer in Unity and a faithful follower of Truth.

254. Such an one knows that as the Sun, though being one, is reflected differently in the water contained in different vessels, even so My Divine Light is perceived differently according to different devotees' power of perception.

255. Therefore, let those who cannot see Me directly, see My Glory reflected in an Image of My Self. Let that Image be like a ladder whereby one ascends ever higher, closer to the Highest. For so long as one cannot fly, one cannot ascend without a ladder. And how many Earth-dwellers can fly? How many can ascend to My Abode and see Me face to face in this very life?

256. My Image shall be pleasing to the mind and reflect My Glory like a mirror. It shall be fashioned from silver, gold, precious gems, gilt wood, stone or some other suitable material. It shall be beautifully shaped to gladden the heart and render it receptive to My Beauty.

257. Then let the Yogi honour it, offer incense and flowers unto it and meditate upon it according to the Teachings of Shiva, the Lord of Yoga, and as instructed by one's Teacher. Learning to see Me in My Image, he shall develop the power to see Me everywhere. Having developed the power to see Me everywhere, he shall see the World the way I Myself see it and thereby attain Unity with Myself. O you who are endowed with Wisdom! what more can a man desire?

258. Verily, they who have abandoned all attachment to sensual pleasures and devote themselves to the constant worship of My Image, shall reach the Highest Heaven within a single lifetime. But those who say that I reside not in the Image contradict themselves and sin against Me, Who am All-Pervading (Present Everywhere) and Ever-Free.

259. O noble ones! the uppermost World is Heaven and the lowermost is Hell. Heaven is inhabited by Great Beings who live in Truth. Hell is the abode of those who have chosen the Untruth. Between these two, there lies the World of Men, where Truth is mixed with Untruth in various measures.

260. The Astral World is the place wherein abide the Souls between one earthly life and the next. The Gurus are the Spiritual Masters who transmit My Truth to the World. They live in the Terrestrial, Astral and Celestial Spheres. I, the Supreme Guru, am above all.

261. In life, there are two Paths: one leads to Heaven, the other leads to Hell. Those who walk upon the upward Path, go to My Abode. Those who choose the downward Path, go astray. Therefore, as the hawk takes only one bird from the flock, let the wise follow one path. And let that path be straight and not crooked.

262. Verily, My Image is the guiding lamp that brings the Seeker to Myself. All other things lead away. Now, he who knows that I am the Highest Truth and that the worship of My Holy Image is the Path that leads unto Myself, shall proceed as follows.

263. Let him seek a clean and quiet place, wherein he shall be seated upon a soft cloth or deer-skin. Assuming the Lotus Posture he shall sit erect, immobile like a tree or a mountain and facing the Northern Sky which is the true Abode of Light wherein resides the Hidden Sun that is never seen by mortal man.

264. Having purified his mind by means of the appropriate prayers, he shall draw upon his forehead the holy Trilinear Sign of Shiva called Tripundra either with ashes from the sacred fire or with holy water. He shall then wear a rosary of Rudraksha beads and with a pure mind recite the following words in his thought.

265. OM! Adoration to the Three Worlds, Terrestrial, Astral and Celestial! Adoration to the

Guru in the East, to the Guru in the South, to the Guru in the West and to the Guru in the North! Adoration to the Guru Above who is the highest Guru of all! Adoration to the Effulgent Lord of Light! May He enlighten me with His Spirit Bright!

266. O Lord of All! from Untruth lead me to Truth; from Darkness lead me to Light; from Death lead me to Eternal Life.

267. May the Veil of Your Mystery be removed for me; may Your Abode of Light be opened for me; may Heaven's Way be cleared for me. O Master of the Greatest Secret! graciously accept my prayer and let success be mine.

268. Having mentally made obeisance to the Three Worlds, the Four Gurus and to Myself, and having put away all hankering after worldly things, all malice and all doubt, with body and mind well at ease, let him next enter the cave of his own heart and abiding therein meditate upon My Form as the Eternal Lord of Yogis, shining in the midst of My Disciples like the Full Moon in a circle of Stars.

269. Let him conceive My Divine Person as being light-blue in colour, like the Infinite Sky of Consciousness out of Which It graciously manifests for the salvation of the World. As being seated upon a royal seat, symbolic of Supreme Sovereignty, on the summit of Holy Mount Kailasa - the likeness of Mount Meru (Shiva's Celestial Abode) upon Earth - and facing South. Having a youthful and beautifully shaped body. Having a radiant lotus-like face with a gentle smile and surrounded by a halo of brilliant sunrays.

270. Having three beautiful eyes, the third or middle one being the Inward Eye of Higher Knowledge. Wearing the Crescent Moon, symbol of Spiritual Awakening, upon the flame-like tresses. Wearing a tiger skin as a symbol of Spiritual Power. Making the fear-dispelling and wish-granting gestures with the two hands. And being endowed with the Eight Yogic Powers which eagerly fulfil his every desire like maidservants attending on their King. Having thus conceived My Divine Form in his heart, let him apply his mind to That until he can clearly perceive It with his inward sight.

271. Having meditated for a while upon My Manifest Form, the Yogi shall visualise It as being reabsorbed into My Formless Being consisting of the Infinite Light of Consciousness and concentrate his mind upon That. This shall be known as the worship of My Subtle Image.

272. Undoubtedly, if the Yogi meditates in the aforementioned manner, he becomes Divine. His lower body becomes the Earth World. His main body becomes the Astral World. His head becomes the Celestial World. His spinal column becomes the All-Supporting Pillar of the Universe. His four limbs become the Four Quarters of the Firmament.

273. His two eyes become the Sun and Moon. His hair becomes the lines of force that fill the All. His mouth becomes My Eternal Law. His breath, going out and in, becomes the Creation and Dissolution of the World. Assuredly, indeed, such an one becomes identical with Me, the Universal Being.

274. O you who are deserving of Eternal Life! know this to be My Highest Worship and the Highest Yoga leading to Union with the Supreme. This, truly, is the Path trodden by the Ancient Masters who, on account of their Spiritual achievements, are most dear to Me.

275. Verily, I say unto you, Whether gross or subtle, with form or formless, My Image is the Gateway to My Supreme Abode. My Image is in everything and everything is within My Image. They who have not mastered the Spiritual art of mental worship, shall therefore honour Me by means of a physical Image.

276. Although the highest Yogis see My Likeness in their hearts, It may be regarded as existing in Wood, Water, Fire, Sun or Sky, according to one's heart's desire. For I am present in all things.

277. They who honour Me in a material or subtle Image, be it by means of outer or inner devotion, unto them I shall grant success in Yoga and in life, without fail. So long as Spiritual Knowledge has not dawned, one shall continue practising with detachment, devotion and purity of mind, to the end.

278. One shall take up residence in the Holy City of Light (Kashi) or some other hallowed spot and, with a mind fully concentrated upon Me, remain there until death. By My Grace, upon their departure from this World, the residents of My Holy City shall go to the Supreme Abode.

279. As for those who, living in far-away corners of the Earth, are required by the custom of the land to honour other Gods, they shall do so while thinking on Me, the One True God. Thus doing, they shall be free of sin. For all worship is ultimately directed towards Me, the Unseen Self hidden in all things.

280. Verily, this is the Truth: As all rivers go to the Ocean, so indeed all acts of worship reach Me, the Ultimate Goal. Therefore, for the sake of appearances and if compelled to do so, let the Yogi visit any suitable place of worship in his native or adoptive land and, with a pure mind, pay obeisance to the Deity worshipped therein.

281. Having honoured the Deity of that place, let him address his mind unto Me, the Highest Lord and calling upon Me by My True Name, worship Me with devotion in his heart. For I am the One above the Many and everything ultimately depends upon Me. I am the Self-Effulgent Lord of Light. I am the One Who Outshine the Many even as the Sun outshines the Stars. There is no God but I.

282. If someone says, My friend, what is your faith? My devotee shall reply thus, My friend, I believe that so long as one has faith in God, the Lord Himself will show the Path.

283. But unto those who bear the pure and radiant mark of righteousness upon their brow, who are intelligent, pure and good, whom one deems trustworthy, one shall speak openly: I, my friend, am a traveller upon the Inward Path of Unity; if you will, let us walk together and meet the Lord in His Abode of Light. In such company the Yogi can gladly travel until his journey is done.

284. Therefore, let one seek that company which is profitable and edifying to oneself, to one's fellow traveller and to the Community of Devotees (Sangham). If one be unable to find a like-minded companion, a fellow traveller or a Soulmate; if the company be unprofitable to oneself, to one's fellow traveller and to the Community of Devotees, then let one travel alone, roaming the World like an elephant in the great forest. For better it is by far to walk alone than in the company of fools or foes.

285. Whether he be alone or in company, in the Holy Land (of India) or abroad, let the righteous ever keep to the straight path (satpatha). They who keep to the straight path shall not perish. Those who go astray will prevail only for awhile till their good Karma endures. But

when that comes to an end, they are overcome by their evil deeds and destruction will be their fate. Only a few shall be saved to be a warning and an example unto others.

286. O noble ones! I never forsake any Soul. Some I guide directly, some I guide through others and some I guide through signs. Some I guide overtly and some I guide covertly. But My Guiding Light shines equally upon all, even as the Sun shines upon a field. Those who reject My Guidance have only themselves to blame. Hear you the plight of those who were unfaithful to Me.

287. A great Yogi lived in a village at the foot of a holy tree. Virtuous maidens were sent him with choice foods and handsome clothes in return for his wise words. But in the space of six years the village was afflicted by a flood, a famine and a plague. Many villagers perished and the survivors were dumbstruck with grief.

288. The villagers said to themselves, The holy man failed to save us from the afflictions that visited our homes; of what avail is offering him good food and shelter? In great anger they rushed to the Sage and said: Holy Sir! You have failed to protect us and our dear ones. This being so, it were better for you to depart from this place.

289. The Sage answered and spoke: If this is your wish, I shall depart at once. But beware! we shall meet again. And away he went, whilst the villagers returned to their homes. But in their heart they knew that they had sinned.

290. The Sage withdrew to a hill and watched the village from afar even as a father watches over his sons. And sure enough, whereas previously the village was struck by one disaster every two years, now it was struck by all three, flood, famine and plague, at once.

291. With shame and remorse in their heart, the villagers went to ask forgiveness of the Sage, who spoke: O people! it was only the doubters that perished. Faith was upon their lips and doubt in their hearts. Doubt is the door to the Abode of Discord. And that is where they went. Verily, no man can protect you against your own sins.

292. Do not follow in the footsteps of the weak-hearted. If doubt enters your heart, know that it is doubt itself that is to be doubted and not the Truth. The best protection is living in Unity with the One. Therefore, follow you the example of Yogis who ever abide in Harmony with Him. Having heard this, the villagers pledged obedience to him and thenceforth their village was spared.

293. Verily, faith is a man's most precious possession. Faith is that which prompts him to seek Knowledge. When the Knowledge that comes from the One reaches a man, it kindles the flame of faith in him. By that guiding light he finds the Bridge of Knowledge and by passing over that he finds the One. Thus everything comes from the One and returns to Him in obedience to My Eternal Law.

294. Knower, Knowledge and Known (object) alone exist. The Known is made of Knowledge and Knowledge springs from the Knower. So long as man is not possessed of Knowledge, he is a mere object, tossed about by the waters of life even as a log by a river in flood.

295. But when by means of Knowledge he passes as over a bridge to the One Who Knows, he becomes One with Him and abides ever untouched by harm. Verily, when by means of Yoga the

Soul has safely crossed the waters of separation and distinction, then he looks upon all things with the single Eye of Unity and becomes One with the All. This is the Eternal Truth.

296. O noble ones! as long as the Sun and Moon endure, you shall find no Revelation like Mine. My Revelation is the Path of all paths, the Royal Road of Heaven revealed by Me unto the Ancient Masters at the beginning of the World. He who follows the Path of Yoga shall find the True Teaching, the True Path, the True Guidance and the True God.

297. May he who knows this Secret Teaching practise it in a secluded place. But the best of all secluded places is the Yogi's own heart. For the heart is the most secluded of all places and the true abode of all things secret.

298. Mindful of appearances, knowing that Truth in this World has many enemies, practising in secret, let the Yogi live happily in this World yet unaffected by the World. In this way he shall steadily advance upon My Path.

299. Let my devotee abide by the customs of his country of abode whilst keeping to the right path (satpatha) in his heart. But when the Shadow of Discord and Separation has been vanquished and the Light of Unity prevails on Earth, I, the One True God shall be worshipped openly by all. This is My Divine Command (Ishvariya Adesh).

300. Verily, My Word of Truth shall be kept secret that It may not be corrupted and distorted by the evil-hearted and deluded. In this World, Truth has many an embittered foe. But when the time has come It shall be openly revealed to all. For when the flame is only young it is easily extinguished even by a child. But when it has grown in strength, the dark forest of delusion comes to a swift end.

Commentary to Chapter Ten

20. *But enjoying physical union with one's wife, etc.:* The general meaning of the term Dharmacharya is "walking in the Way of Dharma" and may apply equally to all Spiritually-motivated actions performed by a person. In respect of sexual relations it denotes "proper conduct", that is, conduct according to Universal Law (Dharma). In Yoga, total sexual abstinence is enjoined only upon those who have formally taken the vows of Renunciation (Sannyas) and who are therefore expected to honour those vows. All other followers of Yoga are permitted, indeed, expected to establish and maintain sexual relationships with other members of the Community, within certain rules. It is a universally recognised fact that the observance of certain rules of conduct is essential to prevent a breakdown in social and moral order. If Humanity were to abandon reason and act exclusively on emotional impulse, the World would soon sink into anarchy and chaos, not to mention the resultant negative effects on Mankind's mental and Spiritual well-being. Even animals have certain rules of behaviour which uphold order within a group or population and which have emerged over thousands of years as vital for the survival and well-being of a species. Indeed, Spiritual life itself is impossible without self-control. Yoga, therefore, teaches that man must control his emotional and biological urges in the interest of a higher good. While the foregoing verse defines the right sexual conduct in the case of a Renunciant (Sannyasin), the current verse briefly highlights the rules for ordinary members of the Community. Concerning monthly courses: Biologically speaking, menstrual periods are the time at which the female body must rest in order to adapt to inner changes, for which reason sexual intercourse at this time, although not a crime or sin, is not recommended. Holy days: The most frequently observed holy days are the eighth day of each lunar fortnight as well as New Moon

and Full Moon. They are intended to be occasions on which man takes a break from everyday, material life and concentrates on Spiritual things, the exception being certain festivals that are held in spring or autumn, for example, which due to an increased Spiritual influence in Nature at those times, are traditionally regarded as auspicious for the conception of offspring.

Under-age relations: The Ancient Gospels of India (Puranas) predict that in the current World Age girls as young as twelve will bear children. This shows that even in those times, under-age sexual relations were seen as a symptom of the moral and Spiritual degeneration of the human race. In most traditional societies, in order to protect young people from abuse, sexual intercourse before the age of sixteen is not permitted, although exception may be made when the intentions of the involved parties are genuine and in the interest of the person or persons concerned.

Extramarital relations: To avoid emotional and material conflict, marital commitment must be promoted and extra-marital relationships avoided.

Same-sex relations: It is generally accepted that the survival of the human race is a good thing. But if all or most humans were homosexual, the human race would soon become extinct. Since human reproduction is necessary for the survival of the species and heterosexual intercourse is necessary for human reproduction, it must be in the interest of the human race for most or all of its members to be heterosexual. This is precisely the reason why although homosexuality has always been part of human variation it has remained a small percentage throughout history. This being so, it would be unwise, on spurious ideological grounds to seek to reverse this time-honoured balance in favour of homosexuality. In addition to this, there are other considerations, of a moral, religious and Spiritual order, that need to be taken into account. Most religious traditions view homosexuality as an aberrant form of behaviour that sometimes amounts to punishable criminal offence: see the Law of Manu (VIII, 369), Arthashastra (IV, 13:40), Dharmasutra (Baudh., III, 7:2), Bible (Lev. 18:22, Romans 1:27-32), Quran (4:15), etc. Yoga teaches that homosexual inclinations are habits acquired in this or a previous life through lack of Spiritual guidance. Since such habits often take a lifetime to change, Yoga tolerates same-sex intercourse *as an exception* while emphasising the fact that heterosexual (man-woman) relationships must remain the general rule in accordance with Universal Law. This is explained as follows. There are three factors that need to be considered in order to adequately assess the meaning and value of a particular action: (1) the agent's motives, (2) the effects of the action upon the agent, and (3) the effects of the action upon the surrounding World (society, environment, etc.). While feelings of affection towards a person of the same sex as oneself are natural and therefore, acceptable, the fact is that from a Spiritual point of view, emotional love is higher than physical love and Spiritual love is higher than both. Moreover, Spiritual love (the sense of oneness between two Souls) need not express itself as emotional love (i.e. desire), nor does emotional love (or desire) need to express itself as physical (or sexual) action. The fact is that man and woman were created to complement each other and unity between them is regarded as having psychological and Spiritual dimensions that constitute an essential factor in their Spiritual evolution and growth in the same way as on the physical level sexual intercourse between man and woman is conducive to human reproduction and the growth of the Community. By contrast, homosexual acts are neither capable of fulfilling a reproductive function nor can they always be said to represent a straightforward expression of genuine love but may in some cases be symptomatic of an individual's underlying inability to adequately relate to others, in particular to persons of the opposite sex. Finally, if an emotional impulse such as sexual desire is at any time allowed to express itself physically, then this should happen in agreement with the good of the entire Community (upon which the individual himself depends) and not merely for personal reasons. For this reason, it has been said that a relationship must be "profitable and edifying to oneself, to one's fellow traveller and to the Community" (10:284). Thus the larger order of things must in all circumstances be taken as a frame of reference for one's own actions and a course of action should be taken only upon due consideration of the above stated principles. At all events, Yogis have the duty to be an example to all Mankind - including in matters of a sexual nature - in particular when a Yogi occupies a leading position in the Community. Since, as already

intimated, Yoga regards homoerotic tendencies as psychological habits, they are naturally expected to be absent in a Spiritual Master who always acts according to Spiritual Law. Marrying non-Yogis: Marrying members of other religious denominations is prohibited to Yogis in order to protect the Community against contamination by beliefs and practices that are contrary to Yoga (and Universal Law). Indeed, since the Teachings of Yoga are the Original Revelation of Truth on Earth a dilution and possible loss thereof would result in grave consequences not only for the Spiritual Community of Yogis but for the whole of the human race which will remain bereft of true Spiritual Guidance. However, exception is made when a devotee's prospective spouse agrees to accept the teachings of Yoga (by pronouncing the words "There is no God except Shiva, and Yoga is the Path that leads to Him"). This is only natural as marital harmony and happiness are to a not insignificant extent dependent upon the future partners sharing the same religious views.

35. *Untimely Death*: See Commentary to Chapter 9, verse 89.

42. *Let one repeat three times the Prayer To The Divine Sun (Savitri)*: Savitri or Gayatri Mantra is the celebrated Prayer To The Divine Light which has been recited by all people of India from times immemorial. It runs as follows: Om! Adoration to the Effulgent Lord of Light! May He enlighten me with His Spirit Bright! (Om! Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo devasya dhimahi! Dhyo yo nah prachodayat!).

47. *This, verily, O learned ones! is the essence of Yogic Breath-Control. He who realises this obtains the fruit of Yoga Practice*: The Vijnana Bhairava Tantra says: "By (carefully) restraining both the in-breath and the out-breath (even for a moment), one attains in the end (suspension of duality of breath and thought) and by means of this energy called tranquil (shanta), the Tranquil Divine State (Shanta Bhairava) is revealed" (27). And in verse 26, it is said: "When the (breath) energy goes neither in nor out, but remains in the intermediate, thought-free state, there arises thereby the Supreme Reality". Mahamaheshvara Abhinava Gupta explains in the Tantraloka (V, 22-23): "Let the Yogi with well-concentrated mind meditate in his heart on the interaction of Moon, Sun and Fire, that is, the incoming, outgoing and upward-rising breaths with a thought free from duality. What would be the fruit of this practice? When, by means of the friction of the fire-sticks (of in-breath and out-breath which kindle the fire of the upward breath) of this meditation, the aspirant has suspended the movement of the two breaths and having obtained thereby the cessation of all tendency towards duality, then the Fire of the Tremendous God in the form of the central, upward-moving breath, flares up in the sacrificial pit of the meditator's heart. Intensely burning, this fire consumes all mental restrictions and enables the Yogi to realise his own Self, which is the Supreme Self-Aware Subject". The effect of Yogic breath-control manifests itself in three distinct stages. First, it leads to the stilling of mental thought-processes: thoughts become fewer, clearer and more purposeful, resulting in a mind that is focused, clear and free from agitation. Second, in the same way as a still lake reflects the light of the Sun and is penetrated by it to a much greater extent than is the case with agitated water, breath-control awakens and illumines the mind which, having been stilled, partakes more and more of the light of the Soul. And third, the mind is freed from all self-imposed delimitations and merges into the Pure Consciousness of the Universal Spirit enabling the Enlightened Yogi to live in complete unity and harmony with the Divine. Those who by means of Pranayama have attained the goal of Yoga Practice need not engage in any further practices. Those, on the other hand, who are less successful, must continue with the other "limbs" or stages of Yoga until the intended result is obtained. See also Commentary to 2:72 (b).

50. *The highest meditation shall be known to be that which has My Divine Person as object*: Meditation, that is, the prolonged concentration of the mind on a particular object, may be done

on any thing, idea or sensation. However, since from a Spiritual point of view meditation is done for the purpose of experiencing Unity with the Supreme Self, true meditation must have the Self as object. Thus the Shiva Purana (Vay. Sam., II, 7:38) says: Meditation is pondering over Shiva, while in verse 33 of the same Chapter, the Supreme Lord says: Yoga is the concentration of the mind upon Me, according to the way revealed by Me, restraining all other activities.

54. *The best time to begin the Practice of Yoga is in the seasons of Spring or Autumn:* The Gheranda Samhita (V, 1-15), also says that the Practice of Yoga, in particular Pranayama, should not be taken up during the following four out of the Six Seasons: Cold (Hemanta, from 23 October to 21 December), The Dews (Shishira, from 22 December to 19 February), Heat (Grishma, from 21 April to 21 June) and The Rains (Varsha, from 22 June to 22 August). Spring (Vasanta, from 20 February to 20 April) and Autumn (Sharada, from 23 August to 22 October), however, are ideal due to their mild nature.

63. *Let the Mystic Lotus or Chakra be conceived of as being at a distance of twelve finger-breadths from the top of the head, etc.:* This refers to the Seven Energy Centres or Chakras and the Spiritual practices related to them. The Soul is a human being's source of intelligence and energy. He gives life to our energy system which inwardly consists of the mind and outwardly of the physical body. These may be said to be the Soul's two bodies or coverings through which he experiences embodied life and interacts with the surrounding World. Within the energy system or body (shakti sharira) there are certain points of focus where energy tends to concentrate. These are known as Wheels or Whirls (Chakras), due to their circular shape and movement. It is through these points that energy flows from the Soul into the energy system and further into the physical body as well as from these back to the Soul. Since the Universe we live in along with all things and beings contained within it consists of Intelligent Energy, our energy system naturally interacts with all other forms of energy. The Chakras are particularly sensitive to all kinds of energy, both outer and inner, including our own thoughts and feelings. Their location in relation to the physical body and particular functions may be briefly described as follows. (1) The First and Lowest Energy Centre (Muladhara Chakra) is situated near the base of the spine. It represents our capacity to experience happiness from *basic biological comforts or functions* (without becoming addicted to them): food, shelter, warmth, sleep; movement, digestion, excreting, breathing, washing. When this centre is not functioning properly, we experience inability to derive happiness or comfort from these things. This situation gives rise to feelings of fear, anxiety, worries and causes us to temporarily crave, or permanently become addicted to, *Security*. This conscious or subconscious desire for *security* may manifest itself as a craving for food (any food), warmth or shelter, moving a lot or resting, holding one's breath or excessive cleanliness, etc. The fundamental feelings associated with this centre - when defective - are therefore: fear, insecurity, anxiety, worries. (2) The Second Energy Centre (Svadisthana Chakra) is situated in the lower abdomen, just one or two inches above the first, and is responsible for our capacity to experience happiness related to *sense perceptions*: particular odours, flavours, colours and forms, tactile sensations, sounds. In a more general sense, this natural happiness expresses itself as enthusiasm for, or joy of, life. By contrast, when this centre is out of balance, we experience at one extreme greed or lust and at the other, frustration, disappointment, boredom, lassitude (lack of enthusiasm or interest), depression and grief. In our subconscious effort to redress this condition, we often develop a temporary craving for, or permanently become addicted to, *sense-gratification* in the form of consumption of sweets, junk food, psychoactive drugs and other habit-inducing substances, shopping, activities and feelings of a sexual nature, etc. (3) The Third Energy Centre (Manipura Chakra), located on the spinal column at the level of the upper abdomen or navel, represents our capacity to exercise and enjoy *control* over ourselves and our life or various aspects thereof. When an imbalance occurs, we may experience at one extreme pride and vanity, and at the other, anger. Either extremes are associated with temporary craving

for, or permanent addiction to, *power over people, things and situations*. (4) The Fourth Energy Centre (Anahata Chakra) is situated on the spine at heart level - for which reason it is also known as the Heart (Hardaya) Centre - and is our capacity to create and enjoy *openness*. In an ideal situation, this enables us to experience acceptance towards others and ourselves, friendliness, love, affection, care, sympathy, compassion, generosity, charity, without becoming addicted to, or feeling a compulsion for, any of these. In the event of a malfunctioning of this capacity, we experience closedness or indifference to others and ourselves, intolerance, envy, jealousy, hatred. We become selfish and crave, or become addicted to, *love and attention*. In this connection, it must be clearly understood that craving or experiencing a need for love and attention is natural in a young human being and to some extent even in an adult. In such cases, love and affection must be given to the individual concerned. However, when this need becomes an addiction or obsession or is consciously or unconsciously used to manipulate others, alternative measures must be taken to resolve the problem. In other words, there may be occasions where it is advisable not to be too open or friendly towards a particular person or group of persons. Openness and friendliness must be practised intelligently according to circumstances. The Heart Chakra is the main focus of consciousness during deep sleep. (5) The Fifth Energy Centre (Vishuddha Chakra), at the base of the neck, constitutes our capacity to experience and enjoy *relatedness or emotional-relational efficiency*. It is the capacity to emotionally relate to others (as individuals) and to the Universe as a whole in a harmonious and efficient way. This includes the ability to cope with and assimilate, experiences, situations and events as well as the capacity for expression, communication, learning and teaching. Imbalance related to this centre results in inability to relate to and assimilate facts and experiences, express ourselves, communicate; feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment, shame, guilt. This situation can further develop into temporary craving for, or permanent addiction to, promiscuous, inadequate or unnatural relationships, meaningless or malicious talk, etc. This is also the main centre of our consciousness during the dreaming-state. (6) The Sixth Centre (Ajna Chakra) is located in the centre of the head behind the eyebrows and represents our capacity to enjoy *individual consciousness (self-awareness) and intellectual knowledge*, mental clarity, wisdom, insight, intuition. In its higher aspect it is known as the Third Eye or the Eye of Shiva. The focus of consciousness is located here in particular during: waking, lucid (awakened) dreaming, meditation, out-of-body experiences, astral travel, telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. A malfunctioning of this centre leads to incapacity for higher mental states, insufficient or inadequate intellectual knowledge (ignorance), inability to focus, to see clearly, mental opacity and confusion, insanity, etc. This in turn may develop into temporary craving for, or permanent addiction to, wrong, useless or harmful knowledge and thoughts. (7) The Seventh and Highest Centre is situated at the crown of the head or, as the present verse has it, twelve finger-breadths above the head. This is due to the fact that the normal height of the energy body is about six feet (or 72 inches) which means that a person endowed with a shorter physical body will experience the Top Chakra above his physical head. Being the highest Chakra, it represents the seat of Higher Consciousness. It enables us to experience and enjoy *Spiritual Experience and Universal Awareness*. It is the centre for Spirituality, awareness of a Higher Reality, higher states of consciousness such as experienced in advanced meditation (Samadhi) and Enlightenment. In other words, it is that part of us which is closest to God, or, in psychological parlance, the point where we reach Transformation, that is, Unity, Harmony, Wholeness, Completeness, Oneness, Perfection, Self-Realisation, Fulfilment. For this reason it is also known as the Thousand-Rayed Centre (Sahasrara Chakra). The malfunctioning of this centre results in incapacity for Spiritual experience, Spiritual ignorance, lack of faith in, or rejection of, a higher reality, materialism, temporary craving for, or permanent addiction to, material things and experiences. At this point, it must be understood that the Energy Centres, Wheels or Chakras, are not separate entities but, rather, being part of the same one energy system or body, they constantly interact with, and mutually influence, one another in a variety of ways. Apart from the basic activity of radiation

and absorption (or expansion and contraction) taking place in a particular centre, energy also performs a linear movement: negative, dense energy moving downwards creates an experience of heaviness, lack of energy, depression; positive energy moving upwards creates the experience of lightness, strength, elation. This gives rise to a constant flow of energy between the Crown (Sahasrara) and Base (Muladhara) Chakras which may be compared to the flow of vital juices circulating along the channels within a plant's stem. In humans, these channels or energy currents are known as Nadis, the main one (known as Sushumna Nadi) being situated along the spine. When one of the lower Chakras is defective, the vitiated energy that flows from it affects the next-higher Chakra which in turn affects the next one and so on. This results in the general malfunction of the entire system and leads to mental and physical imbalance, disease or even death. For example, due to a fundamental ignorance about life, ourselves or others, we may experience a sense of insecurity, fear or anxiety in the First Chakra. If the issue is not adequately identified and resolved it will cause us to crave a particular experience or substance which we subconsciously feel it might be of help. If we are unable to obtain relief we become disappointed and frustrated (Second Chakra). If we continue to fail in our attempt to bring the situation under control, we will become angry (Third Chakra). Anger will cause our heart to contract and we experience intolerance (Fourth Chakra). Intolerance and contraction of the heart will make relating efficiently to individual persons and the World impossible and we experience inadequacy and isolation (Fifth Chakra). We then begin to think that life is pointless (Sixth Chakra). We lose faith in ourselves as a higher being or Soul and in God, and become completely blind to a higher reality or Truth (Seventh Chakra). Here is how such negative developments may be consciously prevented, suppressed or redressed: if, for example, we experience grief as a result of a loss (Second Chakra), this will affect the flow of energy to the next-higher Chakra and we will experience a sense of powerlessness or helplessness (Third Chakra). This in turn will cause the next Chakra to contract and cause us to experience a sense of being "broken-hearted" (Fourth Chakra), etc. Now, having experienced grief in the Second Chakra, we may consciously take that energy one level higher by converting it into anger at our own inability to cope with a loss. Anger stimulates the Third Chakra and neutralises the feeling of helplessness before it overpowers us. We can then consciously take anger to the next-higher level and transform it into the determined conviction that despite the loss we are as complete as ever which will gradually result in a sense of acceptance and love of ourselves as we are (Fourth Chakra). Through regular practice we not only learn how to resolve all such issues but we also come to the realisation that we are ultimately responsible for our own life. In particular we understand that our Chakras interact not only with other Chakras within our own energy body but, being fields of energy, they also interact without our knowledge with the Chakras of people around us, causing them to behave towards us in unexpected and often unwanted ways. Indeed, in a person who has only just entered upon the Yoga Path, several or all Chakras may be simultaneously unbalanced in various ways. In addition, the beginner will often misunderstand the real issues. He may incorrectly diagnose a particular condition and resort to the wrong remedy. He may mistake social contact for Spiritual contact, opinion for knowledge, obsession for belief, addiction for legitimate desire or need, sentimentality for love, talking for real communication, emotional enjoyment for Spiritual fulfilment, automatic emotion-based responses for higher intuition, imagination for realisation, and so on. For this reason a Master, Friend or Guide is required to provide assistance and guidance. A Master will often start this process of Spiritual growth by consciously activating one of the disciple's Chakras which is of particular relevance to his progress. The disciple on his part will have to apply the various practices as instructed by the Master. To sum up, if we understand the intellectual and emotional mechanisms that bring us down by causing our consciousness to contract, we can consciously choose to cultivate positive emotions and thoughts that induce our consciousness to expand and enable us to elevate ourselves from Chakra to Chakra, *like climbing a ladder or ascending a mountain*, to finally attain the highest state of consciousness which is one of absolute unity and harmony with the Universal

Being (Shiva) and the World. Equally of importance is the realisation that notwithstanding their outer manifestation all experiences arise in the heart like waves upon the sea of energy or dynamic intelligence that constitutes the centre of our being. As such they are variations of the three qualities of Sattva (Luminosity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Opacity) which constitute Material Energy. By cultivating sattvic qualities in ourselves, we soon return to our natural state from which we have become alienated by a Spiritually ignorant mind. Indeed, Yoga teaches that Reality consists of Intelligence (Chit), Bliss (Ananda) and Energy (Shakti). Life, therefore, is fundamentally happy. We were in fact created to be happy and everything that the Universe has given us - including our energy system - serves the purpose of enabling us to experience this Universal Happiness which is the Essence of Life. Unhappiness, on the other hand, is a distorted experience of life that arises when and to the extent that our energy functions out of harmony with, or contrary to, our innate intelligence and bliss. In consequence, to be happy is not only the birthright but the *duty* of all living beings. It is Dharma or Universal Law. To create unhappiness in oneself or in others constitutes a violation of the Spiritual Laws of the Universe and must be regarded as a crime by those who follow the Path of Spirit.

67. *Having become One with the Cosmic Self, the Yogi shall then perceive the Self as living in and through all things:* The first aim of Yoga Practice is to extricate oneself from the hold of material existence. This is done by means of cultivating the awareness of oneself as a free and happy Soul, consisting entirely of light, intelligence and bliss: "I am not this body, I am not this mind, I am pure Consciousness and Bliss", etc. Having obtained a degree of disengagement of one's intelligence and energy from conditioned experience and having realised one's Identity with the Supreme Being (Parama Shiva), the next step consists in experiencing the Universe as the expression or manifestation of Shiva's Infinite Intelligence. Thus Absolute Oneness of experience is attained.

71. *City-of-Eight (Puryashtaka):* The Shiva Purana (Vidyeshvara Samhita, 18:4) has a slightly different description of this group of eight which are called bondages (pasha): Matter, Intellect, Ego, and the Five Sense Objects (Sound, Touch, Colour, Taste and Smell). However, both descriptions amount to fundamentally the same.

76. *Verily, indeed, I am Shiva: I am Pure Consciousness and Bliss:* The Shiva Purana explains: "It is written that everything is Shiva. Due to the Soul's essential identity with Shiva, he becomes equal to Shiva. The sense of duality arises on account of the forces that separate the Soul from the Supreme. But he who by means of the thought, I am Eternal Shiva, purifies his Soul becomes Shiva, the Universal Master Himself. I am He Who is Shiva, the Soul of all and identical with all: this is the meaning of all Gospels revealed by the Lord. The Teacher (Guru) shall convey to the disciple (Shishya) the meaning as declared by Shiva and explained in the Scriptures. It establishes identity between Man and Shiva Himself" (Kailasa Samhita, Ch. 18-19).

78. *As a young Swan, etc.:* Apart from its literal meaning, this verse clearly alludes to the practice of meditation by means of concentration on the mantra Sa-Ham (or Shiva-Ham) "I am He (Shiva)" or its mirror image, Ham-Sa. In the Sanskrit language Hamsa means Swan and the Swan in India is regarded as symbolic of the Soul. A human being is said to naturally utter the sound "ham" upon inhalation and "sah" upon exhalation, thereby constantly reciting the mantra "I am He (Shiva)". Thus, throughout day and night, man automatically - though unconsciously - recites these two sounds 21,600 times, till his last breath. Hence it is called Ajapa-Japa or effortless recitation. As the Vijnana Bhairava Tantra (155-156) emphasises, though easy to accomplish by virtue of its effortless nature, this recitation is difficult for the dull-minded. In the present verse, these two syllables are indirectly compared to the two wings whereby the swan-like Soul ascends to and becomes One with, the Supreme. In the Shiva Stotravali (14:19 and 7:4) the

poet Utpaladeva similarly compares the Self with a Swan: "Hail to You! Most Excellent Swan gliding through the skies of Your devotees' minds" and wishes to become like him "I toss within the World Egg infested with false attachments. May my unswerving devotion nourish me with the sweet essence of Your Bliss so that I may grow into a Bird with mighty wings!". And in the Stavachintamani, another poet and great Yogi, Bhatta Narayana, says: "Obeisance to the Source of Supreme Peace (Shiva), the Great Swan Whose Body shines due to its excessive whiteness and Whose Unique Abode is the purified heart of the Enlightened Ones!" (57). The mantra Sa-Ham or Shiva-Ham may be regarded as identical in both meaning and effect with the Great Mantra, Shiva-Om.

83. *Divine suffering is that which comes about through divine intervention, as when one is struck by a lightning, hit by a stray missile or is stricken with an illness or misfortune:* This refers to the agency of Divine Beings or Gods (Devas). As already explained, the Gods are manifestations of the Supreme Principle of Goodness (Shiva) and are, by definition, good. It may seem strange, therefore, that they should take any hostile actions against innocent and unsuspecting humans. However, such actions on the part of the Gods have little to do with their own nature but depend entirely upon God's Universal Plan as well as upon the Karma of the concerned humans themselves. Thus some humans the Gods cause to die in a gentle and pleasant way and others in a sudden and painful way, etc. Other Scriptures agree with this. The Quran, for one, speaks of "Angels who violently pull out the Souls of the wicked and others who gently draw out the Souls of the blessed" (79:1-2).

86. *All these are impediments upon the Path:* The Shiva Purana (Vayaviya Samhita, II, 38:1-8) gives a list of ten such impediments: idleness, illness, carelessness, doubt, fickle-mindedness, delusion or false beliefs, lack of faith, suffering (see the three-fold affliction, verse 83), dejection and sensual overindulgence, while on a different level, it enumerates eight bondages: Matter, Intellect, Ego and the Five Sense Objects, Sound, Touch, Colour, Taste and Smell (Vidyeshvara Samhita, 18:4). See also here (Chapter 6, verse 47), the Five Bonds, Fetters (Pasha) or Afflictions (Klesha): ignorance (avidya), egoity (I-am-ness, asmita), desire (raga), aversion (dvesha), and attachment (abhinivesha), which are also listed in the Yoga Sutra (2:3). The Buddhist Scriptures on their part speak of five basic hindrances (Nivarana): sensuous desire, ill will, doubt, sloth and agitation, which are to be eliminated by means of concentration (ekagrata), good-will (priti), investigative thinking or enquiry into reality (vichara), right thoughts (vitarka) and happiness (sukha). Similarly, the Sages of Ancient Greece sought to attain freedom from mental states such as fear, greed, attachment, envy, grief and worldly joy, that disturb the Soul's natural happiness and peace. Likewise, later Christian writings list seven "deadly sins" as: pride, greed, envy, anger, lust, gluttony and sloth which are to be eliminated through humility, generosity, love, kindness, self-control, temperance and zeal. As there are countless mental inclinations and levels of experience, no list can ever claim to be exhaustive. Moreover, different Spiritual aspirants may experience problems with different inclinations. Some may find gluttony difficult to control, while others may be plagued by anger, fear, anxiety or doubt. Nevertheless, irrespective of how many such inclinations we choose to include in a single list, what level or levels of experience we take up for consideration, or whether we call them hindrances (nivarana), obstacles (antaraya), obstructions (vighna), distractions (vikshepa), afflictions (klesha), errors (viparyaya), defects (dosha) or sins, the fact is that all negative, opaque and obtrusive states of mind that obstruct the process of Spiritual development constitute obstacles that prevent us from advancing on the Path to Enlightenment leading to our true Self. They may be said to be obstacles in another sense also, namely, that they obstruct the light of Consciousness so that it cannot reach us. In the same way as the light of the Sun cannot illumine a particular corner of the Earth from which he is separated by some physical obstacle, the Sun of Consciousness cannot illumine that part of ourselves which is obscured by mental or psychological "clouds". These

mental or emotional clouds therefore must be dispersed by means of Spiritual Knowledge (Atma-Vijnana) and Practice (Sadhana). Their eradication results in the proper functioning of the energy body and the Chakras which will not only enable us to lead a happy life on Earth but will also enable us to enter higher states of consciousness and experience higher planes of existence. See Commentary to verse 63, above.

