

Taittiriya Upanishad Highlights
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In 1997, Nitya gave a series of ten talks based loosely on the Taittiriya Upanishad, but essentially an overview of Indian spirituality based on the Upanishads, especially the Brihadaranyaka. It is eminently proper for a realized guru to use the traditional wisdom of the scriptures as a jumping off point for far-ranging meditations, including instructions to disciples present at the time. This is a compilation of the most trenchant parts of those talks. One other section has been used as an Appendix to the new edition of Nataraja Guru's *Integrated Science of the Absolute*, and another as an introductory essay on the *Gurukula Dhyana Manjusha*, and these are not included here.

(Invocation)

Peace Invocation

saha navavatu
saha nau bhunaktu
saha viryam karavavahai
tejasvi navadhitam astu
ma vidvishavahai
aum santih santih santih

Let us together be protected.
Let us both be nourished with the benefit of the bond.
Let us together be energized by the wisdom we gain.
Let us together become resplendent in our perfection.
May we never have any discordance between us.
Aum, peace, peace, peace.

The name of the Upanishad chosen for the study is Taittiriya Upanishad. An Upanishad is fundamentally a secret doctrine based on dialectical reasoning. To facilitate its methodology to be correct

and effective in bringing about the union of the seeking mind and the seer's mind, a typical situation of dialogue is accepted. In India from time immemorial our encounter with the educational environment has been mainly looked upon as a profoundly soul-lifting experience.

Two mythological figures are brought together in this Upanishad to play the role of the wise father and the devoted student. The father in the Taittiriya Upanishad is Varuna and the student is his son Bhrigu. Varuna is a symbolic name of the teacher to denote that the teacher is adored as one worthy of being sought for his spiritual benediction. The word *varuna* is derived from *vara*. The perfection that is sought is *vara*. The giver of the highest benediction is known as Varuna, meaning the bestower of the best of all attainable values.

Bhrigu, the student here, is given an appropriate name which means one who is being processed with the intense flames of wisdom. The kind of austerity to which Varuna directs his son is to go deeper and deeper in the search by intensifying his contemplative penance.

Bringing together the secret of the seer and the earnestness of the seeker is the age-old method of establishing bipolarity between teacher and taught. That is indicated in the peace invocation of this Upanishad. The preceptor and the wisdom-seeking student sit facing each other. They get into a covenant together. They give up their personal pronoun 'I' and bracket themselves, accepting the collective pronoun 'we' of the first person.

The first line of the invocation is *saha navavatu*, meaning "let us together be protected." Thus, the teacher and the taught bond themselves together for their mutual protection. It is assumed that the teacher will protect the taught and the disciple will protect the guru. This mutuality is the spirit of bipolar togetherness.

The second line says *saha nau bhunaktu*, meaning "let us both be nourished with the benefit of the bond." The teaching is not given literally. The teacher is to be stimulated and inspired by the student's enthusiastic questions. Question in Sanskrit is called

chodayam, and also it is etymologically related with the word *chodanam*, meaning inspiration. The stimulating question inspires the teacher to conduct the student into the deeper realms of wisdom or understanding. So what accrues from the dialogue of the teacher and taught is a value not uncovered up to that point in time. In other words, both the teacher and the taught are exposed to a new revelation of truth. Consequently, they both come to a beneficial exposure to higher truth.

The third line of the invocation says, *saha viryam karavavahai* meaning “let us together be energized by the wisdom we gain.”

The fourth line says, *tejasvi navadhitam astu* meaning “let us together become resplendent in our perfection.”

Then in the last line comes a great spiritual warning: *ma vidvishavahai* meaning “may we never have any discordance between us.” When two persons are bracketed for the attainment of lofty values, there is a likelihood of them becoming victimized by spiritual jealousy. Thus the invocation closes with the final agreement that the parties getting bonded for wisdom should never allow any discordance to come between them.

