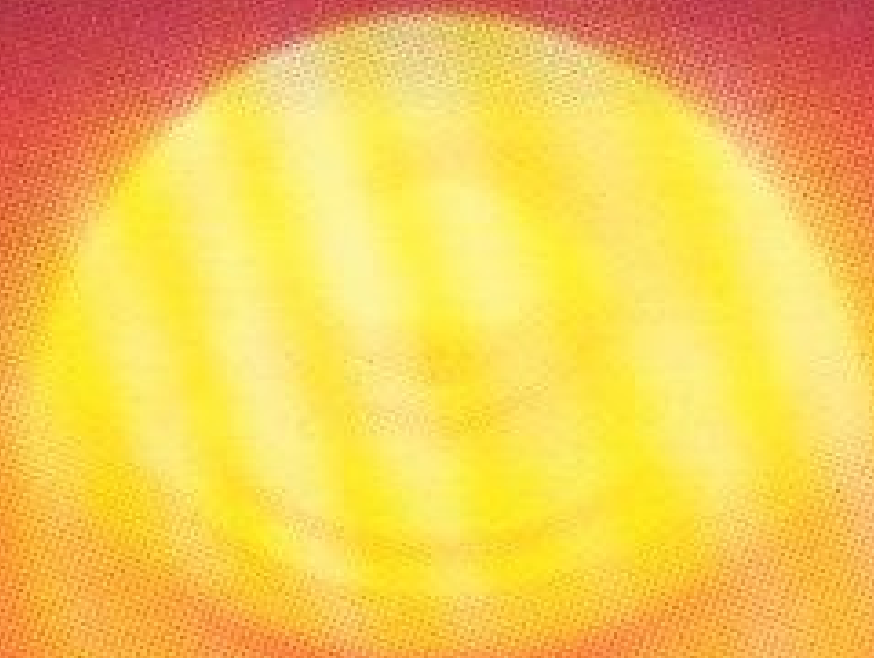


Who 'i' am i?



- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

WHO AM I?

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PREFACE

In this paradoxical universe the pursuit to discover its mysteries is limitless. The more we know, the more humble we become in the face of what we don't and cannot know. There are innumerable ways and means for investigating and acquiring knowledge. Amongst these, there are disciplines of objective, experimentally verifiable sciences about which man naturally wants to know more and more. Why? How? Where? When? of everything -he keeps on wondering and inquiring about. It is this natural curiosity which has led man to acquire so much knowledge of the mundane and material world and erect an imposing and gigantic technological edifice of civilization and culture.

Human ingenuity, aided by experimental science and thought, continues pushing back the limits of the unknown. However, the mass of humanity, including the elites, knows pretty little about its own real self. We hardly ever think about knowing the reality of our own existence. If we remain ignorant about our own real identity, the course of life remains uncertain, fearful, and confused. Because of ignorance of one's real self, man is unable to think or act wisely and righteously. There is only one highway to true happiness and peace in life and that is Self-Knowledge.

The present booklet is a humble attempt at "Exploration of the Self". Words or logic cannot fully explain the riddle of "Who am I?" The only way to know one's true identity is to explore the domains of consciousness within. An endeavor has been made in this booklet to guide the seeker to explore the reality of Self through specific disciplines of meditation and contemplation. It is hoped that it will be helpful to the genuine seekers of the Spirit.

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya.



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CHAPTER – I

Throughout life man remains confused because of the multiplicity of his numerous personalities. His perception of his own personality is always in a state of flux .It keeps on changing with environment, events and interactions with people, places and things. A verse in Chanakya Neeti (14-18) exhorts man to keep on questioning himself about his true identity. How does he identify himself from time to time? As a friend or an enemy of someone (I am friend/enemy of ...); as powerful or weak in relation to others (I command.../ I am subdued by....); as a resident of some place or country (I belong to/am citizen of. ...); as rich or poor because of plenty or lack of money and possessions (I am rich/poor on account of ...); etc. The subject "I" in each case appears to refer to a different person. In other words, the 'I' with which the person identifies himself refers to his body. Ultimately the truth dawns that the real-self, real-"I", the unchanging self, is not related to the material world; that, in fact, the real "I" is none other than an emanation - a local manifestation - of the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, Supreme Being – the Unified Field of Existence - and therefore is endowed with all its attributes in potential. The perceived limitations are because of our false identification with the transient ego-self, which separates us from the Whole.

There is only one primary reason behind all our problems and sufferings. Through the magic curtain of Maya (ignorance) we have forgotten our at-onement with the ultimate Supreme Source. The moment we awaken to our immortal identity as sparks (souls) of the Supreme Light (Universal Transcendent Spirit) we are freed from the shackles of fear – death, decay and suffering. With this realization, the entire perspective of 'I' undergoes a metamorphosis. The seeker then reflects: When I am part of that Eternal Being, how can "I" -the Eternal Self take birth or die? Not being "life" in a body why should I feel the necessity of food and water for my existence at a particular place? I am also not the mind-stuff, which weaves personal and material relationships making me unhappy on loss of what I am attached to and happy when I get what I like. Not being the egocentric "doer", the question of bondage to material world or deliverance from it does not arise.

In other words, the real "I" is beyond birth and death, does not feel hungry or

thirsty, is free from misery and sense of self and possession and is simply a witness to all activities of the mind-body-ego-knot. All acquisition of knowledge or information in this world is subject to our personal experience. Therefore it is always subjective and relative to our physical body, till we become aware of our true identity. Then and only then we get clear vision about our roles as embodied spiritual seekers. Therefore, awakened awareness of Self or Self-Realization is the supreme aim of human life.

When you ask someone about himself, he identifies himself as a professional, a holder of some status, as follower of some faith, etc. On further inquiry he gives more details such as his place of residence, citizenship, lineage or occupation. Such identifications, however, are not casual replies. The individual firmly believes in these identities as his real self. Man is so obsessed with his body, that he considers the body and the real self as one and the same. As a matter of fact, heritage, race, business, profession or status are related exclusively to the physical body of man. Body is only a garment or an instrument of the real self, but illusion and ignorance make him identify entirely with the body. Consequently he ignorantly considers the well-being of the transient body as the well-being of the Eternal Self. Because of this illusion life becomes a perpetual flux of turbulence, anxieties and painful experiences.

SOUL IN THE BODY

It is true that a being independent of the body lives through a body. At the moment of death, when life departs from the body, there is no change in the apparent physiology of the body. Nevertheless, the dead body immediately starts to decay and to putrefy emitting foul smell. Devoid of life (life in its essence is an integral part of the soul till it attains salvation), the body acquires an abhorable state. It proves that although the being enlivens the body, it has an existence of its own, independent of the body. In parlance of spirituality, this separate entity is called ATMA (Soul). This Soul is our true identity. Your right answer to the question "Who am I?" is "I am That Atma".

THE REAL YOU IS NOT THE BODY

Everyone intuitively knows that soul and body in a living being are two separate entities and even in our speech we say: "My body" – signifying that 'I am the possessor of the body and not the body itself'. Hardly anyone will doubt the separate existence of the soul. Whereas even a common man accepts this concept of differentiation in principle, his behavior reflects otherwise. Man behaves in such a manner as though he is inseparable from his body and the pains and pleasures of the body are his own (of the real self). A close observation of an individual's thoughts, speech and actions would show that all of these pertain exclusively to his identification with the body. He thinks, speaks and acts in terms of the body only. In other words when he says " I", he implies his body.

Body is the lodgement and temple of the soul. Hence it is proper as well as necessary to look after its health, cleanliness and upkeep, but it is erroneous and fallacious to identify oneself exclusively with the body - thus mistaking the residence for the resident. It is due to this false and mistaken identity that man loses sight of the real interests of the soul – his true identity – and suffers the pangs of death, disease, separation in endless cycles of embodiments.

INTERESTS OF SOUL AND BODY ARE DIFFERENT

Since soul and body are two separate entities, their interests are also different. The requirements of the body are represented by the interests of the sensory organs. The ten organs of sense perceptions and actions and the eleventh mind are perpetually running outwards for gratification of their basic urges through the instrumentality of the body. The sensory urges are delicious food, stylish clothes, numerous things of beauty, beautiful women, melodious sounds and a variety of objects of comfort, pleasure and luxury .The mind on the other hand aspires for a high status in society, great wealth, widespread fame and authority. The entire life is thus spent in satisfying these insatiable hankerings of body and mind. When desires become cravings, the deluded person frantically tries to satisfy them by any means – fair or foul. This is the primary cause of all sinful activities.

LUST AND GREED ARE ANIMAL TRAITS

If a human being exclusively and wholly lives for food, sleep, fear, sex etc., his would be considered an animal-like existence, devoid of any higher purpose. The least rise in the intensity of desire or impatience makes man take recourse to unfair means and turns the individual into a reckless devil. Individuals with such devil character traits make life hellish not only for themselves but also for others. Lust and greed are the two most powerful of these evil traits, which remain ever unsatiated. There is no end to cravings for sex and desires for acquiring more and more things for comfort, pleasure and luxury. Life is an endless cycle of desire, temporary satisfaction and still more intense craving. The more one indulges in sex, acquires material things, the greater become agitations of the mind: worries, wants and anxieties; and these go on increasing day by day. Whatever pleasure one gets through sensual indulgence is followed by disenchantment, fatigue and unhappiness. The knowledge that the present sense gratification would not last long and its ultimate end would bring unhappiness of loss creates a vicious cycle. In this way, perspective of body-consciousness drags man towards immorality, suffering, craving and turbulence in mind. Nevertheless, man keeps on seeking true happiness in material things.

Real success and prosperity in life lies in remaining ever conscious of one's true identity. When man identifies himself with ATMA (Soul), his aspirations and inclinations naturally begin to follow the righteous path of self-discipline, which provides true happiness to the Soul.

THE FOOD FOR SOUL

Whenever a person commits immoral acts like theft, violence, adultery, deception, he has a queer feeling of uneasiness within. His limbs start shaking and pulse- rate becomes irregular .It is nothing but an adverse reaction of the higher self (soul) to an immoral act or behavior of the lower animal self. Immorality is contrary to the nature and interests of the soul. On the other hand, virtuous acts involving altruism, philanthropy, kindheartedness, self-sacrifice and continence provide great inner satisfaction, lightheartedness, cheerfulness and exhilaration. Only those persons who are able to listen to the promptings of the soul (conscience) and act accordingly, are righteous and

noble. Having risen above animal drives, a person tuned to the voice of conscience can never commit a sinful or evil act.

Virtuous acts provide inner peace and joy to the soul in this world, as well as in the world beyond. Thus, the well-being of the soul lies in living virtuously. On the contrary, body considers its well-being in subtle and gross gratification of the mind and body. Unfortunately mass of humanity spend their entire lives in the blind routine of appeasing the urges of the body, which unlike the soul, is destined to decay and die; but in this process soul bound in ignorance keeps on accumulating sins. No doubt such lifestyle gives fleeting pleasures to the body and to mind, but the soul is exposed to suffering in this world and in the world beyond. The body is required to undergo hardships in the course of performance of virtuous acts for the welfare of the soul. Unless strictly disciplined to abstain from sense-indulgence, the body cannot properly perform virtuous and noble acts. It is therefore required to be subjected to such disciplines as continence, sacrifice of self-interests, control of wayward thoughts, speech, actions; moderation in sex and philanthropy. It is therefore evident that well-being of body and soul are dramatically opposite. One has to choose between the two.