90. *In truth, Pratibha is the Supreme Power Divine. There is nothing that the Yogi cannot know or accomplish thereby:* Pratibha or Intuition, Inward Illumination, etc., is the power whereby Consciousness elevates itself to higher stages of experience. For this reason it has been said that Spiritual Insight (Pratibha) is the highest and only limb of Yoga (Tantraloka IV, 86), all others being of secondary importance.

98. *Verily and without doubt, by the Power of Anima, the Yogi makes himself small as an atom, etc.:* It has become fashionable among modern scholars to interpret such statements in a metaphorical or symbolic sense. It is neither unusual nor surprising for outsiders to make such fundamental mistakes. Those who are acquainted with the inner processes of Yoga, however, are perfectly aware of the fact that Yogic Powers are very real and not the product of poetic licence. It is an established fact that ordinary humans and even animals often possess supernatural faculties, such as the power of clairvoyance, telepathy, mind-reading, etc. Such faculties are in fact but the natural powers of the Soul which have become inactive or ineffective through lack of practice as well as due to the obstructive activities of the Spiritually-unaware mind. One of the functions of Yoga Practice is to reactivate these Powers, known as Siddhis (Accomplishments or Spiritual Perfections). Indeed, they are precisely thus called because they become manifest as a direct result of the Soul's having attained Perfection on the Yoga Path. Consequently, we may reasonably expect a Yogi who has reached the Highest Degree of Perfection to possess Perfect Mastery over *all* Powers and therefore be an Omnipotent Being equal in all respects to God. The proof for this fact is that Accomplished Yogis do on occasion make use of their Divine Powers, although this always occurs strictly in accord with Divine Will (with Which they have become One) and not at the uninvited request of outsiders. This, in short, is the right interpretation of this and similar verses. Any other position would be contrary not only to reason but also to Scripture itself.

104. *Emptied their heart of worldly pleasures:* The Goal of Yoga is to attain a higher experience of Truth. This can only happen by overcoming limited experience, which is based on perception of material things to the exclusion of higher realities. By learning how to see the Divine in material things, man begins to experience Boundless Divine Bliss instead of limited worldly pleasures. Apart from quality, intensity and reality, the difference between the two modes of experience consists in that while Divine Bliss elevates the Soul to ever-higher states, mundane enjoyments tend to tie him down to material things, due to ignorance of their true source.

110. *The Divine Word can be heard either from Myself, a Divine Guru, a Superhuman Guru (Siddha or Accomplished Yogi) or a human Guru:* Shiva is the Supreme Spiritual Authority. However, due to lack of spiritual awareness in most humans He only rarely directly reveals the Truth to Mankind. Most often, the Truth is revealed through the medium of Teachers who may be termed Divine, Superhuman and Human. The Human Teachers (Manava Gurus) are those among Mankind who possess either partial or intellectual knowledge of Truth (known as Unawakened or Abuddhas) or direct knowledge of Truth (known as Buddhas). Being human, they also have personal Karma to work out in addition to their preceptorial (teaching) duties. They are responsible for a limited number of Spiritual Seekers whom they instruct either verbally or in writing. The Superhuman Teachers (Siddha Gurus) are Perfect Souls (Siddha Purushas)

inhabiting the Higher Planes who occasionally incarnate as human beings, that is, they are born to human parents, for the purpose of imparting the Truth to the World. Being free from personal Karma they act solely for the fulfilment of Divine Will. They also provide guidance to larger numbers of Seekers than the Human Teachers and instruct their worthy disciples (Sat-Shishya) by various means such as mantra, touch, thought or a mere glance. Finally, Divine Teachers (Daiva Gurus) are neither ordinary humans nor human incarnations of Higher Beings but direct Manifestations or Emanations of the Divine who come into being at regular intervals to provide Spiritual Guidance to the Whole World, after which they return to Shiva's World of Light (or are re-absorbed into His Divine Being). Due to the immense Spiritual Power radiating worldwide from such Beings, Spiritually receptive Souls often unconsciously experience an inner awakening without realising its true source. Indeed, Divine Teachers generally initiate chosen disciples (Sat-Shishya) not physically but by means of dreams or certain signs that are capable of setting in motion the inner processes of awakening. Once these processes have been activated, the person in question will sooner or later be enlightened as to the true source of his awakening. For example, just as a hungry man may instinctively consume whatever items of food happen to be at hand, a Spiritually starved Soul may unexpectedly (and inexplicably) become attracted to any religious teaching or group simply because it is available or appeals to him at that time. However, in the course of time, he will either through secondary channels or directly come to realise that Yoga is the only Truth and that Shiva or His Manifestation is the True Well-Spring of Spiritual Knowledge and discard all other faiths. At present, Lord Soma-Natha is the Supreme World Teacher and Shiva's Representative on Earth. He currently resides in the Himalayas from where he graciously guides all Souls who humbly submit to his Divine Authority. He cannot be approached for selfish reasons nor for any other improper motives. However, his disciples may sometimes approach sincere Seekers and invite them to join his Spiritual Circle. (See also verse 11:213 and Commentary).

117 (a). *Let him who is desirous of Knowledge be a disciple first:* The importance of being instructed in Spiritual matters by a competent Teacher is stressed in all religions. Says the Bible: "How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15). And the Quran says: "He (Mohammad) is taught by one who is powerful and mighty (Gabriel)" (53:2). Similarly, in Buddhism, a Teacher of Meditation is called a "Good Friend" owing to whom living beings are liberated from worldly life: "A meditation subject should be taken by approaching the Good Friend, the giver of a meditation subject, and by doing all the duties unto him" (Vishuddhi-Marga III, 65). Moreover, it is said, "it is only the Fully Enlightened One (Suprabuddha) who possesses all the aspects of the Good Friend. However, in the absence of such an one, it is proper to take a particular meditation subject from one who has attained perfection in that particular meditation subject" (ibidem, III, 62). Whatever type of Master one has chosen, disciples are invariably advised to engage in service to the Master (Guru-Seva) for two reasons: (1) to cultivate in themselves an attitude of selflessness which is the condition for any significant progress in Spiritual life and (2) to open the Master's heart by pleasing him and thereby induce him to reveal the highest truths. Indeed, it is a Spiritual fact that the more the Master is pleased with the disciple, the higher will be the quality and intensity of his instruction. The service rendered to the Master, therefore, is not entirely objectless. While the disciple pledges unconditional loyalty and obedience to the Master, the latter on his part is expected to look after the disciple's Spiritual welfare. Says the Shiva Purana: "The Master is Shiva and Shiva is the Master. The disciple shall never rouse the Master's displeasure whether in thought, word or deed. He shall ever perform what is profitable and pleasing to the Guru. Upon dawning of Realisation, the disciple shall abide by the Guru with unswerving devotion. But if no sign of success whatsoever be obtained in the space of a year, let the disciple turn to another Master" (Vayaviya Samhita II, 15:20-46).

117 (b). *One becomes a Master worthy of My Highest Heaven through association with the worthy and not in any other way:* Association or contact with the World (Jana-Sanga) or with worldly people is universally recognised as leading to a decline in a person's Spiritual consciousness. The opposite to this, that is to say association or contact with Spirit (Sat-Sanga) or Spiritually-minded people is regarded as leading to an elevation of consciousness which enables the Spiritual aspirant to rise to higher and higher stages of experience. Sat-Sanga therefore, which literally means "sitting close to Truth" is an essential Spiritual practice.

119 (a). *Six flavours:* Traditional Indian Medicine (Ayur-Veda or Science of Long Life) distinguishes between six different Flavours (Rasas), Sweet (Madhura) as in sugar, Sour (Amla) as in lemon, Salty (Lavana) as in salt, Bitter (Tikta) as in bitter almond, Astringent (Kashaya) as in pomegranate, and Sharp (Katu) as in black pepper. The importance of the Flavours or Rasas consists in the fact that they have the capacity to influence the basic constituents of the human body in various ways. These constituents are the Three Dhatus technically called, Vata (Wind), Pitta (Fire) and Kapha (Water), not to be confused with the Elements (Tattvas) whose names they bear. Vata (Wind) is responsible for the regulation of all bodily activities, Pitta (Fire) is responsible for regulating digestion and temperature, and Kapha (Water) controls everything that has to do with moisture and lubrication in the body. Now, flavour is not a random, irrelevant occurrence but an indication of the presence in our food of certain naturally occurring chemicals which have the capacity to alter the bio-chemical balance and, therefore, the functioning, of the human body and mind. Thus sweet foods support the function of Kapha but restrain Vata and Pitta; sour supports both Kapha and Pitta but reduces Vata; salt increases Kapha and Pitta but curbs Vata; bitter reduces both Kapha and Pitta but augments Vata; astringent diminishes Kapha and Pitta and stimulates Vata; and sharp decreases Kapha but encourages Vata and Pitta. What becomes clear from this is that apart from the quality, quantity, mode of preparation, etc., of food, flavour is a key factor in every balanced diet which cannot be simply overlooked. Though this may at first sound rather complicated, the fact is that every human being tends to be dominated by one of the three constituents (Dhatu). Once the Dhatu Type has been established, it is fairly easy to master the basics of the formula whereby an ideal individual diet may be designed and observed. For a diet based on purely Spiritual principles see Commentary to 11:121.

119 (b). *Six two-monthly seasons:* The Indian year (solar) may roughly be said to consist of three distinct Seasons, namely, Hot (Ushna), Rainy (Varsha), and Cold (Shishira). However, these are more commonly divided into six Seasons of two solar months each: Spring (Vasanta), lasting from the Month of Phalguna (20 February to 21 March) to and including the Month of Chaitra (22 March to 20 April); Heat (Grishma), lasting from Vaisakha (21 April - 21 May) to Jyeshtha (22 May - 21 June); The Rains (Varsha), lasting from Ashadha (22 June - 22 July) to Shravana (23 July - 22 August); Autumn (Sharada), lasting from Bhadrapada (23 August - 22 September) to Ashvina (23 September - 22 October); Cold (Hemanta), from Karttika (23 October - 21 November), to Margashirsha or Agrahayana (22 November - 21 December); and The Dews or Thaws (Shishira), from Pausha (22 December - 20 January) to Magha (21 January - 19 February).

130. *Abiding in the World but not having their heart in it, etc.:* The purpose of Yoga Practice is to redress the imbalance created through man's obsessive concern with material things. Becoming aware of oneself as a non-material, conscious entity constitutes a key objective in all genuine Spiritual endeavour. This leads to the realisation that we live in the material World but have our roots in a higher, Spiritual World and inspires us to establish Spirituality on Earth.

133. *Know would-be Yogis to belong to one of four kinds, lowly, moderate, keen and supreme:* Yogis are not only intimately acquainted with the realities of the Spiritual World but they also are past masters in human psychology. As such, Yogis have long recognised that there

are no two identical persons just as there are no two identical fingers on one hand. Due to differences in character, mental and physical capacity, inclinations, etc., different methods of Spiritual teaching and practice have been designed for different aspirants. In consequence, an aspirant's (would-be Yogi's) character, mental and physical capacity, etc., must be first determined by a competent Yoga Master. The basic criteria usually employed for this purpose are: Posture, Action, Eating, Reaction to sensory perception, Predominant mental states, etc. Once the physical, psychological and Spiritual traits have been ascertained through the analytical observation of a person's behaviour in specific circumstances, the aspirant may be identified as belonging to one of the six following temperaments: hateful, greedy and deluded, on the negative side; or intelligent, faithful and speculative, on the positive side. The hateful is defined by a lack of understanding (and dislike) of things that are good and true; the greedy by a craving for harmful things; and the deluded by an obscure mind. The intelligent is defined by an understanding of what is good and true and is akin to the hateful through his dislike of what is wrong and untrue; the faithful is defined by a desire for virtue and is akin to the greedy through his desire; and the speculative is defined by excessive speculative thinking that is akin in nature to delusion. Ultimately, the six temperaments are indicative of the predominance of one of the three Qualities of Consciousness (Gunas), Sattva (Luminosity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Obscuration) in their positive or negative aspects, respectively. People of Sattvic character are described in the Scriptures as possessing an inborn intuition of the One Reality that underlies all things. They are calm, stable, focused, well-mannered, self-controlled, attracted to Spiritual Knowledge and keen to work for the welfare of others. Those of Rajasic character have a worldview that is dominated by the superficial distinctiveness and separateness of things as opposed to their fundamental oneness and unity. They are attracted to sensual pleasures, unstable, restless and intent on their own ends. The Tamasic character is described as being obsessed with one thing to the exclusion of all others, lazy, undisciplined, wanton, bad-mouthed and fond of quarrels, sleep and intoxicant substances. These three types also bear parallels to the three medical categories of Vata, Kapha and Pitta (see Commentary to 10:119 (a), above). Yoga Masters may study a disciple's aura or psychic radiance quite independently of physical and mental characteristics. Should the Master lack the necessary penetrative insight into a disciple's mind, he may simply enquire of the latter as to what mental states he is inclined to, what subject he likes bringing to his mind or what meditation object is favoured by his mind. Such methods of behavioural analysis are, of course, resorted to by not-fully-Enlightened Masters (Aprabuddha). A Yoga Master who has attained Full Enlightenment, on the other hand, will gain instant access to an aspirant's innermost thoughts and feelings by a mere glance (or Power of Spiritual Sight) and instruct him accordingly. In the same way as there are various classes of Spiritual Masters (see verse 110 and Commentary), there are also different classes of disciples. While the general term for disciple is Shishya, these are divided into three categories according to their degree of Spiritual Realisation: (1) Samayis who have just been initiated, (2) Sadhakas who have received initiation and are at various stages of Spiritual Training (Sadhana) and (3) Putrakas who are the most dedicated Seekers of Enlightenment among the aforementioned practisers of the Yoga Path. As such, they are regarded as Spiritual Sons (Putra) who upon completion of their training will qualify as Masters (Acharya).

141. *One is liberated through My Grace:* Grace (Prasada) is the Power whereby the Supreme Being liberates the personal Soul from his limitations and elevates him to the status of Unity and Identity with Itself. Hence it is also known as Anugraha Shakti. It is regarded as being of three kinds, according to the way in which it arises: inborn, which arises spontaneously from within oneself; received from a Teacher, human or Divine; and obtained through the study of Scripture and realisation of the Truth contained therein.

144. *Know that My devotees' devotion is due to My Grace and My Grace descends upon them due to their devotion:* This may be compared with Shiva Stotravali, 16:21, where it is said: "You are pleased, O Lord! with devotion, and devotion arises at your will. You alone understand how these are connected".

156. *But no Devotion is greater than that of Parvati, the Mountain Maiden who was the youngest among three sisters:* Although Parvati or Mountain Maiden was in her earthly life connected with a Mountain, we must not lose sight of the symbolic meaning of the word. A Mountain is, by definition, an elevated ground that stands out through its height. In Yogic symbolism, Mountain (Parvata, That Which Reaches Beyond) signifies an elevated state of being, hence Mount Meru, Mount Kailasa, etc., where Higher Beings reside. Indeed, Parvati was a Divine Manifestation who incarnated on Earth for the purpose of leading all earth-dwellers towards Shiva, the Supreme Lord Who is the True "Husband" or Soulmate of all creatures. See also Commentary to 9:4.

167. *The second is the Impurity of Delusion... It causes the Self to see all things as different and separate both from each other and himself:* In the Spiritually unawakened person (abuddha), the intellect concerns itself with the differences perceived between the objects of the World. Thus his entire life is determined by distinction-based consciousness. The Awakened Soul on the other hand, views all things as consisting of the same substance, namely, pure luminous energy which is the creative expression of Consciousness.

223. *As waves from Water, as sparks from Fire, as rays from the Sun, all life springs forth from Me, the Lord, the Source of all Life:* As the attentive reader will recall, we demonstrated in our Commentary to Chapter 1, verse 42, that all the major Scriptures in the World support the Yogic teaching to the effect that all things from the Gods (or Angels) to human Souls and inanimate things were created by God out of Himself. Since this is a very important teaching that cannot be repeated often enough, we may now briefly leave Scripture aside and turn our attention to the history of language itself, as an independent means of verification. The etymological analysis of the English word Soul will reveal that it derives from Anglo-Saxon Sawl, "that which comes from the Sea of Being" or "which emanates from the Ocean of Life". Indeed, from Africa to Europe, India and Persia (Sumer), people throughout the Ancient World believed that Souls originated not in nothing but in the Water of Life itself, that is, the life-giving substance that represents the ground of all being. Heaven itself was compared to an infinite body of water in which Souls existed like fish in the Sea, glittering among the waves like Stars in the Firmament. For this reason, in the Indian tradition, the Supreme Being is still called, Jaleshvara (Lord of Waters) as well as Minanatha (Lord of Fishes) which may also be rendered as Lord of Souls, Lord of Stars, Lord of All Things That Shine, Source Light of All Lights, Sun of Reality, Ocean of Being, etc. In keeping with this original, worldwide tradition, and as the Supreme Lord Himself here declares, Yoga teaches that God is the Sea of Life, the Ocean of Universal Consciousness from Which everything comes and in Which all things and beings have their existence. It is from that Divine Source that all Souls are born like waves from Water, like sparks from Fire and like rays from the Sun (hence English "daylights" for Soul or Life force).

236. *In whatever way one worships Me with devotion, that I am greatly pleased with, etc.:* It is natural for human beings to think that what they are doing is better, more useful or more important than what others do. Says the Tripura Rahasya: "Every man stamps his own views with the seal of authority and condemns the rest, not only as worthless but also as harmful!" (6:64). Spiritual Seekers who have just entered upon the Path, are not an exception to this. Thus those who practise meditation not infrequently look down on other Spiritual practices like praying, chanting or going on pilgrimage. Conversely, those who are engaged in prayer,

chanting, etc., look down on meditation. Such unexamined prejudice is corrected here by stressing the fact that any activity that is done with devotion leads to Spiritual realisation and hence is legitimate for that purpose. It is a humbling experience to realise that forms of worship one has previously rejected as "inferior" or even "idolatrous" are as capable of bringing one closer to God as those one has regarded as exclusively suited for that purpose. True Spiritual life is about shedding preconceived ideas such as these and learning to see the reality behind appearances. For example, when correctly understood, "Image worship" is suddenly seen as a beautiful expression of love of the Divine. Let us suppose that a young man were in love with a girl and wished to express his love for her by offering her a bunch of flowers. However, because he is too shy or because the girl's parents would object, the young man is compelled to leave the flowers on the girl's doorstep. Now, although the flowers are left outside the door, they are clearly not meant for the door but for the girl who lives in the house behind the door. Similarly, the Yogi, Hindu or Buddhist devotee who appears to offer flowers, incense, candles and other such things to an Idol or Image (Murti) of God, in reality directs his worship to the Deity represented by the Image and upon Whom the Image helps to concentrate the worshipper's mind. In the same way as a bunch of flowers given to the person one loves is an expression of love or Unity between two Souls, an object offered to an Image of the Divine is an expression of union, communion or Unity of the worshipper with the Deity worshipped through the medium of the Image. On a higher level, the offering itself stands for a part of oneself which is offered to the Deity represented by the Image. It is an expression of the recognition of the fact that everything, including oneself belongs, and is offered in worship, to the Deity Who is one's Higher Self. This Spiritual awareness is beautifully expressed in the traditional saying: "Shiva (God) is the Worshipped One as well as the worshipper and the (object offered in) worship; indeed, Shiva is everything that is. I myself (the Divine Spirit within me) am no other but that very Shiva Himself". What becomes evident is that far from constituting an act of ignorance, "Image worship" is a beautiful, deeply human and highly Spiritual gesture: a very simple and powerful means of establishing Unity with God with Whom one is essentially One. In other words, a gesture that only an ignorant person can condemn or deny. Indeed, while fundamentalist Judaism and Islam reject the worship of Images as "Idolatry", Christianity (both Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox) has long adopted the Hindu (or Pagan) practice of employing symbolic imagery in the worship of the Divine. The reason for this is easy to see: in a World where most people were illiterate, an Image was much more expressive than a book. Even today, it remains a fact that no amount of literary description can match what we see with our own eyes. Written words have neither the immediacy nor the suggestive power of sensory perception. While words have to be processed by the mind, Images speak directly to our heart. A statue holding a trident or sword, or one smiling down on us, for example, can perfectly well convey God's power of Justice, Truth or Compassion to the believer. Likewise, an Image that embodies all characteristics of physical beauty can immediately open the worshipper's heart to the Beauty of God. Since God Himself has given man the power of artistic expression it cannot be wrong for man to utilise it in whatever manner he sees fit for the purpose of coming closer to God. To prevent him, on spurious ideological grounds, from doing so is a crime against Humanity and against God. The suppression of religious experience and expression can have no place in the civilised World. Indeed, what is the purpose of Religion (any Religion) if not to bring us closer to God? And how can we get closer to the Perfect One if not by shedding our imperfections and put on the Perfection of God? And how can we put on the Perfection of God if not by cultivating Divine Qualities within us? And how can we cultivate what is good, what is beautiful, what is real in us, if not by holding before us objects that evoke in us feelings and thoughts that are conducive to the increase of Perfection in us? In Yoga, therefore, we do not worship Images but Divine Qualities reflected in the Images, just as at other times we worship the Divine Qualities we perceive in Nature, in people, or read about in the Scriptures. Writing in defence of Image Worship, the 4th century Christian Saint, Basil of Caesarea, says: "The honour given unto an Image passes over to

that which the Image represents" (De Spiritu Sancto). Saint John of Damascus (8th century) also says: "Therefore, when we bow down and worship (an Image of God), we do not worship the material, but that which is represented by the material" (Exposition of the Right Faith). Moreover, in On Holy Images, he declares, "I will not cease from honouring that material Image which works my Salvation". Similarly, the Stavachintamani (21) says: "O Omnipotent One! by what path can You not be reached, and by what name can You not be called? By what meditation are You not meditated upon? And again, what is there that You are not?". And in the Shiva Stotravali, the poet says: "Obeisance to You, O Radiant One! Who can be worshiped in any manner, in any place, in whatever form at all" (2:20). Indeed, every worshipper is entitled to worship God according to whatever method he finds most suitable to himself. And as different worshippers are on different levels of Spiritual development, there are also different stages of practice. The first stages of Yoga Practice (Sadhana) may be compared to when we cannot directly perceive anything but feel that there is something in the air and consciously gather our thoughts in an endeavour to make out what it is; the second, to when we can hear the distant sound of thunder after which the Sky becomes covered in dark clouds; and the third, to when there is a sudden downpour of rain that drenches us to the bone. When the thunderstorm has passed, we find ourselves bathed in the glorious radiance of the blazing Sun and as we eagerly soak in his light and his warmth, we become one with that source of light and our individuality dissolves in an extraordinary experience of oneness. As a result of this Spiritual Union of man and God, the human heart which is, by definition, limited, opaque, scattered, twisted, disorientated and extremely fragile, feeble and confused, is one day ambushed and taken by surprise and, being utterly deprived of any possibility whatever to resist or escape, it is seized, penetrated, invaded and inundated from within and without and at the same time transfigured, illumined, clarified, unified, empowered, magnified and cosmified, that is, expanded to cosmic dimensions, and therefore totally, absolutely, immediately, permanently and irrevocably Deified, that is, Made One With God. This in short is the ultimate function of Yoga: to unify our entire being and to restore the state of Unity between ourselves and the Supreme Being, which Unity has been interrupted and disturbed by a divisive perspective of Life. In practice, therefore, Yoga distinguishes between three levels or degrees of Spiritual Activity (Sadhana) leading to Union with the Supreme: (1) Psycho-physical level based on physical and mental training. Apart from physical postures, this may include elements of a religious nature, conventionally speaking, such as praying, chanting, performing certain ritual or symbolic acts, attending Spiritual discourses, etc. At this stage consciousness is still attached to the material aspect of reality. The Five Yogic Duties (Pancha-Dharma) of Shraddha (Declaration of Faith), Smarana (Remembrance of the Holy Name), Daya (Charity), Upavasa (Fasting in honour of Shiva - on Shiva Ratri Day) and Yatra (Pilgrimage) belong to this stage. These five are obligatory for all followers of Shiva, indeed, as Lord Shiva Himself declares in verse 11:48, they ought to be observed by all of Mankind irrespective of religious creed. However, those who wish to become more intimately acquainted with the Spiritual dimensions of life must follow the Eightfold Path consisting of the Three Preliminary Practices (Yama, Niyama, Asana) and the Five Advanced Practices (Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi); (2) Mystical level based on communion with a Higher Reality brought about by inner Spiritual Intuition. Consciousness here begins to penetrate the deeper layers of reality, becoming acquainted with, and adapting itself to, Spiritual dimensions of being. The main practice belonging to this stage is Meditation (Dhyana) or Contemplation (Bhavana); (3) Metaphysical or Transcendental (Lokauttara) level based on direct Recognition of Ultimate Reality and understanding of Its true relationship to oneself and the World, as a result of which the ordinary human condition is overcome and permanent Cosmic Consciousness is attained. The practice here consists in returning, by a conscious effort of will, to the mass of pure, thought-free Awareness out of which all experiences, inner and outer, arise. Each of the above three levels revolves on the Soul's powers of action, knowledge and will, respectively. When these three powers have been sufficiently developed and harmonised with

those of the Universal Consciousness, the Soul's innate powers of Bliss and Consciousness awoken from within and the Yogi enters the last stages of Spiritual Endeavour in which he becomes permanently established in the domain of Spirit. The Spiritual Realisation brought about by Yoga Practice is experienced in two phases: First, one realises oneself as identical with the Supreme. Second, one realises the World as one's own conscious creation or projection. See also Commentary to Ch. 6:14.

268. *Let him next enter the cave of his own heart:* That is, enter the inner space of one's true being. Meditation may be compared to entering a cave in which we take refuge from everyday life. The cave appears at first to be narrow and dark. However, having become established there, with patience and practice, we begin to see in the dark and the cave eventually appears infinitely wide and bright, and full of wonderful things that provide us with wisdom, happiness and strength on the basis of which we begin to relate to the World in new and better ways that bring joy and fulfilment to our lives. Since caves are places of great silence and stillness the word cave is also symbolic of the complete stillness and silence of the thought-free awareness experienced in higher Spiritual States.

271. *Having meditated for a while upon My Incarnate Form, the Yogi shall visualise It as being reabsorbed into My Formless Being:* The question that at this point often arises in the beginner's mind is, "If the ultimate goal of meditation is union with the Formless, Supreme Reality, why then should it be necessary to meditate first on a limited form such as Shiva's blue body, etc.?" Firstly, it is rather difficult for the Spiritually untutored mind to meditate on the Absolute which lies beyond all mental perception or conception. The mind must therefore develop its powers of grasping higher realities by concentrating and contemplating on the form and meaning of lower manifestations of the Supreme which are known to appear to the devotees in that shape and which represent an intermediate state between man and God, in the same way as one ascends a flight of steps leading to a higher position in space. The lower manifestations of the Divine must be properly understood and assimilated prior to any attempt at scaling the higher reaches of the Spiritual World. Secondly, since most people do not possess direct access to the Supreme Being, they need to put themselves under the guidance and protection of those lower manifestations of the Supreme which then will safely lead the meditator to the final Goal. Without guidance and protection, an inexperienced meditator is likely to be led astray by mind-created experiences that cut him off from Reality and leave him in a condition of separation from both the material and Spiritual Worlds. The fact that a traveller knows or believes to know the goal, does not imply that he also knows the way. A man may well fall into a precipice or get bitten by a snake he has inadvertently disturbed, while keeping his gaze on the mountain top he wishes to reach. Similarly, unguided meditation may awaken forces over which the unprotected meditator has no control or lead to areas of the mind or Higher Space which the meditator cannot evade. Hence, all traditions that teach meditation have enjoined the establishment of contact with Higher Beings as a means of protecting oneself against the dangers of uncontrolled psychic processes. Buddhist Scriptures such as the Vishuddhi-Marga, for example, recommend that "when meditating, one should first develop lovingkindness towards (or establish a relation of friendship with) all the Deities within the boundary (i.e., those Spiritual Entities that by experience are known to exert a protective influence on the meditator's village, district or country). By so doing, he is then protected by Kindly Deities with righteous protection. (Further) this is called generally useful and a meditation subject since it is needed generally, and desirable owing to its great helpfulness" (op. cit., III, 58 and 59). It is specifically recommended in such works to meditate upon the Spiritual qualities of Gods (or Angels, in biblical terms), such as faith, purity, knowledge and understanding, as being present in oneself. "By virtue of this, the meditator becomes dearly loved by the Gods and obtains much happiness and gladness. Indeed, even if he penetrates no higher, he is at least headed for a happy destiny, for this meditation on

Gods (and their qualities) is blessed with great Spiritual Power and enables one to attain a condition similar to that of the Gods" (ibid., 4, 117 and 118).

281. *Having honoured the Deity of that place, let him address his mind unto Me:* Adherence to Truth is a fundamental Yogic principle. Truth or Reality is ultimately one. Yet due to variation in the conscious subjects' (or Souls') capacities of perception and conception different levels of Truth are admitted to exist. For example, the same object may be held to be of a large or small size depending on its relation to other objects or whether it is perceived by a child or an adult; a space of twenty years may be perceived as very great by a child but as relatively small by an adult, etc. Different levels of Truth are admitted to exist in terms of the pursuit of justice also. Suppose that an innocent man is being hunted by a group of armed men who seek to seize and punish him for some perceived crime. In their hunt for him, the men encounter another man who must have witnessed the fugitive's flight. Now if the witness be asked whether or not he saw the fugitive and the direction he took, the answer would be "yes", strictly speaking. But if by answering "no" the life of the innocent man is saved, then the negative answer though being technically untrue, must be admitted to be *morally* true its intention and purpose being to prevent an injustice from being perpetrated. The law codes of Ancient India clearly state that such a witness is not committing a crime even though any statement that is knowingly made in contradiction with factual truth amounts to perjury, in normal circumstances. Likewise, if a country be invaded by a hostile force and compelled to adopt a new religious belief, as has been the case of India and other parts of the World, then the native population may feign adherence to the new religion for the purpose of escaping persecution, while the flame of faith is being kept alive in the heart of the believers until such time as it may be safely allowed to burn openly again. When that moment has come, it is the duty of the keepers of the flame to call their brethren to the true faith, in particular those who in the course of time have become partly or wholly oblivious of their original faith. (See also verse 300, below, and Commentary to 11:231.)

285. *Those who go astray will prevail only for awhile till their good Karma endures. But when that comes to an end, they are overcome by their evil deeds and destruction will be their fate:* The Quran also says: "We (God) give them to enjoy a little, then We drive them to a severe chastisement" (31:24). It is a commonly observable fact that evil-doers often enjoy a good life for some time even though eventually they have to pay for their deeds. Verse 285 explains why Divine Retribution does not fall upon the guilty immediately. God being Just, He allows every person to enjoy the fruit of his good deeds (satkarma) performed by him in this or a former life, after which, either when the good Karma has been exhausted or outweighed by bad Karma, he becomes fit to taste the fruit of his evil deeds. Says the Mundaka Upanishad: "Having had enjoyment in the highest heaven won by good works, they re-enter this World, or a lower". Indeed, Yoga teaches that consciousness can ascend as well as descend on the scale of experience. In the same way as a man, due to intoxication, insanity and the like, may find himself in a debased state of mind, so also, a human being who has been incapable or unwilling to elevate himself and has instead succumbed to lower, negative or Spiritually objectionable tendencies or sins, may well find himself in a lower, subhuman form of life that corresponds to his Karma or inner attitude, in a future life. Says Scripture: "Either as a worm, or as a moth, or as a fish, or as a bird, or as a snake, or as a tiger, or as a person, or as some other in this or that condition, he is born here (in this World) according to his deeds, according to his knowledge" (Katha Upanishad 5:7). Whether we take this literally or symbolically, we cannot deny the fact that some animals clearly possess human-like qualities such as a keen intelligence, while certain humans are hardly better than animals. While most humans will likely continue as humans even in a future existence, some may actually assume lower, subhuman forms. This is not surprising since a Soul who has attained human form after many lifetimes in animal form may well relapse either temporarily or more permanently into lower forms of existence. At all events it is clear that the

condition or state of life of a living being is not mere coincidence but accurately reflects its inner individual characteristics.

298. *Mindful of appearances, knowing that Truth in this World has many enemies, practising in secret, let the Yogi live happily in this World yet unaffected by the World. In this way he shall steadily advance upon My Path:* The Shiva Stotravali says: "Amidst Righteousness and Unrighteousness, amidst knowledge and actions, amidst prosperity and hardship, Your devotees, in the face of all this, enjoy the Bliss of Your Devotion" (15:6). Likewise, the Stavachintamani: "O Universal Being! Your constant memory is the sole remedy to the darkness of ignorance. Establish in me, by an ever-renewed gift, this favourable disposition!" (24).

End of Chapter 10 and Commentary

THE ELEVENTH LIGHT

(Chapter Eleven)

11

*Wherein The Wheel of The Eternal Law is proclaimed
for the Establishment of Righteousness on Earth*

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Lord Shiva said:

1. I shall now set forth the Law of what is wrong and what is right that It may enlighten the World with Its Glorious Light. Dharma is the World-Protecting Law. He who follows the Eternal Dharma shall be protected against all misfortune and evil Karma.

2. O you who are Princes amongst men! know that the Law whereby Life takes its course is of three kinds. That which has been laid down by the forefathers or decreed by a Ruler and is followed by a whole community of men, is the Law of Man. Being man-made and imperfect, it shall be followed by the wise with wisdom and not blindly. That which is followed naturally by moving and unmoving things, is the Law of Nature. It shall be followed by beast, plant and inanimate thing, each according to its distinctive nature and appropriate place and time.

3. But that which is perfect, self-existing, ever-changeless and followed by those who know the Truth, is the Law of God. It is the Law of Laws whereby the Universal Order (Vishvarta) is perpetually upheld. Being the Eternal Law of the Universe, it shall be followed above all other laws and with great faith, for it is the Law of Life and the direct manifestation of My Supreme Divine Self.

4. It is by the following of My Eternal Law that I may be known and not by any other means.

Let all Souls follow My Law for those who follow It not cannot account themselves among the truly living. Even when alive they are as if dead. And being as if dead, they shall be cast out from My Abode of Life into the Abode of Death. Therefore, let those who are true lovers of Life and living seekers of Truth attend and listen to My Law Eternal by the following whereof even the least-Enlightened Souls shall see the Light of Truth.

5. O righteous ones! nothing exists but I. I, the Supreme Being consisting of Consciousness and Bliss, the Ever-Awake, the Dispeller of Darkness, the Guardian of Law Eternal, Am One. And Unity is My Highest Truth. It is by the Power of Unity (Yoga Bala) that I, the Lord of Life, perceive Myself as being One with Myself and with the World. It is by the Power of Unity that Divine Oneness is preserved and the All is held together.

6. It is by the Power of Unity that separate things are joined to make a larger one: Raindrops make a River, Rivers make an Ocean, Bricks make a House, Trees make a Forest, People make a Couple, a Family and a Clan. It is by the Power of Unity that a calf is found in the herd by the mother cow and a hunter tracks down his quarry in the wood. It is by the Power of Unity that an arrow finds its goal and sunlight ripens a fruit.

7. It is by the Power of Unity that perceptions come about as a sense is joined to its respective object. It is by the Power of Unity that separate points of perception are united into a whole. It is by the Power of Unity that knowledge is stored in the mind. It is by the Power of Unity that coherent thoughts and sentences are fashioned and actions are performed.

8. It is by the Power of Unity that Body, Mind and Soul are held together. It is by the Power of Unity that memories of past events are forgathered and brought back to the mind. It is by the Power of Unity that soothsayers foresee things that are yet to come and Prophets (Rishis or God-Seers) know the Truth that is hidden (to others). It is by the Power of Unity that two Souls share the same dream and an Accomplished Yogi can read another man's thoughts.

9. It is by the Power of Unity that wounds are healed and an ailing body is made whole. It is by the Power of Unity that a frail man regains his strength. It is by the Power of Unity that the ox is harnessed to the plough. It is by the Power of Unity that seed is sown, sprouts and takes root.

10. It is by the Power of Unity that beauty is perceived by the eye and love arises in the heart. It is by the Power of Unity that humans are attracted to one another and wild beasts find a mate. It is by the Power of Unity that the atoms of life are held together and man finds what he has lost. It is by the Power of Unity that living beings understand each other and men work together for a common cause.

11. It is by the Power of Unity that in waking, man is united with the body and the physical World. It is by the Power of Unity that in dreams, man is united with his mind. It is by the Power of Unity that in deep sleep, man is united with his sleeping Soul. It is by the Power of Unity that in Enlightenment, man is united with his Awakened Self.

12. It is by the Power of Unity that I, the Lord, Am United with My Creation and man is united with the object of his heart's desire. It is by the Power of Unity that all conflicts are ended and Peace is established in the World. That Power which does make a thing whole, lasting and complete; which brings two, ten, or a thousand things together; and which preserves the life of everything: That is the Power of Unity. That selfsame Power is Yoga. For, Yoga is Unity and Unity is Yoga.

13. By the Power of Yoga, peace is restored to a troubled mind. By the Power of Yoga, thoughts are concentrated in meditation and consciousness is unified in the deep absorption of the Self. By the Power of Yoga, man is united with the Lord. By the Power of Yoga, the Brotherhood of Man and the Unity of Life are preserved. By the Power of Yoga, My Kingdom is established upon Earth. By the Power of Yoga, this My Teaching is imparted unto those who desire to hear the Truth. By the Power of Yoga, Untruth shall be vanquished and Truth shall prevail in the World. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by the Power of Yoga.

14. Verily One World Only exists. Its uppermost region is called Heaven, whilst the nethermost part is called Hell. Heaven is the Realm of Pure Unity with the Divine. Hell is where dis-Unity prevails. For Sin and dis-Unity are one and the same. Earth is where both Unity and dis-Unity, Virtue and Sin are found together. The heavenward Path, that which leads upwards, is the Path to the Divine. The downward Path leads down into Hell.