This is further explicated in the Bhagavad Gita when the teacher Krishna asks his disciple Arjuna to become of his (Krishna’s) mind also: *manmana bhava*—“let my mind become your mind too by constantly identifying your interest with mine through remembrance—*bhakti*.” For that the disciple must learn self-sacrifice into absolute attentiveness—*sraddha*.

It is with such an invocation that the interrelationship between the teacher and the taught becomes well knitted before they commence their joint search for wisdom.

Even more than in the mundane experience of ordinary learning, in spiritual learning the teacher and the taught have to be intimately close to each other. This closeness is indicated by the word *upa* in Upanishad. The closeness should be such as that between a numerator and its denominator. The teacher is a numerator, and the teacher’s wisdom roots are to go penetrating into the disciple, who offers himself or herself to be the future

denominator. This intimate relationship is the bipolarity that is sought between the teacher and the taught. With this preparatory understanding we now go into the third chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which is named, after the seeker Bhrigu, as Bhrigu Valli.

(1)

The theme given to us for the search and attainment of Self-knowledge is the focusing of our attention on an archaic model of a progeny seeking guidance from the fully expressive maturity of its father. The law of the universe is a hidden cause surfacing into the awareness of time and space in the form of proliferating effects. The effects in their turn become a cumulative state of becoming that can thereafter assert itself as an antecedent cause, repeating the process with evolutionary mutations.

The grand drama of the replication of a parent organism into a continuous process of cyclic repetition is alluded to in the surprise which struck Rene Descartes when he saw in the city of Rome an architectural device of a self-replicating fountain. Water was gushing out of a spout filling the fountain, and the same water was again and again going back up out of the fountain. This sets before us an image of an underlying cycle of becoming arising out of being and refilling the being eternally. The source of life is eternally giving formulations of new eventualities. The self-expending donor of energy is revitalized by the process of giving. Thus there is a complementarity of giving and receiving, a dialectical situation where two contradictory forces are canceling each other out into a unity for the process of reciprocity and complementarity. This is at the bottom of every reality that we come across, comprising the functional level of the ever-perpetuating forms of the transformations of organisms.

The Upanishads have a system of presenting the teaching which always commences from the unresolved enigma of paradoxes. All present notions that can be clothed in the expressive voice of a word and its magical bursting into a meaning, further expand its area of relevancy through the explosion of psychic

energy. For this reason the teachers of antiquity gave primacy to the dynamics of relevant words. In the Indian Upanishads the mysterious word AUM is given as a classical starting point for the search of word wisdom. This was known to the Greeks when they came to conceive the word as the logos. Philo Judaeus could intuitively see the concretization and materialization of the subtle dynamics of the word when he said, “The Word becomes spirit and flesh.” In India what is equivalent to logos is the word, the veda.

When you pass on from the data of information given to the senses in the form of matter to its spiritual representation in word wisdom, we are no longer looking at the physical world as such, but at the image of the world that is impressed on the innermost consciousness of one who has the quest to know. That is why Sir Arthur Eddington said that when we philosophize the reality of matter, we are not philosophizing the reality of mud, water or fire, but the concept of them. We can take this as a starting point to insert ourselves into the philosophical discipline of making every atom of sensitivity in us glow with the sensibility of participating in the truth of the known by making ourselves the knower, receiving and registering the knowledge that releases us from the enigmas of ignorance.

Let us first examine the two words, *varuna* and *bhrigu*. Varuna is the symbol of the benevolent giver. Mythically, the indwelling area of the mysterious giver is the infinite ocean of the water of life that transforms the arid desert lands of fecund earth into heavenly bodies of varying propensities of becoming. What is relevant to us is our earth girdled by oceans, from which the sun in the firmament is continuously drawing water to great heights where it can be transported all over as rain clouds. The geologic evolution of a burning planet to finally become domiciled with the emergence of small patches of life is conceived as the first benevolence of Varuna. Thus Varuna is the life donor to a planet like Earth. The process is one of sacrificing water and fire to retransform the water into a cloud and make rain.