SELF-REALISATION IS REFLECTED IN BEHAVIOUR

There are two categories of people in this world. Those who identify themselves with their body, do not care about the welfare of the soul and spend their entire life in collecting material assets and things of comfort and pleasure. Life of such persons is reduced to an animal-like existence. Even while they are discussing nobility, rectitude, religion, ethics, life beyond death, benevolence, etc their interests remain focused on self-aggrandizement – here on earth or in heavens beyond. At times such individuals use religiosity as a facade for acquiring fame, for public acclaim of their nobility or for proving superiority of their scholarship; but their minds are always pre-occupied with pursuit of physical pleasures and body-centered ego-inflation. But the moment a person realizes the necessity of soul-awakening, there is a sea-change in his attitude towards life. Sense-indulgence loses charm for him. When the wisdom of self-awareness dawns within, he realizes that the body is merely a garment of clay or an instrument for self-expression in the visible world; that this unique, invaluable human life should not be wasted in trivialities of self-

glorification and indulgences in the comforts and pleasures of body. On becoming soul-conscious, he identifies himself with ATMA (Soul) and all his interests are directed towards well-being and joy of the soul. He single-pointedly uses every moment of his life in cultivating soul attributes. Thus, a body-engrossed person leads a miserably unhappy and animal-like existence whereas the soul-conscious person follows a life-path conforming to highest ethical and spiritual standards leading to abiding peace and joy.

REWARDS OF SOUL-AWARENESS

On becoming aware of the immortal indwelling soul, one does not get unduly influenced, agitated or disturbed by the evanescent ups and downs of life. Dualities of profit and loss, life and death, union and separation, respect and insult, attachment and aversion, etc produce very negligible reaction in a soul-conscious person. He takes these as routine, natural happenings of this ever-changing world. The man of awakened awareness knows that events happen as per Divine Will and not according to ego-centered individual likes and dislikes. The enlightened person disinterestedly views the passing show of happenings like a detached spectator – neither elated by so-called pleasant events nor dejected by unpleasant ones. A soul-conscious person easily escapes from the stresses and strains, which keep on tormenting and disturbing the body-conscious persons and at times, under intense stress, driving them to take the extreme step of suicide.

The key to living a life of purity, simplicity, nobility and dignity is to rise above body-consciousness and awaken to the reality of soul-consciousness. It brings true happiness, peace and gives a purpose to life. This is why spiritual masters gave topmost priority to Sadhana of Self-realization: "I AM AN IMMORTAL SOUL ". The sadhanas given in this book are meant to inspire a sincere sadhak on the path to self-realization – the supreme purpose of human life.

The discovery of the Indwelling Real Self makes a person realize that he is neither this body nor the mind-stuff (Sookchma Shareer) both of which are only soul's instruments. Realization of this truth frees man from the bondage of body and mind. A fable would explain this phenomenon more explicitly:
A monkey happens to come across a pitcher full of nuts. It puts its hand in the

pitcher, grabs a fistful, but is unable to withdraw the filled fist because of the narrow mouth of the pitcher. The monkey starts crying in panic, believing that the pitcher is holding its hand. It is able to pull out the hand, the moment it realizes the truth and releases the nuts. Likewise, man suffers because he clings to his carnal weaknesses like attachment, likes, dislikes, sex, anger, etc. The moment he exercises his conscious willpower to shake off these self-imposed addictions, he is instantly freed from the bondage of ignorance. There is also that story about the lion's cub, who, on being brought up in the company of lambs developed the timidity of lambs; but when it saw its image, the true-self, in water, it regained its real lion-like confidence and strength. This is exactly what happens when we discover our true identity – the Immortal Soul.

It brings total relief from ego-inflicted sufferings and wants which keep on tormenting us each moment. There are numerous fields of knowledge in this world but The Supreme Knowledge, transcending all other fields of knowledge, is the Knowledge of the Self. (Atma Gyan) which unravels the mystery of life. Research scholars in the material and mundane sciences have uncovered many miracles of nature, such as: electrical energy and atomic power. In the same manner, on diving deep into the inmost recesses of the Supreme source and spirit of the universe, the sages, seers and the mystics have discovered the nectar of ATMA (soul) transcending the limitations of the material world, the experience of which makes man truly wise and bestows upon him mastery over mental and material forces and energies. Hence it is essential for man to first know his Real Self. He should repeatedly put this question to himself- "WHO AM I?" and find out the right answer through in-depth analysis, contemplation and introspection. On knowing the true self, man gains the clear-seeing wisdom to discriminate between what is beneficial for true human well-being and what is not? Things, which are considered beneficial in a state of mind inclined towards materialistic pursuits and pleasures, for which man craves day and night, appear trivial, in fact harmful, when one becomes aware of the soul. Then many pursuits, which appear useless, even foolish and abhorrent to a materially infatuated individual, provide real inner peace and joy to the seeker of the Soul and become signposts on his immortal journey back Home.

HURDLES IN SADHANA

Many persons aspire for spiritual progress but do not achieve the desired progress because of their halfhearted, lop-sided process of sadhana. The goal of sadhana is to violently shake man out of his body-conscious state of slumber, so that he becomes fully awakened to the reality of his true identity as an Immortal Soul. The holistic therapy for any disease involves treatment of the root cause of the malady. Mere palliatives do not serve the purpose. The same principle holds true in case of spiritual sadhana. No doubt, the conventional rituals of sadhana like continence, philanthropy, fasting, jap, anushthans, yajna, etc. are beneficial as initial steps. Nevertheless, they do not constitute the totality of sadhana. These rituals do enhance purity of mind, positive traits and nobility, but these alone do not lead to Enlightenment, which reveals the illusory and transient nature of the phenomenal world and our free identity as immortal souls - sparks of the Divine. The purpose of this booklet is to help and guide a spiritual seeker to awaken to the Presence of his Indwelling Divinity. A person of awakened awareness of the Spirit effortlessly lives a life of nobility, righteousness and loving kindness.

Once this paradigm shift of consciousness is accomplished, the confines of “I” and “MINE” expand infinitely to encompass the whole of the universe. Such a realized Soul feels that he has far greater responsibilities to shoulder than mere caring for his narrow physical-self and related persons and things. As one climbs higher and higher on this spiritual ascent, one’s sense of belonging expands accordingly and finally, looking around as far as one can from the top of a hill, one discovers that he is one with all existence. Earlier, a person had to take care, perhaps, of his children, siblings, a few relatives, a few employees, some possessions, etc., but now these thousands upon thousands of things and people around appear needing his personal care. In other words, as one's field of vision widens on climbing a hill, so does the perspective of Self on self-realization. The tiny egocentric, body-confined sense of I-ness vanishes for good.

Let us try to understand this concept through an analogy. Let us consider the air in a balloon as the limited-self. Blowing air in this balloon expands it and it occupies more and more space, till it bursts. The air in the balloon becomes part of the vast expanse of air surrounding the earth. In the same manner,

progressive expansion of self-identity ultimately leads to the realization that it was inseparably connected with all creation. It was the body-consciousness (the balloon), which was creating the illusion of an isolated, independent existence of one's own. In a nutshell, this is the vision of Self-realization. This is the basic tenet of the super-science of spirituality, which constitutes the core of the various religious faiths and mystic paths all over the world. In nutshell, this is the core of all disciplines of spiritual practices, irrespective of the people, places or varieties of worship.

Once having a glimpse of the true Self, the seeker can never return to the confines of the old narrow perspective of self. In common human life in each moment, there is a lurking worry and fear of a possible disaster. Man is in desperate search of a perennial source of happiness, but he is seeking it outside of himself – in possessions, self, power and relations. When one dying of thirst in a desert finds an oasis of cool water, would one ever think of returning to the wasteland of scorching sand? "Yadgatva Na Nivartate Taddham Parmam Mam" proclaims the Divine Teacher in Bhagwadgita. It means, "Having experienced the bliss of Self -realization who would like to come back for suffering mundane worldly woes?" Having reached the destination, the question of losing direction does not arise. Does one forget the way back to home after homecoming?

Vices like lust, anger, greed, infatuation and cravings for sensory pleasure keep man always entangled in the cobweb of misery .On account of the ever-changing nature of material world, one can never have lasting peace and happiness on this plane. Throughout life man keeps on lamenting for loss, craving for more and more of what he considers pleasant and getting frustrated on denial of his wishes. The attachment to the pleasant and repulsion from the unpleasant are two root causes of retrogression, which drag the being to births in sub-human species of animal kingdom. (Laws of science of spirituality state that in course of its progressive evolution, the soul of a being inhabits bodies of successively higher, more evolved species of biological kingdom and birth as a human being is the culmination of this evolution. It is further stated that indulgence in aforementioned animal traits sets the clock of progressive evolution backwards). The methods prescribed in spiritual practices in various faiths are meant to rise above the pull of these beastly

tendencies. In the Bhagwadgita, human mind is personified as Arjun. In the battle of Mahabharat, which symbolizes the perpetual inner battle between the good and the evil within our own selves, he is exhorted by God-incarnate, Sri Krishna, to fight against and annihilate his own intimate relatives (evil traits) personified as the Kauravas. In the following chapters of this booklet simple exercises are suggested for elevating the level of consciousness of man to a super-conscious state where he becomes totally free from degrading traits of worldly life. Self-realization endows the seeker with celestial virtues of divinity. As mentioned earlier, progressive expansion of the ego-bound narrow-self ultimately bursts the balloon of body-consciousness and the individual being attains at-one-ment with the omnipresent Supreme Being. Some scepters may interpret this path of soul-growth as the way of the recluse or the ascetic, who wants "Nirvana" (Deliverance) or who desire to be detached from worldly life for altruistic pursuits. One may even argue that this sadhana is only for those who are interested in the benefits of life beyond death, whereas all efforts of a common man are focused on the pleasures of this world only; that most of the time of man in his daily routine is taken up by such things as business, job, education, entertainment, etc; and he has little or no inclination or time to think of and provide for life beyond death.

It is natural to have such doubts since in today's world, the confused mindset of man treats well-being of self in this world and in the worlds beyond death as two different pursuits, whereas factually these cannot be compartmentalized. What pertains to this world is also covertly related to the other. These are inseparable like two sides of the same coin. The subject matter of this writing does not permit dealing in detail with this misconception. Suffice it to say that the cultivation of Self-awareness is the most efficacious method of success in practical life of this world as well. All progress in this world goes hand in hand with the progressive evolution of human consciousness. One, who is endowed with the inner-strength of soul, has the capacity to succeed in all avenues of life.

The simple and natural method of communion with God is in knowing one's true immortal self, appreciating dignity of human life, finding out the specific role of human species in the creation of God, and thereafter start functioning without any ego-centered motive as the Manager of His estate; whatever part

of it has been entrusted to your care. There can be no more soul-satisfying art of living than this.

There should be no ambiguity in understanding this plain truth that there are two root causes of success or failure in any human endeavor: One - a correct appraisal of one's capabilities and shortcomings; and two - knowledge about availability of means and resources required to complete the assignment. In spite of being endowed with the best of intellect, one cannot arrive at the right decision in the absence of hard facts about these variables.

Spiritual masters say: "Remember! The soul in you is indestructible. You are not a non-entity, but a magnificent creation of God. Do not feel weak in any respect. Nor beg for anything. You are immensely powerful. There are no limitations to what you can do. The potentials with which you have appeared in this world can undoubtedly overcome all obstacles in your way to success. Your capabilities are more powerful than the obstructions to be overcome. Success and happiness are your birthrights. Wake up! Identify your true self; assess your means and resources and wisely go ahead towards the set goal. You will find that there is nothing that you aspire for is beyond your reach. You are the "Kalpavrikcha" and "Kamdhenu" of heaven, which grant all wishes. You are success personified. Come forward and take charge of what is your due."