15. Those who choose Heaven go up to My Abode of Unity. But those who choose dis-Unity, sink into Hell which is the Abode of Discord. The Accomplished Yogis, who are Masters of Unity, live both in Heaven and on Earth. They are free to roam the Universe at will like unto birds sailing over the Wide Sky. At My Behest, they spread abroad My Word of Unity to all quarters of the World.

16. O you who believe in Truth! follow the Supreme Eternal Law, which I, the Lord, teach and proclaim unto you for the benefit of all. By the following thereof, one goes the upward Path which is the Path of Unity with Truth and Freedom, chosen by the righteous ones. Follow the Path of Unity. For Unity is Life and dis-Unity is Death. Unity and the One (Supreme Being) are One and the Same. Of Unity you were born, in Unity you live and to Unity you shall return.

17. Whether in joy or in sorrow, in war or in peace, in victory or in defeat; whether in Life or in Death, in this World or in the next, My devotee should always strive to establish Unity with Me. For Sin and Separation are one and the same. He who goes the way of Separation goes the way of Sin. But he who goes the way of Unity shall be United with Me. The struggle for Unity (Yoga Samgharsha, also Dharma-Yuddha) is the Struggle for the Attainment of the One. This is man's first and last duty and My Supreme Command.

18. Honour the Sky and the Earth. For in the likeness of Spirit and Matter I made them and out of these I fashioned the World. You yourselves are the children of both and they shall be honoured as a sign of My Creation.

19. Honour the Sun and the Moon. For they are the likeness of My Light Divine and the most clear sign of My Glory. And My Glory shall be honoured by all.

20. Honour the Stars that lighten the Sky at night. For they are signs of My Law Eternal by the following whereof men shall stumble not in the dark but safely reach My Abode of Light.

21. Honour both Spirit and Matter as you honour your own father and mother. For your life depends upon these two: your Spiritual life upon Spirit and your material life upon Matter. To disrespect one's father and mother is wrong, but to despise or go against them is a great sin. He who despises Spirit or Matter shall go the downward way.

22. Honour and respect one another. For I Myself reside in all living things. He who respects another, respects Me, the All-Creator who live in the heart of all. Do not be too keen to lay blame on others. Know that when pointing one finger at others' faults, three fingers are pointing back at

yourself.

23. Do not destroy life, for all life belongs to Me and is part of Me. And it is not right to take what belongs to another. He who takes a breathing creature's life for his own sustenance shall have a price to pay. But unworthy life may be taken in order that a worthier life may thrive. Verily, I give life unto each man that he may live by My Law and do My Command; he who knowingly does otherwise shall be unworthy of life. He who takes another's life in defence of his homeland, of his people, of his livelihood, and of his faith, does so lawfully. For he who seeks to take away one's homeland, one's people, one's livelihood, and one's faith in the Truth, is a man of evil (adharmi) and a follower of the Untruth. Thus I, the Lord, declare, It is one's duty to defend the Truth against the Untruth. I, the Highest Truth, the Supreme Lord of Justice, Who am ever on the side of the righteous, shall not suffer the followers of Untruth to stretch forth their arms against My devotees who faithfully follow My Law.

24. He who fails to defend his homeland against the enemy, who suffers men to be slain, womenfolk to be violated and children to be carried off into slavery, he is a great sinner. But he who leads or allows fellow devotees to be led, whether by force or by guile, unto other Paths than Mine is the greatest sinner of all. Indeed, and beyond doubt, such an one is a true enemy of men and of God. For separation from Truth is the greatest crime.

25. Be therefore on your guard, for Truth on Earth is corrupt and the Untruth finds easy pray. It is every man's duty to defend what is true. Let every true man train in the holy art of Righteous Struggle (Dharma-Yuddha) and become skilled in defensive action in thought, word and deed. For in this sinful Age of Darkness human kind cannot live in Peace and in Truth without struggle.

26. If, unprovoked, the followers of Untruth assail you and wage war on you, stand firm and fight back with force. Strike them down one by one till you have crushed the last evil-doer in the land. I Myself, the Supreme Commander of the Heavenly Hosts, shall lead My devotees in their righteous battle. I shall strike down the evil ones with Bolts of Lightning and spear them all with Flaming Arrows of Wrath. For I Am the Great Fiery One. I Am the Avenger of the oppressed and the Destroyer of the oppressors. I put Dread in the heart of the unjust and Death in their Souls. I tear their hearts to pieces and from their heads I fashion a necklace of skulls.

27. O righteous ones! when giving battle in My Cause, My Fiery Might shall descend upon your Soul from On High and instil boundless valour and strength in your heart. As an Elephant in rut crushes all under his foot, as Wild Horses split the Earth with thousand hooves, as the roar of raging Bulls does shake the Sky, as a Thunderstorm lays waste the crop, even thus you shall defeat your foes, when giving battle in My Cause.

28. My devotee shall not accept defeat in battle but fight fearlessly to the death. For it is far better to go to Heaven than live on Earth bound in fetters like a beast. He who turns back in battle shall be punished by the King. When the enemy has been vanquished, compassion shall be shown only to those who understand compassion, who repent, who turn away from evil and who humbly enter upon My Path, but not to any others. Have no compassion for the evil and the undeserving lest they mistake your kindness for weakness and double their resolve to wreak destruction upon you.

29. Think not that those who have chosen the Untruth are real men. They are but mere shadow-like imitations of True Man. True men being by nature Real, will not choose what is un-Real and un-True. Verily, the Soul being ever good and pure, does not mingle with evil but forsakes the evil one, leaving behind a mere shell in the likeness of a man. He who is forsaken by his Soul

can only regain his self by being destroyed in the cause of Dharma or by willingly submitting to My Law. Verily, though appearing to be living he is akin to evil Spirits and ghosts. His soulless shell must be removed from among the living even as chaff is removed from corn. Even if some among the evil-doers were real, it would be right to destroy them. For it is not the Will of Shiva, Who Is Pure Goodness, that evil should prevail. If evil were allowed to flourish, the World would be like to the darkest Hell. Therefore, to destroy what is evil is the duty of all righteous men.

30. Evil (Adharma) enters the heart of those who oppose what is right. Having entered therein it rules their life from within. Thus evil is brought into the World. He who allies himself with evil is the enemy of Good. But he who destroys the evil-doers does the Will of Supreme Shiva and treads the Path of Righteousness. He prevents them from doing harm to others and also unto themselves. For they who do evil shall be tormented greatly in this World and the next. But if they be prevented from doing evil they shall be preserved from Hell. Therefore, taking the life of the evil-doer is a true act of compassion, like taking a sharp sword out of a child's hand. For the human body is but a mere tool: it may be used for good and for evil too. It is better to destroy the body that the Soul may be saved.

31. As a limb that is diseased beyond all cure is cut off to save a man's life, even so he who is incurably diseased with evil shall be cut down lest he infect the rest. Verily, he who prevents another man from working deeds of evil and from transgressing against My Law, who hates no one but dutifully destroys the evil-doer in obedience to My Command, is a twice-saviour and a Saint: he saves the would-be slayer and the victim too. But he who out of false compassion spares the man of evil is twice a sinner: he lets the slayer go to perdition and the victims too. Therefore, let every man uproot evil and cultivate what is good, that My Law (Dharma Shasana) may be established in all quarters of this Earth.

32. O you People of the Truth! do not ally yourselves with evil. Choose wisely. For this shall be the test of your faith and thereupon shall rest the judgement of your life in this World. As all worldly things have a shadow, so Truth on Earth has a shadow too. Only in My Abode of Light where all is bright and clear there is no shadow, no Untruth and no lie. But on Earth, where light is obscured by shadow, the Untruth finds easy prey. For this reason, on Earth, some must die in order that others may prevail. Let every man strive to overcome the enemies of Truth. But he who conquers both the outward and inward enemies, namely, fear, attachment and the rest, is by far the best. He becomes a Perfect One in this very lifetime.

33. O noble ones! let My followers be without fear in their pursuit of Justice. For, fear is the sign of the lowly. Out of fear lowly folk never start a great work; ordinary men begin a work but give up as soon as obstacles cross their path; but Great Souls never give up - they strive in this life and the next until success is theirs. Verily, it were better to be fearless as a tiger for even one day than to abide for a hundred years in dread like the antelope, the hare and the goat. Thus it has been said, The Flash of Lightning that lights up the World at a stroke is greater than the fire that gives nothing but smoke. Fear not Death, for the righteous are the Children of Truth and eternal life shall ever be theirs.

34. He who has fallen in the hands of the enemy; whose body has grown frail and a burden on the Path; who lays down his life to save another; or who desires to join a departed one; these four may take their own life. In doing so they shall commit no sin. They shall be reborn in this World or another, each according to his deeds. As for those who lay down their earthly life for My Sake, they shall receive the greatest honours. The Doors of Heaven and all Pathways shall be wide open unto them and they shall go in peace wherever they desire. Verily, they are the

greatest among Great Heroes and they shall live ever-untouched by Death. A place of honour they shall take in Heaven's Feasting-Hall of Bliss!

35. Follow you the Path of Truth. Seek Truth even in your dreams. Do not ally yourselves with Untruth at any time. For Real Life is established upon Truth. Man becomes Real by living in the Real. Otherwise he lives in the Lie and his life becomes a lie. And the life that has become a lie shall go up in smoke even as a dark cloud is burned up by the All-Consuming Sun of Truth. Always speak the Truth. For whatsoever man speaks with his mouth that he believes with his heart. And whatsoever he believes with his heart the same shall come true. But that which the heart knows to be false shall remain a lie. For the heart is the abode of Truth Who is the Most Wise. Verily, Truth is your Refuge and your Shelter. He who forsakes the Abode of Truth shall be captured and devoured by Untruth.

36. Follow the Path of Peace. For Happiness is attained by living in peace with oneself, with the World and with Me, the Great God and Lord of Supreme Peace. It is Peace that brings lasting Happiness to all.

37. Follow the Path of Spirit. For it is from the Great Spirit that you come and to That you shall return. There is no other Path.

38. Follow the Path of Good. Think good, speak good, do good. Firstly, think good thoughts. For even as the plough follows the ox, one's words and deeds follow one's thoughts. Verily, man is fashioned by his thoughts: what he thinks that he becomes. His entire life is built upon thoughts. It is for this reason that man is called Manu, the Thinking One. Secondly, speak good words. For through kind words one comes far in life. But he who knows when to speak and also when to remain silent, he comes furthest of all.

39. Thirdly, do good deeds (satkarma). For as the size of a wild beast is known by the tracks, large or small, that it makes as it passes through the forest, so a man's greatness is known by the deeds he has accomplished in his life. And what a great man does, so do the others too. He is an example to all. Thinking good, speaking good and doing good, My devotee shall work for the good of all. For whatever good is done to the Universe and to the things residing therein, that is done to Me Who Am the One Soul of the Universe and of all things.

40. Whatsoever is thought, spoken or done, whether good or bad, shall return to one like the echo returning from a rock. It shall follow one like a shadow and bring one good or bad fortune according to one's deeds. Therefore, follow you My Command. Follow not the Path of Separation. Break not the Bond of Unity with Truth. Enter not into the Abode of Separation for Sin and Separation from Truth are one and the same. Know that Good is mightier than Evil. If only a few men amongst a thousand keep to the Right Path (Satpatha), the World shall be saved from destruction. Be you the few amongst the thousand who walk after Truth and not the many who go astray and willingly lose their way.

41. Follow the Path of Perfection. For Happiness is ever found in Perfection. There is no Happiness in imperfection. Verily, you are the Children of the Perfect One and you shall rise above the earthly World to attain Heaven's Perfection. And the Great Bliss of Heaven shall be yours for all time.

42. I shall now proclaim the Five Holy Duties of Yoga (Pancha-Dharma) whereby the Bond of Unity with Me is established and by the following whereof all mortal men shall find Happiness in this World and the next. They are, Declaration of Faith, Remembrance of the Holy Name,

Charity, Fasting and Pilgrimage.

43. Declaration of Faith: witnessing the Truth of Yoga with the words, Lord Shiva is the Highest God and Yoga is the Path that leads to Him. The uttering of these words five times a day at sunrise, midday, sunset and between is known as Shraddha or declaration of Faith. By the observance thereof one becomes established on the Path. But he who cannot keep this observance five times a day shall perform it at least twice: before sunrise and after sunset.

44. Remembrance of the Holy Name. Remembering My Name while uttering the Great Mantra, Om Namah Shivaya, with great devotion, is called Smarana or Remembrance of the Holy Name. The regular practice thereof will confer to the devotee a Vision of My Divine Self.

45. Charity is the offering of help Spiritual and material, to fellow humans and in particular to one's fellow devotees. It shall be done to the best of one's knowledge and ability: kind words, food, shelter, clothing and gold shall be given to those in need with compassion and humility. This is known as Daya or Charity. By this practice one comes closer to My Creation and secures great rewards in this life and the next. Verily, one is always rewarded according to one's generosity.

46. Fasting. The abstaining from taking food once every month on the dark night that comes before the Moonless Day and the First Crescent of the Moon, is known as Shiva Ratri Upavasa or Fasting on the Holy Night of Shiva. But that Fast (Upavasana) which is observed before the Moonless Night (Amavasya) in the Month of Magha (February - March, see Commentary), is known as Maha Shiva Ratri or the Great Fast of Shiva. It is the most excellent of all Fasts. I bestow all kinds of Blessings upon those who observe My Fast with devotion and remain watchful on that Holy Night. For he who watches for the dawn of the First Moon, watches for the Dawning of My Light Eternal and his name shall be established in the Abode of the Awakened Ones. By the earnest practice of this Watchful Fast My devotee is cleansed of sins and his Soul grows ever brighter even as the New Moon grows in brightness every day.

47. Pilgrimage or Sacred Journey. At least once in a lifetime, My devotee shall visit the Sacred Places of the Holy Land of India. Among these, the most auspicious is Holy Mount Kailasa. It is set in the northernmost part of India, beyond the Abode of Snow (Himalaya). Being a reflection of Mount Meru, My Celestial Abode, it shines like a jewel among all Holy Places. It illumines the Nine Continents on Earth. From the hills round about it four mighty streams flow forth into the World like the Four Rivers of Life and a lake of holy water lies at its feet. The journey undertaken thereto is Yatra or Pilgrimage. Through the observance of this excellent practice one becomes worthy of the Highest Heaven. I Myself whisper the Secret Knowledge that leads to My Abode into the ear of those who with a pure Soul visit this Holiest of holy places.

48. These Five Holy Practices (Pancha-Dharma) are the Pillars of Unity whereby Divine Order is established and maintained in the World. They shall be practised by all My devotees without fail. Indeed, they shall be practised by all of human kind.

49. The following of My Law enables one to know how to act and conduct one's life always in the right way. For what is done in Unity with Me, whatever that action may be, it shall be lawful, holy and pleasing to Me. But if doubts or disputes were to arise, let them be settled by a Man of Spirit who is devoted to Me and who is a leader (janata-naya) among the Community of Devotees. He shall judge over the matter according to My Law and his word shall be faithfully obeyed as My Divine Command.

50. Let those who have transgressed My Law repent and atone by fasting, praying, making donations and turning their heart to Me. O you who are followers of Truth! think not that I am a vengeful God. For it is not I Who punish the sinner but Sin itself, by My Leave, does so. As a disobedient child who leaves the parents' house or a beast that leaves the safety of its fold, being without shelter or protection, falls pray to starvation, wild beasts and death, so a man who wilfully leaves My Abode of Unity, goes to the Abode of Separation wherein conflict, disease and death hold sway.

51. Thus the sinner by breaking the Holy Bond of Unity with Me and entering into the Abode of Sin offers his Soul up to the God of Sin. But he who sins not, who acts not in dis-Unity with Me, who ever abides in My Abode of Unity, is never harmed by Sin. Furthermore, know that whensoever a Soul strays from the Path, I Myself send him a warning first. By mending his ways he can avert the punishment he dreads. Do you therefore look out for My Signs (Lakshana). Do not ignore them. Be on your guard. For he who heeds not My signs, shall go to sorrow.

52. Verily, I, the Most Compassionate, the Merciful, the True Friend of all creatures, make My Will known through the words of men of God and through secret signs of warning, visions and dreams. For it is not for Me to speak the words of men but for men to learn and obey My Divine Command. Therefore, follow those who teach My Word, for this shall be the test of your faith and upon this shall rest the judgement of your life on Earth.

53. Let no man harm another but live in peace with men and other creatures. He who lives in caves, in the desert, or under trees, shall be kind to beast and plant as to his own brothers. For, in times of need these shall be his guiding lamp in things of the mountain, of the desert, and of the forest. Likewise, they who are wedded to one another according to the holy rites or who dwell in a great community of devotees, shall be kind to one another in thought, speech and deed.

54. Let no man oppress another nor deprive him of what is rightfully his. But he who is learned in the things of the Spirit shall be a guide and a lamp unto the others in things of the Spirit. And he who is learned in the things of the World shall be a guide and a lamp unto others in things of the World. But he who is learned in both things of the Spirit and things of the World is truly a man of great wisdom. He shall be a guide to all and a great leader of men (manu-naya). He shall be a World Ruler (Loka-Raja) mighty and wise.

55. Verily, as the Sun is the first amongst all things that shine, and the Evening Star the first amongst the Stars, so he who is great of Wisdom shall be the first among men and lead them upon the Path. He shall be followed by all even as the Moon follows the Sun across the Sky and a devoted wife follows her man. For without the wise one's light of wisdom, man kind will remain in the dark and know not the Path trodden by the wise in life. Verily and without doubt, the wise uphold the Earth with their Insight just as a Wise King upholds the land with his righteous rule.

56. As the Planets orbit the Sun, as swans nest upon a lake and honey-bees swarm round a lotus blossom, so all men and women of the realm take refuge with a Righteous King for protection, help and counsel. The welfare of all depends upon such an holy one who rules his kingdom according to My Command. O you who are the best among the wise! know that without a Holy King a country is like a family without a father, like a herd of cows without a leading bull, like an army without a commander and like a ship without a rudder. Therefore, let the people choose a good King.

57. The King shall be enthroned by the Assembly of Holy Sages in accord with My Command. He shall be of handsome and auspicious features, strong, able and free from any defects in body

and in mind. His foremost duty shall be to establish Righteousness on Earth. He shall be a follower of Truth. He shall have no dealings with the people of Untruth. Ever remembering that I am the True Sovereign he shall be a tireless Defender of My Law.

58. The King shall favour peace above war. He shall not start a war without just cause. But if assailed by the enemy, he shall be fearless in defending himself and his realm. He shall be skilled in the use of the thirty-six kinds of weapons and in tactics of war. He shall enter the battlefield like an elephant entering a lotus pond. He shall be brave in battle, magnanimous in victory and unbowed in defeat.

59. The King shall maintain good relations with neighbouring kings and protect all allied kings and their people. He shall be like a father and an elder brother unto his subjects. He shall rule with courage, humility and wisdom. He shall apportion punishment and reward after befittingly enquiring into the matter. He shall always be well-informed in regard to the character, behaviour and intentions of his subjects. He shall be aware that excessive generosity can corrupt and too much censure can give rise to resentment.

60. The King shall be fair and kind to his Queen, wives and female attendants. He shall be courteous and just to ministers and menservants alike. He shall be devoted to the protection and welfare of all his subjects. He shall work for the prosperity of his people, his family and his own person through righteous means. He shall surround himself with trustworthy informers and advisers. He shall himself mingle among the people in disguise in the search for truth.

61. The King shall be moderate in eating, physical exercise and sexual enjoyment. He shall be ever watchful and awake even in sleep. He shall practise self-control and abstain from unnecessary thoughts, words and deeds. He shall not divulge secrets of state. He shall be a speaker of truth in a gentle and clear voice. He shall be a dedicated follower of Shiva, an accomplished practiser of Yoga and a master of the Eight Yogic Powers (Ashtasiddhi).

62. The King shall receive in payment for his service to the nation neither more nor less than the sixth part of the land's produce. He shall build holy temples, contemplation halls and schools as well as water tanks, wells, parks and shelters, sanctuaries for the poor and the oppressed and abodes of healing for those of ill health. He shall encourage Spiritual study and debate and take part therein so often as his royal duties permit. Self-sacrifice for the good of the people shall be regarded by him as the highest goal. He shall give his daughters in marriage to the best among men and procure virtuous wives for his sons. At the end of his reign on Earth the King shall entrust his kingship unto his first-born son or some other suitable successor. For thus I have declared, A man's land may be divided but a Kingdom shall ever abide as one.

63. These, O you who are followers of Unity with the Supreme! shall be known as the thirty-six excellent qualities of a Great King. Let all nations on Earth unite under such a King for he is a Divine Ruler indeed. He shall be revered by all as a God and obeyed as an Incarnation of My Supreme Self. Having illumined the Earth with his hallowed presence, upon departure from this World he shall join the Holy Immortals in Heaven. Verily, such a King is a blessing to all in this life and the next. Therefore, let a shrine be erected upon his tomb and his virtues be proclaimed to the World for the good of all.

64. As a King is just, generous and kind, so My devotees shall be kind to all creatures. Let them be kind even to the enemy in battle. Let them not slay one who flees the battlefield with dishevelled hair or apparel, nor one who is unarmed and defenceless, nor one who is injured and begs for mercy. Let no man forsake his father, nor his mother, nor his wife, nor yet his daughter

or son unless they be found guilty of a great sin. He who does otherwise is a great sinner himself. Let every man give unto his parents the love and respect that he owes them. Let him be generous in returning the food and the care he received of them. For he who takes and fails to give is never a righteous man but only a thief. Let no man harden his heart against one who is in need of help. For good fortune comes now to one, now to another, turning this way and that way, ever changing like the flames of fire in the wind. One who this day abounds in riches, may to-morrow possess naught but a beggar's bowl. Therefore, let My devotees give with ample generosity and sympathy to one who lacks. Let gifts be given to the poor, the weak and the afflicted, with fair words.

65. My devotees shall keep themselves clean. They shall walk upright, with a pure heart and kindly mien. They shall cover or bare their physical frame as befits the occasion, and wear apparel that is pure, pleasing to the body and pleasant to behold. Their garments shall not conceal their faces, nor their feet or hands. They shall greet each other courteously with the threefold salutation. They shall eat and cause others to eat food that is lawful, wholesome, and pleasing to the taste. But the best food shall be offered to the King, a Priest, a Holy Man and a Guest. A guest shall be looked upon as a God and all his needs shall be duly attended to by the host. Likewise, the guest shall obey the laws of the house with gratitude and respect and repay the hospitality received according to his means. Guests, small children, pregnant women, the elders and those that are ill shall be fed first. Honour shall ever be shown to those of many years: they shall be greeted with palms joined together; they shall be bowed down to, offered a seat and all their requests shall be attended to by the younger. Verily their feet shall be clasped in adoration and their wise words shall be paid heed.

66. Furthermore, know that love and kindness are manifestations of the Holy Unity of Souls. Therefore let My devotees show loving kindness to one another. For he who loves another loves Me, the One God and the True Self of all. Love is a feeling of immeasurable Joy that arises from the awareness of Unity with the loved one. It is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and also in the end. If it tastes bitter, it is not ripe. Verily, Love is the highest mark of Unity. It is the most beautiful expression of Truth and the sweetest fruit of Yoga. Happiness is a house built upon Love and Love is the Power that holds things together. By that Power two Trees blossom together in Spring; by that Power two Eagles sail towards the Sun; and two Souls, like two Clouds, blend into one.

67. Gentleness is an expression of Love. Let no man utter harsh words against another. As a wise man craves not a bitter fruit when a sweet fruit is at hand, so My devotee shall not speak unkind words when kind ones will likewise convey the truth. Humility is the antidote to vanity. A tree laden with fruit bends low but a barren one holds its branches high. Greatness is at once seen in a humble man. Therefore know that humility is a sign of greatness. Thus seeing God in each other, helping and edifying one another, My devotees shall be whole, happy and strong. They shall be a Light unto the World in this life and the next and their Community shall prosper and grow. Verily, they who abide by My Law shall find guidance and protection in the Light of Unity which is the well-spring of all life. They shall not stumble in the dark nor fall into the ditch of discord. But having drawn strength from that Light and having grown in radiance and might, they shall themselves be a Lamp unto the World. This is My Divine Command.

68. O noble ones! let every man live his life according to his Spiritual attainment. Let no man waste his life with idle preoccupations. For life is precious: I gave it to man that he may put it to good use. At the end of this life every man shall be called to account for his deeds on Earth, each according to his merits and sins. Ordinary men live sixty years. Those who are advanced upon the Path live one hundred and twenty years. Enlightened Yogis live three hundred and sixty years on Earth or more if they desire. But howsoever long one lives, life seems always short: it is over

before long, even as a dream ends when the Sun rises at dawn.

69. Therefore let the thinking man make good use of his life. In the first portion thereof, up to twenty years, let him apply himself to the study of all that is needful to know for the living of a righteous life. In the second part of his life, up to the age of forty, let him become a good householder, a husband and a father. But in the third part of his life, up to the age of sixty and beyond, let him devote himself to the search for Truth.

70. Having acquired from a good teacher the knowledge that is needful for a virtuous life, let the young man obtain for himself a bride. Let him choose a maiden endowed with auspicious marks; who has handsome features, a pleasant voice and a graceful gait; who has a well-boding name, a virtuous character and is a devout follower of My Law. With such a wife an upright man will bring light into the World and establish Heaven on Earth. As the Moon grows for fifteen days and then is round and full, so manhood is attained in the sixteenth year and so is womanhood. Thereafter it shall be lawful for man and woman to wed but not afore. But if a maiden be with child and wished to marry the father, let her join herself to him and let them be accounted husband and wife. I am Compassionate and Just and so shall be My devotees. Every man shall find a soulmate according to My Will and to his Karma. But they that cannot marry shall set their heart on Me and live according to the Holy Dharma. This is My Eternal Law.

71. Nine kinds of marriage shall be known to my devotee: three lawful and six unlawful. The lawful ones are the following three. Firstly, that wherein a daughter, having been decked with costly garments, jewellery and gifts is given by her father unto a virtuous man of his own choice, but never to one of evil character, nor to one who is not a follower of My Law. Secondly, that wherein the bridegroom, having chosen a bride, of his own will gives as much wealth to her parents, her kinsfolk and to herself as he can afford. And thirdly, that wherein a maiden and her sweetheart meet in secret out of mutual desire, in which case they shall reveal their intention to the girl's parents, the village elders or the King within a year. These three shall be known as lawful to all my devotees. But amongst these three, that union which springs from love is the most pleasing to Me.

72. Of the forbidden kinds, the first three are those done by stealth, deception or force. They who take or give a person in marriage by any of these three means, are committing a great sin for which they shall be severely punished by the King. Nor shall a bride be given to a man after being promised to another. Nor a bride or bridegroom substituted with another (after being shown to the suitor). Nor yet shall a follower of Dharma wed one who follows laws other than Mine. He who intends to marry an unbeliever should consider that love for the whole of Mankind is greater than love for a single man and that Love of My Truth is the greatest of all. Thinking thus, he shall be preserved from temptation and shall not commit a sin. But if the would-be spouse embrace My Law, let the two be wedded and live together in peace.

73. Listen you now to the most excellent rite whereby a devoted couple becomes husband and wife. Let the bride and the groom kindle a fire and cast some incense into it. Then with their mind addressed to Me, let them chant the following prayer: O Lord of Immeasurable Glory! from Delusion lead us unto Truth; from Darkness lead us unto Light; from Death lead us unto Eternal Life. They shall then pledge allegiance to each other and swear that they will abide in unity as one. Having done this, let the groom take the bride's hand and step three times round the fire according to the course of the Sun (that is, from East to South and so forth) and with that, the holy wedding-rite shall be accomplished. Thereafter they shall be accounted husband and wife.

74. The priest, the parents and the guests shall be the earthly witness. But the fire shall be the witness divine. For I Myself reside in all things that shine. Hence the fire shall be a token of My Supreme Light. But if no fire be obtainable, let a lamp be kindled or even some incense be burnt. If that too be not at hand, let the wedding take place by a tree, a lake or a running stream and let their union be witnessed by the Sun, the Moon or the North Star. For I reside in all things that shine. I am the All-Seeing, the All-Wise.

75. O foremost among the righteous! man and woman were made for the establishment of My Law on Earth and for the good of each other. They are the earthly likeness of the First Beings Divine and the twofold Manifestation of the One. Therefore, they shall know each other to be Divine, honour each other, elevate each other and work together for the welfare of all. Moreover, know that when the Water of Heaven is joined to the Fire of Earth then the excellent fruit of Unity is conceived whereby Spirit spreads forth into the World.

76. Verily and without doubt, the Union of man and woman is like unto that of Heaven and Earth. It has been rightly said by those who are wise, That which is Above is like as that which is below and that which is below is like as That which is Above. For in the Abode of Shiva, Heaven and Earth, Soul and Matter, Male and Female, are forever One. Therefore, down on Earth, man and woman shall unite that Spirit may grow in Wisdom and Might. For Unity is the Power whereby Spirit comes alive but Disunity is that by which it dies.

77. I created man for woman and woman for man. A married couple is not two but one. The purpose of marriage is to make what was separated into one. Those who are joined in the marriage of Shiva are one Spirit, even as I Myself am One. Therefore let them keep that unity of Spirit and fall not into the Abode of Discord. Let harmony and friendship prevail in a married couple. For the couple who is happy, healthy and virtuous will have offspring endowed with the same qualities. Likewise, they that are unhappy, devoid of good health and given to sin will bear offspring like themselves. Let man and woman ever avoid unrighteous deeds. Let them ever strive to do works that are agreeable and beneficial to each other and to the Community of the Righteous (Dharma Sangham), that My Law may prevail on Earth.

78. Man and woman were made to enjoy unity with each other in body, mind and Soul. For the bliss of Unity is the Soul's true sustenance. Unity is of three kinds, of body, of mind and of Soul. In those who are attached to the things of the World, Unity is incomplete and imperfect for it is in body only. In those who have left the blindness of ignorance behind and are about to enter upon the Path of Spirit, it is mixed, for it is both in body and in mind. But in those who are well-established on the Road to Perfection, it is perfect and complete, being of the Soul. They who attain Unity of Soul are the highest among the human race. They alone are worthy to enter through Heaven's Gates. The others must stay outside.

79. Know that a wife is a husband's most cherished possession. He shall protect, nourish and cultivate her even as a farmer cultivates the Earth. As a farmer at sowing-time sows seed in his field so the husband shall sow his seed in his wife's womb and make her fertile like the fruit-bearing land. As oil or some other substance cast as an offering into the sacred fire goes up to the Sun wherefrom comes rain and thence food upon which living creatures subsist, even thus from the seed offered unto the fire in the womb, there springs a fruit (the child) which is the support of Mankind.

80. Let the man who desires to have a fruitful marriage lie down with his wife on an auspicious day which shall be neither during her monthly courses, nor fall upon a New-Moon or Full-Moon day, for these are holy. But let them enjoy conjugal union on the sixteenth day from the

beginning of her courses or when the First Crescent is seen in the Sky, or on the first day of each fortnight. A married couple shall ever endeavour to procreate. For thus I have declared, Like as the thousand-rayed Sun who is the Offspring of Heaven and Earth (i.e., Spirit and Matter), the fruit of Union between woman and man is a new-born Star that gladdens the World. It is every man's duty to bring Light into the World, each one according to his means.

81. Let man and woman ever abide as one. From Unity spring all things that are right and good but from Discord comes only what is evil and wrong. Let righteous men ever protect their womenfolk. Let the father protect the daughter and the brother protect the sister. Let the husband protect the wife and the son protect the mother. Let all men protect the Queen. Let a man not lust after the wife of another nor meet women (other than his wife) in secret. He who has sworn an oath of loyalty and is unfaithful to his word commits a sin.

82. Likewise, let women ever be loyal to their menfolk. Let the daughter be loyal to the father and the sister to the brother. Let the wife be loyal to the husband and the mother to the son. Let all women be loyal to the King. The women who through unrighteous conduct put themselves and their men to shame are little better than wild beasts. But if they be loyal, virtuous and endowed with knowledge of the Spirit, they bring honour to all. From knowledge springs virtue and from virtue springs happiness lasting and true. Virtuous women bring happiness to all. They are like radiant Goddesses and the Jewels of Mankind. Even the Sun, the Moon and the Stars bow down before them in adoration.

83. But if they ask you, My Lord, which of the two shall have dominion over the other, the husband or the wife? answer in this way: the male being bodily stronger, he is a better worker and a better fighter; he provides for and protects the female. Verily, in this Age of Darkness, there will be many a war. When evil-doers invade the land seeking to injure and destroy her people, shall infants and womenfolk protect the men? Perish the thought! Therefore, it were better for woman to follow the man. It were wrong for the weaker to rule over the stronger. Thus it has been said: The country where the stronger is led by the weaker is quickly attacked and easily defeated.

84. But whosoever of the two is the wiser and the better leader, the same shall assume leadership in their daily chores. And the leader shall always listen to the wisdom of the other in those things wherein he is less wise. Verily, the couple that ever wrangle with each other for authority shall better part. For they are like two oxen that draw a cart in opposite quarters. Their union yields more harm than good and their works will come to naught. If a couple cannot live in peace as one, let them each go his own way rather than bring ill fate upon themselves and their children through much quarrelling and fighting. Children shall be protected from harm like young animals and plants and not be made to suffer for their parents' sins. Nor should any parent suffer for the child. But the man who raises a child in ways that are contrary to Dharma shall accrue much evil Karma. A just punishment shall be his fate both in this life and in the next.

85. Men will say that the child belongs to the father and womenfolk will say that he belongs to the mother. But it is only their proud and stubborn heart who makes them speak so. The father cannot claim that the child belongs to him, for he neither bears the child in his womb nor gives he birth to him. And the mother cannot claim that the child is hers alone, for she willingly gave herself to the man in marriage, in full knowledge that a child that springs from their union will belong to both. The truth is that the child belongs to both parents in equal measure, being born by means of the bodily fluids of the two who are one through the bond of marriage. Therefore, let it be known that man, woman and child are one Spirit even as I Myself am One. Let there ever be unity between parents and child.

86. If a child is begotten upon his wife by a man who has several wives, he shall belong equally to all. But if one of the parents either before or after the birth waives his rights to the child by a special agreement, then the child shall belong to the other parent alone. If a man being without children appoints his wife to bear a son by another man, the child thus conceived shall belong to the adoptive father and his wife, and not to the blood father. For the produce of the seed sown on another's field belongs to the owner of the field and not to the sower. The merit or sin that springs from a deed done by the command of the King falls upon the King and not upon him who obeyed the King's command. And the merit resulting from a priest's chanting prayers on behalf of another man, goes alone to the man who appointed him.

87. The same shall apply to the woman whose husband passes away without sons and who for the sake of preserving the husband's line bears a child by another man. And if both parents are appointed by a childless man to bear a son on his behalf then the child shall belong to the man who appointed them. Likewise, a child wilfully abandoned by his parents shall belong to those who foster him. The child that springs from the union of a man with an unwilling woman shall belong to the mother alone if she desires to keep him. But it were better for her not to bring him into the World. For the fruit of such an union is a poisoned fruit that spreads evil upon Earth for seven generations and more. Let there be no doubt about this.

88. Let husband and wife be ever true to each other. The husband or wife who is unfaithful to the other shall atone for his or her transgression by fasting for three days, giving unto the other gifts of livestock, jewellery or other valuables, and vowing not to transgress again. If the vow is broken once, the fast and the amount of gifts shall be doubled. But if the vow be broken twice, the bond of marriage shall be regarded as severed and the couple shall either marry again after one year or go separate ways. But it were better for them to make up and stay faithful to each other. Such ones are true followers of Unity and an example unto all.

89. If a man wishes to divorce his wife, he shall not keep the dowry, nor demand (the return of) the gifts he has given her, nor shall he keep what she has given him. The same shall apply to the woman who seeks to divorce her husband and to those that are not married but live together (as if married). But he who divorces his wife shall provide for her and their child until such time as they find other means of sustenance except when the wife is able to support herself. If the man becomes unable at any time to provide for himself, his wife or their children, their needs shall be met by their kinsfolk, neighbours, the village elders or the King.

90. If a couple become divided, the child shall go to that parent who is better able to provide for him. If neither is found to be able, he shall go to the next of kin, the village elders or the King or to such person or persons as be appointed by these. But if the child be born to parents of whom one is a follower of My Law and the other not, then he shall go to the first-named parent without fail. And if that parent though being a follower of My Law be unable to provide for the child, then he shall be fostered by the Community of Devotees. Let all disputes be settled amicably for quarrelling brings harm to an innocent child and harming the innocent is a great sin. This is My Eternal Law.

91. O noble ones! let the King be a righteous leader and a good father unto the followers of My Law. He shall look after those who cannot find shelter elsewhere such as orphans, the destitute, the aged, widows, the feeble-minded, the afflicted, the persecuted and the oppressed. He shall ever be a good example and a source of guidance and support to all. Let the King appoint eight trustworthy ministers who shall assist him in the governing of the land.

92. Each village shall be ruled by a council of five elders chosen by the villagers themselves. The King shall appoint a headman over each village and a band of warriors to protect the righteous. Other headmen shall be appointed over groups of ten, twenty, sixty, one hundred and twenty villages and one or more towns as the case may be. The village elders shall inform the headman of any wrongdoings done in their village, the headman of one village shall inform the headman of ten, and the higher headmen in due order shall inform the King. The King shall then act for the protection of the Kingdom and for the upholding of the Law. In this way Dharma shall prevail.

93. Grain, wood, cloth, livestock, fuel and other such things as the villagers owe to the King shall be obtained by the headman of each village and duly brought to the King. The King in return shall lead and protect the people and be ever vigilant as to their welfare and prosperity.

94. Let the wise King rule the country according to the Four Means of Peaceful Persuasion, Enticement, Sowing Dissension and Punishment. Firstly, he shall persuade his opponents by peaceful means such as reasoned argumentation, the invocation of My Eternal Law, and so forth. Secondly, if he be unable to achieve the desired end, let him bestow gifts of land, gold, or give his offspring in marriage to those powerful rulers with whom he wishes to make peace for the good of the people. Thirdly, if that were to be in vain, let him sow dissension among his foes that they may be divided by discord and become easier to conquer. And fourthly, if that also fail, let him impose his will by means of force. Let him diligently apply these four in his dealings with powerful men, be they strangers or of his own race, ever seeking to do good for his people.

95. But for restraining the evil-doers in his own land let him employ the Six Means known to the Wise, each according to the crime and the perpetrator of the crime: verbal admonition, imposition of a fine, inflicting corporal punishment, binding in fetters (i.e., imprisonment or enslavement), banishing and death. Of these, the first five shall be permitted to village elders and headmen alike. But the sixth shall only be given by the King and by his men in accordance with his command. For the taking of another's life is lawful for a man beside the King only in self-defence, in protecting the life of the innocent, and in defending his own property. He who unprovoked assails another or enters another man's house with the intention of committing a crime shall himself be struck down with a club.