This episode is used to give us the name Bhrigu, the symbolic progeny of the cosmic process of transforming lifeless

matter into vitalized matter. Bhrigu means that which undergoes the intensity of heat and light to evolve as a recipient of the secret of nature, which can bring the essence of word wisdom. Thus, there is a great similarity between Varuna and the first cosmic force that has transformed the chaos of empty space into the well-ordered cosmic constellations of celestial bodies. It is on such a body, the Earth, that part of its evolute takes the position of an observer of its own origin, transformation, and cyclic changes, finally to be the vital breath of life in the stuff that goes into the making of an organism. Thus the pace of creation is set in the bringing together of the two elements fire and water to soak the earth, and to bring pulsations of life through electrolysis.

The search began without a mind and without concepts, and yet when the evolute, Bhrigu, seeks the reality of itself by turning toward the primordial origin of things, Varuna, the indication given to the seeker was to punctuate the search by focusing first on nourishment, *anna*, then on the vital force of breath, which succeeded in processing out of the morbidity of earth, water and fire to gain the sensibility of light.

The first organ of search which human beings have is called *chaksus*, the eye which can discern the mysteries of the unknown through continuous observation. It is not the observation of a single person. There are a plethora of eyes making countless searches through different offshoots of becoming.

Next, communication starts between the agents of observation. That is described as the faculty of listening, *srotra*. Then comes the individuation of organisms born of inertial matter and spiritual awareness. This strange combination is called *manas*, giving organisms the faculty to cognize. Once the inquiry becomes consolidated in the search for a golden thread of meaning going through cause and effect, the result is the word and voice of an observer proclaiming the truth of essences with the subtlety of concepts.

We are never fully satisfied with any knowledge we get. Each piece of knowledge is a stepping stone in our insatiable quest to know. Hence, in the first mantra Bhrigu says the ultimate to which

the seeker could arrive is the origin of life, *anna*. It is from the benevolent supplier of the basic ingredients to formulate the first organism that all subsequent organisms came. Therefore, the seeker was programmed to go further with every inquiry.

The criteria of truth are discovered along with the search. The eternal truth is that out of which things arise, which maintains whatever has arisen and also re-absorbs all to take evolution further to arrive at new degrees of perfection. The non-pulsating, floating materials of heaven become animated only when a pulsation is initiated into constellations of factors of life, which get coordinated through electromagnetic bonding. This most significant bonding of opposites brings to life the contradiction and competition between anabolism and catabolism, which from thereon becomes an ever-present, dialectical polarization in the multitudinous functions of matter animated by spirit and spirit clothed by matter. What is referred to here is not a single, isolated, lone function in some corner of the universe. We are speaking of a holistic appraisal of the total ground and the total world of figures.

From this totality or holistic vision we individuals have to refocus the search in our own psychophysical organism in which we are temporarily placed, to outlive it and transcend it with innumerable evolutionary facets, to come to a greater and greater appraisal of our own personal truth, which is implicit within truth as a whole. To relate ourselves with great vigilance in spite of the altering states of our consciousness, the microcosm in us has to resonate with the macrocosm to which belong the earth, water, fire, air, and the space which holds millions of energy sources, like the solar and the galactical. As Carl Sagan says, our finite entity as a seeker is one with billions and billions of others in the functional world, and no effort made to know is ever lost because there is a contiguity in the search for the ultimate.

Our happy lot is that we can burn away like candles on the altar of a cathedral, which contributes to the totality of the effect of the incandescent candles. We can keep up our vigil in the wakeful life, in the dream and even in the unconscious, and watch how a part of us is presented as food (*anna*), and yet another aspect is

devouring the nourishment with gusto. The glory of this conception keeps every living moment a moment of our supreme participation with the process of becoming, which is like a ripple in the vast and never-changing being. Many mystical, poetic, and scientific descriptions are given to every bit of that experience of consciousness, which to each person is a treasure unto itself, and to the world a milestone of its growth. Such is the great vision with which the Bhrigu Valli initiates our search. We now go further into the secret of pulsation, *prana*.