This booklet tells you that you are not merely a body, nor like any other less evolved species on earth, but are a manifestation of attributes of God. Body and mind are your tools. You are not a slave of your sensory organs. Animal-like habits cannot enslave you. The pollutants of thoughts cannot withstand your inner strength. In essence, a human being is an embodied soul, with the body as an instrument. Understand this distinction clearly and unambiguously. When man regards the "Self" as his body, the soul cannot use the body effectively. The distinction enables the soul to make use of the body as an instrument of self-growth. This is the task before man. Any task can be successfully accomplished if there is clarity of vision and purpose. This is the yoga of perfect skill in works (Yogaha Karmasu Kaushalam - Gita). Diligently aspire to be such a yogi.

The purpose of this writing is to motivate you to make your due contributions

to the real well-being of this world and the world beyond, leading you to the Supreme goal of Self-realization.

May God enlighten your path.



CHAPTER - II

“Naimatma Pravachanen Labhyohah Na Medhaya Na Bahu Shruten”

Say the Upanishads: “The Soul cannot be perceived by sermons, or through intellectuality, or by too much listening to discourses on spirituality.”

The preceding chapter would have evoked a curiosity in the reader to learn about that entity called Soul, after knowing which nothing else remains to be known. It is but natural to have such an aspiration. The natures of the body and the Soul are so distinctive that a closer examination reveals the difference between the two. Whereas the body is composed of gross physical elements of matter, the soul is infinitesimally subtle (Sookchma) – beyond all imagination.

According to the well-known laws of science, in a compound, the substance having lesser density tends to dissociate from the associated matter. For example, having lesser density than that of water, oil and wood float on the surface of water. Similarly, because of lighter gases in it, hot air and flames in fire rise upwards in spite of downward pull of gravitational force and atmospheric pressure.

The same principle holds well in case of body and Soul of the embodied beings. The soul is infinitesimally subtler (Sookchma) than the matter that constitutes the body. Hence, in spite of being engaged in the body, instead of remaining as its inseparable permanent constituent, it strives to dissociate itself from the latter to rise to a higher level of consciousness. It is generally believed that downward pull of sensory indulgence acts as a counterforce against this evolution. However, it is not true. Pure Bliss is inherent in the very nature of the Soul. Man instinctively endeavors to interact with this internal source of happiness. That is why everyone desires to be happy. In the absence of the correct means and wisdom required for attaining lasting happiness, man resorts to quench this natural intrinsic thirst for happiness in the outer objective world by indulging in mundane, perverted sensory pleasures of the flesh. If he, somehow, has even a fleeting taste of the bliss inherent in the true Self, would he run here and there chasing the mirage of happiness? Dear reader! You must be reading these lines with the same expectations and excitement, which a traveler feels on receiving a letter from his dear ones after a long period of absence from home. Such reaction itself is sufficient to indicate that man is ever eager to know the reality of his true

Self. As mentioned earlier, in spite of being within the body, the Soul cannot exist as its integral constituent. The source of happiness lies within the Soul, which is an individualized manifestation of the omnipresent Supreme Being, having attributes of Truth-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-Chit-Anand). Man wanders, in vain, in the world of objects in search of that something, which could provide him lasting happiness, which ever eludes him due to his misplaced search. Once it dawns upon him that the source of ever- lasting unalloyed bliss lies within his own real Self – the Soul – a contact is established with the inexhaustible fount of peace and happiness and real sadhana begins, which ultimately culminates in full Self-Awareness.

Everyone complains about the fickleness of mind, but none is able to explain the reason thereof. As a matter of fact, mind always remains in a state of flux because it is ever in search of happiness (Desire for comforts, satisfaction, elation, jubilation, acquisition of wealth, status, honor, etc. are varied phantom forms of happiness). Man keeps on running helter- skelter without any rest in search of source of happiness, like the musk deer running in search of aroma of the musk lying in its own naval. Man continues to seek the basic source of happiness in the material world whereas it exists in his own Inner- Self. Self-realization provides an access to this source of unending bliss, thus resulting in mental calm and cessation of the chain of desires.

WHAT IS SELF-REALIZATION?

Self-realization means having a clear and irrefutable experience of the real natures of one's self-identity (immortal Soul) and of the transient body. The experience of Self-realization, however, is not a routine process of daily life. It does not take much effort to cram a piece of literature and endlessly talk about theoretical aspects of any field of knowledge. One may claim to know ten times more about the subject elucidated in this booklet and put forward forceful arguments in support of one's own point of view. One may also point out scriptural discrepancies in its descriptions. Such things would, at most, take the seeker to the threshold of the temple of Self. Sheer cramming does not make one a scholar. The scriptures clearly state that one cannot interact with the Soul by indulging in debates, intellectual cogitations or listening to sermons on the subject.

Whatever the reader has been reading about this subject so far is likely to confuse him, unless Divine Grace makes him worthy of understanding. If the reader finds the subject interesting and is desirous of knowing the real nature of his Inner-Self, he is welcome to follow the spiritual practices recommended herein.

BEGIN ON A CLEAN SLATE

For climbing up the peak of a mountain, first one has to reach the foot of the hill and decide upon the route to be undertaken. The same process is applicable to the uphill task of Self-realization.

Each field of expertise has its own specific curriculum. Whatever be one's experience and knowledge in other fields, for a new unknown discipline, a beginning has to be made at the primary, kindergarten level. The spiritual seeker, irrespective of his attainments in other fields of knowledge, should not feel embarrassed in learning the alphabets of Self-realization. Overlooking all personal qualifications and experience, through these lessons, the aspirant is being encouraged to proceed like a beginner on a clean slate. It would make assimilation easier and progress faster.

Put this question to yourself. What do I mean when I say "I"? Animals, birds and other less evolved species of biological kingdom do not have this pronounced concept of "I". Although like human beings, they too feel pleasure, pain, and comforts, nevertheless their mental processes do not transcend physical requirements of the body. For instance, a donkey does not know why it is bearing a burden or what is its relationship to the person who is using it as a beast of burden. Though it does feel the discomfort of the burden and feels satiated on being fed fresh fodder, it does not react to sense stimulations like a human being. For such lower orders of living species, the body alone is the reality of self.

Though in course of progressive evolution, we human beings have acquired a superior intellect, how many of us are aware of the reality of Self? We come across quite a few persons who claim to be familiar with the Self, but there is a

world of difference between awareness of the reality and talking about it. People mechanically record in their memory, whatever little they come to know from others about reality of Self (Atma-Gyan) and replay this programmed information in course of discussions from time to time. Then there are many others, who have never heard of existence of an entity called Soul. Such individuals are still infants as far as growth of intelligence is concerned. Their little world remains confined to instinctive, automated reactions to animal urges like hunger, sleep, fear, sex, anger, greed, infatuation, etc. Intellectual engagements of such persons do not go beyond matters related to physical requirements. Amongst such persons, the dull headed become satisfied with crude means of enjoyment, whereas the so-called intelligent ones endeavor to refine and beautify the means and methods of sense indulgence. An individual belonging to an underdeveloped country derives the same pleasure in riding an animal-driven cart, which a rich person of the developed world has while driving his expensive car. Basically, both derive the same sense of pleasure.

In today's world, whatever progress human intelligence has made has been predominantly utilized for improvement in quality and quantity of means of physical comforts and pleasure. Today, for most of the civilized persons of the society, the body itself is the reality of self (Deh-Atma-Buddhi). Though, for the sake of religiosity, such individuals perfunctorily follow the traditional rituals, these are meant for superficial satisfaction only and have no relevance whatsoever to realization of Supreme Truth about the Self (Atma-Gyan). For instance, such acts as philanthropy are regarded as virtuous activities; but these do not necessarily lead to spiritual search unless performed as part of Sadhana, without expectation of name fame or other rewards. Though such rituals as yajna and tap, endeavors for acquiring spiritual wisdom and work for welfare of society are considered by scriptures as essential duties of all human beings, to whatever faith they subscribe, these do not, by themselves, take one closer to the discovery of indwelling Soul. Soul (Atma) is so infinitesimally rarefied (Sookchma), that it cannot directly interact with any material object. It is beyond the reach of any physical endeavor involving money, rituals, altruism and glorification of persons or places of worship.

ACCESS TO ATMA IS THROUGH THE MIND

The means available to us for approaching Atma are the four faculties of the mind, namely- Man -rhything with “pun”: interacting with the sensory organs; Buddhi: the realm of thoughts, contemplation and intellect; Chitta: the storehouse of inherent traits and habits formed as a consequence of repeated actions in the present and previous births; and Ahamkar: Ego - the predominant impression of one’s own personality like “I am rich”, “I am poor”, “I am strong”, etc. These four faculties of the mind can be trained as tools for experiencing the reality of the Soul (Atma Darshan). The Soul is subtly pervasive all over the body. It has not been assigned any fixed location by nature, where one could access it through some means or methodology. As only the faculties of mind are capable of revealing the stages of growth of the soul in evolution, its modes of manifestation in forms, exploration of secrets of the inner world of the mind is an essential part of spiritual search..

THE REALM OF MIND IS NOT AN ILLUSION

The domain of mind functions as per its own underlying principles like the external material world. Within moments, thoughts travel from New York to Switzerland. Though New York and Switzerland in the mental imagery do not have a physical presence in the mind, nevertheless these are reflections of an actuality, which does exist elsewhere. A shadow is as much a reality as the object of which it is a reflection. Nothing can be conceptualized unless it factually exists in substance somewhere. Hence the realm of mind should not be taken as an illusory world.

An infinitesimally rarefied energy (Sookchma Chetna) operating in the mind is controlling all activities of the universe. An industrialist, who desires to extend his business to a foreign country, first gathers relevant information about that country, analyses the data and takes then decisions about actual investment there. Divinity sends its probing messages to a soul capable of illumination as intuitions in mind. By entering the domain of mind (by reading body language, facial expressions, psychoanalysis, polygraphy, etc.) we can find almost everything about the emotional state and reflex response of a person. Such things, however, pertain to a very small part of the conscious superficial layers

of the mind. In the deeper layers of the mind – sub-conscious subliminal and super-conscious - paranormal, extra-sensory domains are hidden. From these domains, predictions can be made about future events. All inspirations, guidance and light for spiritual quest come through a quiet, receptive and purified mind. The latter receives divine directives as intuitions; the tongue expresses them in words, which are then recorded in the holy books. In absence of these faculties of the mind, man would have functioned like a mechanical robot. It is the domain of mind, which serves as a channel between ultimate causal realm of the Spirit and the Soul of man, encased in Maya.

YOGIC PRACTICES FOR CONTROL OF BODY AND MIND ARE DIFFERENT

Now let us endeavor to enter the domain of mind, examine the reality of Soul and experience its existence with the help of paranormal powers inherent in the depths of the mind. All seekers throughout the world have been adopting the same methodology. For understanding elementary facts about any subject, there is no alternative to application of penetrating intelligence inherent in the inner world of the mind. Subjective investigation for discovery of the reality of Self would also require the aid of illumined intelligence. The science of spirituality calls this process as Yoga.

There are many disciplines of Yoga. Some amongst these are meant for health and physical fitness. Others are for spiritual Sadhana. However, good health is an essential prerequisite for entering the path of this Sadhana. The higher disciplines of yoga comprise Pratyahar (Inward withdrawal of mind and senses from their objects), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation), and Samadhi (State of Trance) successively. Spiritual seekers also follow many other disciplines like Yam, Niyam, Asan, Pranayama. The Hatha Yogis carry out procedures of Neti, Dheti, Vasti, Vajroli and other exercises for physical fitness and control. Others have their own specific methods for physical fitness. All of these are basically meant to keep the body healthy so that problems of the body do not create obstacles in course of mind control exercises. The seekers are advised to maintain good health with simple exercises. In today's environment, it is neither advisable nor necessary to follow the traditional ancient physical exercises of yoga, involving intricate postures.