96. Thus the King, ever remembering that I am the True Sovereign, shall keep his people on the Road of Righteousness according to My Law. He shall restrain the thieves, the robbers, the murderers, the oppressors of the upright, and the godless who seek to corrupt the righteous. The King who restrains not the sinners shall take their sins upon himself. Therefore let him ever exert himself to punish the wrongdoers and reward the virtuous. Evil shall be banished by him like weeds and Righteousness cultivated like flowers and fruit-bearing trees. Verily, towards such a King the hearts of the people will turn like rivers towards the Sea.

97. Punishment shall be meted out in proportion to the crime. He who having been punished by the Righteous King, lets evil take root in his heart, will be punished even more in his next life. But he who willingly accepts his just punishment and thereafter casts off all evil from his heart, will go to the Abode of the Righteous without fail. Therefore let no man hold a grudge against those who punish him, for he who does so sins against himself. But he who punishes the unrighteous does so at My Behest. Just punishment is inflicted upon the sinner for the perfecting of his Soul. Say to the sinners: O people! not for nothing were you born in this World but that you might purify your Souls and grow in wisdom and might. This is how Perfection is attained. I am All-Wise and Ever Just.

98. O foremost among the best! know that other sins may be absolved. But killing a holy man; harming the innocent; betraying the People of Truth, their King, or a good friend; desecrating a holy place; and abandoning My Law: these shall be known as the Five Capital Sins for which there is no redemption. The perpetrators of these five shall be given the highest punishment by the King. Verily, they shall be punished in this life and the next. The property of the worst evil-doers shall be taken by the King and given to the poor.

99. Let no man ever speak falsely when called to give evidence before the village elders or the King but pledge to declare the plain truth with the following words: May Earth give in under my feet and swallow me alive; may Water drown me with a flood; may Fire strike me with a lightning-bolt; may Air take away my breath; may Sky no longer shelter me; may the Moon and Sun no longer shine for me; may the Lord of Life Himself forsake me if I should speak anything else but the truth. Those who wilfully speak falsely shall commit a great sin. But those who unwittingly do so or who are forced by others to bear false witness shall not be punished by the King. For I am Ever Compassionate and Just.

100. The King shall learn of all wrongdoings in his Kingdom by three means: by his power of second-sight; by information given him by trusted ministers, spies and common men; and by the confession of the wrongdoers themselves. Having acquired detailed knowledge of each deed, as well as of the perpetrator's motives, character and wealth, let him make justice according to My Law in all matters of importance to the Kingdom. But in lesser cases let him appoint a righteous judge or leave the matter in the village elders' hands. As for the jungle tribes and mountain-dwellers that live in far-off corners of the land, let them make justice according to their ancestral laws. The King shall give them guidance and protection only. But he may reward them if they follow his guidance and intervene if the Kingdom be threatened.

101. If any tribes in the land whether living far off or near stray from the path and ally themselves with evil, the King shall subdue them with force and make firm the Rule of Dharma in the realm. For the King who cares not to keep his subjects on the right path (satpatha) soon finds his Kingdom unravelling like the seams of a worn-out cloth. But he who ever restrains the unrighteous shall increase his dominion upon Earth and also in the next World. If the King be perceived to steer the land away from the right course, the people shall rise up and do away with him at once. For it is My Wish and My Command that every man should do what is in his power to uphold Righteousness on Earth. The Assembly of Sages shall then be called together and a new King appointed to rule over the land. Therefore, let the King ever impart justice according to My Law if he wishes to avoid an evil fate. Let him not act with his own interests in mind but for the good of the people. For it is to serve the people that he is made a King and given special powers. If the people perish, he shall perish too. But if the people prosper, so shall he.

102. As a King rules over his Kingdom, so a householder shall keep his home in order. A man may punish his wife, his son, his servant, his disciple and his younger brother who have done wrong, after giving them a forewarning. If his warning go unheeded, he may punish them by smiting them on the back part of their body. Let him not strike them on the head or other parts. Nor should he strike them with his fist as to cause bruises, nor with a club as to break a limb, nor yet with a sharp object as to draw blood. But he may strike them with his hand, a rope or a split bamboo cane so as to cause only a colouring (or redness) of the skin. He who disregards this rule shall make atonement for his sin by fasting for three days, feeding and clothing the poor and paying a fine to the King.

103. He who transgresses twice shall be treated as a thief. For he deprives the unjustly punished of their freedom, dignity and health. Therefore let the righteous man not punish anyone without a

good cause. And let the others not provoke him into punishing them. Let the justly punished not strike back nor ever complain if the punishment is just. For just punishment is for the perfecting of the Soul and is given in obedience to Divine Law. Beware! an even greater affliction awaits him who seeks to evade just retribution: he shall be punished by Myself. Do not trade a lesser punishment for a greater. But if the punishment be unjust, they may report the matter to the village elders, the headman or the King and accept their judgement.

104. O righteous ones! it is good if men are restrained by the elders or the King. But it were better by far for them to restrain themselves. Let no man do unto others what he himself knows to be wrong. Let no man take or even crave in his heart what belongs to another. For to do so is a sin. But the traveller who has run out of provisions may take, in order to evade starvation, a small amount of grain or other plant-born fruit from a stranger's field and drink from his well. Likewise he who in times of distress seeks to feed or water his livestock. But it were good to ask for permission first and even better if leave to do so be granted by the owner (of the field).

105. A thing borrowed from another shall be returned as given. Tools for tilling the land; beasts of burden such as oxen, elephants and camels; fishing boats and rafts; corn for sowing the field; bulls for impregnating cows; gold, silver, copper and precious stones. Whatsoever has been borrowed shall be returned to the lender at the agreed time, undamaged and in good condition. If a borrowed thing such as an amount of gold or gemstones has been exchanged for other goods, it shall be returned in kind unless otherwise agreed. If a thing has been damaged whilst in the borrower's keeping, he shall either repair it or return an undamaged one in its stead, or pay such price as the lender rightfully demands.

106. For the lending of goods the lender shall be entitled to charge a price which shall be only a small part of the total worth. Let no man enrich himself to the detriment of others nor take advantage of the needy. Let the lender have patience with the debtor and let the debtor return what he owes lest he make himself guilty of theft. Let the just worth of all trade goods be settled by the King once every fortnight and all weights and measures examined once in six months, or more often if need be. Let the upright inform the King of all wrongdoings in the land and let the King restrain all wrongdoers. But it were better by far if people restrained themselves and desisted from deceiving their fellow men. Verily, the wrongdoers sin against their own Souls even though they may not know it. But in their heart of hearts they know this to be true. And so do I, the Lord of Justice Who see all from above. A just reward awaits them all!

107. The Farmer, the Merchant, the Warrior, the Priest and the Yogi in their midst: these five are supporting My Law. They are the five fingers of My Divine Hand whereby I establish the Holy Dharma on Earth. Know that Yoga and Dharma are one and the same. He who sees the two as one, sees things as they are and does not go astray. Let every man keep within his own fold and not overstep his lawful boundaries. Let him ever keep to the path of his duty according to My Command. The Farmer shall till and tend the earth; the Merchant shall trade in the fruits of the Farmer's labour; the Warrior shall protect the land; the Priest shall conduct the holy prayers; and the Yogi shall spread My Word of Truth. This is My Eternal Law.

108. Those who say that the servant is another Caste, are ignorant folk whose knowledge springs from other men and not from Myself. And some speak thus to keep other men in servitude and bondage. In so doing they are committing a sin. Therefore, listen you to the plain Truth. A servant shall be one who through lowly birth, misfortune or his own deeds is destitute of possessions and forced to earn his daily sustenance by serving another man. Since a servant is defined by his work, he who hires himself out to another man and does the other's work shall be deemed to belong to that Caste the work of which he does. If he does a Farmer's work such as

tilling the land, gleaning corn, threshing, cutting wood, tending the cattle, fishing, weaving and so forth, he shall be deemed a Farmer even if he himself be landless; if he does a Merchant's work such as carrying, keeping account of, selling, buying, or lending, goods, he shall be deemed a Merchant even if himself does not own the merchandise; if he does a Warrior's work such as carrying weapons, guarding houses or fields, protecting a person's life, or collecting taxes for the King, he shall be deemed a Warrior even if himself possesses no weapons and is no accomplished master in the art of war; if he be employed in the maintenance of a holy place, procuring materials for the holy rites and aiding the Priest in conducting the prayers, he shall be deemed a Priest even if he knows not the Scriptures by heart; and if he does work in the service of a Yogi, be it gathering food, fetching water, cooking, protecting his master's possessions or acting as his messenger, he shall be deemed as belonging to the Yogis even though he is not an Awakened One.

109. Verily, as you account a child born into a Caste to belong to that Caste even though he cannot yet perform all that is required of him according to his station, even thus a servant shall be accounted to belong to the Caste whose work he does even though he may not be a full-blood Farmer, Merchant and so forth. A man who, though born into the Priestly Caste, has no knowledge of the Scriptures and does a Farmer's work, cannot be accounted a Priest but only a Farmer. Verily, Caste is determined by the kind of work a man does. And a servant is a man who does another's work; he has no work of his own. Therefore he belongs to that Caste the work of which he does and not to any other. This shall be a settled matter. He who says otherwise sins against My Law.

110. The servant shall ever show obedience and respect to his master, for it is to him that he owes his livelihood. Likewise, let no man look down upon a servant or treat him with contempt. For on Earth, all men are My servants: they were sent down into this World to serve Me and each other. For thus I have declared, He who would be a Master shall be a servant first. But every man shall be treated according to his works. It is his work that makes a man and not his birth. A righteous servant is better than an evil King. Even those that on account of some abominable deed were enslaved by a righteous King, shall be freed when their sentence has been served. And their offspring shall likewise be free. For no child shall be made to pay for his parents' sins. This is My Eternal Law.

111. The Five Castes are like unto one man. The Yogi is the head; the Priest is the mouth; the Warrior is the arms; the Merchant is the thighs; and the Farmer is the feet. Together they are like unto one body that forms the whole of Humankind. Therefore let every man conduct himself according to his duty as established at the beginning of time. And let living in unity with one another be the duty of them all. He who lives in unity with Mankind lives in unity with Me. And he alone who lives in Unity with Me is a Yogi and a True Man. Let no part of the whole swerve from its duty. Let the five parts of Mankind ever work in unity for the welfare of the whole. And let the whole work for the good of each part. This is My Divine Command.

112. As to whether it becomes a man to have one wife or many, the farmer, the labourer and the servant shall take one wife each. The merchant may take two wives if he can provide for both. The warrior can have three spouses. For should he be slain in battle he will soon be replaced by his many sons. The priest may wed four women that Righteousness may spread to the four corners of the Earth. But a great leader of men may take three times as many (that is, twelve) even as the stag, the lion and the bull who are leading among their own kind. And a King may take three times that (i.e., thirty-six). For the King is the greatest of all: he is like unto the Ocean to which many rivers flow. There shall be no compulsion in this. Let My devotees do what is right for themselves and for others, each according to his means, status and power, and providing

that they all treat each other with equity and respect. The fool who does otherwise will go to sorrow and has only himself to blame.

113. Let every man keep to the path of his duty according to the Holy Dharma. Let no man deprive another of his livelihood, nor steal, nor deceive, nor yet speak an untruth. For he who keeps to the straight path shall not perish. Remember that the World is my Own Creation and ever abides by My Command. I shall not suffer My faithful devotees to meet an evil fate. I, the Lord of Truth am ever faithful to My Promise. What I speak shall come to pass.

114. I created the Day, that man might wake and Night that he might rest. I created fruit-bearing trees and rich fields of golden grain. I created milk-yielding cows and cool waters full of fish. I made forests and caves for shelter, the Moon that man might measure time, the Great Stars for direction and the light-bestowing Sun. And I gave him the Law whereby he might live in abundance and peace. I gave man a World of things that he too might give. Giving in the Cause of Dharma (Charity, Daya) is the highest duty of all. Let every man give according to his means.

115. O Sages! know that gifts (Dana) are of three kinds according to the reason for which they are made: gifts born of fear, born of desire and born of selfless duty. A gift given for the purpose of warding off harm to oneself or another is a gift given out of fear (Bhayadana). A gift given for the purpose of obtaining a desired thing is a gift of desire (Kamadana). But a gift given out of a sense of duty towards one's Creator and fellow men, and without thought of reward, is a gift of righteous duty (or thing given in the cause of Dharma, Dharmadana). Of these three, the last-mentioned is the best.

116. Righteous men shall not make charitable donations to one who is wealthy, nor to a squanderer, nor yet to an evil-doer. For the gift given to one who accumulates wealth brings no Spiritual merit; likewise, that which is given to a squanderer shall be accounted to be lost; whilst that which is given to the evil-doer only increases evil on Earth. But to one who is in need, who is a man of virtue and who employs the received gift in a good cause, to such an one the donor should give according to his capacity of giving (dana shakti) and at the right time and place (desha-kala). For there is a time and a place for everything. Such a gift, given with a glad heart and after the needs of one's own family have been fulfilled, shall be known as a righteous gift (Dharmadana or Daya) from which Spiritual merit flows like water from a pure well.

117. Let My devotees ever abide by My Law and observe the Fivefold Duty (Pancha-Dharma) of Declaring the Faith, Remembering the Holy Name, Giving for Charity, Fasting and Pilgrimage (see above, verses 44-48). These five are the Pillars of Unity whereby Divine Order is established and maintained in the World. They shall be practised by all Mankind without fail. But of these five, Charity is the most dear to Me. My devotees shall always give something to orphans, to widows, to the destitute and the afflicted, even if it be a small thing. For what is given with a pure heart to others is like unto the seed of a great tree: though small as a mustard seed at first, it shall grow and bear abundant fruit in due course.

118. My devotee shall be kind to all creatures and honour all created things. Do not deprive other creatures of their livelihood. Harm not those that harm you not. Do not slay a living being without good cause. The eating of meat shall be lawful to My devotees when no others sustenance is to be found, but not otherwise. In this World life is sustained by taking the life of others. With every step, with every breath, with every move, a World of living creatures is destroyed. The creature that is stronger and more agile eats that which is weaker and more docile. And that which is not eaten by man will be eaten by another (of its own kind) if that be its

Karma. Therefore flesh may be taken provided that it is lawfully obtained and the thriving of no kind of creature is in any way put at stake.

119. My devotee may eat the flesh of airborne creatures that feed upon seeds, berries and fruit, such as the jungle-fowl, the partridge and the dove. But let him not eat those that feed on other creatures like the eagle, the vulture, the owl and the hawk. Nor the village-fowl, nor the cuckoo, nor the crow, nor the heron, nor the crane, nor the parrot, nor the duck, nor the goose, nor yet the swan. Of land-living creatures the flesh of grass-eating beasts may be taken such as the buffalo, the goat, the sheep, the antelope, the deer, the wild boar and the hare. Likewise the hedgehog, the porcupine, the tortoise and the Godha lizard. But let him not eat flesh-eating beasts like the lion, the tiger and the leopard. Nor the dog, the cat, the village-hog, the elephant, the cow, the camel, nor the horse. Nor shall men eat the flesh of other men, nor that of man-like creatures (such as monkeys and apes). Of waterborne things he may eat the turtle and all kinds of fish that are wholesome to eat, but not the dolphin, the whale, the alligator, nor the shark.

120. Let My devotees eat what they deem best for themselves and their family to eat. But to an infant no other food than breast-milk shall be given for one or two years or until his first teeth appear. If the mother be lacking in milk, the child shall be nursed by another wife or an appointed nurse. If a wet-nurse be not obtainable, he shall be given the milk of the cow or the goat, or even the milk (extracted) from the ripe coco-nut. At the end of his first two years the child shall be weaned on fruit, vegetables, pulses and (unleavened) bread. In his twelfth year or when his milk teeth have fallen out and new teeth begin to grow, he may eat some fish or meat if need be. But the parents who raise their offspring on pure food are the best of My devotees.

121. Verily, let no man eat meat if he can avoid it. For meat cannot be obtained without inflicting suffering on sentient things and depriving them of their lives. Harming the innocent and the defenceless is a deed most abhorrent to the righteous. Seeking to increase one's own flesh by the taking of flesh from others is assuredly on a par with theft or worse. Wild beasts may eat the flesh of other creatures, but man ought to know better and abstain. And My devotees even more so. Therefore, let righteous men abstain from flesh and subsist on grains, beans, nuts, fruit and milk. These five may be eaten without taking the life even of plants. For plants too are living things. But leaves, stalks and roots may still be eaten in preference to meat. For a cut-down plant gives green offshoots again but a moving thing cannot be brought back to life once it has been slain.

122. He who on failure of other means of sustenance eats meat, does not commit a sin if the same be obtained and eaten according to My Law. Let an offering of choice grass, grain or fruit be made to the slain beast and the following words be addressed to its Soul: O brother Deer (or other creature)! forgive me if I have sinned against you. Pray accept my offering and may your path to Heaven be an easy one! May this meat be for the sake of Dharma! My devotee shall then consecrate the meat with the words: To the Lord of all Creatures, to the Fathers and to all hungry Souls, Svaha! Having thus offered the meat up unto Myself, his Ancestors and all who are afflicted with hunger, and having resolved to employ the sustenance drawn therefrom in the upholding of My Law, he may proceed to eating it.

123. The fool who does otherwise commits a great sin and shall be accounted little better than a thief and a murderer of men. In his next life he shall be tormented by the Soul of the beast he slew or by the Lord of its kind. For every living creature has an Overlord from whom it springs and to whom it belongs. My devotee shall atone for the sin of eating meat by propitiating the Lord of the eaten beast, by fasting on New and Full-Moon days and by feeding as many wild creatures as he is able to feed. At the time of harvesting the grain, a corner of the field shall be

set aside and left untouched till sowing time that it may afford sustenance and shelter to the creatures of the field. One who has fed himself and his kin, shall leave some food and water on the roof of the house, in a forest-clearing or in some other open place where birds and other living things may come to feed. Likewise, when forest-trees and other plants are hewn down for the use of men, new ones shall be planted in their stead. For both plants and moving things were here on Earth first. Man came afterwards and took the fields, the rivers, the mountains and the woods all to himself. Therefore, let him give something to those that came before him. Otherwise he will commit a sin.

124. O noble ones! from birth to death man subsists on food. What he eats with his mouth is food for the body; what he eats with his senses is food for the mind; but what he eats with his heart is food for his Soul. What he eats with his mouth, senses and heart, that he becomes. It is good to eat food that sustains the body; it is good to eat food that nourishes the mind. But that food which gives strength to the Soul is the best food of all.

125. The body delights in physical food; the mind delights in beautiful sensations, beautiful feelings and beautiful thoughts. But the Soul delights in Truth. All things that are true, beautiful and good shall be deemed to be the Soul's own food. But the Bliss of Heaven is the highest delight of all. As an infant drinks the mother's milk even so the Soul drinks the bliss-bestowing Milk of Heaven whereby one is endowed with illustrious wisdom and power. That Bliss is not attained through worldly food but through detachment from the World. My devotee shall not be too attached to possessions, kinsfolk and other worldly things for they tie him down to the World. And a bound Soul knows not the Joys of Heaven even as the captive elephant knows not the joys of his free-roaming kin.

126. Verily, it is detachment from the objects of the senses that relieves man from the burdens of this World. Therefore, detachment shall be cultivated at all times. He who masters the art of detachment evades the troubles of the World even as the wise Heron evaded the Crows. A Heron while fishing in the river made a big catch. Two voracious Crows at once descended upon him, wishing to snatch away the fish. The Heron flew this way and that way seeking to escape the Crows. Perceiving that he was no match for them, the Heron at last let go of the fish and alighted upon a tree where he could repose in peace. A Yogi who was sitting on the riverbank saw this and with great wonder exclaimed: Adoration be to Shiva! to Him, Who this day in the form of a wise Heron has taught me the art of letting-go.

127. The World wherein man lives is like unto a great Tree and man's body like unto a bird's nest. Through detachment from both body and the World, the Soul who is like a bird rises up into the Sky and joins himself to the Most High. He unites himself with the One and becomes equal to the Radiant Gods in this very lifetime. Verily, of all things the Unmeasured alone lives on for all times; but that which is measured is born and in due course dies. He who abides upon the lofty Peak of Unity with the Immeasurable One falls not over the stumbling-block of limitation. He is not hunted by the hounds of Discord. His eye is not blinded by the Cloud of Delusion. His heart is not pierced by the arrows of Death. He is above Limitation, above Delusion, above Discord and above Death, who ever abides in the sunlight of Unity with Truth.

128. Therefore, do not be attached to the things of this World, for this World is a mere wave in the Ocean of Life and a passing reflection of My Everlasting Light. What is a passing wave like as a wave shall pass; but That Which is Abiding shall stand for all time: even when the World has come to an end. Verily, in this World, some laugh and others cry. But the follower of Dharma is ever serene and content. For he knows things which men who are devoid of knowledge fail to understand. As the Moon is not attached to mountains, forests and the Sea as she travels on her

path across the Sky, so the wise Yogi abides ever unattached to the things of worldly life. Detachment is of two kinds. Firstly, observing all things calmly and as if from afar. And secondly, seeing all things for what they are, namely, emanations of the Most High. Through detachment from the things of the World, the veil of delusion falls off from the Yogi's eyes and he at once begins to see My Signs. O noble ones! I did not create the World for nothing but that it might be an example and a guidance to all Souls. All things in this World have a meaning and are a Sign from On High: a message to be understood and followed.

129. My Signs are of two kinds, those that endure and those that pass away. The enduring ones are the Sky, the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Mountains and the Sea. The passing ones are of three kinds. Things that come to pass in daily life, visions and dreams. Some are a guidance to be followed, some are a good tidings and some are an ill omen or a warning. A human form of handsome features, a Radiant One (a God), a holy man, a King or Queen; the Sun's or one's own clear reflection in water, a bright cloud, a rainbow or a sky-blue light; riding upon a horse, white bull or elephant; women, children and wild beasts being kind towards each other and to oneself; dwelling in a sheltered place or a well-kept house; eating pure food, wearing pure apparel in the day and resting in a pure bed at night; flying into the bright Sky, being in beautiful surroundings, being in the company of good friends or Gods; lying down with the head towards the South; casting a clear, unbroken and unshaken shadow; a growing plant; a running stream or lotus pond; a pleasant scent. These are auspicious Signs (Sulakshana) to be sought whilst waking, dreaming or seeing a vision. For they all are boding well.

130. But a hideous form, an evil Spirit, an unrighteous man, one afflicted by his own sins or a lifeless corpse; the Sun's or one's own hazy reflection in water, a dark cloud, an ill-shaped lightning or a blood-red light; riding upon a dog, a black bull or a donkey; women, children and wild beasts being hostile to each other or to oneself; dwelling in a wind-swept place or a dilapidated house; eating impure food, wearing polluted clothes in the day or sleeping in a polluted bed at night; falling into a dark pit, being in a repugnant place, being in the company of enemies or demons; sleeping with the head towards other directions than South; casting a fading, broken and shaking shadow; a withering plant; a stagnant pool; a foul smell. These are Signs that bode no good (Durlakshana), whether seen while awake, in a dream or perceived in a vision; whether seen from afar or from anear.

131. Know that if a single ill-boding Sign is seen, it is a warning. If it be accompanied by others of its kind, the time has come for him who has seen them to depart from this World. But if good and bad omens are seen together, there shall be a loss and a gain to him who has perceived them. Having perceived ill-boding omens, the wise Yogi shall at once immerse himself in contemplation and abide in that state with one-pointed concentration upon My Supreme Self. If then he should desire to live on, his wish shall be assuredly granted. If he should desire to forsake his mortal body, he shall exit the same by the crown of the head and rise heavenwards without delay.

132. Having perceived the signs of Death, before departing from this World, let the righteous man make a will before trusted witnesses and bequeath his possessions to those he leaves behind. For thus it has been said: When the time has come to depart, possessions are best left behind. When Death does draw near, let the wise one bid farewell to all who are dear. My devotee may either wait for Death in his own home; or having made over his possessions to his wife or eldest son, he may depart in a northward direction living on nothing but water and air until his journey in this life comes to an end; or he may depart from this World by gradually reducing the amount of food he eats; or by lighting a pyre upon which he has seated himself; or by going into water; or

by willingly forsaking his body. These five are the most excellent ways of ending one's life on Earth and passing to the Otherworld.

133. Having been decked with flowers and other such offerings, the body of one who has departed from this World may be left like unto a log in the forest, buried under earth, cremated or cast into the water according to each Soul's Spiritual attainment. But the body of one who is a righteous leader of men or one endowed with great power shall be buried in an upright posture (that is, seated cross-legged) and facing the North and a mound of earth shall be raised upon it that his Soul may be remembered and honoured by all. My devotees shall not grieve for the departed, for all Souls spring from Me and unto Me they all return: this is the Eternal Law. But let them make their departure light and not heavy. A heavy heart holds a Soul down and lets him not rise up. Therefore, break not the departed one's peace with the din of lamentation. Do not trouble his heart with downcast mien. Make the departure easy with prayers, chants and festive songs, and honour his memory with a joyous feast. This is My Divine Command.

134. Upon the burial of his mortal frame, a man's property shall be made over to his heirs. In the case of a householder, the first heir shall be his wife. When the wife too has departed from this World, the property shall be equally divided among the children or taken by the eldest son or daughter who shall be like a father or mother unto the younger ones till they come of age. If there be more than one wife, the property shall be equally shared by all and upon their death by their children. If a child be begotten upon the deceased man's wife by another man for the purpose of preserving the line, he shall be accounted his blood son and rightful heir.

135. If there be no offspring, the property shall go to the parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces or such person or persons as appointed by the deceased before trusted witnesses. Let the property be equally and justly divided among all lawful heirs. He who is wealthy shall be content with less but he who is poor shall be given more. And if any of them be an evil-doer, he shall receive the least. Upon failure of all aforementioned heirs, the property such as land, livestock or gold shall be taken by the King for safekeeping and for good works (satkarma). For the King is like as a father unto all men and protects the destitute and the afflicted. But food and clothing shall be given to the poor.

136. O righteous ones! man's life depends upon his actions, his knowledge, his will-power and the Will of the Great One. And so do the Four Goals of life. Righteousness springs from man's actions. For, whether he leads a righteous or unrighteous life depends upon his deeds. Prosperity springs from his knowledge. For whether he acquires wealth or not depends upon whether he knows the means whereby to acquire it. Even one who is well-born may either lose his possessions through lack of knowledge or not know how to enjoy what is his by birth. Love springs from his desire which is a form of will-power. But Spiritual Perfection flows from My Own Will. This is the Eternal Dharma.

137. Dharma is the World-Protecting Law. He who is without Dharma is like unto one who dwells in a house without a roof: to him misfortune comes like rain unto the roof-less house. But he who takes refuge in the Holy Dharma is well-sheltered and protected against evil karma. From him misfortunes stand aloof like rain from the house with a well-thatched roof.

138. Those who follow the Path of Dharma act in accordance with my Will. For such ones there is nothing that cannot be attained. Verily, those who follow the right path (satpatha) easily achieve what they desire even as a man in a boat is quickly carried downstream. But those who follow other paths are like the man who goes against the stream: hard is his life and uncertain his achievements. This is My Eternal Law. He who knows not My Law nor follows it, shall go the

downward way in life. But he who knowing My Law acts in other ways, shall go deeper still. Indeed, he shall sink into Hell. Verily, I say unto you, it would be better to have one's head cut off than follow another Path.

139. Having earned merit through good deeds (satkarma), one enjoys the fruit thereof. When merit comes to an end, one suffers the pain of sin. For in this Dark Age of Sin, there is not one man on Earth whose deeds are wholly good. Thus one's own actions endlessly throw the Soul from one of Life's extremes to the other, life after life. But when through My Grace man enters upon the Path of Yoga and acts in Unity with Me, he goes beyond both merit and sin. Verily, the deeds of an accomplished Yogi, being done in perfect Unity with Me, are all perfectly lawful and holy. Let Freedom, Unity and Justice prevail amongst My devotees. For these three make up the Trident of Truth Which is the best weapon against the Untruth.

140. Verily, as the Sun drives away the dark shadows of night with his beams of light, so Truth with Its three-pronged Bolt of Freedom, Unity and Justice repels the shadows of Untruth. As Lightning pierces the rain-bearing clouds with flaming darts of fire, so the Trident of Truth cuts through the darkness of Untruth and reveals the Truth. Armed with My Threefold Bolt of Truth, My devotees shall vanquish all things that are evil and false and Victory shall be theirs for all time. Their names shall be established in the Abode of Truth and in Radiance they shall equal the Mighty Gods.

142. Having called upon Me with the Prayer, Om Namah Shivaya, with a mind fully concentrated upon Me, Who Am the Innermost Soul of the Universe and the Highest Truth, let the Yogi utter the following words with conviction and without fear in his heart.

143. Come not against Me! you Cloud of Obscuration (i.e., Death) who live on the life-breath of the ignorant. Your magic cannot grip My Heart for I am full of the Power of the Lord of Gods.

144. Retreat! you Thought of Separation who beset the confused and gnaw at their heart. My mind shall not be lost in your Forest of Delusion for I am the Son (or Daughter) of the Lord of Light.

145. Begone from Me! you Evil Spirit who devour the life-blood of the weak. Your fiendish deeds shall not corrupt My Soul for I am the Lord of Gods Himself.

146. I am the Lord of Life Eternal, the True Illuminator, the Light of all lights. I am the Voice of the Past and the Future, and Master of all that passes now. I am the Threefold Light of Fire, Sun and Moon. I am the All-Enclosing Mighty Sky.

147. The Universe is My Own Reflection. All this has risen out of Me. I am the One Source of all Life. I am the Living Light of all Souls, the Breath of everything that breathes, the Power of all the Gods worshipped by men.

148. I pervade the All with My Light of Truth. Nothing can stand in My Way. For I am One with Lord Shiva, the Wielder of the Bolt of Light, the Sun of Reality Whose Essence is Pure Consciousness and Bliss.

149. Verily, by the power of this Mighty Spell the Yogi falls not into the dark recesses of the Otherworld. He goes beyond Life and Death and enters into My Supreme Abode where Discord and Separation hold not sway, where everything follows My Law, where all is Happy, One, and ever at Peace. This is the Eternal Dharma. Let all Souls follow My Path for it is the Eternal Road

of Heaven trodden by the righteous Souls from the beginning of all Time. Let them not follow other paths.

150. O righteous ones! I have given My Law to Mankind that It might be a guidance to all. But of all nations some will reject It, some will corrupt It and some will invent their own laws. Therefore, follow the True Law that I have given you. Follow not those laws that are invented and followed by others. Beware of strangers and their laws.

151. In the Holy Land of India I have established a Community of the Righteous that it might be a guiding light unto the World. Therefore strange faiths shall not be suffered in My Abode of Truth. For strangers are a quarrelsome lot. They bear fair words and evil deeds. They will bring nothing but Discord to the Holy Land and misery to the People of Truth. Blinded by ignorance and pride they will say that their manner of worship is the better way. When through blandishments or threats they have enticed you to go astray, others will come who will declare that their way is better still. Thus, little by little you will be led astray and will never again find the right way.

152. Therefore, be forewarned! Forget not that I created the World that it might abide in unity with My Truth. Disunity is a disease that takes root in the heart of those who are unfaithful to Me (i.e., untrue to the One Supreme Being). Verily, disunity is the greatest Sin. If the People of Unity suffered disunity in their midst, Unity would be wiped out from the face of the Earth and Mankind would sink into Disunity and Discord.

153. Verily, I created Mankind as one, but some among nations chose the Path of Discord. They quarrelled with each other and worshipped vain phantasms and False Gods. In those dark places upon Earth that are devoid of Dharma, the deluded will outnumber and rise above the righteous. And the more deluded still will rise above the former. In their delusion they will turn against My Law and invent their own laws. Little do they know that My Law cannot be changed but only followed!

154. Having rejected My Law, they will be overcome by madness. They will say with their mouths, You shall not kill. But no sooner will they utter these words than they will fall upon their fellow men and murder them without remorse. Thousands upon thousands of innocents will be slaughtered like sheep. Let every man judge for himself: are these the works of righteous men? By no means. Just wait and see. A terrible punishment awaits them, verily, indeed.

155. Others will say, Behold, this is the son of God; he will redeem the World from Sin. Know this to be a lie. No man can remove another man's sins but only his own. And even that, only at such time as I Myself appoint him. For I Alone Am the Saviour of all. Verily of Sin there will be not less but more. Salvation is not obtained by the belief in fables but only by the following of My Law.

156. Others will follow one who takes his pleasure of virgins as young as six and of a multitude of female slaves. Moreover, having slain many innocents he will say, This is the Will of God. O you who are righteous amongst men, just think! Can unrighteousness ever be My Will? If this were so, I would be an evil Spirit and not God. Verily, he who thinks that I approve of evil commits a heinous sin. He follows the Path of Evil and sinks into the deepest Hell. He and his followers will one day know what My Divine Will *Is*. The curse of their own deeds shall fall upon their heads. So long as the World endures they shall find neither happiness nor peace. A dreadful punishment awaits those who transgress My Law. I am All-Seeing and Ever Just. I bring destruction and death to every evil-doer according to his sins. But some I shall save from

destruction to be a guidance and a warning unto others, even as I saved the unbeliever who sought to try My devotee.

157. Once, an unbeliever from across the Western Sea, who was a leader amongst the unfaithful nations, came to the Holy Land (of India) to preach the wrong path to the righteous. Having arrived on these hallowed shores, he chanced upon a pious devotee who resided upon a hill outside an ancient city. He saluted the Yogi and, full of self-pride declared, O Yogi! I have come to test your powers. Make ready to meet your doom! The Yogi graciously glanced at him and said: My friend, since I have never claimed to possess powers, do you show your powers first that we may all know what you mean.

158. The stranger muttered a prayer to his God and at once went up to the clouds. But beyond the clouds he could not go. Therefore he hid himself within a cloud and tarried there for a while, scheming what to do next. At long last he descended back to Earth claiming to have been to Heaven. Thinking victory to be already his, he spoke with a haughty grin: Now, Yogi, it is your turn. But the Yogi directed his thought to My Supreme Eternal Truth and by the Power Thereof, instantly rose up into the Sky, driving all the clouds away. Thence he flew to the place where the Sun rises and to that where the Sun sets. He flew to that place where the Sun shines at midday and to that wherein he rests at night. He flew all the way to Holy Mount Kailasa, circled it three times and went to the various heavens whose inhabitants honoured him even as they honour a great king. The very Hosts of Heaven were his harbingers and even inanimate things worshipped him by laying down their shadows at his feet.

159. Thereupon the stranger seeing that he was utterly defeated and sorely fearing for his life, threw himself down before the Yogi and pleaded to be accepted as his obedient slave. But the Yogi replied: O you whose heart was infected with pride! know that in all the Three Worlds, which are, Heaven, Earth and that which lies between, there is One Master only - the Lord of Immeasurable Glory and Master of all living Souls. You were unfaithful to Him and were heading for destruction. Seeking to destroy others you very nearly met your own doom. But since you have lost your pride and wish to be a servant, I command you by the Will of Shiva to serve the orphans, the destitute and the afflicted. This is the Lord's Command to which until now, due to the din created by your evil thoughts, you were unable to give ear. At the Yogi's words of Mercy, a veil fell from the stranger's eyes and he believed in the Holy Dharma. He at once departed to do the Command of his Master, praising the Name of Shiva as he went.

160. After him, another stranger came seeking to corrupt the heart of upright men. He cast a staff upon the ground which took the likeness of a snake. He then commanded My People to worship his God. Little did he know who the Greatest God Is! But the Lord of Serpents himself, My Own Emanation, descended from his dwelling-place above and swallowed the unbeliever alive. Needless to say, neither the man himself nor his staff were ever seen again here, nor in other parts.

161. Therefore, beware! Follow not into the footsteps of the unfaithful. For when their time has come they shall go to destruction. Only a few shall be saved to be an example. Walk not in the path of foreign faiths. For had they been true, I Myself would have guided you to them. But I have given you a True Religion (Sat-Dharma) and not one invented by men. I have given you a Guiding Light that your Soul might be nourished and grow in wisdom and might. I have made you a Community of Righteous Souls and the most numerous nation on Earth that you might be a light unto the World.

162. Verily at the beginning of Time I established One Law for all of Mankind. But of all

nations upon Earth, the People of India alone have stayed faithful to My Law. The others have changed their faith many times over, like a woman who gives herself to many men. Don't they know that I have eyes everywhere and ever watch them from close by? Let them do as they please, the day of reckoning is never far! But of you I have made a nation of righteous men that you might lead the others to the True Faith.

163. The Holy Land of India, the Abode of Light (Bharat) which shines like unto a jewel on this Earth was given by Me to My devotees that they might lovingly tend her like a precious garden and make her an example and a guidance unto others. Those who neglect My Holy Gift shall not only lose their possession but suffer a dreadful fate as a reward for their sin. Verily, I say unto you, I did not create the Earth for her to be ruled by miscreants but by righteous men who abide in Unity with Me. If the unfaithful prevail, it is not because I Myself will thus, but because the righteous having become weak and corrupt, neglect their holy duty: which is to uphold Righteousness upon Earth.

164. Therefore, desist from suffering unbelievers in your midst. For they are a devious lot. They will rob you of your possessions and drive you out of your own homes. They will defile your womenfolk and take your children as slaves. They will brand the mark of servitude upon the brow of free men. Verily, strangers are not to be trusted. Do not make friends with them. It were far better to live alone than join oneself to the enemies of My Law. But those amongst the sons and daughters of the Holy Land who stray from the Path of Dharma are the worst by far. For they betray their own people and are the greatest sinners of all. An evil fate awaits them all.

165. He who without good reason causes disunity between two people such as husband and wife, brother and sister or father and daughter, shall abide in Hell for sixty years. He who causes disunity between a righteous King and his people shall earn a place in Hell for six hundred years. He who brings disunity to a nation shall dwell in Hell for six thousand years. But he who brings disunity to the Abode of My People (India) shall abide in Hell till the end of time. Verily, there is no redemption for those who sin against the Holy Law of Unity. They shall be justly punished in this life and the next.

166. Therefore, be ever on your guard against those who would infect your heart with disunity and discord. Do not suffer unbelievers in your midst save if they accept My Truth. If they embrace My Revelation receive them into the unity of Shiva with all your heart. But if they reject the Dharma, let them go elsewhere and keep yourselves away from them. If they rise up in arms against you, I shall grant you victory over them all. For the righteous shall be victorious even as I Myself am Ever Victorious. Verily, foreign kingdoms will rise and fall but the Land of Glory (India) shall ever remain the Holy Bastion of Truth and the Refuge of the Righteous upon Earth.

167. O People of Truth! a glorious reward awaits those who follow My Law. Those who reject the Dharma shall go to their own destruction and their works shall come to naught. But My devotees shall never perish, they shall go to Everlasting Life. Verily, I say unto you, I have raised you up among all people and made you leaders of men that you might proclaim to them My Revelation and lead them unto Salvation. They who accept My Law shall attain Supreme Perfection. I am ever faithful to My Promise. Therefore, when the time has come, let My Word be made known to all quarters of the Earth.