(2)

The Upanishadic concept of the Absolute implies in it two extreme positions which are indicated by two Sanskrit terms: this (*idam*) and all (*sarvam*). As we move from the figurative notion of “this” to the universal concept of “all”, the mental image of “this” expands to fill an inconceivable vastness of infinitude.

Philosophically, it is untenable to think of the minutest of the minute and the infinitude of the infinite together. It is that impossibility of accommodating the contradiction of “this” and “all” which brings the canceling out of two figurative notions and annuls both thisness and allness by freezing the duality of the knower and the object of its knowledge.

Normally, between the knower and the object of knowledge there is a rapid oscillation of the illuminating light of knowledge which assumes alternating positions between the self and non-self, between the knower and knowledge.

The spectrum from the structured psychophysical entity of a microbe to that of the entire cosmos is to be put together as one whole truth when we say *sarvam* (all). The bulk of the uncharted, unconscious light of the self-luminous *atman* is to be spread out to have a glimpse of the variations and variegations of a moment of manifestation to know what nourishes an iota of being which has its universal semblance in the nourishment of all the energy-receiving, structural and functional details of everything referred to in this vast universe as “all”. Thus there is a subtle dialectical

exchange of energy going on as every “this” gets its assigned position to be part of the whole. This is the unitive aspect of analysis and synthesis when they take complementary positions in unitive thought.

It took several millennia for the rishis of the Upanishads to complete a picture of the indistinct spirit expressing itself through the distinct character of animated matter.

To go from *idam* (this) to *sarvam* (all), there should be a principle of homogeneity which equates to some extent anything with everything.

(3)

We have seen that every need, however trifling or inevitable, is in the form of hunger. We cannot exhaust either the concept or the variegated varieties of hunger. From every iota of our physical nature the presence of biochemical materials, metabolic functionings, and the placement of us in new time/space situations calls our attention to meet with the contingency of one need or another. Thus the Upanishad wants to present to our attention the epistemological need of knowing the primal cause that expands into the programs of life. That is why our attention is drawn to the dialectical polarities of hunger and food.

Now after seeing the immediacy of hunger and the presence of food, our attention is directed to a far deeper aspect of the foundation of life: the vital force, the energy we derive from the pulsating prana. After knowing that *anna* (food) is the origin of everything, the sustenance of all, and the ultimate reemergence of all manifestation, when Bhrigu wanted his father's guidance to go beyond food, the area for probe is indicated by saying “prana.”

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.5.10 we read:

Whatever is unknown is a form of the vital force, because the vital force is what is unknown. The vital force protects one by becoming what is unknown.

The eye sees everything but it does not see itself, or know how it sees everything. This is so with all the other senses too. We hear everything with the ear, but we do not know how the ear hears, or how the skin has the sensation of touch. We only infer the existence of the senses from certain effects. Often things come under our observation, yet we are not sure of their true nature. It is only by a force of psychological compunction that we relate the invariable proximity between two events, so that one is believed to be the cause of the other.

Hence, a story is given here in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that the first primary being decided to avert death by means of singing praises of the real to avert the unreal. For any action the animation and force of energy has to come from air, and in the case of a living being by breath. We are told that all faculties, one by one, were asked to make the *udgita*, the loud chanting of the praise of the real, but every attempt was foiled by the vitiating inertia which is metaphorically called “the dark” (*asura*). Finally, the vital breath succeeded in chanting the *udgita*, because air alone can bring the sonic effect which is absolutely necessary for articulation.

Thus, with the means of the evocative aspect of air, the word came into being. It is with word that everything is created, everything sustained, and word recoils into itself when it is not necessary to retain its audible form. This knowledge will lead us to make a probe into the origin of the word. Only when a word is spoken loudly enough for another to hear does it evoke all the connected word memories and set a course activating the five organs of action, which integrally belong to the will to be.