It would be unfair to ask a person living in a polluted environment of a city to carry out intense Pranayama practices. Such difficult exercises were prescribed for those seekers of yore who lived in the unpolluted environment of the hills, took only fresh fruits for meals, used unpolluted water from the mountain springs or streams and observed continence. There is no logic in asking a frog to wear a horseshoe. It would kill the frog. Today there is general awareness about the norms for healthy living and these should be strictly adhered to. If there is some disease, an expert medical practitioner of the discipline may be consulted. For our present objective, however, no such physical standards of health are necessary for which one may require prolonged treatment or prior training. Normal health and a relaxed, happy attitude are the only two prerequisites.

PREPARATION FOR MEDITATION

Choose a quiet place. It is advisable to find a place free of things which may provoke fear or distraction. Since it is not always possible to find an ideal, totally noiseless place, as far as possible, a place having least noise may be chosen. It is preferable to have a fixed place for daily meditation. If it is not possible to find an ideal place, that is, in a forest, on a hill or bank of a river, select a small chamber, where mind is not likely to be distracted. Be seated comfortably, keeping the back straight. It is not necessary to stiffen the neck and chest or to cross the legs, since it might induce discomfort in parts of the body, which will repeatedly send signals to the mind, disturbing its equanimity. Let the body be totally loosened, so that all muscles become relaxed. Let each part of the body feel tension-free, peaceful and at complete rest. A comfortable chair is best suited for this posture. Lying flat on the bed, face upwards, would also serve the purpose, but the head has to be raised a little. Alternatively, one may sit with the back resting against a wall, with a cushion behind the back. Whatever be the sitting posture, the body should be loosened like a ball of cotton, so that there does not arise any need for changing positions or adjusting the support for comfort. However, care should be taken to adopt a posture in which, on reaching the state of deep meditation, there is no likelihood of toppling.

Keep sitting in this way for some time. Let the body feel restful and mind at peace. In the initial stages, it would require somewhat greater effort but later, with practice, the seeker finds it easy to relax irrespective of the place and

environment. A word of caution! This exercise is not meant for simply creating a state of relaxation, in which one generally reaches a state of drowsiness, begins to daydream or flies high on the wings of imagination. Remember! This preparation for meditation has a specific purpose. It is required to be practiced as directed, since it has been created deliberately for a specific objective.

Later, with practice, this state of mind in meditation would become a state of natural awareness (consciousness) and would not require any conscious effort to attain. In difficult situations of life giving rise to fear, misery, pain, apprehension or stress, such as equanimity of mind would become activated without any conscious effort and the seeker would pass through the crisis in an attitude of calm confidence and peace.

SOUL IS THE NUCLEUS OF YOUR WORLD

Now in the above state of meditation collect all your thoughts on the nature of "I". Think absolutely nothing about any external person, place, thing or event. Conceptualize, that factually your Soul (the real Self, "I") is an independent entity; that it is infinitely powerful, indestructible and indivisible. That it is the central star around which your personal world, i.e. everything related to you, is continuously revolving (is in perpetual cyclic motion) like the planets of the solar system orbiting around the Sun. Conceptualize the Inner-Self as the nucleus of your world, brightly illuminated like The Sun. Resolutely create such an imagery in your mind with the help of the creative nature of your mind. In your mental horizon, establish your Soul as a centrally located stationary central star, around which everything related to you is perpetually revolving. Assure yourself that these things around you are dependent on you but that you are not dependent on them and that, though you are providing them energy for their movement, nevertheless they have their separate existence and in no way belong to you. After persistently practicing in this way, in a few days, such an awareness will become deep-rooted.

Do not think the picture you are conceptualizing is fallacious or fanciful. It is an exercise to let you appreciate that laws of motion in nature are universally applicable, as much to the living beings as to inert matter. As a matter of fact,

each cell / particle, living as well non-living, is perpetually in a state of rotation around some nucleus. In the solar system, there are planets revolving around the Sun, and the latter too is circumambulating some other invisible nucleus of energy in the universe. The nucleus of energy in our heart makes the blood circulate around the body. It is the natural property of everything tangible or intangible to follow its particular law of cyclic motion. Sound, natural forces, ideologies and atoms of various elements are always moving forward following their particular rotational trajectories. The natural law of motion governing periodical cyclic changes is working everywhere - all around us. (Life and activities of followers of particular ideologies revolve around the protagonists of these ideologies.) As mentioned above, the Soul of an individual being is a nucleus of energy and elements of all natural systems living or non-living, which are related to the individual, move around this central force. In other words, their actions and reactions are indirectly influenced by this nucleus (Soul) within a time-space paradigm. On becoming thoroughly convinced about the reality and universality of these natural phenomena, you will notice an unusual transformation in your outlook. You will clearly perceive yourself existing as a nucleus of energy acting on everything related to you. You will find that your world and all material objects related to you such as your house, your car, garments, ornaments, money and property are not an integral part of you; that these have separate existence of their own; that though you are living amongst these, these are alien to you.

(Note: This concept may be further understood in this way. Whatever be the dynamism of interactions between the various animate and inanimate systems related to a person, the driving force behind it is his mind. It is the mind of the individual, which creates and shapes his world. Further, the mind, as we have discussed earlier is only a tool of the inner Self i.e. Soul. Hence the Soul has been referred to as the central star of the personal world. Besides, as, in spite of being the source of energy to the entire solar system, the Sun itself remains unaffected by the dynamics in its system, the soul of a person (not his body) remains an independent entity, uninfluenced by the activities in one's personal world. In this way, the real Self and the associated world, though related, exist independently. An oft-quoted classic analogy is the lotus leaf floating on water being in water yet not submerged in it.)

THE REWARDS OF DISCOVERING THE SOUL

The person, who has consciously discovered his inner Self as the nucleus of energies controlling the varied activities of his world, becomes a detached observer and witness of the ever-changing phenomena of names and forms around him. In spite of being a part of this scenario, such a person remains perpetually aware of the ever-liberated real Self (Atma or Soul). Like the petal of a lotus flower, which, in spite of being surrounded by water, keeps afloat a little over the surface of water, an enlightened person does not get emotionally involved in the happenings of the world.

On the other hand, an unenlightened individual is like an unintelligent small child. So long as a man considers himself as a petty, helpless, tied-up being of the creation, nature treats him accordingly and provides him with means of subsistence befitting his self-image. If you regard yourself as a good-for-nothing, ordinary being, who takes pleasure only in gross physical cravings of flesh, your psyche will be the cesspool of evil tendencies like greed, desires for sensory pleasures, sex, flattery, etc. But once you become consciously aware of the immense potential of your Soul by virtue of its eternal relationship to the Supreme Being, you will instantly start manifesting the attributes of your Divine Parentage. Your behavior and temperament will undergo a sea change. A small child does not mind dirtying his clothes, but an intelligent adult hates to do so, and even if, in a contingency he is forced to do so, he feels very much embarrassed and ashamed. Likewise, when man becomes spiritually more evolved and aware, all the lowly animal tendencies like selfishness, greed, hatred, divisiveness, anger, violence, etc effortlessly fall away from his nature like dry leaves and he is bestowed with virtuous attributes of divine nature e.g. altruism, loving kindness, inter-connectedness, compassion, selfless service, etc – and these virtues continue growing with the progression of his spiritual evolution – just as a tadpole grows into a frog, it automatically sheds its tail.

THE PROOF OF SELF-REALIZATION LIES IN DIRECT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

No amount of education or reasoning can lead one to the direct experience of the inner Self as the immortal nucleus of individual manifestation in the form of multifarious energy waves. In the realm of mysticism and spirituality, logic

finds itself totally helpless, since it can confidently deal with only tangible experiences of the material world. Extrasensory and para-psychological experiences are beyond the range of logic. By reasoning one cannot prove that the person who is being respectfully addressed as 'father' is actually father of the concerned person.

Hence, for experiencing the transcendental Supreme source of ourselves as well as the universe we will have to discard the logical approach and take recourse to the traditionally established and tested practices of Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (Trance), successively. Therefore, in order that uncertainties of pros and cons of the disciplines being proposed here do not unnecessarily engage the mind and interfere with the objective of experiencing the Soul (Atma), let us silence the logical reasoning in these discussions. Rest assured, it is not the purpose of the author to confuse the reader with some rigmarole abstractions or suggest some process of inner growth, which could prove harmful in any way. On the basis of his own personal experience, the author is fully convinced about the efficacy of the path elaborated here. I assure all those who have faith in my words that the path being shown is right and self-experienced.

Come forward! Follow in my footsteps. You will not be hastened but slowly led to the destination. Practice the exercises given in this book and through meditation and contemplation explore the hidden domain of your mind. Conceptualize yourself being a central star shining like Sun, around which your world is revolving. Repeat this exercise again and again till the impression becomes so deep that whenever you pronounce "I", there is a flash in your mind of a comprehensive image comprising your consciousness, personal thoughts (Vichar), strengths and talents, along with your body. With this identification of self, whenever you look around towards your personal world, everything in it should appear revolving around this central star of your Soul.

Note: In this book the relationship of an individual and the beings in his personal world are compared to the Sun and its planets, the former acting as the source of energy to the planets in its system, which are, themselves also rotating around their own axes. All dynamics inherent in the personal world (cf. the planetary system of Sun) of an individual (the Sun) depend on consciousness, thoughts, strengths and talents (cf. the solar energy) of that individual. The

beings in the personal world follow their independent repetitive daily routines of activities. (cf. rotation of planets around their independent axes.)

To hasten the process of Awakened Awareness of the Soul (Atma -Swaroop Darshan), here is another method. In the state of meditation, repeat your own name, slowly, solemnly and respectfully, as though you were calling someone of eminence. With this practice you will find your mind getting concentrated on the real form of Self. This was the method used by Lord Tennyson for activating the potentiality of his Soul. He writes that through this method, he had become vaguely aware of the reality of the Soul and, in due course, also became conscious about the irrefutable existence and indestructibility of the Soul and found the basic source of consciousness in it.

While trying to conceive the reality of the Soul, some seekers tend to confuse the higher Inner-Self (“I”) with the false narrow self (I, as commonly related to body) and thus become distracted from the reality of the Soul. It is necessary to overcome this obstacle. Otherwise such false identification of self with the material body would, at the most, provide petty material benefits of a very low order by developing confidence in the narrow self (body). Identification with the real Inner-Self requires total freedom from body-consciousness.

HOW TO DISSOCIATE FROM BODY- CONSCIOUSNESS?

In order to overcome the confusion between the narrow lower self and the Real Self, in the state of meditation visualize that you and your body are two separate entities and you are using your body as your garment or a tool. Try to understand your body as you consider your garments. Visualize that your “I” would continue to exist even after the body has been discarded. Conceptually leaving the body, look at it from a higher level. Look at the body as though it were a hollow nest, in which you live and could easily come out of it. Consider yourself as the caretaker of this house, who is responsible for its sanitation (keeping it pure in thoughts and deeds), strength (keeping it strong) and functionality (physical activity). You are the master of the body and are using it as per your own free will. In this way, conceive: “I” am not this body. It is only My tool. “I” am using it only as a rest house. This body is built up with five basic elements of nature collected by “ME”(my real Self) for giving it a desired

appearance. (Scriptures tell that soul acquires a body and environment conforming to the traits brought forward from previous births i.e. the inherent traits from previous births are the building blocks of the mind and body of the newborn.)). During meditation, totally forget about your body and concentrate your thoughts and emotions on “I” as an independent conscious entity. Then you will become aware that the Soul has an immortal existence independent of the body. Having had this awareness, whenever you will say “I”, this expression will have an altogether a new meaning for you.