168. I have set forth My Law in plain language that it might be understood by all. But those that understand not shall at least believe. For belief is the light of those that lack knowledge and wisdom. Therefore believe and follow those who understand. Do not look left, do not look right,

and never look down. Always look up. This is how you hold fast to the Right Path (Satpatha). Follow you a straight course like the Sun. Do not follow a crooked path. Be strong in the following of Dharma like unto a Mountain, constant like unto a River and patient like unto the Ocean. Do not give in to temptation. Do not trade the Kingdom of Heaven for a bowl of stale food, for he who does so commits a mortal sin.

169. As archery has two parts, firstly the laying of the arrow upon the bow and secondly the shooting thereof, even so learning has two parts: the acquisition of knowledge and the application thereof. It is through the application of the acquired knowledge that learning is tested. Man's life is nothing but learning. And learning requires testing. For the knowledge that is acquired but not tested is like unto food that is prepared but never tasted. Many a test has been prepared for every Soul that he might see for himself what his knowledge is worth. Verily, in this life every man shall be tested, each in his own time. Therefore, do not fail the test of life. Do not give in to temptation, for temptation is the stumbling-block of your life.

170. Nor shall you be weak and disheartened in the face of misfortunes. For they too are but a trial for testing your strength and fitness for a Higher World. Pay no heed to those who seek to turn you away from My Truth for in so doing you will have failed. He who falls from the Right Path (Satpatha) falls into Hell and can account himself among the lost. It were better not to know the Truth than, having known It, to follow another path. He who having heard My Truth follows another Path is like the fool who digs a well on a riverbank and like one who trades gold for dirt. Verily, hard is the Path of Righteousness for the weak-hearted and few have the strength to travel it to the end. But he who having been shown the right way turns to another path, shall commit a great sin. But they who are strong of heart shall not perish. They shall be raised above the others and a great reward shall be theirs: Heaven Itself shall be their eternal abode.

171. Those who follow My Law are rightly guided and shall never fail. For My Law is the manifestation of the Supreme Light of Knowledge and the essence of all True Scriptures which are known to the wise. It abides forever in the Highest Heaven as the Eternal Sound Supreme Which is plainly heard by Yogis but only faintly by other men. From the Heart of the Heavenly Sphere, My Divine Word in its Unspoken Form constantly shines in all directions illumining the way for those who wish to reach My Abode of Peace across the troubled waters of the Ocean of Existence. I Am the Dispeller of Darkness, the Eternal Enlightener of Whom all true Teachers are manifestations even as rays are emanations of the Sun. My Revelation is the Light that reveals the Road to Heaven.

172. For the well-being of the World, I, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful God, the Lord of Yoga, the Lord of Unity, at the beginning of each World-Age Reveal the Truth unto human kind by means of Five Mighty Streams of Light. They are manifestations of My Five Powers Divine: Infinite Awareness, Bliss, Will, Knowledge and Action.

173. By way of these Mighty Streams of Perfect Intelligence I manifest My Eternal Truth in the Form of Divine Word and broadcast It to all Quarters of the World.

174. Assuming the Form of the Middlemost Stream of Awareness that passes down, I descend into the World of men illumining it with My Pure Light of Perfect Awareness. Thence, from that Self-Luminous Middlemost Point, I spread forth to the Four Quarters of the Firmament.

175. Assuming the Form of the Eastwards-flowing Stream of Bliss, I illuminate the Sky of the Rising Sun with My Pure Light of Perfect Bliss.

176. Assuming the Form of the Southwards-flowing Stream of Will, I illuminate the Sky of the Midday Sun with My Pure Light of Perfect Will.

177. Assuming the Form of the Westwards-flowing Stream of Knowledge, I illuminate the Sky of the Setting Sun with My Pure Light of Perfect Knowledge.

178. Assuming the Form of the Northwards-flowing Stream of Action, I illuminate the Sky of the Midnight Sun with My Pure Light of Perfect Action.

179. By way of these Five Luminous Streams which pervade the Five States of Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep, Enlightenment and Universal Consciousness I, the Lord, the Non-Sound become Sound, Constantly Enlighten all the Worlds till the end of Time.

180. Yet though I Eternally Shine equally upon all, unenlightened Souls receive My Light variously, according to each one's capacity of perception. Those that cannot perceive My Divine Light directly, have to resort to a Master, Human, Superhuman or Divine.

181. Because of this, I Graciously Assume the Form of Four Divine World-Gurus, one to each Quarter, whilst I Myself abide amongst them as their Middlemost Overlord.

182. Having imparted My Divine Knowledge unto them, they transmit My Word to Four Superhuman Gurus, these reveal It to Four Human Masters and the last-named impart It to their human disciples. Having accomplished their task according to My Command, the Four Divine Masters return to My Heavenly Abode.

183. Whensoever My Divine Teaching is being imparted in this World or in Heaven, I Myself abide in the midst of the congregation of devotees as the Eternal, Unseen Teacher of the Universe. For the Heart of all things is My Eternal Abode Wherein I may be found at all times and in all places.

184. Thus My Word is forever delivered unto the World for the welfare of all. He who accepting My Word, hears it, thinks and acts upon it, and becomes absorbed in It by means of the Yogic Practices called Shravana, Manana and Bhavana, that one attains Union with Me (Shiva-Samyoga). He rises heavenwards to My Supreme Abode by the same Mighty Stream of Self-Effulgent Light whereby I Myself descend into the World of men.

185. That middlemost, Heavenward Stream that leads to the Heart of all things and is difficult to attain, is the Sacred World Pole, the Self-Luminous Axis of the All. Standing like an Infinite Pillar of Light in the secret Heart of the World Circle (Loka Mandala), It stretches from the nethermost World to the Highest. Rising upwards through It, By the Power of My Grace, one goes to the Highest Heaven.

186. It is only seen by Enlightened Yogis. Nevertheless, all My devotees can find It, who, through the practice of Yoga, develop the power of Inward Vision. For, he who knows the Truth in himself, knows Me, the Supreme Lord. And he who knows the Supreme Lord, knows the Holy Stambha, the All-Supporting Pillar of the Universe.

187. Verily, the World is constructed with Love and is Ever-Illumined with the Lamp of My Infinite Compassion. There is nothing that cannot be attained by the Power of Yoga. Yoga is the Path, the Goal and the Guiding Light. Yoga is the beginning and the end of all things.

188. O immortal Masters! Life in the Physical World begins with the First of the Four World Ages, known as the Golden Age of Truth and Enlightenment (Satya Yuga), in which Earth is ruled by Myself. In this Age, being free from Impurity and Sin, the Earth-dwellers live in the Shining Light of Truth. For their minds and hearts are not sealed but are vibrant and free. They are endowed with radiant bodies of light and know not hunger, thirst nor pain. They live in perfect Harmony (Samvada) and Unity (Samyoga) with each other, with Nature, with the Gods, and My Supreme Self.

189. In truth, they are themselves Divine and follow Heaven's Eternal Path of Light. In this Age, Earth is a true Abode of Unity. Through constant contact with the Divine, Higher Knowledge and Heavenly Bliss are easily available to all. This Luminous Age of Enlightenment and Bliss lasts forty-eight hundred Divine Years, of three hundred and sixty human years each. When these many years have passed, the Glorious Age of Light comes to an end.

190. The Second World Age, known as the Silver Age of Sleep (Treta Yuga) dawns upon Earth. I then assume the Form of a new Group of Four World Teachers, one to each Quarter, with My Eternal Self in their midst. Due to contact with the physical World, the Spiritual Impurity of Imperfection begins to take root in the Souls' heart, causing them to deem themselves and the World limited and imperfect.

191. Unity and Harmony with My Divine Self is perfect no more. Earth is ruled by the Gods and Earth-dwellers live as if in deep sleep. For they are no longer perfectly awake to the Reality of Heaven but even more asleep to the World. My Light of Truth is seen by them like the distant Stars shimmering in the dark Night Sky. Mind and body being less pure, Knowledge and Happiness can only be attained through meditation upon Me, the Supreme Self. It is the Age of Sleep also in another sense, in that the Souls have yet no will of their own, living mostly in Unity with My Divine Will.

192. Thirty-six hundred Divine Years having passed, there now dawns upon Earth the Third World Age, the Copper Age of Dream (Dvapara Yuga). At the beginning of this Age, I Manifest Myself anew as the Eternal World Teacher. Surrounded by four others, one to each Quarter, I bring My Word into the World.

193. In this Age, as due to contact with the physical World the influence of Imperfection grows, the second Impurity, that of Delusion, takes root in Earth-dwellers' heart. The Impurity of Delusion causes them to perceive separation and distinction among themselves and other things. They now begin to develop a will of their own and acquire knowledge of worldly things.

194. Yet because their knowledge of Heaven is not completely obscured, nor their knowledge of the World fully awakened, but the two kinds of knowledge are equally weak, the Earth-dwelling Souls abide in an intermediate state like that of Dream which is neither Waking nor yet Sleep.

195. Unity with Me, with the Gods, with Nature and each other, being perceived less even than before, selfishness begins to spread. Earth is then ruled by divinely appointed Kings who are the offspring of the Sons of Heaven and the Daughters of Earth. Human kind's Vision of My Divine Self having grown dim, Knowledge and Happiness can only be obtained through prayer and sacrifices.

196. Twenty-four hundred Divine Years having thus passed, the Fourth and Last World Age now begins. It is known as the Iron Age of Waking (Kali Yuga). It is called of Iron, being even less bright and shiny than the previous three. Indeed, it is the darkest of all. And it is called the

Age of Waking because herein Earth-dwellers, though fully asleep to the World of Spirit, are now wide awake to worldly life.

197. In this Age too, I descend into the World amidst Four Wisdom Masters, each unto one Quarter as before. Yet due to the limitations of physical life and the influence of Imperfection and Delusion, the third Impurity, that of Limited Action, takes root in men's heart. The powers of will, knowledge and action are now exercised only with a view to obtaining material things. The more mortal men are engrossed in material things, the less awareness they possess of things of the Spirit. Earth is ruled by self-appointed human Kings.

198. Forgetting that I, Lord Shiva, am the Highest Truth, men resort to praying and sacrificing to lesser Gods. The more they pray to lesser Gods, the less capable they become of having a Vision of Myself. Without a Vision of Me, the Lord of Unity, Unity itself disappears and conflict prevails upon Earth. Verily, in this Dark Age, Earth is a true Abode of Separation and Discord. In addition to Imperfection and Delusion, the Impurity of imperfect, deluded Action leads to suffering by force of the Law of Karma. For conflict, disease and death are the result of dis-Unity with Me. Disunity is the only cause of suffering.

199. Divine Light is then perceived no more. People's sight having grown dimmer than ever, houses of prayer are built to this or that God and man-made lamps installed therein as a replacement for the Light of Truth. Truth being no longer seen let alone practised, the Gods themselves are before long replaced by statues, books, and other things even as they flee in horror. Sacred places that once shined bright with Spiritual Power and were delightful to behold, are forsaken and forgotten in the blind darkness of delusion.

200. Neither prayer nor sacrifices are now of any avail. New Gods, of whom no one has ever heard before, are introduced and bowed down to. But as they exist nowhere save in the deluded mind of mortals, there is little good that they can do. With mind and heart sealed, with Soul poisoned by bitterness and hatred, man becomes the enemy of man, of the World, of God. True Knowledge and Happiness are no longer obtainable in the World save by a few righteous Souls who in answer to the call of Spirit start upon the Royal Path of Yoga that leads to Unity with Me.

201. This, O Sages who know the Truth! is the state of the World even to-day, as the Age of Darkness (Kali Yuga) has now come and the same shall last not more nor less than twelve hundred Years of the Gods. Throughout this time, there will be some Souls who, having had their full of worldly existence, having learned life's cruel lessons, go up to My Heavenly Abode by the Eternal Path of Yoga. Verily they who go to Everlasting Life by the Yogic Path of Unity, suffer no more. Having become immortal and living in a state of Absolute Unity with Me, even if they choose to remain in the World, they are not affected thereby.

202. But the others, who are still unripe, unfit for Heaven, must all die. After a brief sojourn in the Otherworld, they are reborn on Earth, life after life. Indeed, I Myself, as Lord of Time and King of the Dead, shall gather all Dwellers upon Earth and reward them each according to his merits or sins.

203. This being done, a new Golden Age commences, followed by the other Three. They (Four Ages) last forty-eight hundred, thirty-six hundred, twenty-four hundred and, finally, twelve hundred Years Divine. Together, they constitute a Cosmic Cycle known as a Great World Age of twelve thousand Divine Years (or 4,320,000 human years).

204. This, multiplied a thousandfold, is known to the wise as an Aeon which is a Universal Day,

that is, a day in the life of the Physical Universe. When this Day passes away, there dawns the Dissolution of the Physical Universe which is merged into the Higher Worlds. Therein, all Earth-dwelling Souls that have failed to rise to Higher Planes while on Earth, abide in a sleep-like, disembodied state. They remain in that state for the duration of one Aeon which is of equal length to the Universal Day. However, being of a dark, sleep-like nature, it is called Universal Night. When this comes to an end, there dawns another Universal Day, in which the Physical Universe emerges anew and the unenlightened Souls, waking from their Universal Slumber, re-enter the drama of earthly life like toys out of a box, every one in the role allotted them by Karmic Law.

205. At the end of three hundred and sixty such Universal Days and Nights, multiplied a thousandfold, the Physical Universe is permanently absorbed into the Higher Worlds. In due course these are themselves merged into the next-higher Worlds, one after another, in ascending order till the very last.

206. At the time of the final Great Universal Dissolution, all Worlds, whether Physical, Astral or Spiritual, that are seen or unseen, along with the Souls, subhuman, human and superhuman, are dissolved in My Infinite Universal Consciousness.

207. O you who are knowers of My Secret! these great spans of time which are difficult to grasp even by the wise, are but the twinkling of an eye, for Me, the Lord of Eternity. The Worlds beginning with the Physical Universe are to be conceived of as immeasurably vast concentric Spheres and increasingly greater in size, duration as well as Spiritual Purity and Perfection, up to My Infinite and Ever-Living Self Wherein they all rest. Thus they are perceived by Enlightened Yogis who have attained Unity with Me.

208. Verily, behind every created thing there lies a greater truth. And behind that, a greater one still. Yet at the beginning and end of all, I the Great Life, Lord of Unmeasured Greatness, Eternally Abide for ever. For there is nothing greater than I.

209. When I, the Supreme Reality, look outwards, as it were, I Project the World Dream consisting of innumerable Universes down to the smallest atom. When I look inwards, all this vanishes in the Infinite Light of My Own Self like a dewdrop in the light of the rising Sun. This is Life's Great Mystery which is a Feat of Magic and a Play.

210. I have thus described to you the Great Cycle of World Ages that repeats itself from Age to Age and from Aeon to Aeon, like a Great Wheel revolving upon the Self-Luminous Hub of the Universe till the end of Time.

211. He who has listened to my Word with great devotion, shall rise by the power thereof above Past and Future, and enter into My Eternal Now. To him the Ever-Living Reality of Being shall appear from behind the Veil of Becoming and shine upon him like the Sun from behind the clouds. Verily, for him the present moment is the Door to Eternity.

212. Let no one be deceived! Twelve hundred long Divine Years lasting three hundred and sixty earth-years each, shall pass before I Manifest again and bring to the World a New Cosmic Cycle and a New Golden Age. Meanwhile, I shall appear only to My devotees. Verily, know this to be a matter a million times true: to My faithful devotees I shall appear any time they sincerely call upon Me, but not to the others. For, the others even if they saw Me, would fail to recognise Me - as even now they see Me but know Me not.

213. Therefore, henceforward twelve Great Souls shall uphold My Law upon Earth. Their noble names which are forever established among the Stars are: Duravasa, Dharmakunda, Satyapati, Mahakala, Adinatha (Vrishabhanatha), Ramanatha (the Buddha's Guru), Jaleshvara, Svachchanda, Shambhunatha, Guptanatha, Soma-Natha, and Siddhanatha. They are Rays of My Own Light. Shining from the Land of Glory they illumine the World. Verily, for five hundred years each they shall proclaim My Word in this World and beyond. Thus six thousand years shall pass; and when they have passed away, twelve more Masters shall descend into the World. When seventy-two such cycles (of 6,000 years each) have passed, I Myself shall return to Earth, but not before.

214. Let all living Souls take heed of My Word. Consider that worldly pleasures have a beginning and an end. They bring joy while they last and pain when they pass away. But the Bliss of Heaven Which is all Souls' True Home has neither beginning nor end. Do not reject the Shining Lamp of My Knowledge! For worldly knowledge is soon forgotten. But the knowledge which is of the Spirit, is the light of one's own eyes. It abides with the Soul and illumines his Path in this life and the next. It is one's Guiding Light from birth to birth.

215. Do not miss the Divine Ark that has been sent to take you to My Abode of Peace! For many are the boats but few indeed are the worthy helmsmen that can steer you through life's unpredictable storms. Do not turn away from My Path! For this is the Glorious Path to Liberation which all the True Masters have trodden from the beginning of the World, which is eternal, unchanging and open to all. Do not turn away from the Path of Truth! Follow it with wisdom and faith. For the day shall come when some will go astray. Indeed, before long, the day shall come when many will go astray.

216. Having become wilful and wayward, they will abandon the Path and lead each other to perdition. Blundering in darkness like lost travellers on a moonless night, they will see not My Light. Without Light to illumine and guide them, they will work evil deeds and commit heinous sins which only they will know in their heart, and God Who Sees all things.

217. Verily, as a result of their actions, the Wheel of the Eternal Law upon whose rim the World revolves shall lie shattered by the wayside. The Sun shall no longer travel on his daily course. The Moon shall no longer shed her light upon Earth at night. The Stars shall revolve not in the Firmament. Men rising against the World, the World shall rise against men. Forests and fields of grain shall turn to dust. Mighty rivers shall change course or dry out. Mountains shall sink to Earth and great floods shall drown the land. Verily what I speak shall come to pass.

218. Even I shall find it difficult to recognise My Creation. For the Earth will be inhabited by creatures that are deceitful, greedy, vain and spiteful. Selfish, slothful, loathsome to behold, dull and utterly oblivious of their Heavenly Birth. People will feed on foul food and utter foul words. Their mind will be averse to things of the Spirit and turned to ways that are evil and false.

219. Teachers of Truth will withdraw to caves, forests and other secret places. Only the most fortunate among Earth-dwellers will find Guidance in the way of Truth. Priests will no more perform holy rites. Warriors will harass people instead of protecting them. Merchants will deceive their patrons with unworthy goods. Farmers will no more produce wholesome food, and servants will become masters through deceit.

220. Deluded Kings will lead their subjects astray. Ignorant noblemen will act like the lowest of the low and the lowly will imitate those who are high-born. Thieves will become Kings and murderers will appoint themselves Great Kings. Husbands and wives will no more look upon one another as Divine. Sons and daughters will no more heed the wise words of their fathers. All

will vie with each other in finding evil ways of obtaining material gains. Sacred customs like building temples, water tanks and lotus-ponds, keeping parks and pleasure gardens, maintaining guest-houses for pilgrims and feeding the poor, will be observed no more.

221. Impostors, falsely wearing sacred robes, will pose as holy men. Others, masquerading as Gods, oblivious of their mortal sin, will profess to be Incarnations of My Truth Supreme. Taking My Name in vain, they will propagate the Untruth and poison the Souls of the unsuspecting multitude with cunning words of guile. Thus, fake, man-made religions will come to be passed for Truth and imposed upon the World through deception and brute force. Many a Soul shall be led astray by one who is mad with delusion.

222. O seers of Truth! know that when highwaymen, pirates and their sons become princes, the end shall not be far. The Holy Land of India, the Abode of Truth on Earth, will be ruled by evil kings from foreign parts. Her children will be enslaved by the people of Untruth. Hailing from the Lands of Darkness where the Sun (of Truth) sets instead of rising, the evil ones will spread Untruth in the World. They will pray upon the righteous like vultures, hyenas and wild dogs. They will ensnare and deceive the people through repugnant and abominable works. They will make slaves out of free men and poison their hearts with blandishments and false faiths.

223. Verily, having lost their senses, the sons and daughters of the Holy Land will fight one another for their evil masters' favour even as dogs fight over a morsel from their master's meal. Evil-doers will roam the Earth at will whilst the virtuous will suffer. Innocent blood will be shed everywhere. Living beings of all kinds will be slaughtered in their hundreds of thousands. Even unborn babes will be slain in their mothers' womb.

224. Nourished by innocent blood and sin, evil Spirits will prosper and spread far and wide like poisoned weeds. They will seize the Souls of men who deviate from the Yoga Path of Unity with the Supreme and bring them down into the Abode of Darkness where all is dark and Light shines not. Verily, the deviators having fallen pray to the Sin of Separation shall see not My Light Divine though It shine brighter than the Midday-Sun.

225. O righteous ones! even wild beasts, birds and insects are kindly to each other and take care not to harm the forest they live in or befoul their own nests. But man, who deems himself greater than beasts, wilfully acts in sinful ways. Let no one be deceived by false beliefs. Man having become a slave of disunity and Untruth, having turned his heart away from Me, he shall before long reap the bitter fruits of his sinful deeds.

226. When human kind loses the protection and guidance of Gods and Divine Kings, when men become their own foes, then even the Elements of Nature shall turn against them. Troubled by people's deluded actions, the aggravated Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Sky will bring Great Suffering to all. Earthquakes, Floods, Fires, Storms and a vitiated Sky, crime, disease and war, shall be a warning of things to come.

227. This being so, let them not injure or destroy the Earth, for the Earth is holy. And they who destroy what is holy shall themselves be destroyed. Let them not destroy the Water, let them not destroy the Fire, let them not destroy the Air, let them not destroy the Sky, for these are holy. And they who destroy what is holy shall themselves be destroyed.

228. But they who corrupt the mind of men are a thousandfold worse than even the worst. For the right mind, being a mirror of the Soul, is what makes man truly human and is a bridge to the Divine. It leads one to My Abode of Unity. But when corrupt it leads one to the Abode of

Discord. Therefore, let them not corrupt the mind, for the mind of man is holy and a spark of Divine Light. They who corrupt it shall be tormented greatly. They shall find no peace in this World nor in the next. For thus I have declared, Men rising against the World, the World shall rise against men. The Wheel of the Eternal Law shall be restored and crush those who sought to crush it. This is My Divine Command.

229. Therefore, let them not injure, nor harm nor destroy the Elements, for they are holy and deserving of honour even as I, the Creator am honoured. Let them love My Creation, for it was out of Love that I Created it. And My Creation manifests what is Holy and True. Let them love each other and Me, for he who loves what is Holy shall himself become Holy and attain to everlasting life in My Highest Glory.

230. Let all Souls follow My Path. Let them not turn away from My Word. Let them not close their eyes, their ears and their heart to My Truth. Let them not go astray. For having gone astray, the evil ones shall lie in wait for them, and ambush them, and enslave them, and lead them unto destruction. I am the Supreme Goal of all and all paths in the end lead unto Myself. But some paths go first to hell. Verily, even down on Earth, when seeking to ascend a Mountain, some paths are found not to lead to the Top. And of those that do, some pass through perilous ravines and recesses full of wild beasts, robbers or fierce hillmen. Therefore, I say unto you, One Path Only is straight, free from perils and easy to follow. That Path is the Path of Truth, the Path of all Paths. It is the Path which I revealed unto the Ancient Masters at the beginning of Time and which has been trodden by the righteous ever since.

231. O Jewels of the human race! O Immortal Stars in the firmament of Sages! I, the Lord, the Beloved of My Devotees and the Saviour of Mankind, have declared My Eternal Law for the benefit of all. Do you now impart My Secret Teaching to those who have a pure heart, who are yearning for Higher Knowledge, and who are ready for the Truth. For Truth is the only antidote to ignorance, delusion and sorrow. The World shall know not Peace, nor Happiness, nor Truth, until the day My Word prevails. But if My Word prevail, Truth shall return without fail. This is My Divine Command (Shiva-Shasana). What I speak must come to pass.

232. To this, the Sages raised their voices in praise and spoke: Eternal Adoration to Shiva, the Kindly, the Gracious, the Most Merciful! Adoration to Him Who Is Supreme Truth Incarnate, Who Is the Soul of the Universe and Who Is Our Higher Self! O Merciful Lord of Life! wonderful indeed is Your Eternal Teaching. Owing to Your Holy Word, our ears can now hear the Pure Sound of Truth, our eyes can see the Clear Light of Your Immeasurable Glory and our hearts overflow with Your Heavenly Bliss. Hard and rough is the stem of the sugar cane but pleasantly sweet and uplifting its juice. Even thus, life is hard and painful for the ignorant but sweet for those who have heard Your Truth, while for those who follow Your Word it is Pure Bliss.

233. Wheresoever we turn our gaze, It is Only You we behold for You Are Everything: You Are the Soul of the Universe, all things are manifestations of Your Glory and the All is ever pulsing with the beat of Your Infinite Heart. You Are the Sky and the Earth, and the Sun that keeps them apart. You Are the bird traversing the Sky, the beast roaming the wood, the fish swimming in the sea and the corn growing in the field. Verily, You Are the Lord stationed in the heart of all things: what choice does the World have but to joyfully perform the Dance of Life, dancing like drops in Your Ocean of Delight. We therefore declare that there is no other God but Shiva and that we, the Immortal Masters, are His Eternal Messengers by His Divine Command.

234. We bow down to Him, the Highest God, Who out of His Free Will assumes an infinite

multitude of forms, and Who for His Own Pleasure continuously Creates, Maintains and Dissolves all the Worlds along with everything that exists within them.

235. We bow to Him, the Highest God, Who delights in Creation, Who rests in the pleasure of Permanence, and Who relishes the exquisite flavour of the essence of all the Worlds.

236. We bow to Him, the Highest God, Who for His Own Pleasure conceals from us His Real Identity and then, moved by compassion, assumes the Form of the Highest Teacher, Who opens our eyes and brings Light into our hearts and guides us upon the Secret Inward Path leading to Himself.

237. We bow to Him, the Highest God, without Whom no life is possible and Who is an Infinite Ocean of Ever-Shining Consciousness, Who is Our Real Self and Who Alone deserves to be worshipped by all.

238. We bow to Him, the Highest God, of Whom the wise have rightly said that He can be truly worshipped only by becoming One with Him.

239. We bow to Him, Who Alone Exists, Whose Path is Unity and Who Is Worshiped by means of Knowledge of one's Self.

240. We declare that Shiva Alone Exists and Yoga is the Path that leads to Him. This is the Eternal Truth.

Commentary to Chapter Eleven

11. *In waking, man is united with the body, etc.:* A fish that lives in the Sea has no existence independently of the Sea. It is born and lives as part of the Sea even if it is not consciously aware of this. Likewise, a living Soul has his existence in and as part of the Sea of Universal Consciousness. Although ordinary man's duality-based perception of the World prevents him, in everyday life, from seeing the underlying Unity of Everything, Yogis know by means of their superior power of perception which they have acquired either spontaneously or through years of systematic training, that the Soul is in unity with the body in the waking-state; with the mind in dreams; with his Sleeping Self in deep sleep; and with his Awakened Self in Enlightenment (the Fourth State); while in Full Enlightenment (Fifth State) he is in unity with the Supreme Self (Shiva). As has been said in the Anguttara Nikaya 2, 206: The Enlightened One is even in this life, freed from the World, immersed in the Supreme, aware of happiness in himself, and lives with his Soul identified with the Supreme. The Christian Saint Dorotheus of Gaza, writing in the 7th century, similarly says: "The World is comparable to a circle the centre of which is God. Starting at the periphery of this World Circle, the Holy Ones (God-Seekers) advance towards God and at the same time towards each other. Thus nearness to God results in unity with one's fellow humans and unity with one's fellow humans results in nearness to God" (St. Dorotheus's Instructions). This once again proves the original identity of all religions. See also Commentary to 7:32.

16. *Follow the Path of Unity. For Unity is Life and dis-Unity is Death:* As a practical illustration of the invincible power of Unity, the Yoga Masters tell the story of a wise King who having reached a ripe old age, saw that the time had come to leave his sons in charge of the Kingdom. He handed each of them a stick and asked them to break it. This they did with ease. He then took a whole bundle of sticks and repeated his request. This time, however, none of

them could break the bundle. They thus understood that only by remaining united would they be invincible against all enemies and misfortunes.

17. *Sin and Separation are one and the same. He who goes the way of Separation goes the way of Sin:* Unity is God's Experience of Oneness with Himself and His Creation and therefore constitutes the very essence of life. Without Unity life would fall apart and sink into chaos and death. In consequence, human life must be based on Unity (Yoga) with God and the World. The opposite to this is Disunity (Viyoga) or Separation. The state of Disunity or Separation as well as any action that represents an expression thereof is called Sin. Indeed, the English word Sin (Germanic Sind) is derived from the same root as Sunder, to divide, break away, separate oneself (from God). The very same idea is expressed in the Sanskrit language by the word Pataka (Sin, Crime) which denotes "that which causes one to fall (asunder), to sink". The same word is also used to convey the sense of Hell, that is, a place, state or condition into which one has fallen from a higher position. The antidote to Sin (and Hell) is Yoga, that is, Abidance in Unity with God. This is in full agreement with the original teachings of the Western traditions. Thus says the Bible: "Whosoever abides in (Unity with) God sinns not; but whosoever sinns has not seen Him, neither known Him (because such an one is separated from God)" (1 John, 3:6).

23. *But unworthy life may be taken:* Man has no power, indeed, no life of his own. He derives the powers of knowledge and action, whereby he lives his life, from the Universal Consciousness or God. He is therefore under the obligation to use those powers as intended by the Giver and true Owner of the powers and not as he pleases. In other words, man must live in Unity with Truth. Indeed, Truth and Life are one and the same. This fact is acknowledged in Yoga by the use of closely related words to describe both Life (Satta) and Truth (Satya). In consequence, only life in unity with Truth can qualify as true life, properly speaking. For this reason, the life of violent criminals, for example, may be taken for the purpose of preserving the life of peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Criminals, after all, are well-acquainted with both the rules and the consequences of breaking the rules. The decision to commit a crime is always a deliberate and informed one. If they reform themselves and take to the Path of Righteousness, they should be welcomed with open arms. If, however, they adhere to evil ways, the shock of being deprived of their own life will certainly put them on the right path in a future existence. As far as war situations are concerned, it is essential to understand that war was, until recently, regarded by many people as a welcome relief from the monotony (and poverty) of daily life. Expressions such as "spoils of war" are based on facts of history: the wealth and status of most leading countries in the World were built on acts of war against other countries - not to mention piracy and slave trade. Now, in common with most Spiritual traditions, Yoga teaches that non-violence must be the fundamental basis to a life in Unity with Truth. However, this is not to be taken as an absolute law but as a general principle that does not exclude violence (or forceful action) as a legitimate means of upholding peace, order and justice if and when peaceful means either have patently failed or are reasonably expected to fail. The fact is that non-violence only works if practised by all. Indeed, were non-violence to be practised in an absolute sense in all circumstances by a section of Humankind only, the World would be ruled by aggressive people who take advantage of the others' excessive love of peace (or fear of violence). We can see what happens in the animal kingdom where aggressive animals prey on peaceful ones. Yet even there, normally peaceful creatures such as cattle can be fiercely protective of their young and ready to defend themselves if attacked. It is therefore unreasonable to expect humans not to defend themselves against those who intend to harm them or their fellow humans. To see somebody being assaulted and refrain from helping him on the grounds of non-violence is both absurd and inhuman. Indeed, as verse 31 explains, in allowing an evil-doer to commit a crime, we (a) allow the victim to suffer and (b) sentence the perpetrator to a guaranteed (future) punishment from which he could have been saved, had we acted to prevent the crime from being committed. In the

light of this, it becomes evident that violent, forceful or aggressive actions performed in the interest of upholding life, peace, justice and truth, must be recognised as being in accord with the general principle of non-violence, being aimed at, and ultimately resulting in, the establishment or reinforcement of peace and order. By contrast, non-violence or tolerance of crime can result in an increase in crime and therefore defeat its own purpose. The position of Yoga on this point is not only logical but is also supported by all major Spiritual traditions. In the Hindu Scripture, Bhagavat Gita for example, Lord Krishna clearly advocates military action not only as a legitimate form of self-defence but as a Spiritual duty. Likewise, it is written in the Manu Smriti, VII, 87-88: "A king who, while observing his duty of protecting his people, is defied by foes, be they equal in strength, or stronger, or weaker, must not shrink from battle, remembering a Warrior's duty. Not to turn back in battle, to protect the people, to honour the holy Priests, is the best means for a king to secure happiness". And: "He who kills in the cause of right commits no sin" (VIII, 349). Moreover, those who refuse to give assistance according to the duties (to which they have been appointed by the King) or to their ability, such as in the case of a village being attacked by robbers or a dyke being destroyed, etc., are actually committing a punishable offence (ibidem, IX, 272-274). Among Buddhists, some supporters of non-violence point out that, in an earlier incarnation, the Buddha himself is said to have offered his own flesh to a tigress that due to illness was unable to feed her cubs. To this it may be replied that the Buddha's action may have been appropriate in that particular life, but that he did not repeat this in his last incarnation as a Buddha, when physical self-sacrifice would have frustrated his World-enlightening teaching activities. It may also be legitimately argued that, if 20th century Tibetan Buddhists had taken care to set up a proper defence system, then perhaps they would not have been invaded and subjected to oppression and genocide by Communist China. Indeed, historical evidence shows that Buddhist monks hailing from India were responsible for the dissemination of both Buddhism and martial arts over large areas of Asia. Buddhist countries are known to have opted for military action whenever this was seen as necessary. In consequence, forceful action for the purpose of self-defence or reinforcement of law and order does not appear to have been viewed as incompatible with Buddhist teachings in former times. Historically speaking, military action has often proved to influence the life of many people in positive ways despite the suffering and loss of life it may cause. It must be regarded as beyond dispute, for example, that Germany's challenge to British World hegemony in the first half of the 20th century led to the dissolution of the British Empire, enabling many nations, including India, to gain freedom from British domination. Armed struggle against foreign invasion and occupation is at any rate universally accepted as legitimate. The Shiva Purana (Uma Samhita, 20:33), a Hindu Scripture closely allied to the Yoga Tradition says: "A righteous war is conducive to the attainment of Heaven. It sanctifies and increases the manifold beauty of a man". And: "He who falls in battle without surrendering his weapons attains to Everlasting Heaven" (20:25). Likewise, in the Christian Gospel (Luke 22:36), Jesus tells his followers to sell their clothes and buy swords (presumably for purposes of self-defence). He also tells them: "But those enemies of mine who would not submit themselves to my rule, bring here and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). And again: "You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass" (Matthew 24:6). In other words, it is admitted that violence and wars are sometimes necessary and cannot be avoided. In this particular case, Jesus was referring to the Jewish uprising against Roman Rule in the years 66-70 CE. Statements of a similar nature may be found in the Scriptures of Judaism, Islam and other faiths. Thus the great Guru and Prophet of the Sikhs, Govind Singh, said: "When all other means have failed, it is righteous to draw the sword". And the Quran declares: "Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it. But you may hate a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you" (2:216). Fighting in a righteous cause is good for a number of reasons. It is good because it is conducive to the establishment of Universal Order and Justice (Dharma) and hence constitutes a fulfilment of Divine Will. It is good because it enables the fighter to overcome selfishness and fear which is

one of the greatest obstacles in life in general and in Spiritual life, in particular. It is good because the hardships endured by a fighter, including injury and death, constitute a sure means of cleansing oneself of sins that would otherwise be difficult to eradicate. For this reason it is said: "As for those who lay down their earthly life for My Sake, they shall receive the greatest honours", etc. (see verse 34, below). The same position may be found among the Ancient Greeks and Romans for whom laying down one's life for the sake of one's country and one's faith was not only a religious duty but a great honour. Thus speaks the celebrated poet Horatius: "And how can man die better than facing fearful odds, for the ashes of his fathers and the Temples of his Gods?". Forceful action in the face of adversity is often the only means of establishing good. On the other hand, misguided kindness may actually result in evil. If, for example, unreformed criminals are pardoned or released from prison, they will invariably return to crime which could have been prevented had they been treated less kindly. Therefore, the Shiva Purana declares: "Kindness towards violent enemies is not ultimately conducive to good. He who is kind to such ones is really unkind even though his unkindness is concealed by apparent kindness. It is therefore established that kindness does not always result in good" (Vayaviya Samhita I, 31:39-42). It is clear therefore that all major Spiritual traditions hold both violent and non-violent action to be legitimate according to the requirements of a given situation, a position with which the Yoga Tradition itself is in complete agreement. After all, Spiritual life and, for that matter, true Democracy, are not about complacency and implicit acceptance of disorder and crime but about having the courage to fight evil and defend justice in the same way, for example, as a living organism fights disease. For this reason, verse 31 again says: "Let every man uproot evil and cultivate what is good, that My Law may be established in all quarters of this Earth". Yoga therefore teaches that it is every responsible person's duty to actively support Universal Order on Earth either by peaceful means, if possible, or by forceful means, if necessary. From among India's most noble warriors (both human and Divine) who are celebrated for their heroic deeds, we may mention Lord Murugan (Karttikeya), Lord Rama, King Skanda Gupta and Shivaji Maharaj.

29. *Think not that those who have chosen the Untruth are real men:* A man or human being qualifies as such only when and to the extent that he behaves, that is, thinks, speaks and acts, like one. As Souls generally evolve from lower to higher forms of intelligence in the course of many lives, some Souls may psychologically still occupy a subhuman position even though biologically speaking they are endowed with a human body. Conversely, since life can not only evolve to higher forms but also devolve to lower ones, a previously-human Soul may devolve to a psychologically subhuman level while physically still inhabiting a human form. Indeed, it is a universally observable fact that some humans behave in ways that are more characteristic of animals for which reason they can barely be said to be human. Consequently, such individuals are instinctively described by their fellow men by a word that is normally reserved for an animal, for example, snake, dog, pig, ape, etc. Quite apart from this, human bodies may also be inhabited, and human-like shapes assumed, by other non-human entities such as ghosts, evil spirits, etc. Human appearance, therefore, cannot be said to constitute proof of humanity. An instructive anecdote is traditionally related concerning the great 14th century Kashmiri Yogini and Saint, Lalli, who is as celebrated throughout India for her beautiful poems as she is revered for her Spiritual attainment. She was one of those rare beings who have attained Union with God, and who in India are known as Avadhuta, one who has "shaken off" the chains of limited existence. Such beings have inspired India since times beyond memory and can still be found in that hallowed land even today. They have renounced all worldly possessions and wander at will in a state of complete detachment and freedom, sleeping in caves or under trees and eating whatever Nature offers them. Lalli, whose name means, "She Who Longs For True Love (Unity with the Supreme)", was born in the beautiful Valley of Kashmir (also known as Sharada Desh), North India. Married into a wealthy family at an early age, Lalli finally left home in search for

Shiva Whom she rightly regarded as the only "Real Man", the Unique and Supreme Husband, Friend, Brother and Lover of all Souls. As a true Yogini, that is, one who has attained Union with Shiva, and as a mark of supreme freedom and detachment, she would roam the woods and the mountains "clad in space and girdled with wind", with only her flowing tresses covering her physical frame. One day, asked by the eldest in a group of village men as to why she wouldn't wear clothes and whether it would not be more appropriate for a woman to cover herself in public, Lalli replied, "Why should I? I don't see any men about". Shocking as this may sound, from her higher perspective a real man could only be a Self-realised being, one who had realised his Identity with God. Indeed, having tasted the Bliss of Union with the Supreme, whom else could she have called a Man except Shiva Himself? The fact is that those who are Spiritually unaware, and even more so those who choose to follow un-Spiritual ways, are neither really human nor even alive, Spiritually speaking. Evidently, those who are unfaithful to the Supreme Principle of Goodness (Shiva) or Truth, are untrue and therefore unreal. They are mere shells which may have the appearance of human beings but are really devoid of Soul or true life. This is the true meaning of the word "soulless" (niratma or nirjiva). Such soulless beings can only regain their Soul by undergoing many hardships as a result of which they are finally forced to see the Light and take to the Spiritual (Soulful) Path that leads to the Supreme Soul Himself.