The factors of consciousness in a being with which we function voluntarily are the result of unconscious processes. Thus the secret of continuing in the program of life belongs to and is maintained by the unconscious vital energy called prana. That is also the historical reason for ushering in “faith in the unknown,”

which was later called natural law in science and God's will in religion.

In the flow of life every now and then there arises a need to change the course of life to generate adequate ingenuity so that the universal life program can continue. The evolutionists call it natural selection. Although we usually associate selection with the deliberate judgment of a conscious being, natural selection has not behind it any rational being to pick and choose. Just as a psychologist, when he comes to the tether end of his wits, holds onto the unconscious as the secret operative of the psyche, the Upanishadic rishi thinks of the unknown as the valid core out of which all manifestations arise.

The Upanishadic theory of truth features the concept of *pranava*. *Pranava* is a suggested name to symbolically allude to the syllable *aum*. The scheme of *aum* has four limbs: the wakeful and transactional, the subjectivity of dreams, the return of pulsating energy to its epicenter called deep sleep, and the fourth quarter, left as indescribable. What is hushed in the fourth is mentioned here as prana. *Aum* is called *pranava*. *Pranava* literally means regeneration.

In making his probe into the mystery of prana, Bhrigu comes to the emergence of an awareness which includes both the conscious and unconscious functions in the dialectical polarization of life. He arrives at a middle ground—the threshold of consciousness or the preconscious, which can serve as a link between the known and the unknown.

This is the hypothetical picture we get from the Upanishad to initiate our probe into the Science of the Absolute, and which can also bring us to the purposive finale of experiencing the summum bonum, the value of values, *ananda*.

(4)

In the immediate study we have to bring the implications of the overall epistemology, the overall methodology, and the overall axiology to the Bhrigu Valli as a test case. In the Bhrigu Valli, the

basics are given as bread, vital breath, mind, fundamental learning, and the value of all values. These are all philosophical abstractions aimed at the greatest furtherance of a person's life situation governed by relevant values.

The concept of the cosmos in its purest form is an idealized vision holding together a threefold confection of existence, subsistence, and value. To exist means to have a relevancy to be. Being is the ground for every shade of becoming. It is a pure fundamental, with its stress on the Absolute sporting an infrastructure of innumerable possibilities of transforming and becoming which alone substantiates the existential verity of being.

The complementary aspects of food and breath can be taken together as a unitive function of bread being transformed into vital forces. Thus the seeming duality between bread and breath comes into a dialectical belonging of one to the other, whereby the bread becomes breath and the breath becomes bread. In that we find the implication of both being and knowing.

We pass on from the breath to the bread and from the bread and bread to the word, and from the word to the simple connotation of the word, and the purposive intention for which the word is spoken. By knowing these details we come to master the mathematics of logic by which objects can be rendered into symbols and signs. What is externally so impressive as earth, water, fire, air, and space, has an inner hierarchical gradation, however crude and clumsy it may look to scientists. This is to be comprehended and appreciated within the three fields of operation. At the largest scale the field is cosmological, where the galactic systems of the starry world and the emergence of an expanding and contracting universe can be looked upon as a valid reality. The median field is of the individual within a physical, organized world in which consciousness can be its inner controlling principle. We mean a consciousness and an unconscious counterpart interlinked by a preconscious. Then, at the minute end of the scale we have the world of a singled-out atom with its unknown and unknowable atomic laws mainly expressed through the wave-like particle and

the particle-like wave. These are some of the fundamentals we should hold in our mind to examine the theory that Varuna is passing on to Bhrigu in this Upanishad.