However, it does not mean that you are required to ignore your body. Doing so will be disastrous. Considering body as the temple of Soul it is your solemn duty to protect it in every way and keep it healthy and strong.

PARANORMAL VISIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In the initial stages of sadhana, the foregoing practice of dissociation from body-consciousness remains an entertaining and relaxing exercise, but as this imagery begins to take roots, the practitioner may feel as though he had actually died and may have such visions which one has at the time of death. There may be flashes of paranormal visions of those things, which are not physically visible at the place of meditation through normal sight. Hazy images of the extra-sensory world (Sookchma Jagat) may be seen. Many other-worldly forms and heavenly scenes may appear. It may frighten the beginners, though there is nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes acceleration in the process of Sadhana, because of virtuous traits brought forward from the previous births and latent memories stored in the deeper levels of consciousness (also from previous births) become suddenly activated. This acceleration uplifts the mind to higher dimensions of awareness. With the passage of time, the Sadhak gradually becomes accustomed to paranormal experiences and such occurrences no more surprise or frighten him. With steady progress, the seeker acquires the capability to dissociate the Soul from the body at will, which, rising beyond the body, becomes aware of phenomena beyond physical sense perception. In this state, however, the Soul of the practitioner does not actually leave the body but, like a person sticking out his neck out of a window to look outside and then withdrawing it at will, is able to transcend the limits of the body, without severing connection with it.

The beginners are advised not to be in a hurry to have occult and paranormal

visions and experiences. It would tantamount to violating the natural process of gradual spiritual advancement. In due course, worthy seekers will be initiated into the technique of accessing the domains of paranormal visions (Parokcha Darshan). Here a passing reference to such experiences is considered necessary, so that when such visions do appear the sadhak does not get frightened or nervous.

IMMORTALITY OF SOUL

Generally people accept the concept of immortality of the Soul on the basis of inherited faith or tradition, but there lurks a doubt about its authenticity. Let us not accept this concept blindly without reasoning. It could be hearsay? If you are told to sit for meditation and are asked to conceive: "I have died", it may appear a simple proposition; but when you actually begin to do so, it would be impossible to think that you as an individuality have ceased to exist. It would not be difficult to have such a simple imagery for those who have been practicing the elaborate exercises of visualization given in the previous pages. The moment one thinks about one's death, although an image of one's dead body is formed in the mind, at the same time there is an awareness: "I am standing aside looking at it." This "I" is ever vigilant, ever present. Try as one may, one cannot conceive the death of this "I" - the seer. The analytical faculty of one's intellect (Vichar Buddhi) thus insists that the soul ("I") is immortal. In this way deep within human consciousness is entrenched an unwavering faith in the immortality of the Soul. By no endeavor whatsoever can this intuitive faith be rooted out. It is based on numerous past experiences of death (of the body) in earlier births, beyond which the Soul has continued to exist. When a person becomes unconscious because of a shock or under the influence of drugs, this "I" remains wide awake and alert. Otherwise, on regaining normalcy, how could a concerned person know that he had been unconscious? Firm faith in one's real Self as indivisible, immortal and beyond the reach of physical, sensory perceptions, is an essential pre-requisite for starting on the path of Self-realization. Until the seeker develops such a faith, one cannot have unqualified, absolute belief in immortal and eternal existence of one's Real- Self and keeps on relapsing to the old accustomed narrow outlook, in which one considers the body as the self, thus rendering all efforts for Self-realization meaningless. Hence the seekers are advised to concentrate on developing a deep conviction of

immortality of the Inner Self - the real "I". First become fully convinced of the immortality of the Soul, only then take up spiritual sadhana. Even in the course of progress of sadhana it is advisable to periodically remind oneself about this reality of the Inner-Self. Later such perception will prove to be of great help in experiencing Awakened Awareness of one's Soul (Atma-Swaroop Sakchatkar).

THE INNER-SELF IS IMMUNE TO PHYSICAL FORCES

During meditation visualize that your Real Self is getting separated from the body; that it has the potentiality to overcome the constraints imposed on it by the five basic elements of which the body is constituted, namely-Akash, vayu, agni, jala and prithvi – ether, air, fire, water and earth respectively. Scriptures tell that these five are the everlasting primordial constituents of all forms. Conceptualize that your Inner Self is no longer confined by the body.

Henceforth, in the following discussions wherever the words "I", "My" or "Me" are mentioned in the text, these refer to the Soul speaking on behalf of the individual being.

Conceptualize: Now "I" have acquired independence. Therefore, "I" can now fly all over the space (Akash) like birds, whenever "I" so will. Now the force of air can no more obstruct MY movement or speed in any way; nor can it dehydrate ME. (Soul being a supernatural entity –without water as its constituent).

Further visualize going through a huge column of fire. "I" am passing through it comfortably without feeling any heat or pain. How can the Soul, which is supernatural, be burnt? The access of heat is limited to heat-sensing, inflammable organs of the material body. Similarly, the Soul (Atma) is free from the effects of earth (Prithvi). In other words, no element of the physical world can touch "ME", nor can it create least the obstruction in "MY" freedom.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Not only does the above exercise of visualization elevate the status of the Soul above the body, it further creates an awareness that the former is beyond the reach even of those five primary elements (Panch Mahabhoot), which constrain its (body's) activities and existence. The embodied Being thus becomes aware that,

besides having far greater potentialities than the body, the Soul also transcends all five primary elements, which constitute the physiology of all animate forms. On entering into this state of transcendental consciousness, one feels as though one has had a rebirth. There is a perception of revitalization with a supernormal inrush of energy. At this stage the sadhak feels freed from the fears of disease, decay and even death. Nothing, not even the most tragic of events, can frighten him any more.

(According to psychology, fear is only a distress signal of an impending danger to the “body”. Thus, fear is exclusively a phenomenon concerning the body. In the supernatural Soul, there is nothing subject to harm. Hence the question of fear does not arise.)

IDENTIFICATION OF “I” AS SOUL IS THE KEY TO UNALLOYED AND ETERNAL BLISS

Remind yourself repeatedly that the key mantra of sadhana towards Self-realization is identification of “I” as The Soul and not as the body, as the first person ‘I’ is generally referred to. Only after developing full conviction of this Truth, can the seeker progress on the path of Self- realization. The seeker will have to develop a perception that the Inner-Self has an immortal existence of its own, independent of the mortal body and that the Soul is an effulgent Star around which life and events related to the seeker’s world are revolving like planets around the Sun. Such a perception will fill the seeker with a higher order of vitality and vibrancy, which will also be reflected in reactions and activities of the people around him. In addition, the sadhak will develop an inner unshakable poise and peace which cannot be disturbed by the trials, tribulations, tests and storms of the world. With progress in self-evolution (Atma Vikas) (i.e. with enlargement of concept ‘I’ to include all beings), the seeker will acquire such a capability,

An enlightened person (Atma Gyani) continues to be steadfastly calm in moments of great calamities in life. Waiving his hand he bids farewell to worldly problems saying, “Good Bye! Go away! Go and get lost in that darkness of illusion which had created you.” Blessed is one who has mastered the key mantra of immortality of his “I-ness” - one with the Supreme Source.

Seekers! Now start putting into practice with faith and enthusiasm the primary lessons towards self-realization. If your progress is slow, be not over-anxious for

quick results. While moving forward, if sometimes you slip backwards, do not be disappointed. Later you will make up for the loss. If you are serious, sincere, single-pointed and steadfast, you are sure to be crowned with ultimate success – Self-Realization. Remember: A journey of hundred miles begins with a step.

AFFIRMATIONS OF THIS LESSON

- * “I” am the powerhouse of talents and energy.
- * “I” am the inexhaustible source of divine thoughts and visions.
- * My world (people, events and things related to my person) are revolving around (working under the influence of) “ME” - i.e. my Inner-Self, a spark of the Divine Effulgence.)
- * “I” have an immortal self-identity of my own - independent of this mortal body.
- * “I” am indestructible.
- * “I” am indivisible. None can harm “ME”.

CHAPTER - III

Indriyani paranyahurindriyebhya param manaha.

Manasastu para buddhiryo buddheh partastu sah.

(Gita-3/42)

“Supreme beyond their objects are the senses; supreme over the senses is mind; supreme over the mind is the intelligent will; that which is supreme over the intelligent will, is He (the Purusha).”

In a human being, his body, its sensory perceptions, mind and the Soul (the Purusha of The Gita) are relatively more and more rarefied in that order. Hence in order to have a clear perception of the Soul, one has to perceive the subtle differences between the body and its senses; sensory perceptions and mind; and mind and the Soul successively.

In the preceding chapter, exercises for discovery of the Soul as an immortal entity, distinctly apart from the mortal body and its senses, were given. Let us now proceed to analyze the faculties of mind.

(Note: In the following text, the reality of Aham as an entity independent of the body and mind is discussed. Here it is necessary to understand that Aham described in this context is neither Ego nor Ahamkar-the Aham- Vritti (thought waves generated by Aham). The Random House English Dictionary defines Ego as “the `I` or self of a person; a person as thinking, feeling, willing and distinguishing itself from selves of others and from objects of its thoughts.” In this way, the `I` or “self” when referred to in the context of Ego is essentially related to the mind and body of a person. Similarly, “Ahamkar” is also one amongst the four faculties of the mind, namely Mun-Buddhi -Chitta- Ahamkar. On the contrary, the real Aham (Vastavik Aham or-Soul), eternally exists independent of the body and mind. Here, the author has used the words “I”, “Aham”, Inner-Self and, Real Self as synonyms of Atma or Soul. These are not to be misunderstood as referring to the Ego or Ahamkar. In other words, where the reader is being asked to speak or think in the first person “I”, unless it is specifically referred to the body or mind, it should be understood as the Soul of the person, expressing itself through speech or thought on behalf of the person.)

MIND INTELLECT AND AHAM

Ancient Indian spiritual texts regard mind and intellect as two separate entities. Modern western philosophers, on the other hand, consider the mind itself as the highest level of intelligence. We need not enter into a fruitless discussion on this subject. The difference between the two is so subtle, that apparently they appear to be one and the same. However, both streams of thought/experience recognize two distinct mental faculties, namely mind and intellect. Both regard intellect being subtler than the mind. For the convenience of reader, we shall regard intellect as a more refined state of mind and proceed with our practical exercises.

Thus far, we have identified the visible and invisible coverings of the human Soul i.e. physical body and different faculties of the mind. Now, in this chapter, we shall endeavor to find how Ahamkar is differentiated from the Real "I". It necessitates examination of minute details. It is not so easy to differentiate between the true Aham and the egoistic knot of the subtle body (Sookchma Shareer), as it is to identify the outer and inner coverings of the Self. It would require a deeper level of perception and sensitivity. Even after having a perception that the subtle body exists independent of the physical matter composing the body, confusion persists about the nature of Aham because of its intimate relationship with the subtle body (Sookchma Shareer). Most people believe that mind and Soul are one and the same. Instead of elaborating the attributes of the mind, the author would try to enlighten the reader about the methods with the help of which it would be possible to analyze the constituents of the physical body and the vague "I" threadbare and find out the nature of the true Aham (i.e. Soul). This introspection you are going to do with the help of your own mind, teasing out of it the right answers to your queries.

Mind is the bio-energy (chetna) serving as the link between the body and Soul. For the convenience of seekers let us make an endeavor to understand the working of mind by broadly trifurcating its functions.