42. *I shall now proclaim the Five Holy Duties of Yoga (Pancha-Dharma):* The Sanskrit word Dharma is capable of a wide range of interrelated meanings that cannot be conveyed by any single English word. Thus, depending on the context, it may signify Divine or Universal Law, World-Supporting Order, Justice, Righteousness, Religion, Virtue, as well as any action performed in obedience to this: Spiritual Practice, Religious Observance, Holy Duty, etc. Adharma, on the other hand, represents everything that is contrary to this.

44. *Remembering My Name while uttering the Great Mantra, Om Namah Shivaya, with great devotion, is called Smarana or Remembrance of the Holy Name:* Om Namah Shivaya is usually taken to mean Devotion to Shiva (or Praise be to Shiva). However, its full meaning may more accurately be rendered as "I recognise Shiva, the Supreme Lord and Highest Reality, as the Unique Source of all Light and of all Life and, therefore, to that Source I bow down, to that Source I surrender, to that Source I offer myself, that I may become pervaded by It and made One with Itself". This Great Mantra (Maha Mantra) or Mantra of the Supreme Reality (Shiva Mantra) may be pronounced either audibly or mentally. An abbreviated form thereof which is used in silent prayer or meditation is Shiva-Om. The sound Shiva is mentally uttered in inhalation and Om in exhalation. Om is the Cosmic Sound by uttering which we let go of all other sounds or thoughts that may disturb the tranquillity of our mind and surrender to the Cosmic Energy. Shiva is the Supreme Being by uttering Whose Name we call upon to enter and fill our being so that we may become One with Him. On this, Lalli, India's great Yogini and poetess, has this to say: "O Lalli! If your breath goes out without Om Namah Shivaya (that is, without awareness of the Divine), don't let it return. Eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, living without the Name of Shiva all are just a waste of breath. If you would that your life be fulfilled, understand that to forget Om Namah Shivaya is death. Therefore, with a one-pointed mind, repeat Om Namah Shivaya: He will instantly speak to you, murmuring from within". See also Commentary to verse 10:78.

46. *Maha Shiva Ratri:* The traditional Indian Calendar is unique in that it is in harmony with the movements of both Sun and Moon. As such, it is based on two naturally occurring, parallel cycles: (1) the progression of the Sun along the twelve Constellations of the Zodiac from Aries to Pisces and (2) the phases of the Moon. The first cycle consists of a series of twelve periods lasting 29-31 days each and begins on the day when the Sun enters the Constellation of Aries (22 March, in the Western calendar). This is known as the first day of the Solar Year (Yugadi). The second cycle consists of twelve "moons" or periods of time lasting 30 lunar days and extending

from the First Crescent (or visible digit of the Waxing Moon) to the next New Moon, each. This cycle is calculated as commencing with the last New Moon before 22 March (Spring Equinox), the first day of the Lunar Year being that on which the First Crescent (Pratipada) is current at sunrise. Thus the two cycles, solar and lunar, are never far apart and they run parallel to each other. Now while the first, solar cycle is used to determine the beginning and end of the seasons, sowing and harvest time, as well as for taxing or accounting, etc., the second, lunar cycle is used to determine the dates for religious events. For this purpose, the lunar month or "moon" is divided into two portions of fifteen days each. The first half or "bright fortnight" runs from the First Crescent (Pratipada) which is the first day of the lunar month to Full Moon (Purnima). Conversely, the second half or "dark fortnight" runs from the day after Full Moon to New Moon (Amavasya, Moonless Day) which is the last day of the month. The Great Night of Shiva or Maha Shiva Ratri is the most important holiday in Yoga. Says the Shiva Purana: "In the Month of Phalguna, in the Star Uttara-Phalguni, let the Great Festival of Shiva (Maha Utsava) commence" (Vayaviya Samhita II, 28:7). Shiva Ratri falls on the 14th of the dark fortnight of the month of Magha (or Phalguna, depending on the calendar), this usually being the 3rd New Moon from the Winter Solstice (22 Dec.) Being held close to the beginning of Spring it clearly represents a Spring Festival that celebrates the beginning of new life. It is the time of the Year when days become visibly brighter and longer. At this auspicious time, Shiva, the Creator and Lord of the Universe gives us the opportunity to cleanse ourselves of all negative influences of the past and make a new start in life. By purifying ourselves we also get closer to Shiva and become infused with His Divine Grace. Spiritually speaking, therefore, Shiva Ratri symbolises the regeneration of the human Soul through Unity with the Divine. Amavasya or New Moon means literally, "together-dwelling". Astronomically speaking, this refers to the dwelling together of the Sun and Moon (which on that day appear to be closest to, and facing, each other when seen from Earth). However, in Spiritual or Yogic terms it refers to a state of Unity between the human Soul (symbolised by the Moon, Ha) and God (symbolised by the Sun, Tha). On this holy day, Spiritual thoughts and sentiments such as Universal goodwill and solidarity with Nature and Mankind, are especially cultivated and shared equally by all. The Eve of Shiva Ratri which lasts from dawn to dawn is regarded as a very sacred time when the devotees pay a visit to the temples where religious services with chants and prayers are held every Prahara (three-hour watch) throughout the day and night, the high point of Shiva Ratri being at midnight (3rd watch of the night). No food is permitted during this time with the exception of water, milk or in the case of small children, old or sick people, as well as pregnant women, some light vegetable food. At sunrise on Shiva Ratri Day a bath is taken in a river or temple bath. After one last visit to the temple, the fast is ended with a festive meal which is shared by all the faithful. It is customary among the followers of Shiva on this holy day to pay a visit to their Guru and present him with gifts. It is noteworthy that the Ancient Romans, Persians, Germans and Russians among many other nations on Earth also began their year in March or close to the beginning of Spring. In Britain, for example, New Year's Day was held on the 25th of March until as recently as 1752. The original Christians are similarly said to have celebrated the beginning of the Year on the 1st of March. In India, in addition to this annual Spring Festival, Shiva Ratri is also observed monthly on every 14th, that is, just before New Moon. Other important holidays after Maha Shiva Ratri are Rambha Tritiya, Tritiya Tithi (Teej) and Skanda Shashthi. They are observed near New-Moon days in the months of Jyeshtha, Bhadrapada and Margashirsha, respectively. Kartika Dipam is particularly popular in South India. (See also Calendar Chart, Plate 1, and explanatory note.)

47. *From the hills round about it four mighty streams flow forth into the World:* The four rivers issuing from the slopes of Mount Kailasa are: the Brahmaputra flowing eastwards, the Karnali flowing southwards and into the Ganges, the Sutlej flowing westwards and the Indus flowing northwards. A Mountain exhibits a number of unique features that qualify it as an ideal

Spiritual symbol. First, it suggests strength, firmness and stability which it appears to lend to its surroundings, for which reason it is often said to support the Earth. Second, it offers shelter from wind, rain, Sun and cold and in spring (or summer), when the snow or ice that covers its summit melts, it is a source of water in the form of lakes and running streams making it an indispensable well-spring of life. Third, it extends from Earth to the Sky, thereby providing a connection between the Lower and Higher Planes of existence. Fourth, through its broad base and narrow top it suggests an upward motion symbolic of the Soul's journey of ascent from the Lower to the Higher. And fifth, due to the fact that the Sun is often observed to rise from behind it as well as through its proximity to the Sky and brilliant, snow-capped peak, the Mountain is itself an abode of light and, therefore, of Divinity. These are some of the reasons for which mountains all over the World have been regarded as Seats of Divine Power since the beginning of human life on Earth. It is noteworthy that each of the Seven Continents has one Great Mountain that dominates the surrounding landscape. Thus there is Mont Blanc in Europe, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Carstenz Pyramid in Australia, McKinley in North America, Aconcagua in South America, Mount Vinson in Antarctica and Mount Kailasa in Asia, all of which range between approximately 5,000 and 7,000 meters above sea level. Mount Kailasa itself is a true jewel among mountains, indeed, it is known by that name (Snow Jewel) to the locals. Rising to a height of over 6,000 meters, it is one of the highest mountains in the World. It is also one of the oldest, being older even than the Himalayas themselves. What distinguishes it from other mountains is that it is not an isolated elevation rising straight from a low-level surface but stands on the Tibetan Tableland, an immense high-altitude expanse of even land known as The Roof Of The World, which stretches over the whole of Tibet and beyond. The rivers that spring from the hills round it and the vast lake at its foot - which is a unique sight of its own - make it a place of extraordinary physical beauty and Spiritual power. It is not surprising, therefore, that for millennia it has been a sacred place of pilgrimage to millions of Yogis, Hindus, Jains, Tibetan Bon-pos and Buddhists. Indeed, it has long been regarded as the Spiritual Centre of the World. Even geographically speaking, this view is not altogether baseless. If we trace a straight line from the North Pole down to Mount Kailasa it will continue southwards all the way to Sri Lanka, dividing both India and the Eurasian Continent (the largest in the World) into two equal halves. Moreover, in the same way as Mount Kailasa of North India is regarded as the Spiritual Centre of the World, the Central-Indian City of Ujjain was the political, cultural and geographical centre of the World being situated, like Mount Kailasa, midway between the Dark West and the Bright East. As such, it was known as Ozene to the Ancient Greeks and as Arin to the Arabs. To this day, the North-South line passing through Ujjain and the terrestrial poles is still used in India as the basic meridian (or central longitude) for astronomical calculations. In consequence, it is not altogether impossible that Mount Kailasa may have provided the model for the sacred mountains of the various religions of the World. Even the Bible speaks of an unidentified "Mountain of God" as well as four rivers that issue from the Garden of Eden (Paradise), etc. If we take into consideration that the Transhimalayan regions were warmer several millennia ago than they are today, Mount Kailasa clearly matches the biblical description of Paradise.

49. *What is done in unity with Me, whatever that action may be, it shall be lawful, holy and pleasing to Me:* This is in agreement with all genuine Spiritual traditions. The Christian Saint Augustine, for example, similarly taught that so long as one loves God, that is to say, one abides in Unity with Him, one may do as one pleases. Love God (abide in Unity with God), he said, and do as you please. The reason being that every action that flows from a state of Unity with God necessarily concords with Divine Will and in consequence can never be unlawful in Universal Law - although it may on occasion conflict with *human* law, custom or opinion. In such cases, Universal or Divine Law must be given precedence over human law. What is important to understand in this context is that human law represents an insignificant factor in the Universe

which continues to abide by the Will of the Supreme Being irrespective of what laws are applied on Earth. In the end, of course, Divine Will will prevail everywhere.

56. *Without a King a country is like a family without a father, etc.:* The Sanskrit word Rajah can equally mean Ruler, yet it is here translated as King due to the fact that this is the English word that normally suggests Governance as a divinely ordained institution, which is the sense and meaning generally intended in Yoga (see also Ch. 8:47). Indeed, the Yogic concept of Divine Kingship, that is to say, the authority whereby a country is ruled in harmony with the Supreme Principle of Goodness (God), has until recently been universally accepted by the thinking men of East and West as the ideal form of governance. The notion that Monarchy (rule by one divinely guided person) is somehow inferior to Democracy (rule by the common people) is a relatively new development in the history of human thought. Ancient man recognised the fact that some people possess greater intelligence, knowledge and experience - and therefore are better suited to govern a country - than others are. Even more so, when the Ruler appears to have some kind of close contact to a Higher Intelligence (or Divine Spirit) that endows him with seemingly superhuman abilities, and when he is, literally, born and bred to that task. Indeed, it was on this basis that the Kings of the Ancient World were appointed to rule over their people, and history offers many examples of great Kings who on account of their natural Spirituality, which was supported and enhanced by long military, political and Spiritual training, have earned the gratitude and admiration of countless successive generations. The reason why most monarchies were in recent times replaced by so-called democracies is that due to the Spiritual degeneration of mankind many Kings in the past came to power not by the Will of God but by political and military means. Consequently, these "Kings" (1) were either incapable or unwilling to follow divine guidance and (2) abused their powers in ways that gave rise to the belief that only democracy can somehow guarantee that the interests of the people are served as intended by them. The problem with this is that people in general do not have sufficient political, economic or social training to understand and foresee all the ramifications (both short-term and long-term) of their choice when electing a Government into office and therefore often elect the wrong person or policy. Moreover, the democratic election system whereby politicians - and their programmes - are elected in and out of office every few years, results in politicians taking short-term views of their policies, to the detriment of systematic long-term planning. Thus politicians become primarily concerned with offering superficial, temporary solutions to the problems that are of concern to the electorate who in turn have neither the specialised expertise nor the time nor, indeed, the inclination, to analyse the policies they have voted for or which are being designed and implemented on their behalf. On strict logic, it makes no difference what system of governance we employ, so long as it guarantees the Spiritual and material good of the people. In practice, however, monarchies such as Britain, Japan and Sweden have in the past proved to be far more efficient in serving the interests of their people than many a democratic government, including that of modern India, which has notoriously failed to adequately promote the much needed material and Spiritual progress of the nation. Indeed, in their obsessive attempt to abolish their own history and reinvent themselves, democracies all over the World have exhibited a curious tendency to become bogged down in all manner of political, cultural and social experiments which by and large have failed to produce the expected results. Having lost their link to the Divine, large sections of Humanity are now in danger of losing their human touch. Millions of unfortunate Souls are suffering the nefarious effects of anti-Spiritual excrescences such as rampant capitalism (rule by big business), communism (atheist state rule) and religious fundamentalism (rule by self-appointed religious authorities), the proliferation of which could have been inhibited by the establishment of Spiritually-inspired monarchies based on time-honoured Yogic principles. It is our firm conviction, therefore, that only leaders who function as part of a time-honoured, Spiritually-inspired tradition can have a both stabilising and elevating effect on a nation and the course she follows in history. In short, the Divine King is a Servant of

the People and a Servant of God. His aim is not to divide and rule but, in true Yogic fashion, to Unite and Serve. He represents both a nation's link to the sacred past and her guiding light towards a glorious future. Among India's many wise and valiant Kings who are still remembered today, are: Lord Rama, Emperor Ashoka, King Vikramaditya and Shivaji Maharaj. And, of course, Lord Buddha himself was a Royal Prince by birth.

60. *Queen, wives and female attendants:* The Queen is the first and usually most senior of a King's spouses. On a different level of meaning, these terms may be interpreted allegorically. Thus the King may symbolise the Soul (Atma); the Queen may stand for Material Energy (Prakarti); female attendants may represent thoughts and feelings; subjects may mean the senses; and the Kingdom is the body over which the Soul reigns. These (from Prakarti to body) are also referred to as the Field (of experience and action) while the Soul is the Lord of the Field (Kshetra-Pati); or the "City-of-Eight" (Puryashtaka, i.e., Matter, Intellect, Ego and the Five Senses) and the Soul, its Lord. The two levels of interpretation are, of course, not mutually exclusive but complementary.

65. *My devotees shall greet each other courteously with the threefold salutation:* The usual greeting formula in India is Namaste or Namaskar. However, followers of Shiva often greet each others with the three words, Om Namah Shivaya, that is, Devotion to Shiva, the Supreme.

66. *Love is a feeling of immeasurable Joy that arises from the awareness of Unity with the loved one:* In conventional language, Love is often the desire of being in the presence of a person or thing towards which one entertains feelings of affection, admiration, etc. From the perspective of Yoga, this desire indicates an incomplete sense of Unity between the person who loves and the object of his love. This becomes evident, for example, from the fact that humans often seek physical or social contact with others not out of a feeling of Unity but on the contrary, out of a feeling of separateness and isolation which they attempt to overcome. By contrast, true Love is an already existing sense of Unity which is perfect and complete in and of itself and does not require anything else except itself as it is. To express this perfection of true Love, it is said: "It is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and also in the end", whereas ordinary love is often accompanied by a whole range of emotions such as anxiety, possessiveness, jealousy, disappointment, dejection, etc.

70. *Let him choose a maiden endowed with auspicious marks:* Yoga knows various systems of determining a person's character, health or future course of life by the study of physical features and behaviour. These characteristics are sometimes classified as eight: (1) Vapus (limbs), (2) Avarta (curls), (3) Gandha (odour), (4) Chaya (aura as well as shadow or reflection), (5) Sattva (mental stability), (6) Svava (voice), (7) Gati (gait), and (8) Varna (complexion). See also verse 10:133 and Commentary.

71. *Wherein the bridegroom, having chosen a bride, of his own will gives as much wealth to her parents, her kinsfolk and to herself as he can afford:* "Of his own will", that is to say, without being solicited by the bride's parents or family which would amount to the bride being sold. The dowry is usually property such as jewellery, clothes and household objects which the bride brings to the husband as in the first type of marriage indicated above. In this second type, property (or money) is given by the bridegroom to the bride's parents or legal custodians (kinsfolk), or to herself upon failure of the former.

72. *Nor yet shall a follower of Dharma wed one who follows laws other than Mine, etc.:* This is to protect the Community against contamination by beliefs and practices that are contrary to Yoga. The Shiva Purana similarly declares: "A maiden who is a follower of Shiva shall not be

given in marriage to one who is not a devotee. If the husband be not a devotee she shall endeavour to guide him unto the Path of Shiva. But if unable to do so, let her abandon him and (upon failure to obtain another husband) turn her mind to a holy life" (Vayaviya Samhita II, 15:66). A follower of Shiva should request the prospective spouse to embrace the Path of Yoga by pronouncing the words "Lord Shiva is the Highest God and Yoga is the Path that leads to Him". Should the husband or wife refuse to do so or, having accepted the Path of Yoga decide to abandon it, the marriage becomes legally invalid.

77. *The couple who is happy, healthy and virtuous will have offspring endowed with the same qualities, etc.:* The Puranas also say: "Righteous and pious children living up to a hundred years are born of righteous marriages. Unfortunate, poor and short-lived children are born of unrighteous wedlock" (Skanda Purana IV. i. 36:8). Since the family constitutes the basic unit of human society, marital harmony is of utmost importance for a happy and healthy population. Festivals celebrating marital unity and prosperity are held all over India, in particular Varalakshmi Vratam (on the Full Moon of the month of Shravana).

78. *Unity is of three kinds, of body, of mind and of Soul:* Bodily unity consisting of physical contact between two bodies is universally admitted to represent a pleasurable experience. It takes place, for example, when two animals mate or in any other instance where contact is purely physical and does not involve emotions. Emotional or mental unity, between two minds, is much more beautiful. It is experienced when two like-minded persons exchange thoughts and feelings either in verbal or physical communication such as when making love. But Spiritual unity, between one Soul and another, is the most beautiful, most fulfilling and most vitally important. However, in materialistic societies people are not consciously aware of this fact. The need for Spiritual unity is only subconsciously felt by most people. As a result of this and because most people are unaware of themselves as Souls, physical unity is often used as a substitute for mental or emotional unity and these both are used as a substitute for Spiritual unity. Human beings may therefore be divided into three distinct categories according to their capacity for experiencing unity: (1) Animal-like, comprising those persons who experience unity mostly or exclusively on the physical level, (2) Human, being those who experience unity on the mental or emotional level and (3) Divine, comprising all living beings who are capable of experiencing unity with other Souls directly and without the intermediary of body and mind. Yoga Practice (Sadhana) requires that whenever we relate to another being we ask ourselves: "On what level am I making Unity (with the other person) at this very moment?" Having found an answer we must then endeavour to establish Unity with the other Soul or Souls at the highest possible level and then allow that Unity to express itself on any of the other, lower levels when and as circumstances require. In this way we constantly elevate ourselves to higher and higher stages of experience until we finally reach the state of Universal Unity.

79. *The Sun wherefrom comes rain:* The Sun draws up the moisture from the Earth (through a process of heating and evaporation) and then sends it down again in the form of rain.

80. *But let them enjoy conjugal union on the sixteenth day from the beginning of her courses or when the First Crescent is seen in the Sky:* There is a scientifically established link between the phases of the Moon and the menstrual cycle in female mammals. In human communities leading a life close to Nature, such as those of Ancient India, menstruation tends to occur on Full Moon, while New Moon is the time when the female reproductive system is the most fertile. Since New Moon is a holy day that is reserved for prayer and meditation, couples are advised to engage in sexual intercourse on the day after New Moon, when the First Crescent is current at sunrise. This practice is said to promote the Spiritual growth of a married couple and ensure the conception of Spiritually-minded children. When observed for several generations, it is said to

result in the birth of a Great Soul (Mahatma or Maha Purusha). A child born to parents who are practising Yogis is known as Yogini-Bhu (Yogi-Born).

81. *Let man and woman ever abide as one. From Unity spring all things that are right and good but from Discord comes only what is evil and wrong:* This may be compared to the teachings of the Puranas: "Harmony between husband and wife is conducive to the attainment of the first three Goals of life (Righteousness, Love, Prosperity)" (Skanda Purana IV. i. 36:82). The final Goal, Nirvana, is attainable through Yoga.

83. *Which of the two shall have dominion over the other, the husband or the wife?* It is well to observe here that the point at issue is not which gender should rule over the other in general, but who should assume a position of authority in a marital relation. Indeed, Yoga treats both men and women as equal. However, the fact is that every Soul has a particular role to play in the Universal Plan. If all of a country's citizens competed with each other for leadership, this would result in disunity and conflict. Similarly, competition within a household leads to conflict, disunity and isolation. By contrast, co-operation leads to harmony, unity and togetherness. Since not all Souls can fulfil the same function, men and women are expected to occupy different positions or roles in society which correspond to their respective natural aptitudes. For example, the natural role of woman is that of bearing and raising children and that of man to provide for and protect both woman and child. The two are equally relevant and deserving of equal recognition. Submitting to the authority of the husband in times of war, for example, does in no way diminish a woman's position in society, nor is a man's dignity lowered by following the wife's advice on certain issues. As always in Yoga, the essential point is unity, harmony and co-operation as opposed to the ego-centred competition prevalent in modern, materialistic society.

95. *He who unprovoked assails another or enters another man's house with the intention of committing a crime shall himself be struck down with a club:* Having stated the general principle that only the King or, with his permission, village elders and other persons appointed by him, are entitled to carry out the death sentence upon one who was either found guilty in court or caught in the act of committing a capital offence, the exception to this is now explained as being such cases in which life or property are intentionally put in danger. It is explicitly permitted here to any person to take another's life in defence of his own life and property. Execution of the perpetrator by a blow or several blows to the head was widely practised in Ancient India and elsewhere. The Law of Manu (Manu Smriti, VIII, 314-315) advises the perpetrator to go running to the King and confess his crime. He must also as an instrument of punishment or execution by the King, "carry on his shoulder a pestle, or a club of Khadira wood, or a spear sharp at both ends, or an iron staff". However, the death sentence was often commuted to other, less severe forms of punishment such as beating, fining or amputation of a limb and sometimes even altogether suspended. While the victim of assault, burglary, etc., clearly has the legal and Spiritual right to punish the perpetrator, the question that arises here is what happens to the latter, from a Spiritual rather than legal point of view. The answer is that a person who has been punished for committing a crime is both legally and Spiritually freed from the guilt he has incurred by committing that particular crime. If, on the other hand, the offender is pardoned, he is legally but not Spiritually absolved from his guilt unless and until he has adequately repented and atoned for the transgression. See also Commentary to verse 23, above.

102. *A man may punish his wife, his son, his servant, his disciple and his younger brother:* While in principle Yoga favours peaceful solutions to all domestic issues, the fact is that this is not always possible. Whether we like it or not, more forceful means may on occasion be required. Since violence is known to occur in many households some rules must be established to regulate and control such situations. Corporal punishment is a time-honoured means of

upholding peace and order. While most humans understandably seek to avoid punishment in all circumstances, it remains a Spiritual fact that when justified and appropriately administered, such punishment can cause a person to "come to his senses" and return to his true self. In psychological terms, it similarly has a purifying and therapeutic effect in that it eliminates any conscious or subconscious feelings of guilt that perpetrators often develop in respect of certain improper actions, thoughts, etc. Corporal discipline also has an indisputable educational value in preventing and correcting aberrant behaviour, in particular in such cases where alternative measures have failed. In the context of child rearing, it may be observed that even animals chastise their young to discourage unnatural or improper behaviour. Chastisement therefore must be admitted to be a natural thing and is recognised as such by most religious traditions. Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam sanction various forms and degrees of corporal punishment for the purpose of maintaining domestic and social order. Yoga agrees with this in such cases where corporal discipline is regarded as more effective than other, more peaceful means and provided that it is not used as an instrument of oppression or abuse but applied strictly for the purpose of upholding peace and order, or when necessary, for educational purposes, for example, in schools when other methods have proved unproductive. For an alternative meaning of the word "householder" or "man", see the allegorical interpretation of "King" in Commentary to verse 60, above.

107. *The Farmer, the Merchant, the Warrior, the Priest and the Yogi in their midst:* It is interesting to note that this division of society into five classes is very much valid even today. In a World where the greater part of humanity subsists on agriculture, farming is needed to produce food and feed the population. Trading is necessary to exchange goods. An army is needed to maintain inner order, prevent crime and to defend the country against external attack. Guidance in religious matters is necessary for social and moral order. And Yoga as a Spiritual system is needed for the psychological and Spiritual well-being of all and to establish a conscious link between human society and God. All other specialised professions involving construction work, medical treatment, legal assistance, etc., are needed only occasionally and sometimes not at all, whereas the above five are permanent constituents of all human society. In those countries where Yoga is either unknown or suppressed on political or religious grounds, materialism, atheism, political and religious extremism, etc. become more prominent and psychotherapy is often introduced to redress the resultant imbalance, usually with dubious results.

108. *Those who say that the servant is another Caste, are ignorant folk whose knowledge springs from other men and not from Myself:* The servant class as a separate caste is not generally found in the ancient Scriptures of India. The tenth Book (19:12) of the Rig Veda mentions four castes issuing from the Creator as priests, warriors, farmers and servants but this belongs to the Brahmanic tradition of "Four-Headed" God Brahma, whereas our text follows the Yogic tradition of "Five-Headed" God Shiva. (The Puranas tell us that Brahma had five heads one of which was cut off by Shiva who holds the skull as a symbol of power.) Indeed, the great reverence with which Yogis are regarded by all social classes even today, suggests that the original stratification of society was five-layered with Yogis at the top. Enlightened Yogis being more Divine than human and hence not bound by human laws, are correctly held to be above the four castes that constitute the majority of Mankind. However, as guardians and transmitters of Spiritual Truth on Earth, Yogis cannot be reasonably excluded from society. On the other hand, servants may well be included in the other castes, as explained here. "Outcastes" or "Untouchables" are unknown in Yoga apart from lawfully excommunicated or exiled, unreformed criminals.

110. *On Earth, all men are My servants:* All Souls must sooner or later act in accordance with the Will of God. However, the word "servant" (Dasa) must not be taken in the negative sense of a person that is reluctantly subjected to another's will, but of willing co-operator who understands

the value of following a higher guidance. To serve, therefore, means here to be of service to the Creator for the purpose of establishing Unity with Him, and ultimately to be of service to oneself - a fact that is well-understood by all Spiritual people.

112 (a). *As to whether it becomes a man to have one wife or many, etc.:* What is important to understand is that in traditional societies, polygamy (a man having more than one wife) and polyandry (a woman having more than one husband) are not practised for the purpose of sexual gratification as is sometimes erroneously assumed in the West, but purely for demographic, economic or Spiritual reasons. In times of war, for example, when a high number of men are killed in battle, a large proportion of the female population is unable to find a partner. Unmarried women therefore will seek to find a partner among already-married men, a situation that necessarily leads to social problems. The obvious solution is for married men, to the extent to which they are able to do so, to take a second or third wife. Conversely, when the male population outnumbers the female population, it may become necessary for several men (for example, brothers) to share one wife in order to redress the male-female imbalance. This last-named practice though not very widespread, is still common in parts of India, including Tibet and Nepal. From a biological point of view, and as observed in the animal kingdom, a male who is physically strong and healthy, intelligent and successful, ought to mate with several females in order to propagate his superior genes, thereby contributing to the advancement of the entire population. Ethically speaking also, it would be in the interest of the whole population for a man of good moral and Spiritual character to have several wives and many children. By contrast, if men of inferior moral and Spiritual character (such as unreformed criminals) were the main generators of offspring, this would lead to a rapid degeneration of human society, causing materialism, crime and violence to rise and Spirituality to decline. In such a situation, it is the duty of a Spiritually-minded man to redress the imbalance by marrying several women and producing a large number of Spiritually-minded children. In consequence, while accepting monogamous (one-spouse-only) relationships as the ideal situation, Yoga also recognises the necessity of polygamy as a practical means of redressing social imbalance.

112 (b). *He is like unto the Ocean:* The King is here compared to the Ocean which in Indian folk-lore is a great Sovereign whose many wives are the rivers. We may observe in this context that having several wives or female partners is not an exclusively Indian or Eastern practice. On the contrary, it is a custom that was widely observed in the Ancient World, including among the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Kings of Israel, the Kings of Africa, Central America and the rulers of many European nations. Among the latter, we may mention the 13th century German King and Roman Emperor Frederick II, one of the most eminent rulers in European history, who was known to his contemporaries as the "Wonder of the World" (Stupor Mundi). According to tradition, Lord Krishna had 16,108 wives, and further examples abound in the Scriptures of India.

119. *My devotee may eat the flesh of airborne creatures, etc.:* Yoga does not prescribe any punishment for the consumption of lawfully obtained meat. Indeed, meat is generally permitted to farmers, merchants and warriors though not to priests and Yogis, that is, those who dedicate themselves exclusively to a religious or Spiritual life. Even in the case of the latter, the occasional consumption of meat is not entirely unknown. Lord Buddha, for example, is said to have eaten meat at his last meal and the present Dalai Lama of Tibet, the Spiritual Leader of millions of Buddhists, is not a strict vegetarian. The dietary prohibitions enjoined in this verse are mainly based on health considerations. The meat of animals that feed on vegetable matter like grains, berries, leaves and grass is considered to contain fewer toxins than that of those which feed on other creatures, whether small (like insects, worms, snails) or large (birds, fish and mammals). Again, of those that are eatable according to this rule, some like the goose or duck or those that live in the vicinity of human habitations (village-cock or pig) are, on account of their

eating habits, held to be potential carriers of disease and therefore unsuitable for human consumption. Finally, there are those animals that humans refrain from eating on practical, moral or religious grounds. Thus, in India, horses and camels are used for riding, elephants for hauling timber and oxen for ploughing the fields or pulling carts; social and moral considerations prohibit the killing of humans and human-like animals for food; while animals such as swans and cows are part of a nation's religious symbolism and are therefore regarded as sacred. Historically speaking, some animals were linked with a particular Deity or event in the history of a people and their flesh was only eaten on certain holy days as part of religious celebrations, as a sacramental meal. The killing and consumption of such animals was therefore prohibited in all other circumstances. This was originally the case of the wild pig, boar or hog. In Europe, for example, wild boar were only killed and eaten in winter, on the occasion of New Year festivities (Yule Tide). The animal's subsequent domestication, however, forced it to subsist on household refuse such as kitchen swill (or hogwash) and other hygienically objectionable substances it might find while rummaging about the village for food. However, this cannot be logically applied to pigs only, as some modern religions do. For example, apart from what comes to them via the sewerage system, fish are known to eat dead bodies including those of humans, chickens often eat their own excrements, and so on. Hence the association with uncleanness and the prohibition for eating pigs and domestic fowls that roam freely near human habitation, but not for those animals that live in the wild (and therefore feed on natural food) or that are kept on farms (and fed healthy, uncontaminated food). It is noteworthy that the link between certain animals such as pigs, chickens and geese and contagious diseases especially those that are transmissible to humans has been confirmed by modern scientific research. In addition to the above considerations, the Teachings of Yoga tell us to avoid eating meat when possible and that if circumstances oblige us to eat meat (such as in times of famine, war, etc.) we must do so not casually but with due respect for the sanctity of the animal's life (see verses 122, 123). While it is true that the animal is not really killed since its Soul continues to live and sooner or later takes on a new body, the fact remains that the true purpose of animals is not to be eaten or otherwise exploited by humans but to participate in their own process of evolution, in which humans as their elder brothers ought to assist them to the best of their knowledge and ability.

120. *Pure food:* In agreement with modern Science, Yoga teaches that everything consists of energy (shakti, in Sanskrit). Energy is a power or force that has the capacity to act or work by producing changes in itself and in other forces with which it comes into contact. A human being consists of Spiritual, mental and physical energies, and so does everything else - every living being and inanimate object - to various degrees. Energy can be generated and put out in the form of thoughts, feelings, sounds or physical activity. And it can be taken in and absorbed in the form of light, sound, heat, air, water or food. Every form of energy has the capacity to affect us in certain ways. A balanced, healthy and happy life is a harmonious exchange of inner and outer energies. The goal of Yoga, therefore, is to help us create a happy and fulfilling life on the basis of harmonious energy patterns (Spiritual, mental and physical). Energy has three fundamental qualities known as luminosity (sattva), obscurity (tamas) and movement (rajas), the latter being an interaction of the first two. Spiritual life is the conscious cultivation of Spiritual energy patterns. Beautiful and harmonious thoughts, emotions, sounds, colours, forms and movements are means whereby Spiritual or sattvic energy patterns are produced. As food consists of energy, it too, has the capacity to stimulate luminous (sattvic), obscure (tamasic) or dynamic (rajasic) energy patterns in a human being. Pure or Spiritual food, therefore, is that which is conducive to Spiritual energy patterns. A Yogic diet is one that consists of such food. In practice, food that is nourishing, balancing and uplifting is given preference over that which is over-stimulating, sedative (drowsiness-inducing) or toxic. The following are some typical examples of the three classes of food. Fruit, vegetables, green leaves, pulses, nuts, cereals, milk, yoghurt, natural cane sugar, unrefined vegetable oils as well as spices like ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, saffron, and

basil belong to the sattvic or uplifting category. Vegetable or animal (in particular saturated) fat such as margarine, butter, cheese and lard, refined sugar, sweets, eggs, fish, meat, spices like pepper, chillies, garlic, onion and cloves, beverages like tea, coffee and alcoholic drinks (in small amounts) are classified as rajasic or stimulant. And foods that are unpalatable, difficult to digest, too dry, too spicy, stale or toxic such as alcohol (in large amounts), condiments like nutmeg and poppy-seeds, are of a tamasic or dullish nature. A Yogic diet requires that sattvic food be the main source of nutrition, with rajasic food taken only occasionally or in small amounts, while tamasic food is to be avoided as far as possible. (See also Ch. 10:55-56.) Regarding the purity or otherwise of things, in common with Yoga, the Sages of Ancient Greece taught that "everything is pure to the pure ones". The Bible also says: "All things indeed are pure", and "There is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Rom., 14:20; 14:14) and again "Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, etc. *These* are the things which defile a man" (Mat., 15:11-20). This of course is in complete agreement with the teachings of Yoga. It is said in the Tantraloka: "The right outlook is this, that everything which is (perceived as being) separate from (one's own) Consciousness is impure and everything on the other hand that is identical therewith, is pure"... "Purity is but the awareness of an object's identity with Shiva (the Universal Consciousness). In a true Yogi this awareness persists with regard to all things"... "He whose mind is firmly established in Reality, even if he were to eat poison, he would not be affected in the least, even as the lotus leaf is not affected by water" (IV, 240-1a; 218-228 a). However, until we have by means of Yoga reached a state of Divine Awareness, what we eat may well affect our body, our mind, our life and our environment. Thus says the Tantraloka: "This (what was quoted above) was also the view of the Sages of old whose mind was free from all differentiating thoughts. This truth however was kept secret by them so as not to disturb the natural order of the World" (op. cit., IV, 243b-244a). In other words, this Higher Truth (that everything is made of Consciousness and hence pure) applies to Enlightened or Advanced Yogis only, and not to ordinary humans who remain unaware of it. Similarly, it may be observed that various methods of deriving nourishment from natural energy-sources such as sunlight are known to the Yogis of India. However, such methods are beyond the reach of ordinary humans for which reason they must be left out of the present consideration.

129. *Lying down with the head towards the South:* Mount Kailasa, which is situated in the North of India, is regarded as the Spiritual Centre of the World by all Indian and Tibetan traditions (Yoga, Hinduism, Bon-po, Jainism, Buddhism, etc.). In consequence, one should sleep with the head pointing South (where the Sun shines at mid-day) so as to face North upon rising from bed. Moreover, at night, the Sun shines in the North (on the other side of Earth) and one aligns oneself with the Solar energy by sleeping in that position. If one is uncertain where the North is, one should simply visualise oneself as facing the northern direction (with Mount Kailasa before oneself and Lake Manas reflecting the Sky) and mentally connect oneself with the Spiritual energy emanating from there.

133. *The body of one who has departed from this World may be left like unto a log in the forest, buried under earth, cremated or cast into the water according to each Soul's Spiritual attainment:* The original method of disposing of a dead body was through burial or, in the case of small infants, by leaving it above ground in the forest or under a bush outside the boundaries of a human community. Where water was abundant, immersion in a river or sea was also practised. The bodies of original man being Spiritually and chemically pure, it was safe to allow them to disintegrate into their natural environment. However, due to Mankind's growing Spiritual degeneration and attachment to physical things, it has become necessary for bodies to be destroyed by fire in order to sever a Soul's emotional dependence on it (which can often last for some time even after death) and set him free. Cremation is also preferable to other forms of

disposal for reasons of hygiene as well as space. Therefore, this is the prevalent custom in India today. Burial may still be performed, however, in the case of Spiritually advanced Souls where there is no question of attachment to the physical body or pollution being caused to the environment. The well-being of both individual and the World round him is therefore carefully considered by the Community leaders in each case.