(5)

In the guru-disciple dialogue epitomized in the Bhrigu Valli, there is a continuous dialectical process in which there is a considerable shift in the modes presented in sequence, as Bhrigu is going through the ones given to him by his father for careful and consistent scrutiny. The very first mode given was food. There the reference to food is “food in principle,” meaning it can be different to different hungry beings. This is followed by the reference to the actual dynamics of vital breath, which comes as an antecedent to food to conduct Bhrigu to a synthesis of the two. This should give him a foretaste of consciousness being introduced into him from an inert and crude basis of creation.

The general methodology involved is a series of evolutionary processes seeping through the primordial leftovers of the remote past, which brings a seeker to the chaotic spoils of several million years that have been blithely witnessed only by inert masses of matter. We do not know whether or not anyone was systematically witnessing the very lawful changes taking place in the blind creation of the starry heavens, the galactical system, and umpteen solar and planetary constellations of matter.

(6)

The Isavasya Upanishad makes a distinction between the “this” (*idam*) and the “total” (*sarvam*). The *sarvam*, or the total, in the Vedic and Vedantic context is called *brahman*.

Prakriti is conceived like a smoky quartz crystal polarizing between the dark and the bright. The pure Self is thought of as illuminating nature by its mere presence. Both these systems are pervaded by the pure Being in which all fructifying becomings are happening, and from it two main divisions result: the world of becoming and the world of knowing.

Even if the whole universe is inestimably large and wide in the complexity of its various attributes, we have the device of epitomizing everything into a single word image. We carry around innumerable micro-images of all the word images put together into a world. Hence, it is necessary to recognize words as the very foundation of our conscious life. The interrelation between the sound that is heard and the form that is seen creates an association area in the mind where out of images a new time/space continuum can be replicated. In this psychophysical space there can be stratas of memory, not only of things but of images of the original space in which it was first experienced. The world thus being a flux in the memory composition, there have to also be sequences in time, and our scheme has to be a motor scheme all the time.

Words have a dynamic of their own which can blend many shades of the appearances and sounds that each individual is continuously exposed to. Because of this, our wakeful life is more or less lived in a hallucinatory world of our own creation.

A vertical parameter runs from the negative alpha point in the world of the indistinct, the unknown, and the unconscious, to pure consciousness in which all the fragments of the conditioned mind can ultimately merge in the pure Self. This merger is the one goal of the seeker of the Absolute. It is described in the Bhrigu Valli as Brahma Vidya, the Science of the Absolute.

Only when we know at least the main functional ability of the overseeing mind, and also the role of the ego as an actualizer of life, will we understand the secrets of learning.

(7)

Now we can say that the moment-to-moment intake of impressions brings orientation to the organs of perception and action to get into mutual alliances so that the almost unborn mind becomes like the feelers of a snail, with its telescoping eyes

reaching out to distinguish the world of forms and touches, discerning between the pleasure-giving and the pain-giving. Alternative efficacy comes to the mind to make the organism either shrink as a defensive device or else flush activating energy into the pleasure-seeking limbs to get into contacts. It is amazing how the timid mouse of humankind learns acceptance and avoidance first with an autonomic dexterity, now and then pausing for more information to maneuver its behavior. This is how the autonomic slowly allows the unconscious to transform into conscious appreciation of every element of impression that comes from outside.

The great sciences of language fill the mind of the child earlier than we expect. The child automatically and partly consciously proclaims itself with the phonetics, grammar, and logic of human speech. Thus, much before formalized learning, mind serves as a facilitator for all learning processes, and for this it is aided by its memorizing and recalling ability, called *chitta*, which when functional is called *chitta vritti*.

The world of immediate perception is a continuous process in which the incoming sensory data are ruthlessly mixed up, and yet intellection, which begins at a very early stage, has the ability to enter into the black box of memory to retrieve elements that are to be correlated and coordinated and indexed with interpretative meaning formulations. With all these simultaneous functions happening, mind allows itself to be united with the faculty of memory, as well as the aesthetically-appreciative, rationally-coordinating, decision-making intellect to stand in aid of the ego, which learns to claim hold on the environment as a knower of things with the ability and volition to choose and act in response to every impression. Simultaneously, the delight in knowing, doing, and experiencing fattens the nucleus of the ego to consciously accept the validity of its individuation.