THE THREE FACULTIES OF MIND

The Pravritta Manas

In spiritual parlance, one faculty of mind is called “Pravritta Manas”. This faculty of mind is undifferentiated between human beings and the less evolved species of the biological kingdom like birds and animals. It is also known as the secret mind –(Gupta Man) or sleeping mind (Supta Man) – the Limbic brain or animal brain i.e. the autonomic nervous system in parlance of medical science. It controls the normal biological functions of the body and keeps it functioning. Though we are not conscious of it, the biological functions of our body keep going on involuntarily. Functions like digestion of food, blood circulation, extraction of juices at successive stages, formation of blood platelets, flesh, bones and bone - marrow, hormones; defecation-urination; inhalation-exhalation; movements of eyelids, etc. take place without any conscious effort. The Pravritta Manas is also responsible for formation of habits. It takes some time in learning something, but once it is learnt, the Pravritta Manas does not discard it easily. The experiences of our ancestors and those which we had had in course of our evolution in our earlier births upto the present human birth, are all stored in this subconscious layer of the mind. Before assuming the human form, the Soul has been inhabiting in innumerable life forms of lower order, lacking developed intellectual capacity. It had acquired in this process of slow evolution, many animal traits like jealousy, animosity, aggressiveness, selfishness and anxiety. All such crude animal-like traits, which have not been consciously eliminated by strong self-efforts in earlier births, are accumulated in this faculty of mind. It is a unique museum having an assortment of antiques. A few amongst these instinctive urges are good, worthwhile and invaluable (such as faithfulness of the dog), whereas many others are perverse and frightening. Seeds of all impulses such as greed, violence, cruelty, rage, impatience, etc, which are common amongst savages and animals, are stored in this part of mind. The basic impulses of the two lower modes of nature – Tamas (inertia) and Rajas (kinesis) - such as ignorance, dullness, passivity –Tamasic - and self-seeking, inflated sense of egoism, sensual indulgence, greed, anger, etc – Rajasic - are all stored in seed form in Pravritta Manas – the unconscious / sub-conscious layers of mind.

The Prabuddha Manas

Besides the Pravritta Manas, there is yet another more evolved faculty, which could be appropriately called as “Prabuddha Manas”, the cortical brain or the intelligent mind. While attentively going through this booklet the reader is using this faculty of the mind. The attributes of this layer of mind are deliberating, analyzing, comparing, conceptualizing, logical thinking and decision-making. Quick-wittedness, sharp intellect, alertness, analysis of a situation, are all functions of this faculty of mind. However, it is to be remembered that neither the Pravritta Manas nor the Prabuddha Manas are Aham of man. With a little more consideration, it would be easy to differentiate these two from Aham. In this small tract, it is not possible to elucidate, in detail, the properties of the intellectual faculty of human mind. Those interested in this subject are advised to study the latest masterpieces on psychology. For the time being it is sufficient to know that the Prabuddha Manas too is only a covering and not the Soul (Aham) proper.

The Adhyatm Manas

The third, most evolved faculty of mind, is called Adhyatm Manas –a distinctive faculty of a spiritually awakened person.

In a majority of people it remains dormant and inactive. It is assumed that this faculty has started awakening in the reader; otherwise he would not have taken interest in the subject of this treatise. This faculty of mind (Adhyatm Manas) is regarded as the most evolved attribute of the mind. It is reflected as spiritual seeking, inspirations, receptivity to inner divine guidance, exceptional talents, etc. Noble urges and emotions originate in this very faculty of mind. Love, compassion, mercy, empathy, sense of justice, sensitivity to sufferings of others, adherence to basic values, benevolence, commitment, integrity, etc. are some of the attributes of this faculty of mind. In this faculty also germinate the seeds of unconditional Divine Love. The mysteries of nature, too, are revealed in this illumined layer of the mind. However, Remember! This faculty of mind, too, is only a resplendent garment of Aham. It is not Aham. Nevertheless, the experience of Aham, which we are endeavoring to point towards, can be had only through Adhyatm Manas.

MIND IS THE TOOL FOR SELF-REALIZATION

Let the above discussion not create the erroneous impression that the writer is assigning a higher or lower status to various faculties of the mind and suggesting that one or the other in itself is an obstruction in the path of Self-realization. As a matter of fact, it is the mind in totality, which is bringing you nearer to the reality of your true immortal identity and your Inner Self (Aham). Each faculty of the mind has its own specific role in helping the seeker move towards Self-realization, provided it is properly utilized. The common man uses only the lower, less evolved faculties of the mind. They are hardly aware that different realms of mind have distinctive known and unknown miraculous potentialities. People tend to ascribe their failures to incapability of their mind. However, those aspiring for spiritual awakening are always advised by their teachers that they should not erroneously put the blame for their failures on their mind. Instead of considering the dormant potentialities of the mind irrelevant for human progress, they should earnestly endeavor to activate them properly. The lessons being imparted here can be put into practice through the mind. All activities leading to success, including understanding an idea and accepting its viability, first take place in the realm of mind only. Hence, addressing the mind of the reader directly, the writer says, "Open the door to receive the wisdom being transmitted from your higher mental faculties." He further pleads, "Please pay attention to this sacred subject. Please do not create obstacles in the way of transmissions of divine illuminations (Daivi Chetna). These can be received through your faculty of Adhyatm Manas, which has capability of perceiving the Truth. Do not create obstacles when it transmits divine energies for enlightenment".

EXERCISE FOR DIFFERENTIATING SOUL FROM THE PRODUCTS OF MIND

With a calm, relaxed and peaceful state of mind be reverently seated, receptively opening yourself to the higher wisdom, being transmitted through your Adhyatm Manas.

In the previous lesson, we have come to understand that your "I" is an immortal entity beyond your body, controlling your thoughts, emotions and traits (see Affirmations of Lesson -II). Now, we proceed further to deduce that

all objective and subjective thoughts are products of the mind and therefore are different from the Soul. In other words, Soul has an independent identity of its own beyond the mind and its qualities and attributes.

Let us examine how the Soul exists independent of the mind. Numerous emotional impulses like animosity, anger, maternal or paternal love, jealousy, hatred, elation, dejection, etc are endlessly arising in the mind. Your "I"- the Inner-Self or Aham can differentiate, examine, analyze or discard each of these. This "Aham" can also observe the state of their origin, maximum intensity and end. After practicing this introspection for a few days, the seeker will become so adept in this process, as though the object of observation were some other person. All such impulses are part of contemplative observation. Their nature can be examined threadbare and impact assessed from all angles. Thus the seer "I" or observer is a different entity than the observed objects – the body or mind. Visualizing the Inner-Self (Soul) in this way will make it easier to comprehend.

The very fact that the creations of mind are being examined separately means that these are not part of your real Self the "I". With practice, this perception of separateness will continue becoming stronger and stronger and ultimately an abiding uninterrupted expression.

INHERENT HUMAN TRAITS AND 'AHAM'

It is not the purpose of these lessons to make the reader impervious to emotions, though it would be welcome if through this sadhana one could develop a capability for getting rid of one's depraving and downgrading traits. However, for the objective under consideration, the seeker is advised to ignore all traits - whether good or bad, leave them as they are and realize that Aham is beyond these and is an overarching independent entity. Let the seeker now resolutely and clearly make a demarcation between the traits and virtues of the three modes of nature (Gunas) discussed earlier and Aham. There is no need to worry that a particular trait has become so strong that it cannot be discarded. Before this trait was established, your Aham was already in existence. If this Aham is capable of clearly discerning these traits objectively and independently, it will become easy to discard them in no time. Remember! Through this exercise, the seeker is experiencing and developing a conviction that the "I" who is using the intellect and its powers, the "I" which considers

the mind and its powers as its implements, is the master of the mind.

Earlier, we have done an in-depth study of the Prabuddha Manas and its creations and found that Aham is capable of discerning these as separate from itself. In the same way, the creations of the highest faculty of mind - the Adhyatm Manas can be discerned by “Aham” as separate from itself. The seeker may doubt that, since the divine spiritual inspirations are not related to physical body, and these cannot be utilized like emotions arising in the lower faculties of mind, perhaps these are inseparably related to the Aham. At this stage, let us not enter into a deep discussion on this subject, as the seeker still has very rudimentary and fleeting experience of the Adhyatm Manas, which unlike the lower, less evolved faculties of the mind, is like a workshop for activation of divine forces in human mind. Seers, who have had the paranormal vision of the “light” (jyoti) of Aham at the highest level of their spiritual evolution, tell that Aham exists beyond the Adhyatm Manas but it illuminates the latter with its light and that reflection of Aham in the Adhyatm Manas is like the image of the Sun seen in water. The enlightened sages say that the brilliance of Adhyatm Manas is only a faint reflection of the inherent and dazzling effulgence of Aham, although first experience of Adhyatm manas creates an illusion as if this itself were Aham, which in reality it is not. Aham is like an incessantly glittering jewel wrapped under several coverings of cloth (the coverings of the illusory worlds created by the magical mind). As the coverings are removed one by one, the filtered light becomes brighter and brighter. The inherent brilliance of the jewel remains undiminished irrespective of the number of coverings or no covering at all.

The sole purpose of going to this level of consciousness is to create the highest level of awareness of Aham, so that the seeker becomes convinced of the competence of the Soul for utilizing its instruments effectively. This understanding empowers him to take off the old, sullied, tattered clothes (regressive traits and illusions) and put on new, resplendent garments (noble, virtuous traits) and with their help carry out the assigned duties and responsibilities of life effectively – thus becoming a role model for others to follow.

After attaining this level of perception through persistent practice, the seeker may be eager to know what remains to be experienced which is beyond Aham.

Transcending Aham is the pure, ultimate, Immutable Super Soul (Vishuddha Atma)- the Almighty God, of which, the individual Soul is a spark. The conviction of this Transcendental Being comes through personal realization. By separating the Aham from the body, the mind and everything else related to these, successively discarding ever subtler layers of ego-bound consciousness, the seeker is ultimately left with the immortal, immutable Soul, beyond which, nothing remains to be discerned. The logic is simple. The thinker, the analyst, and the object being deliberated upon, or being analyzed, can never be one and the same. The Sun can never illuminate its own self. In the same manner, the Soul cannot be something to be deliberated upon, nor can it be a subject of analysis. At each moment of life your consciousness tells you that your Real-Self - "I" is the thinker, the seer and the doer. This "I", as we have already discussed, is neither your body nor your mind in its conscious, subconscious or unconscious states. It has to be some other independent entity, which remains ever vigilant, alert and awake irrespective of the state of the body or the mind. This is what we call Atma or Soul in spiritual parlance.

SOUL-THE EVER PRESENT WITNESS

Try as you may with the farthest range of imagination, you will never succeed in going beyond the Soul. You will never believe that this "I" is ever non-existent. This "I" (the Soul) is a drop of THAT absolute, indestructible, immutable, ocean of consciousness, which we call God. The Soul itself is the spark of THAT Supreme Sun of The Spirit.

O Seeker! May you, by the grace of God, succeed in perceiving the existence of the Soul in yourself and appreciate that man is a deity in deep slumber (a fallen angel, according to Christian belief) unaware of his potentialities. Within a human being there exist, in dormant state, divine potentialities, awaiting discovery and seeking an outlet to manifest themselves in action. It has been demonstrated in the lives of innumerable mystics, sages, seers and occultists through the ages that these powers can be accessed and made operative, although their mastery requires persistent, single-pointed endeavor. Initially, the progress is slow, but after crossing over the threshold of limiting consciousness and rising to the plane of Adhyatm Manas, the vision becomes clear and path easy. After that the progress is like an elevator ride. In its

original nature, the individual Soul (Atma) in each embodied being is an indivisible portion of the Absolute (Parmatma).