150. *I have given My Law to Mankind that It might be a guidance to all, etc.:* It is common practice among the various religions of the World to hold that their respective communities are the sole recipients of Divine Revelation. The followers of Judaism, for example, believe that God's Revelation was given exclusively to them. However, this contradicts the fact that Babylonians possessed almost identical beliefs concerning the creation of the World, the origin of Mankind and the Laws given to man, apparently long before their Jewish neighbours. Indeed, the question that logically arises, is where did all the other nations on Earth get their religious traditions from? Surely, they couldn't all have invented them. The answer to this is found both in the Scriptures of the Indians and in the Quran of the Arabs, where it is clearly stated that God gave His Revelation to all nations and that every nation has her teacher. But if so, what accounts for the obvious differences and contradictions among different faiths? How can God say in the Bible "Behold, this is My Son" and then, just a few centuries later, declare in the Quran "I have never had a Son"? It is suggested in the Quran that God Himself has mislead some people in order to confound them. The problem with this is that God being good and just, cannot deliberately seek to confound anybody. This suggestion therefore does not stand to reason and must be rejected by the discerning seeker of truth. The only logically and Spiritually tenable explanation is that offered by Yoga: God has indeed revealed the Truth to the Whole World but It has been mostly distorted due to each recipient's undeveloped or defective capacity of Spiritual perception or reception, in the same way as something said by a parent to his children will be variously understood or interpreted according to every child's capacity of understanding which will vary with age, upbringing, etc. Since all Divine Revelation has come down to us by human and therefore imperfect means, we can only discover the Truth by being open to the teachings of various religious traditions and harmonising them by the strict application of logic which was given to us by God for the very purpose of finding Truth. In doing so, we can only enrich our own culture and expand our Spiritual horizon. See also Ch. 10:286 (My Guiding Light shines equally upon all...).

151. *Strangers are a quarrelsome lot, etc.:* Despite her being the most numerous (counting Pakistan, Bangladesh and other regions that belonged to India before partition) and hence physically most powerful nation on Earth, India may also be regarded as the most peaceful. It is not only remarkable that throughout history Indians have refrained from invading and conquering other nations but despite being themselves subjected to attacks from foreign powers, they have remained famous for their openness and hospitality towards all foreigners. To understand such prophetic statements, therefore, it is necessary to be acquainted with certain historic facts. In the days of the Indus Empire (2,000 BC) India was the World's largest and most advanced civilisation. Recent archaeological investigations have revealed the existence of urban settlements that may go as far back as 7,000 BC. Although due to climatic changes and other factors she subsequently entered a period of decline, India was still maintaining extensive cultural and commercial links with Rome, Greece, Egypt, Persia and China in Classical times. Ancient Roman writers like Plinius the Elder of the first century of the current era, for example, were complaining that all the gold of the country was exported to India in exchange for Indian goods such as silk, cotton, spices, ivory, precious stones and above all, pearls, a great favourite with Roman ladies. Chinese visitors to India similarly attest to the country's legendary Spiritual and material wealth. The subsequent ascendancy of Christianity in Europe and of Islam in Asia, and the resultant divisions and conflicts, led to a breakdown in the traditional avenues that had linked

India with the West for millennia. Even so, as late as the 11th century of the current era (CE) India was described as a "land full of gold and jewels, and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making clothes, and aromatic plants, and the sugar cane, and the whole aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful". Indeed, it was India's legendary material and Spiritual wealth that attracted foreigners from Ancient Greeks to medieval Arabs and modern British merchants. However, from the 11th century onwards, foreign invasion, occupation and exploitation have caused poverty, corruption, as well as religious and social division and conflict to contaminate Indian society and finally reduce the country to Third-World status. We may therefore legitimately conclude that, generally speaking, foreigners have exerted a negative influence on India and her people. (A notable exception to this are the Jews and the Parsees who unlike Muslims, Christians and Communists have never sought to conquer or convert the country but instead chose to peacefully settle on her shores.) Needless to say, India is not the only nation on earth to have suffered from foreign invasions. The point that is being made in this and the following verses is that nation-wide unity and adherence to Spiritual Law (Dharma) are the only means of preserving the integrity and sovereignty of a people. Today, India must be on her guard against the anti-Spiritual forces that are currently infiltrating and undermining traditional societies everywhere.

154. *They will say with their mouths, You shall not kill. But no sooner will they utter these words than they will fall upon their fellow men and murder them without remorse:* Conversion by means of military force is a frequent occurrence throughout the history of many religions. For example, the Bible recounts how God Yahweh gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, the reformist Prophet of the Israelites. The first of these Commandments, like the First Yogic Rule (Ahimsa), was "You shall not kill". Having descended from the mountain where he received the laws, however, Moses began a military campaign of conquest and conversion of the land of Canaan to biblical Judaism (or Yahwism) which resulted in the death and enslavement of tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children. Says the Bible: "They put to the sword the entire city: man and woman, young and old, cow and sheep" (Joshua 6:21, etc.). As the attentive Bible reader will no doubt observe, such unjustified acts of aggression were contrary to the very laws they were supposedly intended to impose. The present verse is a clear indictment of such actions which are frequently passed off as "the Command of God" when in fact they constitute a blatant violation of Spiritual Law.

155. *I Alone Am the Saviour of all:* As the Supreme Being, Shiva is the True Saviour (Taraka) of all Souls. Even if we sometimes appear to be saved from suffering and pain by secondary agents or factors, the Supreme Lord is ultimately the Primary Cause of all salvific, or redeeming, activities. It is to Him Alone that we owe our recognition and gratitude. See also verse 4:42 and Commentary.

162. *The day of reckoning is never far:* In established Western religions, The Day of Reckoning or Judgement Day is believed to take place at the end of the World when all Souls are thought to be physically brought back from the dead and called to account for their actions. This event is said in the Bible, Quran, etc., to be "near" or imminent. And yet it has still not happened even after thousands of years! As we might expect, this has cast some doubt on the very truth of such scriptural statements and has given rise to confusion among many believers. The Teachings of Yoga are in a unique position to clarify the issue as follows. The fact is that the end of the World is neither near nor far. It cannot be predicted by any human being who was born to or of human parents, be they even Krishna, Jesus, or Mohammad. The function of such leaders, each in his own time, was simply to lead people to God Who would then Himself make known to them all things necessary for their Spiritual and material prosperity and well-being. The end of the World is quite a different (and separate) matter. It will happen at a moment of God's Own

choosing, on the occasion of Universal Dissolution (Pralaya), and will be announced by God Himself by means of one of His Divine Manifestations. There is nothing human beings can do or say about it, which is why no Scripture ever gives a precise date and those that do have long been proved wrong. Meanwhile, however, the actions of all living creatures are constantly registered and assessed for punishment or reward as and when they are performed. In general, therefore, it may be said that the result of our actions may manifest itself at any time but not later than on our departure from this World, when each Soul is individually judged and sentenced by the Supreme Lord Himself in His Capacity as Lord of Justice (Dharma Raja). Hence, as far as the individual Soul is concerned, the day of reckoning is, literally, never far. See also Commentary to 9:46.

188. *Four World Ages:* The Four World Ages have a duration of 4,800, 3,600, 2,400 and 1,200 Divine (Celestial) Years or 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000 and 432,000 human or terrestrial years, respectively.

195. *Divinely appointed Kings who are the offspring of the Sons of Heaven and the Daughters of Earth:* There are two parallel civilisations on Earth that exist on different planes and intersect only at a few points in time and space: a purely Spiritual civilisation of divine beings which is currently on the decline, and a material one which is on the ascent, at least materially or technologically speaking. The first is represented by Manu and Manavi, the First Pair of True Humans and their descendants or successors, and the second by those that have only recently reached the human stage of evolution, having previously incarnated as sub-human species from plants to apes. The Third World Age is characterised by an increase in the physical or material mode of existence. Being in close contact with the emerging human race, whom they were assisting in their evolution, the True Men became deeper and deeper absorbed in material existence and less in touch with the Higher Planes, their True Home. They now began to teach their earthly brothers and sisters the first elements of primitive technology, agriculture, language and other useful skills, and some of them even became involved in more intimate relationships with humans. As a result of this, the first mixed-race beings were born, who gradually came to replace the more primitive humans and finally laid the foundations of human civilisation on Earth as we know it today. Thus, human evolution is not the result of an unconscious process of natural selection as the materialists would have us believe, but it happens according to Shiva's Divine Plan, and we are in reality the descendants of a Divine Race of Spiritual Beings. That this is indeed the case is confirmed by the mythologies of all human races which relate many stories of Gods marrying humans. The Bible, for example, states that "the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them and the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6:4). The Gods were evidently the original Divine Souls and their descent to Earth and intermarriage with humans have been preserved in the collective memory of our Ancestors. The kings and queens of the Ancient World were all known to be of Divine descent. Historical evidence shows that the Kings of Ancient Egypt, Europe, Asia and Central America were revered as Gods. Just a few centuries ago, the King of France was styled the "Sun-King", Indian Kings or Maharajahs traced their lineage back to a Divine Sun-Race, that is, a Race of Divine Light Beings, and to this day the Emperors of Japan are regarded as the direct descendants of a Sun-Goddess. Though from a higher point of view, our Divine Ancestors had descended to less Spiritual levels of existence, their emotional and Spiritual life was far richer and more fulfilling than that of present-day humans. Therefore, life on Earth in this Age, which lasted 2,400 Divine Years (or 864,000 human years), was still on the whole much more peaceful and happier than it is now.

196. *Iron Age of Waking (Kali Yuga):* With the advent of the fourth and last phase of the Earth Cycle, our Divine Ancestors having accomplished their task of introducing civilisation on Earth, returned to their home on the Higher Planes and Earth gradually came under the control of

less-evolved Souls. Ignorance, Confusion and Selfishness have meant that the present inhabitants of the planet are no longer in touch with the Universal Self, and the Higher Laws of the Universe have been almost entirely forgotten. Humans no longer live by the Eternal Law of God, but according to their own personal instincts and selfish impulses. The relics of the great civilisations of India, Egypt, America and Ancient Europe, as well as faint memories of a lost paradise is all that remains from happier and more enlightened times. As the attentive reader will have already understood, the names of the Ages have been chosen to describe the decrease in their "brightness" or divine qualities and simultaneous increase in their "darkness" and hardness or materiality. Thus while at first the Souls and their World were "golden", that is, illumined by the inner Light of God and therefore, incorruptible like gold, they gradually turned away from their Divine Source and fell under the influence of corrupting tendencies. Yet all is not lost. As Yoga teaches us, the present phase of Spiritual decline "only" lasts some 432,000 human years, after which a new Golden Age will commence. From the perspective of the eternal Soul who is our real Self, even thousands of years are a short time and our duty is to begin preparing ourselves for the arrival of the New Golden Age, and assist other Souls in doing likewise. In so doing, we act according to Shiva's Divine Plan and consciously become part of the Greater Scheme of things. The future is indeed golden, provided that we follow the Higher Laws of the Universe. Since Yoga is living in Unity with Truth, the conscientious practice thereof will enable every Soul to join the Higher Order of Beings and finally attain Union with God (Shiva-Samyoga). See also verse 231 and Commentary.

210. *I have thus described to you the Great Cycle of World Ages that repeats itself from Age to Age and from Aeon to Aeon, like a Great Wheel revolving upon the Self-Luminous Hub of the Universe till the end of Time:* There are two unparalleled insights which Yoga has contributed to Mankind's understanding of the Universe: (1) that the Universe consists of literally billions of Galaxies or Worlds (what modern Science calls Multiple Universes or Parallel Worlds); and (2) that time is made of immensely vast aeons extending upwards into Eternity and downwards to the smallest pulses of energy that last only a billionth of a billionth of a second, all these recurring again and again to form a continuous stream of cyclical time. A linear perception of time, in which time begins at a certain point in history and then proceeds in a straight line towards a final point in the future, has often been promoted as the only valid. However, that time is not only linear but also cyclical is evident from the fact that from the briefest act of perception to the beat of our heart, the closing and opening of the eyelids, breathing in and out, the rising and setting of the Sun, the phases of the Moon, the changes of seasons, the movement of the Earth, individual Planets and Constellations, and finally the creation and dissolution of the various Galaxies and Universes, in short, all the phenomena that together give rise to the experience of time, take place in periodically recurring cycles. Even the scientific community is beginning to accept the concept of a Universe that periodically comes into being and merges back into its original source. From a Yogic point of view, it is by developing an awareness of this Universal Rhythm which is the Creative Pulsation of Consciousness that man elevates himself to higher levels of experience. By attuning himself with that Rhythm, the Yogi can experience Oneness with the Creator and thereby bring about a complete transformation of his entire life (see also verse 3:22 and Commentary). Being a Manifestation of the Divine Life-Force, the Four Ages symbolise the Eternal World Order (Sanatana Dharma) which is the ground of all things. Traditionally, this is represented by a Swastika or equal-armed cross the ends of which are bent at a right angle to indicate the circular movement of the Four Ages. When these are bent to the right, they indicate the right-turning revolution of the Wheel of Creation and Establishment of Divine Order on Earth. When bent to the left, they represent the opposite, left-turning counter-movement of the Wheel of Destruction and Dissolution. For this reason, in Indian ritual, right-turning (clock- or sunwise) movements symbolise the Right Order of Things by following which man returns to his true Self and attains Spiritual and material well-being. Indeed, Swastika or the Seal of Divine

Order literally means Well-Being as well as Being Oneself (from Sva, self and As, to be). It is not surprising, therefore, that most of the World's greatest faiths such as Hinduism and Buddhism, have adopted the Swastika as a symbol of World Order as well as personal Salvation or Spiritual Fulfilment. The Christian cross itself is merely a simplified form of the Hindu Swastika. The cross that according to Christian doctrine every man must bear upon his shoulders is in reality the responsibility that man has to take for his own actions. It is only by dutifully "bearing his cross", that is, discharging his duty of living in harmony with Divine Law, which is the Right World Order, that man can become Divine and assume his rightful place at the Centre of the World where he can eternally abide in the Glory of God. This once again demonstrates that if we look beyond superficial differences, all religions in the World prove to be ultimately based on the Original Revelation of Shiva and that both Mankind and God are truly One and inseparably united by the One Universal Law, Order or Rhythm, which is the Most Glorious Manifestation of the Supreme Being's Infinite and Invincible Intelligence and Power.

213. *The Buddha's Guru*: A careful examination of this list of ancient and future Gurus, will reveal the true origins and interconnections of the various faiths of the World. First, it should be noted that these are all *titles* and not proper names. The World Teachers enumerated here, therefore, may well have historically been known by different appellations or styles to different people, at different times, in different places. Lord Adinatha, for example, was known as both Adinatha and Vrishabhanatha, the founder of the Jain tradition of India. Ramanatha was the Guru of Udraka Ramaputra, the Buddha's Guru. Jaleshvara was known as the great Yoga Master Jalamdhara who was possibly also connected to Jaloka (He Whose Abode Is Water), Emperor Ashoka's son and King of Kashmir. Lord Shambhunatha was the Guru of the great Tantric Master Abhinava Gupta, while Guptanatha was involved in the founding of the Sikh tradition. Soma-Natha is the style of the present World Teacher who under various names is responsible for the establishment of various Yoga movements all over the World. As far as Lord Buddha, disciple of Lord Ramanatha (or Ramaputra) is concerned, it has been said by some that his tradition is somehow different from that of Yoga. In particular, it has been claimed that he taught the non-existence of the Soul or Self. In our view, this is a gross misrepresentation of facts. The truth of the matter is that the Buddha was born Siddharta Gautama, in the year 563 BC, in North India. He subsequently became known by the various titles of Shramana Shakyaputra (The Ascetic of the Shakya Clan), Tathagata (He Who Has Thus Arrived), Sugata (He Who Has Passed On To Happiness), Bhagavan (The Blessed One), and finally, the Buddha (The Awakened or Wise One). Even in those times, there were some who believed in the Self and others who rejected its existence. As it often happens with great teachers, both groups attempted to use the Buddha's teachings to support their own views. As the Buddhist Scriptures were not written by the Buddha himself but by his supposed followers who lived centuries after his time, not all material that has come down to us can be accepted as the Buddha's exact words. In our search for truth we must, above all, avoid such elements of Scripture that appear to be incoherent, contradictory and elaborate, and concentrate on what is clear, simple and easy to understand. What is certain is that the Buddha himself was not a man given to philosophical debate. When one of his disciples was asked about his Master's opinion, he replied, "My Master holds no opinion". As the eminent historian of religion Mircea Eliade, has pertinently observed, the Buddha did not deny the existence of the Self but the possibility of knowing the Self through thought and discussion. Not that thinking about or discussing the nature of the Self were in and of itself something to be shunned, but it must not be indulged in - as some are inclined to do - at the expense of more direct means of knowledge such as meditation and intuition. Indeed, the Buddha's teachings on this subject may be summed up as follows: It is wrong to say that the Self is, and it is wrong to say that the Self is not; what is right is to practise diligently; for it is through practice that man becomes an Awakened One (Buddha). (It is in full agreement with the Yoga Tradition to answer complex questions either with silence or by stating that something is neither

this nor that - "neti, neti" - that is to say, the object under discussion must be found in the domain of direct experience that lies beyond mental concepts and verbal articulation.) Becoming Awakened is the key message of Buddhism and it presupposes the existence of a higher truth within ourselves (otherwise, who is to awaken to what?). The fact is that one of the Buddha's most striking statements was "Be yourself your own guiding lamp" which clearly implies the existence of at least two Selves, one that is to be guided and one that functions as a guide. Another one of his central teachings was that upon Enlightenment, "the Self becomes one with the Supreme" (Anguttara-Nikaya, 2, 206). In other words, the Self (or Soul), far from being considered illusory, denied or rejected, is to become One with the Highest Reality and thereby become eminently Real. On strict logic, since human experience is momentary, that is, sense perceptions, emotions, thoughts and our awareness thereof arise and subside all the time, there must be a permanent, changeless principle within us, by referring to which we register change in other things (such as sense perceptions, emotions, etc.). This principle must possess consciousness and intelligence to be aware of experiences and to refer these to each other and to itself. The same principle or entity must also hold within itself, and recall, the impressions of past experiences thereby providing everyday life with continuity, coherence and meaning. Even the Buddha could not have denied the logical necessity of such a permanent, changeless principle or entity. The confusion regarding the existence or otherwise of the Self stems from the fact that the Self has various aspects. First, there is the Unborn, Self-Existing Universal Self who is, by definition, Eternal. Second, there is the individual Self (or Soul) who is permanent in the sense that it continues to exist from life to life until it merges into and becomes One with, the Universal Self. And third, what is ordinarily regarded as self, that is, the stream of experience consisting of ever-rising, ever-subsiding perceptions, emotions and thoughts, which man erroneously identifies with in everyday life. It is this mind-created, everyday self that on closer investigation proves to be impermanent and therefore "non-existent", from a higher perspective. Yet even this self, immaterial and transient though it may be, must be admitted to exist as a temporary experience even if not as a *permanent* reality. The reason why the Buddha sometimes asserted that the Self did not exist was simply because he was referring to the impermanent, quasi-illusory self described above, and because he wished to force the enquirer to seek, and take refuge in, a Higher Reality: the Unborn, the Unmade, Self-Existing Supreme Truth of the Enlightened Condition (Nirvana). What is beyond doubt is that the Buddha did admit the existence of an Immortal Principle (Amarta Dhatu) which he referred to as the "Unbecome, Unborn, Unmade, Unformed", whereby in his own words, "there is escape from that which is become, born, made, and formed". Far from implying nothingness, this suggests the existence of a Transcendental Reality that lies beyond the reach of the human mind. And if such a Reality exists, then there must also be an Intelligence there to experience it. The Dhammapada, a traditional collection of Buddha's sayings, declares: "The Sun shines by day, the Moon shines by night, the Warrior shines in his armour, the Religious Man shines in his meditation, but the Awakened One shines at all times by his (own) radiance" (387). Since a thing that does not exist can hardly be said to be Awakened, or to shine at any time or in any way, it becomes evident that an Enlightened (or Awakened) being shines by virtue of his own Conscious Self, and that the existence of this Self is implicitly admitted by the Buddha whose words this quotation is said by his followers to represent. In contrast to the conventional, everyday self, the Self of Enlightenment, of Buddhahood, of Nirvana, *must* be Eternal as otherwise there would be no escape from the ever-changing experience of worldly existence. Now, one of the definitions of Yoga (as given in the Yoga Sutra 1:2) is "the arrest of mental fluctuations". This is precisely the definition of Buddhist Salvation: Non-Moving (Nirvana), Non-Agitation (Akshobha). Furthermore, in the days of the Buddha, Yoga was already an ancient Spiritual path and (in the Samyatta-Nikaya, 2, 106) the Buddha says, "I have seen the Ancient Way and followed it". Indeed, according to the Buddhist tradition, prior to his Enlightenment the Buddha spent six years practising with Yogis in the forest. It is clear therefore that Yoga - the main teaching of which is the existence of an Eternal Supreme Self - is

the path followed by the Buddha, and his followers were well aware of the fact that the relation between the Buddhist and Yoga tradition was one of identity in both theory and practice. So much so, that the Buddhist work Samanta-Padasika (Vin. A. pp. 145-6), for example, defines Meditation (Dhyana or Jhana) which is central to both Yoga and Buddhism, as "that by which Yogis think (or contemplate reality)". Indeed, Buddhist Scriptures frequently refer to a person who practises Meditation as "Yogi" or "Yogavachara" (One Who Practises Yoga or Walks In The Way of Yoga) and the followers of an influential Buddhist movement originated in the first centuries of the current era, even called themselves "Yogachara" that is, "Followers of the Yoga Path". Finally, in the Dhammapada, the Buddha himself says: "Through Yoga Wisdom arises; without Yoga Wisdom is lost" (282). In consequence, on the basis of the evidence considered so far, we may regard it as an established fact that the teachings of the Buddha are essentially identical with the teachings of Yoga and that original Buddhism was not different from, but clearly belonged to, the timeless Yoga Tradition itself. Ramanatha (or his disciple, Ramaputra) is mentioned in the Buddhist Scriptures as the Buddha's teacher. With regard to the other Gurus, Adinatha (also known as Vrishabhanatha) was the founder of the Jain religion. Jaleshvara (Lord of Waters) re-introduced the ancient rite of immersion to which Yahia-Yuhana belonged. The latter is known as King Yahia, Yahia Ibn Zakariyya, Yohannan, or John the Baptist in the West. His method of initiation was through baptism and Jesus was one of his disciples. Indeed, the Tradition of Shiva is much older than, and constitutes the Well-Spring of Higher Knowledge that has inspired, all Eastern traditions including Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. We, therefore, see no reason to rule out the possibility that the same timeless Tradition was also the Original Source of the Western faiths. The Christian Bible itself describes the greatness of the Prophet known as John the Baptist to whom "all Judaea and Jerusalem and the region round about Jordan" went for baptism, and the Spiritual transformation he brought about in Jesus. Thus it is written: "the Heavens were opened to him (Jesus) and the Light of God descended upon him" at the moment of his being baptised, that is, submerged in the river by John, and not before. The act of baptism, therefore, must be admitted to represent the most important event in the life of Jesus. It also implies that John himself was the Spiritual Teacher of Jesus and that in this capacity he was the initiator of the inner transformation that made Jesus into the leader he subsequently became. Thus says Jesus: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Mat., 11:11). As Jesus was also born of a woman, this implies that John was the greatest among men, including Jesus himself. However, although both John and Jesus were without doubt great leaders, it is evident that the title of World Teacher cannot properly be said to belong to either of them. In the Bible, John says that after him there will come another, even greater Teacher. This couldn't have been Jesus as he didn't come *after* John but lived and taught at the same time as John. Moreover, the Bible tells us that Jesus was the 28th descendent in the royal line of King David and therefore King of Israel by right (in the Greek language, Jesus Christ or Iesus Christos, means King Jesus). The preceptorial lineage to which he belonged was therefore local and not worldwide. Further, Jesus himself declared that another Teacher will be sent by God to teach the whole Truth which he himself had only partly revealed. The title of World Teacher, therefore, belongs to Lord Jaleshvara who at that time was the Supreme Spiritual Leader or World Teacher (Jagat-Guru) on Earth and, as his title implies, Master of the particular method of initiation called baptism. Having commenced his Spiritual function in the year 102 BC, he was responsible for setting in motion the chain of events that resulted in the formation of a number of Spiritual movements of that era, many of which are less well-known but equally relevant to the Spiritual Upliftment of the World as the Christian or Jewish tradition. As is evident from the present verse, Lord Jaleshvara was a Manifestation of Supreme Lord Shiva (the Universal Consciousness) Who to this day is called Ganga-Dhara (Bearer Of The Water Of Life). Water has always been important in India and ritual bathing or baptism has been practised there from prehistoric times. Christians celebrate the day of St. John the Baptist on Midsummer's Day (24 June), which is exactly when the rain season (monsoon)

begins in India. Moreover, since the Sanskrit word Jala can mean both Water and Net (for catching fish, etc.), the term Jalamdhara may also be interpreted as Net-Holder or Net-Wielder, that is, Fisher, which explains the title of "Fisherman" or "Fisher of men" accorded to Jesus and other Spiritual leaders of the time. Minanatha (Lord of Fishes) is one of Shiva's many traditional titles, where the term Fishes (Mina) stands for the human Souls who have their existence in the Ocean of Being (Shiva's Universal Consciousness) like fishes in the Sea. Finally, Shiva Who in India is known as Lord of Physicians (Vaidya Natha) must by implication be admitted to be the Supreme Master of all who are endowed with healing powers as exhibited by various figures mentioned in the Bible. Indeed, as there is only one Supreme Being, we may expect all genuine Spiritual traditions in the World to have one common source. With regard to subsequent World Teachers, it has been claimed by some that the Prophet Mohammad was such a Teacher. There are a number of reasons why this must be regarded as incorrect. Firstly, the Future Teacher announced by Jesus is described as the Holy Spirit who will be sent by God. This clearly indicates a Divine Manifestation, whereas Mohammad was an ordinary man and not a Supernatural Being. This prediction therefore must refer to one of the World Teachers who, as our verse indicates, are Manifestations of God's Own Light. Secondly, since the World Teachers appear every five hundred years, the next in line after Lord Jaleshvara would have been in the year 398 CE (of the Current Era). But Mohammad lived between 570-632, that is, 200 years too late to be even considered as one of the above-mentioned Manifestations. Thirdly, to contend that Mohammad was the announced World Teacher would amount to ignoring the rest of the World. The year 398 and the following few centuries represent a period of great changes in the history of the World. It was a time at which Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire (in 394) and began to establish itself in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. As a parallel or mirror development to this, Hinduism began to experience a period of revival in India and South-East Asia. At the same time, another Indian tradition, Buddhism, began to establish itself in the rest of Asia, in particular China. By comparison, the emergence of Islam in 7th century Arabia, although geographically extensive, involved much smaller numbers of people and cannot therefore claim precedence over the events that affected the rest of the World at that time. Moreover, historical evidence shows that Islam was essentially a local event the impact of which was artificially amplified by military rather than Spiritual means. Numerically as Spiritually speaking then, the precedence clearly belongs to Hinduism and Buddhism, that is to say, to those traditions that were closest to the Teachings of Shiva and the Indian Homeland (Land of Righteousness), and which are universally recognised as having had the greatest Spiritual impact on the World through accepted channels of dissemination. Even so, Original Islam must be admitted to have derived from the same source as all other traditions. The Quran is held to have been revealed by the Angel Gabriel. But since Angel actually means "Messenger" and Gabriel means "Man of God" this title need not imply supernatural agency. The fact is that the founder of Islam is known to have had a Spiritual teacher called Salman the Persian, and Abraham himself whom Arabs claim as their ancestor, is said to have come from Persia. Another Persian, the 12th century Sufi Master Suhrawardi, likewise said that his tradition originated in the East. Since India is the country situated immediately eastwards of Persia, it is clear that that tradition must have originated there. Indeed, Al-Sindhi (the Indian) was one of the teaching lineages of early Islamic mysticism. This is in no way surprising, since Persia (Ancient Iran) and India are not only geographically close to each other but they also share the same cultural (and even linguistic) heritage. As we know, even the Romans adopted the Indo-Persian Lord of Light as their Supreme Deity, and it was with the same Deity that the God of Christianity (including Jesus himself) and ultimately of all other religions, was identified. It was this broader and more complete historical context that enabled the 3rd century Persian Prophet, Mani (The Illustrious), to teach the fundamental unity of all religions: Christianity, Zoroastrianism (the religion of Ancient Persia) and Buddhism, and inspired the greatest minds of the West such as Plotinus and Saint Augustine of Hippo. We may observe in this connection that in the Sanskrit language God

is usually designated by the word Deva (The Radiant One) or, in Buddhist terminology, Amitabha (Infinite Light). Says Saint Hippolytus of Rome (3rd century): "There are some among the Indians who live a self-sufficient life, who abstain from eating living creatures and cooked food, and subsist on fruits. They say that God is Light, not like the light one sees, nor like the Sun or fire, but like the Light of Knowledge whereby the secret mysteries of Nature are perceived by the Wise" (Philosophumena XXI - The Brahmans). Yogic Teachings had obviously penetrated the whole of the Classical World. The famous library of Alexandria, an Egyptian city frequented by Indian sages since the days of Alexander the Great is known to have held over one million works of science, philosophy, religion and law many of them being no doubt of Indian origin and enabling the natives of Arabia to acquaint themselves with the timeless wisdom of India. And, of course, it is established as a matter of history that rice, sugar, spices, cotton, high-quality steel, the game of chess, the "Arabic numerals" (known as "Indian numerals" in Arabic), legends and fables, arts, architecture, laws, as well as numerous religious concepts and customs were introduced to Arabia from India. Even the Arab word for God (Allah) may have derived from the Sanskrit term Alaya (Alaya Vijnana) for the All-Inclusive Universal Consciousness, the Storehouse of Life. Following the rise of Islam and the destruction of the Alexandrian library by Arab Muslim armies (in 642 CE), the Persian cities of Gondeshapur and Baghdad became great centres of learning that between the 7th and 11th centuries continued to facilitate the transmission of Indian Knowledge and Spirituality to the Arab World. About the year 1000, for example, the Yoga Sutra and the Samkhya Sutra were translated into Arabic. It was only from the second half of the 11th century onwards that the rise of nationalist sentiments among the Arab-speaking nations led to a hostile attitude towards foreign influences, and references to non-Arab sources began to be erased from Arab religious and scientific teachings to finally disappear from the collective memory of the Arab people. According to historians, even the Quran which was written down over a period of many years appears to have undergone some editing before it reached its current form. As a result of this, present-day Arabs are generally unaware of the true origins of their culture. India is the only place where knowledge of this historical fact has survived. It is not mere coincidence that in 17th century India, Spiritual texts such as the Upanishads and the Yoga Vasishtha were still being translated from the original Sanskrit into Persian and Arabic for the benefit of educated Muslim readers. In the Arab World itself, however, in particular in more recent times, this all-pervading influence of Indian culture came to be either ignored or deliberately suppressed. The following account will provide ample illustration of this fact. The prominent Sufi author, Idris Shah, tells us in his writings that a well-known Arab saying runs "Seek the Truth, even in China". He further explains the word China (Arabic Syn, Persian Chyn) as standing for "Mental Concentration". According to him, therefore, the esoteric meaning of the sentence is "Seek the Truth, even in Mental Concentration". However, this interpretation only makes sense if we understand that it is based on a Sanskrit, rather than Arabic, pun. Indeed, China (pronounced Cheena) is, first of all, the Sanskrit name for that country which was adopted by Persian and Arabic speakers in the same way as, for example, the Indian word cheetah was adopted by English speakers. Second, as China lies beyond the Himalayas, beyond even Tibet, it stands for a foreign, far-away and unknown place. Third, since China is situated to the East of India the word symbolises the East not as a particular country, but as the cardinal point where the Sun rises, that is to say, a place where light (or knowledge) originates. And fourth, we may derive the word from the Sanskrit root Chi (Chee), to observe, perceive, concentrate upon, and treat it as synonymous with Chintana, thought, reflection, consideration. Thus, why the word "China" should mean "Mental Concentration" only becomes apparent upon due consideration of these facts which patently point to the Indian origin of what was erroneously presumed to be Arabic. In short, the far-reaching influence of Indian Culture and Spirituality on other nations may be regarded as established beyond doubt, even if knowledge of this fact has until now remained outside the public domain. But to return to our main subject which, as the attentive reader will remember, is the above given line of World Teachers. The

objection that may be raised here is why is this list not mentioned in the Scriptures of the World? What is important to understand in this context is that, essentially, there is only One True Teacher, who is Shiva (God) Himself. However, as there are great variations in the human capacity of Spiritual receptivity, Shiva directly transmits the Full Revelation of Truth to only a few Souls who are capable of receiving it. The vast majority of Mankind is instructed by Him through the medium of Teachers who enjoy various degrees of Spiritual Realisation. As verses 10:110-111 explain, there are three kinds of Spiritual Teachers: Human (Manava), Superhuman (Siddha), and Divine (Daiva). Among the human Teachers, some possess only a degree of Spiritual Knowledge and are therefore unawakened (Abuddha) while others are Enlightened Masters (Buddha). In addition to their teaching activities they have personal Karma to work out. Superhuman Gurus are always Fully Enlightened Beings who incarnate as humans exclusively for the purpose of imparting the Truth. Since they are Perfect Souls (Siddha), they have no personal Karma to fulfil and act solely according to Divine Will. They are therefore correctly regarded as Divine Incarnations. Divine Teachers on the other hand, are neither human nor incarnated Perfect Souls. They are Direct Emanations of the Supreme Being who are neither born nor die but simply assume a human-like appearance when descending on the Physical Plane and then return to Shiva's World of Light upon completion of their work. In consequence, Teachers like Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Shankaracharya and Guru Nanak who all were born to human parents and died, must be admitted to belong to either the Human or, at the most, Superhuman Teachers, whereas the World Teachers mentioned in the present verse clearly belong to a higher class of beings that are more akin to non-material entities like Angels or Gods. Now the fact is that most religious movements began as small circles of devotees that only had access to a human Teacher who functioned as the "Master" of that group. Such a Master would have occasionally spoken of a higher authority known by some such title as "The Father", "The Lord", "The Master", "The King", etc., who would have been unknown to the ordinary devotee and to whom most devotees would have had no access except through the medium of the human Master. Since the very function of such groups was to focus the devotees' attention on the human Master who was the immediate channel of communication between the disciple and the Divine, any knowledge of the true hierarchy of Masters would have been irrelevant to the devotee's Spiritual needs, at least in the incipient stages of his training. Most Scriptures were written with precisely this kind of devotee in mind. Indeed, advanced devotees would have possessed more direct knowledge of Spiritual truths and would not have depended on any written material. This is the reason why Scriptures like the Bible or the Quran make no mention of this line of World Teachers. Even so, it is still mentioned indirectly in most Scriptures while some give a more detailed description thereof. In addition to this, the names indicated are always titles and therefore vary considerably from country to country. Also, while some texts give a line of Divine Teachers, others may enumerate Superhuman or Human Teachers, depending on which line was immediately relevant to a particular group of devotees. The Quran, for example, speaks of Abraham, Moses, John (Yahia), Jesus (Isa) and Mohammad, that is to say, human teachers who clearly acted locally rather than worldwide. By contrast, all Indian traditions including Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, mention a series of World Teachers or Divine Emanations which represent a higher level of Spiritual Transmission that may be termed Angelic or Divine rather than human. Judaism on its part speaks of a Future Messiah, and Christianity of the second coming of Christ (this being again a title and not a personal name), which will occur at the "End of the World". Now, this "End of the World" need not be taken literally just as the Jewish concept of the "Beginning of the World" some 5,700 years ago need not, indeed, cannot, be taken literally. A literal interpretation of the "End of the World" would require this to have had already happened at the time of Jesus (2,000 years ago) which it patently did not. Such expressions therefore may simply mean the Beginning and End of a World Age or Era, respectively. Nor are Messiah, Teacher of Righteousness, Dharma Acharya, Christ, Buddha, Maitreya, etc., personal names but *titles* designating a particular function that is to be fulfilled by a Higher Spiritual Being

or series of such Beings. This is an important point that is not always clear in the West but well-understood in the East. In addition to this, the fact is that it is not known whether the Scriptures of the Western World have come down to us in their entirety. Indeed, there are indications that Scriptures like the Bible, for example, are only surviving fragments of much larger oral or written traditions. That none of the established religions are complete but are to be completed in the future, is supported by the internal evidence of their own Scriptures: all of them are awaiting the coming of a Teacher to complete and fulfil what has been scripturally revealed in the past. Thus Buddhist Scriptures name Maitreya as the Future World Teacher. Even the Quran admits that "every nation has her Teacher" (13:6) and that itself is not complete since as it says, "even if all trees on Earth were made into pens and the Sea were made into ink it would be impossible to write down all of God's words" (18:109). Moreover, the author himself admits: "I do not tell you that I possess God's treasures or know what is hidden, nor do I claim to be an Angel" (6:50). At all events, since God Himself deliberately "seals the hearts of men" (4:155) and "confounds" and "leads them astray", no man can claim to possess complete knowledge of Truth which will only be revealed at the "End of the World", "Day of Judgement" or "Day of Resurrection" which is yet to come: a day that was "near" centuries ago, but inexplicably has not arrived even today. As it would be rather late (and pointless) to reveal the Truth, or remove the veil from Mankind's eyes, when the World is no longer there, it is clear that the end of an Era is meant here, exactly as the Jewish and Christian traditions speak of the arrival of a "Saviour" at the "End of the World". Even today, we speak of the "Modern World", "Classical World", "Prehistoric World", etc., whereby we mean a particular period in time and not the physical World itself. As for the Bible, here are Jesus's own words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. However when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth and show you things to come" (John, 16:12-13); "The Comforter, whom the Father will send unto you shall teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said unto you" (John, 14:26). And again, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is Perfect is come, that which is in part (incomplete) shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:9-10). Once more, this amounts to an admission of incompleteness that is to be fulfilled at a future time when a more complete Spiritual Teaching such as that revealed in The Shiva Rahasya becomes accessible to Mankind. To sum up, since India is the Spiritual Centre of the World, the prediction would be to find complete knowledge of the highest truths first in the Revelations of the Indian Sages and second, in a more diluted, less complete, more fragmentary form in the Scriptures of other nations. Indeed, Indian Scriptures give not only complete lists of World Teachers but also describe the various Continents on Earth (usually said to be nine) along with their inhabitants. This clearly demonstrates the universal character of Indian Spirituality as opposed to the more local, culture-specific nature of Western traditions. Hundreds of obscure scriptural statements such as "I and the Father are One", "The Kingdom of God is within you and round you", "The Kingdom of Heaven is spread out on Earth but you see it not", "You are Gods and Children of God", "God gave you life when you were dead and He will cause you to die and then restore you to life and at last you will return to Him" and many others that are incapable of satisfactory interpretation from the perspective of official Western teachings, become crystal clear when seen in the all-illuminating light of Yogic Wisdom. The same applies to the Line of Teachers under discussion. While the biblical Prophets down to John the Baptist and his disciple Jesus (or down to Mohammad if we take the Muslim view) only represent a local, Near-Eastern line of *human* Teachers, the Indian Scriptures explicitly describe a series of World Teachers who are direct Manifestations or Emanations of the Divine in different ages. It follows from what has been said, that Spiritual completeness or perfection is attained by embracing the Eternal Path of Yoga which, by definition, is the Spirituality of Unity and Wholeness (and hence Completeness and Perfection) and which having been transmitted as a Secret Tradition (Rahasya) for millennia, is now openly revealed by the World Teacher Shri Soma-Natha Maharaj to all, that the World may at last find Peace. Thus Shiva Himself, or His Emanation, is the World Teacher (Jagat Guru), the Teacher of

Righteousness (Dharma Acharya), the Remover of Ignorance (Tamohara), the Saviour (Taraka), the Comforter (Santoshada), the Friend of the afflicted (Arttabandhu), Friend of all Souls (Lokabandhu), Lord of the distressed (Dinanatha) Allayer of all suffering (Kashta-Hartri), as well as Guide (Netri), Protector (Pala) and Illuminator (Pradipaka) of the World. Indeed, in modern times, the impact of the activities of Lord Soma-Natha, Shiva's Own Emanation, who assumed his function as World Teacher on Earth in 1898, becomes apparent if we consider the constant rise of Eastern Spirituality in the West from that time down to the present day. This Stream of Spiritual Intelligence has brought about an unparalleled elevation of consciousness in all those who have come into contact with it. There is an interesting story in this connection, involving a young Catholic priest from the West who was recently appointed to a missionary post in India. He was instructed to contact the bishop of the diocese where he was to bring the teachings of the Bible to the local community. Upon arrival, he was advised by the bishop to acquaint himself with the local culture in order to better communicate the Gospel to the natives. A few months later, when he was due to report back to his superior, he confessed that he had found striking similarities between the Christian Gospels and those of the Hindus. In particular he was impressed by the Yogic teaching of Absolute Unity of Man, Nature and God, adding that sadly, there seemed to be no Living Master who might directly impart such teachings to Spiritual Seekers. The bishop replied that there was such a Master and that he was known as Shri Soma-Natha Maharaj. The bishop himself had been initiated into the art of meditation by him. The young man was subsequently introduced to the Master on the bishop's recommendation and while continuing to perform his clerical duties, he has now become a keen follower of the Yoga Path. Nor is this an isolated case. A rising number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim people from all walks of life publicly or privately - sometimes even subconsciously - accept Guru Soma-Natha as the Living Master of the current Age and are inspired by his grace to embrace the Eternal Truth of Yoga. The main channel of Spiritual Instruction operating under the direct guidance of His Divine Holiness Shri Soma-Natha Maharaj Dev is known as Shri Yoga Mahasamajam (The Glorious Order of Universal Unity), to which belong all the disciples who are actively engaged in the dissemination of the true Teachings of Shiva. Whether the contact occurs directly, through one of his many disciples, or even by reading and studying his Gospel (Shiva Rahasya), the effect will always be life-transforming.