From there on life is an enormously expanding exercise in learning and teaching, teaching mostly oneself. The reward for this is a great joy that cannot be entirely accounted for. Thus, *vijnana*

relates to *ananda*. *Vi* stands for specific, *jnana* for knowledge. There is an area of knowledge which is to be fully rearranged and reconstructed with value modes to function as the nucleus of every item of knowledge. Although innumerable are the value items identified through the five organs of perception and five organs of action, all are unitively brought under the guardianship of the self.

The brain-stuff assumes the position of a vertical parameter running from the tip of the spine to the pineal gland in the brain. The Indian yogis mark within it six synergic centers, designated as the base foundation, *muladhara*; the ego foundation, *svadisthana*; the food-based, energy-replenishing center, *manipura*; the guardian center of life, the *anahata* in the heart; the evocative pronouncer of expression, the *vishuddi* in the throat plex; and the center of all conscious expressions and impressions, the *ajna* between the eyebrows. From there to the crown of the head, a secret passage is conceived and named as *sahasrara*, a thousand-petaled coordination surrounding a mystical exit to the spirit world called *brahma randra*, the passage to the Absolute. Such is the interaction we assign to *vijnana*, which Bhrgu identifies as the penultimate discovery in the Science of the Absolute.

(8)

For millions of years the lower self has been purposefully manifesting to pursue its own highest Self and then to cancel both high and low to become one undifferentiated whole. In that process there are always infinitesimal failures and infinitesimal partial successes.

There is a continuous push and pull between spirit, *purusha*, and nature, *prakriti*. The spirit is characterized by its pure, clear quality, and nature by an incessant disturbance controlled by the dynamics of a continuously-obliviating negativity of ignorance. The act of cohabitation and indulgence in erotics of the male and female is meant to fuse the two into the creation of a new progeny, which takes bits and pieces from both to emerge as the fulfillment

of life's purpose, leaving behind a depleted male and a depleted female to wither away in the course of time.

We have seen in the explanation of the previous mantras how each one of us is provided with an obverting mirror which continuously gives us a highly invalid, hallucinatory impression of phenomena, which we have designated as the mind, *manas*. Although our status is of the same stuff as the Absolute, when the spirit is fabricated and placed in a body, its nature is reduced to that of an imprisoned splendor. Each time the spirit is reborn to dwell in a new body, the resplendent prisoner has to function in accordance with the rules of a bonded slave. Consequently, in an ever-fructifying transformation of life materials, marked by instability, *anitya*, and constant exposure to the dirt of the body/mind combination, *asuchi*, and spells of distress, *duhkha*, the Self has to act as non-Self, *anatma*.

It is to save itself from this tragedy and agony of the psychophysical life of the spirit that the science of harmonious union, *yoga*, is given by the seers to redeem the spirit, so it can be placed on its true foundation whereby each person can have for the first time an insight into the direction toward which life is flowing. This is described in the science of yoga as finding one's true spiritual foundation.

There are criteria in this world which are like street lamps that can enlighten our path. In the science of yoga such guiding principles are called valid testimonies, *pramana*. In spite of getting acquainted with the criteria of guidance, we occasionally fall into delusions where the right will be mistaken for the wrong and the wrong accepted as the right. That is how the transient will be misunderstood as the permanent and the sickly will be accepted as healthy. There comes a conditioning in us, in the case of a masochist to love pain, and with a sadist to bring pain to all around us. Thus we depose ourselves from the glorious status of the Self to live a life of a condemned criminal.

Most of our moral concepts and ethical appreciations contain within them contrary or contradictory concepts of values. We need the continuous exercise of discriminating right from wrong and of rubbing away our impulsive attraction toward evil. For this purpose one has to instinctively differentiate the illusory from the valid. Even in familiarizing oneself with the valid, we have to discriminate the validity of the transactional, *vyavahara*, from the validity of transcendence, *paramartha*.