In the next chapter, we shall discover that the Soul, too, does not have an independent existence of its own and that it ever remains an integral part of the Supreme Being. However, before attaining this awareness, one has to activate the awareness of Aham within. Let these lessons and words not be taken merely as a trivial exercise in verbosity and treated with disdain. The elaborations made here may not be as explicit as necessary for this complex subject. Nevertheless, it is to be emphasized that through these words a great truth is being revealed. As you are reading these lines, your Soul is eagerly expecting to proceed on the path leading to spiritual enlightenment. Step forward and become its torchbearer.

It is hoped that with the foregoing contemplative exercises, the reader will have developed the capability of making a distinction between Aham and the faculties of the body and the mind. Experiential awareness of this fact will make the seeker master of his mind and its traits (Vrittis). He will then intuitively develop the competence to use these tools effectively in life.

For elaboration of such a serious subject, the ideological approach and words used by the author may appear too crude and naive. The subject, however, pertains to perceptions of intangible realms of consciousness, which are beyond the reach of words and expressions. The specific taste of a particular favorite food cannot be described in words. One has to personally taste it. The author is simply trying to cultivate an interest in the subject, so that the reader is motivated to himself carry out these exercises. Thus, the reader will himself find proofs of the occult and mystic layers of consciousness and progressively have a clear perception of the nature of the Inner-Self. Until personally realized, knowledge remains a mere theoretical statement. Once one has the concrete experience, no arguments to the contrary are able to shake his rocklike living faith.

YOUR INNER-SELF (SOUL) IS THE MASTER OF YOUR MIND

Consider yourself (i.e. your Real Self) as the master of your body and mind.

YOU (i.e. the Soul) are the king and the mind and body are YOUR subjects. So far your mind and body have enslaved YOU. They were dictating their terms to you. Now shatter this influence of the mind-body duo with one mighty blow. Let them not torment YOU any more. Free YOURSELF from their slavery. Now YOU have become the real ruler of your kingdom. YOU are the king. Command with authority. Ask YOUR subjects- i.e. YOUR temperament, thoughts, determinations, intellect, desires, even the functions of the body to work under YOUR directions. Direct them to put their signatures on this new agreement of submission, stating that henceforth they will obey YOUR orders like faithful employees of a king and will never show the least carelessness in maintaining the best and most beautiful form of managerial order for YOUR life.

There is a general belief that mind is the cause of all downfalls in morality, that the mind puts a person in situations in which regressive traits grow like weeds and these traits keep him dragging from one adversity to another, thus making him perpetually unhappy. With the help of the foregoing contemplative exercises, the seeker would become free of such troubles, since he would have developed the faculties and competence which equip him with the confidence and capacity to steadfastly and calmly meet all challenges of life.

AHAM (SOUL) AS THE MANAGER OF BODY AND MIND

The sight of a big factory, in which hundreds of machines, with numerous moving parts, are operating with engines consuming thousands of horsepowers of electricity, may overwhelm a naïve person, but its superintending engineer, who is thoroughly familiar with its workings, feels perfectly at ease. He makes each section of the plant work as desired, like an experienced 'mahout' controlling his trained elephant, or a snake charmer directing its captive poisonous snake to sway to his tune. The huge complex of machines would rather invoke in its manager a feeling of pride rather than fear. With confidence, he will watch the production of the day. One who has properly understood the nature, interrelationship and workings of Aham and its traits is comparable to such an efficient controlling engineer of a factory. Prolonged practice equips the seeker with extraordinary talents. Not only his conscious mind but also the secret, subconscious mind - the Pravritta Manas - too, becomes responsive to his will and while the conscious mind is engaged in

other activities during waking hours, even when the person is asleep, the sub-conscious keeps on working quietly for completion of its assignments, When the awakened sub-conscious puts forward its output, it takes the new seeker by surprise, who considers it as a result of some invisible help or a paranormal phenomenon. The adept yogi, on the other hand, knows that such a phenomenon is the manifestation of one's own unknown latent potentialities. In human psyche lie buried marvelous talents and capabilities waiting to be awakened and tapped.

Self-confidence and patience are the two key factors for success in any high aim. The task is difficult but it is superbly rewarding. Even if it takes years of contemplative practice, the endeavor should not be given up. Do not remain merely intellectually satisfied with this tract. Study, contemplate, have faith and confidence, and sincerely and steadily move forward on the path towards Self-Realization.

AFFIRMATIONS OF THIS LESSON

- * "I" am the Master. Mind is an instrument for expression of My powers.
- * "I" am not the mind. "I" am not dependent on the authority of the mind.
- * "I" am capable of separating the SELF from intellect, temperament, desires and all other faculties and activities of mind. Leaving all these aside, what is left, is "I AM"
- * "I" am indestructible, eternal, immortal, ever -pure, immutable and undifferentiated.
- * I AM. (Not "I" am this or "I" am that)

CHAPTER IV

Ishavasyamidam Sarvam Yatkincha Jagatyanjagat

That is, whatever exists in this world is pervaded by HIS omnipresence.

SO-HUM (I AM THAT)

In the earlier chapters, an attempt has been made to introduce the seeker to his Inner-Self and to various faculties of the mind covering it. In this chapter, we shall endeavor to understand the interrelationship between the individual Soul (Aham) and the Supreme Soul (Parmatma) i.e. God. As a matter of fact, the Aham of embodied beings is an inseparable portion of that Supreme Being. Basically there is no difference between the two. Thus understood, the individual Self has a far wider connotation – encompassing the whole manifestation and even beyond.

Similarly, Aham is impregnated with the cosmic energies of the Divine. Individual Soul (Aham) is being cared for and nourished by the Supreme Divine like a foetus in the mother's womb. The seeker's sadhana ultimately culminates into an experience of unity of the individual Soul (Aham) and the Absolute Soul (Parmatma). Then will arise that state of awareness, which the yogis describe as So- Hum i.e. I AM THAT (the Absolute Being).

MAN AS A TORTOISE IN A RIVER

Let us now practice the foregoing contemplation. Think of all people, places and things you know. Let your imagination wander far and wide to include everything you have seen, thought of or heard about. Your mental imagery will show you this world as an immense expanse of matter spreading to unknowable limits. This is how man perceives the world. What is overlooked is that, coextensive with the material world, there also exists an endless ocean of bio-energy (Chetna) as life and consciousness in living beings. Each unit of Chetna and matter is perpetually in motion in quantum space (Akash). The elements of matter constituting the physiology of beings are constantly and cyclically undergoing physical and chemical changes. Cyclic change - a

phenomenon involving perpetual, repetitive movement - is the natural law governing all manifestations of nature – living or apparently nonliving. Changes in day and night; seasons in an year; birth-youth-old age - death and reproduction in living organisms; a seed growing into a plant, dying and its seeds again growing into a plant; rise and fall of civilizations; rotation of electrons around protons and neutrons in an atom and revolution of planets and planetary systems; birth and death of planets, stars, galaxies, etc, etc - all natural systems are in a state of cyclic movement and flux.

Let us first consider the cyclic movement of physical matter in the embodied beings. The chemicals, which are part of some organic matter today, will enter your body through your meals tomorrow, and will be expelled the day after in defecation to become part of some other organism. Medical science tells us that at every moment old cells of our body are being destroyed and replaced by new ones. In this manner, after a particular period, though apparently remaining unchanged, the entire body undergoes complete renewal. New matter keeps on entering the body through air, water and food and flows out in course of respiration, perspiration, urination, defecation etc. In this ocean of matter and energy, human beings and all other life forms are living like a tortoise in a flowing river.

The tortoise is only aware of the water surrounding it. It is ignorant of the renewal of water around it because of the movement of the current. We are hardly aware of the movements of perpetually flowing natural currents of matter around us. These currents are not merely flowing through the human bodies, but are engulfing all beings and even flora and other material objects regarded as inanimate. Everything in this world is undergoing a constant and unstoppable change. This is the absolute, immutable law of nature, governing not only the material world but also all realms of manifestation, including the spiritual. “Everything in this world appears and disappears” – say the sages.

Having understood the phenomenon of perpetual movement in the visible physical, material world, let us now consider the transmissions of energy from the human mind as impulses, desires, emotions, ideologies, thoughts, resolutions, etc. These too are perpetually moving around the world. Mysteriously these energy waves travel around the world without the help of any tangible medium. (cf. rapid expansion of mystical, spiritual, religious

visions and, political ideologies around the world in the past). Identical imaginations and ideas arise in many minds simultaneously. Ideologies of individuals get transformed into mass movements and revolutions. Mass thinking by groups of immoral persons pollutes the environment. A gentleman feels suffocated at such places. Conversely one feels relaxed at a place of healthy entertainment and peaceful at a place of worship.

Audio-visual transmissions are now being controlled by information technology. Communication of sound and images by Internet, television, mobile phones, satellite phones, are undisputable proofs of existence of invisible currents as carriers of information and ideologies around the world. Polygraphs (Lie detectors) can now produce graphic pictures of thoughts produced in various emotional states. Like clouds, the invisible currents of thoughts and ideologies are hovering around us in space. Individuals are continuously interacting with these currents. With the power of mind it is possible to influence the masses by projecting specific ideologies on this "Ideosphere." This resurrected ancient science is of great significance for mankind. It is, however, very complex and exhaustive. It is beyond the scope of this small booklet.

Each of the three faculties of mind, namely, Pravritta Manas Prabuddha Manas and Adhyatm Manas has its own independent, invisible field of energy transmission. As the older elements of body are being perpetually replaced by new ones, so are the constituents of mind (thoughts, ideologies, resolutions etc.) These are perpetually moving from one place to another.

The mindset of man is always in a state of flux. An individual pledged to continence throughout life till yesterday is found infatuated with sex today. The most hated enemy of yesterday becomes the most loved person of today. The person who sweats round the clock for earning more and more wealth, suddenly becomes a hermit. There are numerous examples of such transformations in the mindsets of individuals. Why? It is because constituents of mental energy as old thoughts and ideologies are being perpetually replaced by new ones.

VISUALIZATION OF THE UNIFIED FIELD

Be seated in meditative posture. Visualize that one and the same universal, cosmic consciousness is pervading, ordering and manifesting all animate and inanimate forms in the cosmos. Visualize further that it is this one force of cosmic consciousness which has differentiated into the five basic elements of nature constituting the physiology of all living species. In ancient Indian scriptures these elements are referred to as Prithvi (earth), Jal (water), Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Akash (the subatomic space). As old physical cells are being perpetually replaced by new ones, so are the elements of mind (beliefs, opinions, philosophies, ideologies) being replaced by new ones. In other words, the particles of energy generating the mental concepts are also perpetually in motion.

Now let us think about matter and energy of the world in totality. The very fact that all visible and invisible constituents of the creation are in motion; that this movement is being experienced by all and that everything in this world is following its particular trajectory in movement for its specific objective, is sufficient proof that UNIFICATION IS THE BASIS OF ENTIRE CREATION. It proves that everything has been created in cosmos to follow universal laws originating from ONE Unified Field. In this manner, everything in this world is interrelated and interdependent. Saying, "Nothing in the world belongs to me personally" or, "Everything in the world belongs to me" - has the same implication; since in this Unified Field, everything belongs to everyone. Let us compare this Unified Field with a river. Standing in midst of flowing river, which molecules of its water you will claim to be related to your person? Consider the situation. The current of water is continuously flowing. The molecules of water that are touching your body at this particular moment will, in the next moment, go far away from you, but you are constantly in contact with the flowing current. As such, you have two options. Either accept the entire stream integral to your existence or say no part of it is in contact with you. Obviously, you cannot claim a relationship to a part, disowning the whole.