231. *The World shall know not Peace, nor Happiness, nor Truth, until the day My Word prevails. But if My Word prevail, Truth shall return without fail:* The original religion of Mankind is what has come to be known in modern times as "Paganism" in Europe, "Hinduism" in India and "Animism" in Africa, that is to say, the original Spiritualities native to the various parts of the World. To eliminate any misunderstanding, by this we do not mean the man-made systems of beliefs and practices prevalent in the Pagan World in later history which for all practical purposes represent only a shadow-like degeneration of the illustrious original, but the original itself, that is to say a World-Vision which acknowledges the inherent divinity and unity of all things, including Mankind itself, and which may be regarded as essentially identical with Yoga. What is important to understand is that "Pagan" literally means aboriginal or local and represents the original, divinely revealed faith of a particular place. In practice, this expresses itself mainly in the worship of Divine Beings that are felt to be active or influential in the area under consideration. Popular imagination in the past sometimes humanised these Higher Beings to conform with the emotional needs of the people. However, their true nature and function were still clear to most believers and the more enlightened among them knew that these Deities were really manifestations of the Supreme Being Who created them. For example, in pre-Islamic Arabia, Angels were held to be the Daughters of God and, therefore, His extensions or projections, as it were. Later religions expressed exactly the same idea albeit in different words. Thus in Christianity and Islam, Angels are defined as the Powers of God, the only difference being that they are described as male rather than female, to conform with the male-orientated

values of the time. In reality, of course, Angels, Gods, Sons (or Daughters) of God, Devas, Radiant Ones or whatever we choose to call them, are neither male nor female. They are simply Divine Beings consisting of pure, non-physical Intelligence and Energy, although they may assume a human-like appearance when making themselves visible to man. This should be sufficient to demonstrate that all religions concord in their fundamental beliefs if these are correctly understood, and that more recent religions are but variations of the same one Original Spirituality (Adi Dharma). Due to a general decline in Mankind's Spiritual capacity and the negative impact of the energies prevalent in the current World Age ("Kali Yuga"), this once-vibrant ancient faith entered a phase of stagnation, degeneration and decline during which it was largely suppressed and replaced by new systems such as Biblical (Yahwist) Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in the same way as a defective organ or limb might be replaced by an artificial one. However, the replacement part being by definition imperfect, it necessarily creates problems of its own. The ideal solution therefore would be for the original organ or limb to be restored in its previous state of health and wholeness. While this may not always be possible in medical or material terms, it is an undeniable fact in the Spiritual World. Indeed, in common with all temporal manifestations of Eternal Truth, the Original Faith undergoes periodic phases of ascent and descent, of rise and fall. The episode of decline experienced by it in the past can only be temporary and will sooner or later be followed by full and complete recovery. As the new, artificial replacement faiths have patently failed to solve the problems the World is facing today, the only logically tenable and Spiritually legitimate answer is for Humanity to return to its original faith which is based upon life in Unity with Truth, that is, to return to the Vision of Universal Unity or Yoga. The World Order (Dharma) which is the most perfect expression of Universal Unity and Harmony (Yoga) must once again be allowed to prevail upon Earth. This important fact is implicitly recognised by all Spiritual traditions of the World. For example, the Bible clearly states that so long as the inhabitants of Ancient Palestine (Israel) adhered to their original religion they "had plenty of food and were well and saw no evil" but since they abandoned the faith of their forefathers they "have wanted all things and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (Jeremiah 44:17, 18). Thus Shiva's prophetic words are evidently becoming reality and they must be accepted as such by all thinking people in the World irrespective of their outward cultural, political or religious allegiances.

End of Chapter 11 and Commentary

THE TWELFTH LIGHT

(Chapter Twelve)

12

Wherein the Unseen Master reveals His Visible Form to the Devotees

Om is the Eternal Sound Supreme. Of that all other sounds are born.

Sage Vyasa said:

1. By the Grace of Shiva, I shall now tell you how the Lord's Glorious Revelation came to pass upon the Holy Mountain.

2. It is a great Mystery that shall always be connected with our Lord and Master, His Divine Majesty Whose Praises all the Worlds eternally sing and Who Alone has the Power to Deliver us from Darkness.

3. It is a Mystery that the Wise Ones have beheld with their inward eye and known in their heart for many a century and which shall now be declared unto you, in order that what has been unheard shall become heard of, what has been unthought shall become thought of and what has been not-understood shall become understood.

4. It came to pass when according to the ancient time reckoning Kali Yuga, the Age of Darkness, was about to begin - on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month called Magha - before the Moonless day which is the darkest day of the month. On that holy day the Almighty and Most Merciful Universal Being graciously descended from His Celestial Abode in answer to the ardent prayers of those seeking the Light of Truth amidst the night of ignorance that had engulfed the World.

5. He appeared to His devotees - as He always does in moments of darkness - in the shape of a most pure and noble Ascetic sitting on a throne-like slab of stone beneath a mighty tree on the peak of Mount Kailasa beyond the snow-clad Himalayas.

6. His youthful body was of a blue shade like that of the clear Autumn Sky, His long auburn locks shined like the flames of a forest fire and the Crescent Moon herself adorned His forehead.

7. The Lord sat unmoved for a long while and, as He remained in deep contemplation, meditating upon Himself in silence, a dazzling Light streamed forth from His heart illumining all things about. And the Light of the Three Worlds, the Visible Form of the Unseen, dwelt upon Earth for three days and three nights.

8. Now the Mountain He was seated upon, was encircled on all sides by a great dark forest which became filled with a strange light, so that the beasts that dwelt therein and the humans in their villages on the forest fringe, knew not whether it was day or night.

9. The villagers said to themselves that such great a light must come from a forest fire. Yet far and wide no smoke was to be seen, and the animals and birds and all creatures of the forest were not in the least fleeing away in fear, but were all perfectly happy and at peace.

10. Seeing this, the village elders sent some strong and swift young men to see what that brightness might be. These went into the forest where they met a group of hunters and, having greeted them, they enquired about the Light.

11. But the hunters knew not. All they could say was that deep within the forest there lived one Sage, Duravasa Rishi by name, who passed his days in prayer and meditation. He was the wisest man they had ever heard of. He would assuredly have an answer if they asked him kindly. For, it seems, he had a name for being fierce when disturbed in his contemplations.

12. Having thus spoken, the hunters made ready to go about their business, which was hunting. On second thoughts, however, they wished not to incur the wrath of the Spirits of the Forest on what - judging by certain signs known to forest people - appeared to be a special day.

13. And so, they all set off upon their way following a Path that led to a grove of heavenly scented trees, at the far end whereof they came to the lonely cave wherein the Sage lived. Upon entering that hallowed dwelling, they found a fair maiden whose parents had passed away and whom the Sage had adopted as his daughter and disciple.

14. Rising from her deep meditation, she informed them that her father had already departed in the northern direction to find the source of that wondrous radiance. They, however, asked her to come with them, that she might show them the way.

15. Thus they all went on their way and, after a long journey that seemed like seven days and seven nights, they could see the Holy Mountain shining from afar. The closer they came the brighter it shined.

16. At the foot of the Mountain there lay a great Lake of pure water stretching far and wide. Its shores were lined with fine sand of gold-dust and precious gems. Rich grass and healing herbs grew in abundance on the green pasture all round upon which deer, wild horses and oxen grazed at will.

17. Swans and geese swam gracefully across its mirror-like face. The air was resonant with the sweet song of birds flying in and out of trees. Humming bees fed on the sweet-scented nectar of lotuses and other aquatic plants. Steps of blue stone led in and out of the cool water.

18. Yogis and Yoginis (female Yogis), some clad in tree-bark or deerskin, others wearing nothing at all, novices with shaven heads and adepts wearing long matted hair, bathed therein or fetched water in vessels made of coco-nut shell, gourd or human skull. Others meditated sitting upon large rocks. Children with smiling faces played on the banks and gathered flowers as offering to the Holy Gods.

19. Blooming lotus-flowers shined like the stars whilst sun-lit, white clouds glided over the water like waves so that one could tell not whether the Sky had come down to Earth or the Earth had risen up to the Sky. Indeed, the villagers and forest-dwellers thought that they had arrived in Heaven and were exceedingly amazed at that wonderful sight.

20. They marvelled greatly, seeing the Holy Mount itself mirrored in the blue water: Heaven reflecting in the Mirror of the Earth. And they knew not which was the more wonderful to behold, the Radiant Mountain or its reflection in the Lake.

21. Under the enchantment of that sacred place, they now thirsted even more after knowledge of the source of light. The thought passed in their mind: If this be Heaven, what Unmeasured Splendour awaits us in yonder Abode of Light?

22. Spellbound, they advanced towards the bright-shining Heavenly Mountain that stood upon the Roof of the World, not far from the Lake's northern shore, rising high like the All-Supporting Pillar of Heaven.

23. Coming up closer, they saw that the Light emanated from that place. It was a strange and marvellous Light and at first they could not look at it, being as if blind. But as they became a little used to it, they looked up and saw a strange Youth in the midst of that Light, strong and handsome like a Forest-Spirit, surrounded by a circle of immortal Yogis.

24. Indeed, He had the appearance of the God of Yogis Himself. They saw His beautiful Sky-blue body adorned with prayer-beads and sacred snakes, His long flame-like hair, His smiling lotus-like face, His sparkling eyes radiating with an inner power like a secret glow of fire, and they could take not their eyes away from His Divine Countenance even if they had wished to.

25. As He sat there in silence they said to themselves that He must be the Divine Lord or Spirit of that Mountain. For, due to their proximity to Heaven and remoteness from the World of men, Mountains were known to be frequented by Unseen Beings from Above.

26. And they were overcome by a deep feeling of devotion. They saw the Sage bow and worship Him and they too bowed down to the ground and honoured Him with folded hands.

27. And they asked of Him, Who are You, O Lord? But He had a magic Drum in His hand and at once all the quarters of the World began to resound with the beat of the drum, and that enchanted sound entered their ears and invaded their heart so that their inner eye was flung open like a door and they could see the whole World before them: the Holy Sun, the Moon, the Sky, Wind, Fire, the Ocean and Rivers, the Earth with her Mountains and Hills and Valleys and Forests and Plants and Fish and Birds and Animals and Men.

28. He then raised the other hand in which He held a dazzling Trident, a three-pronged Spear brilliant like a myriad of lightning-flashes, and all was swallowed up by a silent darkness. And they understood that He was the Creator and Destroyer of the World, God of all clans, King of all the Gods, Master of the Universe and of all beings in the Universe and beyond the Universe. And they all bowed down and touched that holy ground with their brows.

29. They then lit a fire in His honour, offering Him sweet food and scented water and brought flowers to adorn Him and burned incense to worship Him. But the Lord of Heaven knew not hunger nor thirst, nor cold nor heat, not pain nor pleasure did He know, but was eternally immersed in a state of wonderful Bliss. Verily, the Bliss of Heaven was His only sustenance and food. And more and more men and women and small children came to gaze and wonder at that splendid Vision.

30. And they said unto Him: Worshipful Lord! pray tell us Your Blessed Name that we may know how to worship You. And He spoke: I Am All and Everything. I have so many names as there are things, words, or thoughts in this Universe and beyond.

31. The Wise Hermit from the woods, hearing this, exclaimed: Praise be to Shiva, the Mysterious and Most Glorious, the Unseen and Most Obvious, the Greatest God (Mahadeva), Our Supreme Lord and Master! And so they called Him, Lord (Ishvara), Master (Natha) and also, He Who Is Facing South (Dakshina-Murti) - as He sat against the Mountain whilst facing the multitude.

32. Others again, named Him, Shrikantha, He With a Glorious Neck, which was on account of His devouring the poison of ignorance that afflicts the World. For, only the Lord can remove the ignorance and the suffering of His creatures, by taking it up into Himself.

33. And seeing His Blissful State, they said: Most Merciful Master! pray teach us how we may find the Truth that leads from the darkness of human existence to the dazzling Light of Your Auspicious Presence; how to attain that State beyond pleasure and pain, beyond troubles and fears, beyond sorrow and desire, beyond birth and death, beyond time and space.

34. But He again caused the Four Quarters of the World to resound with the beat of His magic Drum and as that enchanted sound entered their ears it invaded their heart, opening the Secret Gates of Time and Space that they could see the whole World extending far and wide. They could see all the Worlds of the past, present and future quite clearly before their own eyes.

35. And He raised His Trident which opened the Unknown Gates of the Great Cave of the Dark Void and in an instant all that vanished as it came, leaving just darkness and empty space behind, when they heard a thunder-like Voice coming from no-where, Which spoke: The Highest Truth is Silence. It is to be found by going deep into the secret cave of your own heart.

36. They then understood that their little life was just a dream and that all this had come out of a Great Dark Void. Yet no sooner did they understand this, than a tremendous Light dawned upon them and the Unseen Gates of the Great Beyond opened up of themselves to reveal something that no mere mortal had ever seen before.

37. They saw-and-heard-and-felt-and-tasted a Secret greater than all Secrets, a Marvel more marvellous than any man could fathom, more indescribable than words could describe and even when described no mind could fully grasp. Beyond the Great Dark Void there shined an even Greater Light, the Light of Immeasurable and Never-ending Fullness which was the Secret Abode and Living Source of all darkness and all light.

38. This Living Light shafted through the Void in myriads of drops, waves and tides of rhythmic pulses like that of a young bride's womb locked in the tender embrace of her beloved, like the soft belly of a fish in the deeps of the Sea, like the heart of a bird on the wing, like a butterfly in spring, like the wind tugging at the mane of a young horse, like dolphins leaping over waves, to finally freeze and crystallise into the solid World of Men.

39. Verily, the Dark Void itself, it seems, was full to the brim with innumerable things but had appeared void due to lack of light, just as a secret cave that though appearing at first empty like the vacant den of some solitary serpent, turns out to be full of long-forgotten treasures under the revealing light of a burning torch.

40. From Beyond All This, the Light of All Lights, the Secret Abode of all darkness and all light, pervaded the whole Universe with a wonderful Radiance so bright as the light of thousands of millions of Full Moons, cool, soothing and deeply satisfying, that filled all beings with an indescribable feeling of Supreme Delight, and all was engulfed in a boundless mass of vibrant Light and Love and Joy.

41. Drawn by the irresistible Light of that Radiant Sight, men and women from all the corners of the land came to that Most Holy of Mountains. A great multitude gathered there like a great swarm of bees and were overcome by a feeling of delightful Wonder that made them all reel with a strange drunkenness, like honey-bees that drink of the exquisite nectar of the sacred lotus-flower that blossoms in the cool waters of the blue mountain lakes.

42. But the Blissful Master addressed them again: My beloved children, you are most welcome to My World of Light. Yet entrance to that Sacred Abode, that lies within My Own Heart, requires a price that you yourselves have set. From the beginning of your life on Earth, in the course of many a lifetime, you have taken the life of countless living beings to sustain your own body, without even once considering the suffering you caused. This being so, it is now time for you to pay your karmic debt.

43. Only those shall See Truth Face to Face, who are ready to joyfully offer up their bodies and worldly life in Sacrifice to the Lord of Life. Rituals and prayers will not do. If you desire the Highest, a gift of your own selves is the only proper offering. Know you not that a body of light is the only fit garment for entrance into the World of Light? Self-sacrifice is the only way of becoming free from the burden of your bodies of flesh that you may acquire radiant bodies of Light. For, only what *is* Light can become One with Light.

44. Hearing thus, many begun to tremble with fear and spoke: O Worshipful Master! Ocean of Mercy! Saviour of the distressed! have mercy on us, O Lord of the Three Worlds! Leaving behind parents, children and wives, we came to seek refuge in You; what shall become of them?

45. But the Lord replied: Have you not understood that All This is a Dream? Of My Own Radiant Form I have fashioned All This. What I do, that I can also undo. When All This is undone, what remains is My Own Self, the Supreme, Immeasurable, Ever-lasting. I behold Myself in you, the Mirror of My Own Creation. Do you, on your part, behold yourselves in Me, the Mirror of Your Creator, that We may all become united and Live in Blissful Unity as One.

46. I, the Ever-Still yet Ever-Doing and Ever-Undoing, Creator of the Great Dream of Life, Fashioner of the Boundless Universe, Maker of men and other creatures, Am the Truth. Truth is a Supremely Blissful Ocean of Infinite Light and Power. It is both an Eternal Silence and a Harmony of all Sounds. It lives in the heart of all beings: Find first that Truth, and then you may worry about anything else, if need be. If you follow it diligently, the Inward Path of Light will take you to the Supreme Abode. I Myself shall be Your Guiding Light. And He made the Fear-Dispelling Sign with His hand.

47. Sage Duravasa, speaking like the Elder Brother watching over the Path that he was, said: Truly, we are the Children of Light. We are only down here because we have lost our way and become trapped in the dream of material existence, creating material bodies for ourselves. Yet to walk upon the Heavenly Path of Light we must put on new bodies of Light.

48. We belong to Shiva's Infinite World of Light. No sacrifice can be too great for the privilege of walking on the Path that takes us to Our Original Homeland in Heaven. Remember that on this matter, Shiva, Our Lord and Master, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, Who is the Secret Soul of all things and Our True Self, has said: Only Light can return to Light. What the Lord speaks must come to pass.

49. And some who had a brave heart, following the advice of the Wise Hermit from the woods, said: Have we not wandered through the desolate wilderness of this World for long enough? Our Souls long to return to the Radiant Abode of Infinite Life and Freedom which is Our True Home. The only Path that leads us there is Shiva's Path of Light.

50. Just as you cannot climb a mountain while carrying your household upon your shoulders, even so you cannot hope to enter upon the Path that leads to the lofty heights of Enlightenment if you are weighed down by body, mind and other things. And, what we leave behind is just a dream. Since the Lord Himself, in His Infinite Compassion, has offered to be our Guiding Light, how can we not accept His Gracious Offer? Assuredly, the Lord never speaks in vain. Show us Your Secret Path, O Master of the Greatest Secret!

51. And it was the third watch of the third night (that is, midnight), though the Sun shined even as in daylight. And the Great Magician, the Tremendous Three-Eyed Lord of the Three Worlds, the Universal Dream Master, having translucent sapphire-blue limbs and shining red locks, wearing the Crescent Moon as diadem while the Blazing Sun enhaloed His handsome Head and the Blue Sky stretched over His Divine Person like a Royal Awning, holding Drum and Trident in His hands as emblems of His Wondrous Powers and being attended by a host of Immortals and other Celestial Beings constantly chanting His Sacred Name, entered a Secret Cave deep into the mountainside taking with Him all those who had a brave heart, both male and female, to instruct them in the hidden Knowledge of the Truth.

52. Having been taken up into the womb of that Holiest of Mountains, they received from Lord Shiva Himself the Special Gift of the Mystical Elixir of Immortality in the form of the Great Mantra of Shiva, as a result whereof they were all reborn in His Light and were transformed there and then into Radiant Beings, into the True Children of Light which they had been all along without knowing.

53. And some of them went with the Lord to His Infinite Abode of Light, while others were sent by Him into the World of men that they might guard and teach His Word for the welfare of the entire Human Race whose Creator and Benefactor is none other but Shiva, the Kindly, the Lovely, the Adorable Lord of Unity, the Light of all Lights.

54. And of these wise men and women who, by the Grace of the Lord, acquired Divine Status and Equality with the Gods, some still roam the Mountains and the Woods, and at times they cross the Path of some earnest Seeker after Truth, and having compassion upon him, they reveal to him the Secret Teaching that leads to Infinite Life and Unmeasured Freedom. Yet unless the heart is utterly darkened and emptied of all vain things so that naught can be seen but the Light of Truth, there can be no hope of beholding the Blissful Master Who forever dwells within the secret cave of one's own heart.

55. And it was decreed by the Sages of old that he who tells this Great Mystery to another shall be pervaded, purified, clarified and illumined by the Eternal Light of Knowledge, and he also who hears it. Praise be to Shiva, the Sun of Reality, the Deliverer from Darkness, Whose Praises all the Worlds eternally sing!

56. Verily, there is no other Teacher, no other God, no other Truth but the Lord Who is called Shiva: the Pure, the Kind, the Auspicious One. He is the One in Whom all things rest (Shi) and by Whose Power all things move (Va). From that One indeed everything comes and to Him everything returns.

57. All the Teachings upon Earth are born of Him. They are drops of the Fivefold Outpour of Divine Intelligence that pervades the World in the form of God's Perfect Powers of Bliss, Will, and the rest.

58. Though being Eternally One, the Supreme Teaching manifests itself in a multitude of ways according to the capacity of each recipient.

59. As one life only is present in the various parts of the human body irrespective of their being higher or lower, of different shapes and distinct from each other, so the Teaching of Shiva is present in all Teachings.

60. As the working of the various parts of the body can only be understood in relation to the whole body to which they belong, so all Teachings are understood only when seen in the Light of Shiva's Supreme Truth whereof they are but incomplete parts.

61. The various Teachings being but fragmentary portions of the One Truth, they confound and lead astray their adherents. But the Teaching of Shiva contains the Original, Unchanged, Undivided Truth.

62. As the tracks of all beasts, large and small, fit in the track of the Elephant, even so all Teachings are contained in the Teaching of Shiva.

63. Verily, as the Abode of Snow (Himalaya) is among Mountains, as the Moon among the Stars, as the Sun among all things that shine, so this Teaching of Shiva is the Lord of all Teachings.

64. Upon this Teaching all the Rulers of the World stand firm and their Kingdoms are prosperous and happy. Therefore, let one practise this Perfect Knowledge diligently, with devotion to the Lord and to one's Spiritual Teacher, for it shall lead to success.

65. By the following of this Teaching one attains both worldly enjoyment and Spiritual Liberation. And, at the end of one's earthly life, one goes to the Highest Heaven.

66. Let this Teaching be imparted to all who desire to know the Truth. For, by listening to it, their doubts shall vanish like Clouds in the Wind. Their sins shall fall off from their Souls like drops of water from lotus leaves. Their afflictions shall scatter in all directions like Jungle-fowl at the sight of a Hawk. Their enemies shall flee afar off in fear like Jackals at the roar of the mighty Lion.

67. Those who listen regularly to the Teaching of Shiva or meditate daily upon a verse in their heart, shall attain the Four Goals of Life (Chaturvarga) which are: Righteousness (Dharma), Material Prosperity (Artha), Love (Kama), and Spiritual Liberation (Shivatva).

68. For, it is by the Power of Yoga, which is Unity with the Lord, that Divine Righteousness is established in man's heart. It is by the Power of Yoga, that man's material life is kept in order. It is by the Power of Yoga, that man is united with the object of his desire. It is by the Power of Yoga, that man is United with the Lord. They who know this, shall roam the World like the Radiant Gods and move at will among those who are One with the Supreme.

69. Those who listen to the Teaching of Shiva with a clear understanding of its Spiritual Truth, are undoubtedly Great Yogis and shall be liberated in this life.

70. Those who with a pure heart listen to the Teaching of Shiva when about to die, shall go to Shiva's Abode of Light, Which is Shivalaya, the Abode of all Purity and Goodness.

71. Those who listen to the Teaching of Shiva with great devotion even for a moment, shall not be harmed by misfortune. For, Truth drives off untimely death, ill fate and dangers of all kinds. It protects the faithful against bad dreams, evil Spirits and disease. It is the remedy of all ills.

72. Verily, the mere hearing of this Holiest of Holy Teachings shall make even the greatest sinner fit for Salvation if he repent and turn his heart to the Path of Righteousness. Having entered upon the Path, a Soul's innermost wishes shall be fulfilled at Shiva's Command. For what the Lord speaks that comes to pass.

73. Being the Word of God, this Holy Teaching shall be revered with great love and devotion. Its Written Form shall be carefully covered in fine cloth and tied with a silken cord. It shall be always kept in a pure place, before an Image of the Lord.

74. The Teaching of Shiva shall be regarded as God's Visible Form and honour shall be done thereto in the same manner as His Own Worship.

75. The reading and discussing of the Teaching of Shiva shall be held in one's own house, the house of a pious man, a Temple of Shiva, a sacred grove or a clean and quiet park. This should be known as particularly meritorious when performed on holy days such as the fourteenth of the dark fortnight (the day before New Moon) and during the holy months.

76. Those who make copies of the Teaching of Shiva and distribute them among the devotees shall earn much Spiritual Merit. Those who according to their ability bestow gifts to the holders of the reading for their pious service and for the advancement of Righteousness on Earth, such as food, clothes, land, livestock and so forth, shall earn even more merit.

77. But those who learn the Teaching of Shiva by heart shall earn the highest merit. For the study of the Teaching of Shiva leads to discipline and self-control. Self-control leads to concentration. Concentration leads to focus and clarity. Clarity leads to wisdom and wisdom leads to peace of mind, happiness, contentment and undying bliss.

78. Verily, whether one honours the Teaching of Shiva in thought, word, or deed, it shall dissolve all sins and remove all kinds of distress, physical, mental or Spiritual. It shall bring Liberation to oneself, one's living next of kin and even to the remotest of ancestors.

79. Truly, the Teaching of Shiva has brought to pass many a miracle, to which the Saintly Sages (Sadhus) bear witness. For the Word of Shiva has the power to kindle the flame of devotion in the heart of the devotee; devotion attracts the Grace of the Lord; and His Grace attracts all kinds of things auspicious.

80. I have now spoken to you the Secret Teaching of Lord Shiva which was declared by Him at the beginning of Time for the Salvation of the World and by knowing which, one knows all secrets and all things that are worthy to be known.

81. The Supreme Lord Himself revealed this Teaching to the Holy Sages, Duravasa, Nageshanatha, Kapalin and Anandanatha.

82. Sage Duravasa Who Dwells Afar imparted it to his disciples, Tryambakanatha, Amardakanatha and Shrinatha, and these transmitted it to their disciples. I myself heard it from these and I have spoken it to you. Do you now impart this Greatest of Teachings to others that the Command of the Lord may be brought to pass.

83. Thus spoke Venerable Sage and God-Seer Vyasa, the worshipful son of Great Yogi Parashara and Charming Satyavati. May Shiva's Grace and Peace be eternally upon them all!

84. Here ends the Secret of Shiva spoken in verses twelve hundred and thirty. Over the centuries, Shiva's Eternal Teaching had become corrupt. Deprived of His Guiding Light, the World could no more tell Truth from Untruth. Yogi Soma-Natha, the humble devotee of Lord Shiva, like a dutiful gardener at the command of his Master, after enquiring into the Truth, has mended and set in order the course of the great stream of Spiritual Instruction known to the wise as Shri Shiva Rahasya (The Glorious Mystery Of Supreme Reality), that it may nourish the Divine World Garden through which it majestically flows, causing it to flourish and bear fruit for the welfare of all. May the Lord be pleased with my work and may it by His Grace bring Peace upon Earth! May all Souls be happy! Obeisance to the Supreme. **OM.**

Commentary to Chapter Twelve

4. *It came to pass in the year which according to the ancient time reckoning marked the beginning of the Age of Kali:* The Age of Kali or Age of Darkness began in the year 3,102 BC (Before the Current Era), and the traditional Indian Calendar calculates time as commencing at that point. In consequence, to translate a traditional Indian year into a modern Western year, 3,102 is subtracted from the Indian year. Thus 5,106 Kali Yuga minus 3,102 is 2,004 CE (Current Western Era or AD). Conversely, CE years are translated into Kali Yuga years by adding 3,102 to the CE date: CE 2,004 + 3,102 = KY 5,106 current (or 5,105 expired).

5. *He appeared to His devotees on the peak of Mount Kailasa:* The place at which the original Divine Revelation was given to mankind is traditionally identified as Mount Kailasa by all major religions of India, including those of Tibet and Nepal. Echoes of this Revelation are found in other, more recent traditions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The reason why supernatural revelations and visions are often connected with mountains, is that the pure atmosphere and balanced energy vibrations surrounding mountain peaks as well as their physical proximity to the Higher Planes, provide the ideal conditions for Spiritual Beings to clearly materialise themselves and thereby establish contact with human beings. These conditions also make it easier for humans to perceive and concentrate their naturally unfocused minds on such visions. Finally, the remoteness of mountain peaks puts them out of reach for those for whom, due to their insufficient Spiritual development, such visions or apparitions are not intended.

17. *The air was resonant with the sweet song of birds flying in and out of trees, etc.:* In former times (up to about 1,500 BC) climatic conditions in the Trans-Himalayan region were wetter and warmer and therefore the area where Mt. Kailasa is situated was richer in vegetation and animal life than it is today. Also, it is important to bear in mind that the earthly Kailasa is only an approximate reflection of the real Kailasa (Mount Meru) on the Higher Planes. As one approaches it, one enters a zone where the Physical and the Astral Planes intersect allowing the sensitive pilgrim a breathtaking and highly elevating glimpse of the Otherworld. As verse 19 says: "one could tell not whether the Sky had come down to Earth or the Earth had risen up to the Sky".

18. *Some clad in tree-bark or deerskin, others wearing nothing at all:* In common with the original traditions of the Ancient World (Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe, etc.), Yoga regards nudity as natural and therefore acceptable from a Spiritual or religious point of view.

Nudity in India is also traditionally seen as symbolic of detachment and freedom from material restrictions. Writing in the third century CE, the Christian Saint Hippolytus of Rome informs us that some inhabitants of India abstain from wearing clothes on the ground that the body itself is given by God as a covering for the Soul, no other clothing being necessary (Philosophumena, XXI - The Brahmans). Indeed, since the Supreme Being Himself (or His Emanation) wore only a symbolic tiger skin, it would be unreasonable to impose any restrictions with regard to clothing on humans. We may observe that, in Christianity, Lord Jesus is similarly depicted as wearing only a loincloth on the cross and the Bible describes his ancestor, King David, as dancing naked before the temple altar. Michelangelo's celebrated sculpture of King David and similar representations of human and Divine beings from Ancient Greece are but one of the more salient reminders that nudity constitutes an integral part of the common heritage of both East and West. This, of course, does not mean to say that Yogis or Indians in general observe nudity as a matter of everyday practice. Like people all over the World, they dress according to accepted norms of decency and as required by circumstances. The complete covering of the body and face, on the other hand, is neither popular nor advisable, medically, psychologically and Spiritually speaking. Indeed, the Supreme Lord Himself enjoins the wearing of aesthetically pleasing clothes that enhance a person's natural beauty, in particular at weddings and religious festivals (8:53, 11:65, etc.).

43. *Rituals and prayers will not do. If you desire the Highest, a gift of your own selves is the only proper offering:* See Chapter 3, verse 2 and Commentary.

51(a). *The 3rd watch of the night:* Indian time-reckoning divides the day and night into "Watches" (Praharas) of three hours each. Thus the day lasts 4 watches from sunrise to sunset (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and the night 4 watches from sunset to sunrise (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.), midnight falling on the beginning of the 3rd watch of the night

51 (b). *And the Great Magician, the Tremendous Three-Eyed Lord of the Three Worlds... entered a Secret Cave deep into the mountainside:* Caves have been recognised as places of great Spiritual power from the beginning of human life on Earth and all traditions speak of caves where encounters with the Divine take place. Thus Shri Ramana Maharshi, the celebrated Sage of South India, relates the following in connection with a cave on Mount Arunachala: "I was wandering about aimlessly when I found at one place a big cave. When I entered the cave, I saw a number of waterfalls, beautiful gardens, water tanks within those gardens, well-lit paths, fine lighting; everywhere there was most pleasing. As I went further and further I saw a Perfected Soul (Siddha Purusha) seated like Lord Dakshina-Murti (Shiva as World Teacher) under a tree on the banks of a water tank. Around him, a number of Saints (Munis) were seated. They were asking something and he was replying to them. That place appeared very familiar to me" (Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, p. 370). The 10th century North-Indian Master, Abhinava Gupta, is said to have entered the Bhairava Cave (near Magam, Kashmir) along with twelve hundred disciples, from where he ascended to the Higher Planes. The 3rd century Persian Prophet, Mani, is also reported to have entered a cave where he remained for one year during which time he ascended to Heaven. Similarly, the great Sage of Ancient Greece, Epimenides (6th century BC), is said to have fallen asleep in a cave as a young man and to have woken up 57 years later with the gift of prophecy. In the language of Spiritual symbolism, a cave situated near the summit of a mountain represents the highest state of consciousness by entering which man becomes Divine.

The act of entering a cave therefore symbolises the entrance into a Sacred, Divine Space that is not normally accessible to ordinary man. On account of the great silence and stillness prevalent in caves, the word cave also stands for the complete stillness and silence of the thought-free awareness experienced in the higher Spiritual States known to Yogis. See also Chapter 4, verse 56.

67. *Those who listen regularly to the Teaching of Shiva or meditate daily upon a verse in their heart, shall attain the Four Goals of Life:* The Four Goals are traditionally said to be obtainable by the Four Means or Paths (Chatur Marga), Jnana (Wisdom), Yoga (Spiritual Practice), Kriya (Religious Observances) and Charya (Righteous Living). However, these means in turn depend upon Yoga or Unity with the Divine. The reading of, or listening to, the Teaching of Shiva is itself a Spiritual Practice leading to Unity with the Supreme and, consequently, to the obtainment of the Four Goals. Thus, the reading of the Shiva Rahasya is consonant with Righteous Living, it constitutes Religious Observance as well as Spiritual Practice, and it results in the awakening of Divine Wisdom within oneself whereby anything may be obtained. In the Yoga tradition, Scriptures are not read hurriedly and then put away - as is often common among present-day readers - but read slowly to allow their absorption and assimilation or "digestion" by the reader's mind. Reading or re-reading one verse a day enables the human mind to attune itself to the Universal Consciousness and Its Higher Wisdom as revealed in Scripture and thus harmonise the reader's life with that of the Universe, with all the resultant benefits that such a harmonisation brings. As indicated in verse 77, the learning by heart of the Teaching of Shiva, or at least passages thereof, will enable the Yoga student to recall them from memory at all times and make them the object of his meditation, thereby remaining in constant touch with Higher Wisdom.

71. *Untimely Death:* See Commentary to Chapter 9, verse 89.

75. *During the holy months:* The Holy Months are the Four Months (Chatur Masa) of the rainy season: Ashadha (22 June to 22 July), Shravana (23 July to 22 August), Bhadrapada (23 August to 22 September) and Ashvina (23 September - 22 October). It is an ancient custom, already mentioned in Emperor Ashoka's edicts (3rd century BC), for ascetic Yogis and monks (Parivrajakas) who normally wander across the country, to remain in one place during this season. This is an opportunity for the lay community to interact with the Sages (Swamis or Sadhus) and draw inspiration from the latter's teachings and practices and it is a great honour for all householders to accommodate and entertain them. Chaturmasya or in full, Chaturmasya Vrata (also known as Varsha-Vasana), is regarded as a particularly favourable time for the performance of Spiritual practices such as alms-giving, fasting and listening to Spiritual readings and discourses, while certain dietary restrictions are generally observed by all. Although originally observed for the full length of the season, in more recent times it has been reduced to the first two months only, approximately from the Full Moon of Ashadha (June/July) to Full Moon of Bhadrapada (August/September), one fortnight or half month being regarded symbolically as one month.

84 (a). *Here ends the Secret of Shiva spoken in verses twelve hundred and thirty:* The total number of verses in the Shiva Rahasya amounts to 1230, a number which in Yoga has deep Spiritual meaning. When added up individually, the component numbers (1 + 2 + 3) give the figure 6 which, as intimated earlier, constitutes the basis of the sexagesimal system of numbers employed in Yoga for the transmission of certain Spiritual truths. Furthermore, 12 multiplied by 3 gives the Mystic Number 36 or, if we add the final 0, 360. This stands for the Totality of Being or All-Encompassing Reality Itself. In practice, the number 360 symbolises man's (and the World's) Revolution or Completion of the Circle of Life and return to the original point of

departure. This Spiritual Revolution is not a return to the past, but a return to the Eternal Truth that nourishes all life. It is a return that must be urgently effectuated by the modern World for the salvation of all Souls and the establishment of Divine Life on Earth. The same message is also conveyed in the number of the current page in which 9 (Nava, in Sanskrit) means New, thus indicating the advent of a New World Order based upon the Eternal Principle of All-Encompassing Unity. See also Chapters 2 and 7, and Commentary.

84 (b). *Yogi Soma-Natha has mended and set in order the course of the great stream of Spiritual Instruction known to the wise as Shri Shiva Rahasya:* Unlike written Scriptures the transmission of which has involved human agency and which therefore no longer accurately represent the Original Revelation, the Shiva Rahasya is the Word of God directly revealed through His Own Living Apostle, His Divine Holiness Mahaguru Shri Soma-Natha Maharaj Dev for the correction and completion of all other Scriptures which together form the great stream of Spiritual Intelligence that eternally nourishes the World.

End of Chapter 12 and Commentary