This world is an ocean of life and energy. The soul is progressively evolving in this medium and in this process taking what is necessary and discarding what

is not. Nature is not unintelligent, inert or dead. Each particle of what we call physical matter is also instinct with intelligence and life. It is following universal laws. Each particle is being sustained, activated, and made to act intelligently within a particular paradigm in this Universal Field of life and energy. All of us, like fish in water, are dependent for our activities and very survival on this ocean of life. Particles of universally pervasive intelligence and energy, cosmic consciousness (Chetna) and life, are activating infinite systems, forms and forces of this cosmos.

You have to realize that all embodied beings, whatever be their form or body, are part of your own Self, since the same universally pervasive energy - consciousness (Chetna) which animates you is present in each of them. The rigid fences within which you have been limiting the physical objects - people, places and things - as belonging to you personally will have to be pulled down. You will have to realize that the present perception, that only a few drops of this cosmic ocean (manifested as people, places or things) belong to you, is an illusion. Visualize that being part of the omnipresence of God (as the air in a balloon is part of the atmosphere), your real Self (the Soul encased in body-consciousness), encompasses the entire world. This process (the process of blowing the balloon of body consciousness) is expanding your individual Self to the dimension of All-Self. When this balloon bursts on attaining this level of awareness, the seeker becomes a Yogi. A Yogi is one whose individuality has been consciously united (merged) with the cosmic Self. Thus, in order to become a Yogi one is required to cultivate a sense of at-one-ment and empathy with all beings.

Says Gita-

Sarva Bhutasthamatmanam Sarva Bhutani Chatmani;

Eekchate Yogyuktatma Sarvatra Sam Darshana.

(Gita: VI/29)

Meaning: Equal-visioned everywhere, the man whose self is in Yoga, sees the Self in all beings and beings in the Self.

That is: realizing that all beings are part of that unified existence, the yogi interacts with them without discrimination and also perceives one's own Self intrinsically related to all.

Such an individual, by expanding the limits of his thoughts and feelings to include everyone in the world, feels an intrinsic relationship (Atmiyata) with all living beings irrespective of their external appearance (Bahya Swaroop). Besides, apart from being interlinked with each other, the Souls of all beings are also individually linked to the Supreme Being. This is the truth behind the concept of universal brotherhood. In this way, all individual souls, which are masters of bodies of various species, are part of one unified existence. This unification brings us very close to God. Living experience of this unity makes us worthy of entrance into the portals of heaven and to become an integral part of it. This experience cannot be described in words. It is a state of perpetual bliss. In Yogic parlance, entering this indescribable, transcendental, super-consciousness state of absolute bliss is called Samadhi. Its byproducts are freedom from bondage of world, independence of action, freedom of self-management and attainment of Mukti or Mokcha (Salvation, deliverance).

MEDITATION FOR AWARENESS OF THE UNIFIED FIELD

Let us now practice meditation for awareness of the Unified Field.

Be seated in a state of meditation and concentrate on the life -force flowing through all beings. Visualize that

- There is only one cosmic consciousness vibrating throughout the cosmos. It is this cosmic force, which has differentiated into the five basic elements constituting the bodies of all beings.
- The perceptions of various types of pleasures and pains, happiness and unhappiness by the sensory organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are various chemical reactions produced as a consequence of interactions between these five elements and faculties of mind. The sensory perceptions are like the diverse frequencies of sound produced in a stringed musical instrument under the influence of different stimuli provided by the performer.
- The primordial source of energy is one throughout the cosmos and it is sustaining your life in the same manner as it is doing of other organisms.
- We, the children of nature are sitting together, sharing one quilt of cosmic consciousness.

Have a clear, thorough concept of this truth. Let your mind, heart and intellect, understand, feel and accept it without any reservations. Let it become a matter of deep faith with you, requiring no reasoning.

UNIFICATION WITH THE UNIVERSAL MIND

So far we have discussed the concept of five basic elements of material nature (Panch Mahabhoot) constituting the bodies of all beings. We have also discussed how all embodied beings are interrelated, being sustained by the same energy in the universal Unified Field. Now we proceed to examine how the attributes of various domains of one universal mind are manifesting through individualized minds of various beings. Like the universal basic elements of physical matter described above, the compartmentalized mental processes of individuals too are elements of a universal mental plane of consciousness. Your individual mind is a drop in this mega ocean of mind. Whatever knowledge, thoughts, ideologies, impulses and emotions are in your mind are basically a few particles of this universal field of knowledge and perception. The mind of an individual acquires bits of knowledge through books, by listening to the enlightened persons or directly as intuition by interacting with this universal mental plane. Like the omnipresent life force sustaining all living beings, the ocean of knowledge too is an all-pervasive active force and it is being utilized by all beings like the tortoise in the uninterruptedly flowing current of a river. As the tortoise drinks a part of water from the river and discards some in the same river by way of defecation and urination, man continues to interact with the omnipresent Ideosphere, receiving knowledge from this universal field. Ponder over this truth again and again and let it be firmly established in your mind.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

When one becomes convinced about the universality of the components of one's body and mind, nothing appears personal or individual. The enlightened person becomes free of the illusion that the sheaths of his body and mind exist in isolation. With the realization of interrelationship between all beings and things throughout the universe, it is realized that each individual is intimately related to everyone in the world and is an integral part of the whole. Then

nothing in the world appears alien. The two statements: “Everything in the world belongs to me” and “Nothing in this world belongs to me,” convey the same meaning, since in the Unified Field everything belongs to everyone.

Therefore, we must give prime importance to the Soul, which is eternally at-one-ment with the universal Self than to its sheaths of body and mind. The Soul is everlasting, indivisible, indestructible, immortal, cohesive and immutable. The person who has awakened to this awareness of the Soul views everything, including the inanimate matter, the less evolved beings of the lower order in the biological kingdom, the stellar constellations, stars and planets and all planetary systems of the cosmos with wonder and marvel. An enlightened person feels an intuitive affinity with everything in the creation. To him, nothing in the world appears alien, ugly, despicable or unworthy of close intimacy. He does not consider the nests of the birds less significant than his personal residence. Such an elevated level of empathetic enlightenment is not only essential for spiritual progress but also a necessity for the well-being and happiness of the world. It intuitively promotes the feeling of universal brotherhood. From this exalted level of consciousness, the world is revealed in its true perspective and the awakened seer knows how to interact with equanimity under all circumstances. Once a seeker rises to this awakened awareness and vision, all attributes of nobility – love, compassion, selfless service, fearlessness, balance and poise – automatically become part of his nature and all traces of evil traits and impulses fall away like dry autumn leaves before the onset of spring.

ATTITUDE OF A PERSON OF STEADFAST WISDOM (Sthit pragya)

The person who attains the status of “Sthit pragya” (Gita II - 55-72), concretely realizes that although, apparently, all embodied beings seem to have their independent, individualities, they are constituents of one Supreme Reality; or that the same quantum space (Akash) is in each empty pot. That the water filled in these many vessels is reflecting the image of the same Sun. No doubt, the Soul has its immortal existence, but this is so in its inseparable relation to the Supreme Soul/Spirit (Parmeshwar); which transcends the limitations of Time-Space paradigm of the manifest universe. This is the ultimate state of unity. This is the ultimate level of Self-realization, attaining which, the individual soul declares: “SO-HAMASMI” i.e. “I AM THAT ABSOLUTE SPIRIT.” On this

level of transcendental consciousness, there is a clear perception that in the multitude of shapes and forms of animate and inanimate objects of the world is hidden reality of one Life, one Cosmic Force, and one Truth.

The author again and again implores the sincere seekers of Truth to strive for attainment of this level of consciousness, since the quest for Absolute Truth ends with the answer to “WHO AM I?” This is the highest wisdom, beyond which nothing remains to be known. The life of one who has acquired the Supreme Wisdom, will be full of love, compassion, empathy, truthfulness, benevolence and all other divine attributes. This is fulfillment of the supreme aim of human life.

AFFIRMATIONS OF THIS LESSON

* My body, mind and associated people, places and things are only momentary manifestations of the all-pervading universal matter.

* All products of my mind - information, thoughts, ideologies, resolutions, are particles of an undifferentiated universal field of intelligence in the Master Mind.

* The elements of matter and mind are perpetually in motion. Therefore, there are no limitations to the number of things belonging to me. Everything in all planetary systems of cosmos belongs to me.

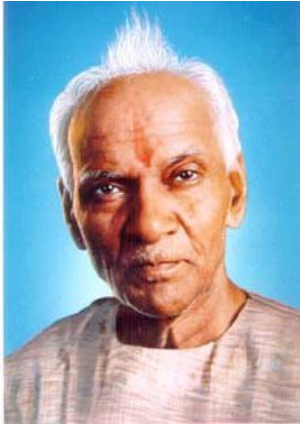
* My immortal Soul is an inseparable and indivisible portion of the Absolute Spirit (Parmatma) in its ultimate state.

* I have attained the at-one-ment with the Supreme Spirit and am even now experiencing the unity of my Soul with the Absolute Spirit.

*SO-HAMASMI- “I AM THAT”

About the Author:

Shriram Sharma Acharya: A seer-sage and a visionary of the New Golden Era.



His personality was a harmonious blend of a saint, spiritual scientist, yogi, philosopher, psychologist, writer, reformer, freedom fighter, researcher, eminent scholar and visionary. He pioneered the revival of spirituality and creative integration of the modern and ancient sciences and religion relevant in the challenging circumstances of the present times. In 1979, he founded the Brahmavarchas Research Institute, the research center in Haridwar (India) dedicated to the integration of the modern and ancient sciences in a practical way motivated by the noble goal of health and happiness for all. This center houses well

equipped laboratories of Haemetology, Biochemistry, Neurophysiology, Cardiology, Phytochemistry, Psychometry, Yagyopathy etc.

At the age of 15, (Jan 18th, 1926) a great Himalayan yogi, Swami Sarveshvaranandji appeared before him in astral body from the flame of the Dipaka (lamp) and guided him throughout his entire life. The next 24 years of his life were devoted to 24 Mahapurashcharanas –each consisting of the rhythmic recitation (japa) of 2.4 million Gayatri Mantra with strictest of disciplines. In 1943, he married Bhagwati Devi, and ever since, the saintly couple dedicatedly pursued the noble mission of spiritual upliftment of humankind.

Realizing the potential of inspiring literature and its relevance in the present era of intellectual evolution, he had chosen writing as the principal mode towards uprooting the evil tendencies and blind faith from people's minds and arousing the indwelling wisdom, strength and spiritual bliss. He wrote about 3000 enlightening books in Hindi on almost all topics concerning human life. He translated the entire Vedic Vangmaya (4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas etc.) in Hindi elucidating the tradition, style, universality and history of Vedic Literature. He also practiced higher-level Sadhana on the arduous heights of the Himalayas and established enliven contact with the Rishis of the Himalayas. During 1984-1986, he carried out the unique spiritual experiment of Sukshmikarana, meaning sublimation of vital force and physical, mental and spiritual energies. He authored a special set of 20 books highlighting the future of the world and conveying the message of the dawn of the New Era of Truth during the 21st Century. On 2nd June 1990, he voluntarily shed his physical sheath.

For more information:

To find out more about Shriram Sharma Acharya and his spiritual establishment visit www.awgp.org

Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya is a university envisioned by Shriram Sharma Acharya to meet the pressing need to impart global education on scientific spirituality and life style with new thought of ethical, moral and spiritual transformation. Visit www.dsvv.org for more information.

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