In the wakeful experience of the rational mind, which is helpful in relating with the verity of transactional life, direct perception is of relatively greater merit than entertaining false imaginations. But we have to be very wary that our decision always agrees with the fundamentals of truth as declared by the scriptures, the injunctions given by our preceptors, and supported by our own logical adherence to reason. In spite of all such cautions, the unreliable mirror of our mind can put before us a hallucinatory validity which can bring a sense of the false glory of erudition, and one may become a megalomaniac posing as a chosen messiah, a guru par excellence, or even assuming the role of a new prophet.

This perdition of reason continues in some people, who walk the path of assumed knowledge when they are ignorant, bringing their life to utter futility. This type of knowledge is called *mitya ajana*, the conviction of the validity of untruth. To pull oneself out of this morass of ignorance, one should have the power to discriminate between right and wrong. Continuous repetition of doing right is called *abhyasa*. Cutting oneself off from all distractions again and again is called *vairagya*. The external world impressing its hallucinatory glory by constantly taking us back to an outmoded memory is a tragedy of life. To avoid this one should live in the company of the wise, be ever-engaged in self study, and lend one's ears to the criticisms of a wise teacher. This continuous search has to go on for a long time.

When the treacherous and evil attractions are pushed aside for a long time, one starts to get clear visions of the Self. It's as if the higher Self is beginning to lift the lower self to sublime

heights. Of course, it is to be accompanied by personal effort for the sublimation of the gross and subtle impact of vital forces. Just like becoming an intimate friend of a very helpful and noble person, one will find one's own Self a constant comrade and friend in need.

If not in this life, in one of the many lives ahead, one is sure to come to such a maturity in spirit where there will be a constant manifestation of Self-absorption. Such blessed instances of the vision of the Self are not happening in the mire of the unconscious. Our own consciousness will be lifted from the body level to a high and sublime vision of truth. This is called *samprajnata samadhi*, experiencing for the first time a natural state of *samadhi* which enables you to enter into the path of peak experiences.

(9)

In the Vedanta philosophy we come to the *summum bonum* of the search for the Absolute in the realization of ananda as brahman.

To explicate the word-wisdom of the guru-disciple dialogue, we are presenting here the symbolic key of the major Upanishads, called *pranava*. The term *pranava* is very suggestive. *Pra* means in a rich, abundant and proper way. *Nava* means arriving at the full exposition of life.

In all great religions and regional maturations of culture there is a secret key to the search undertaken by people, such as the Chinese, the Indian, the Semitic, and those people who live in intimate relationship with nature. The Japanese and Chinese people have the secret of Tao, which became further embellished by the idea of the contemplative *chan* or *zen*. Their central doctrine is that there are two opposites which in their function replace each other in an oscillatory process. The yin is conceived as negative, and the yang as positive. Each one is trying to become the other. Thus yin begins negatively, but becomes ultimately so surcharged with positivity that it becomes yang. Like a pulsating cell that swells

and depletes rhythmically, yin and yang give balance to this world through their opposing oscillations.

In the Indian theory, the One begets the innumerable, and the innumerable are once again in the vortex of union where you cannot say “one” or “not one.” A flickering light grows into the conflagration of an absolute brilliance, and the same dwindles gradually to arrive at the bottommost pit of total darkness in which everything generated or revealed by light is ultimately obliterated. From that point, once again a spark can begin again to grow into the flaming brilliance of earth and heaven united, until they too cannot be distinguished.

The theme of the Semitic religions is that out of nothing comes the wisdom and compassion of the creator who enthusiastically brings about the adorable creation. The creatures become corrupt, and finally the creator, in dismay, banishes what he has created, and sets about redoing it in an endless process of creativity, trying to amend faults, only to become defeated by the satanic counterpart.

Those who have been living close to nature and embrace animism also see the interplay between the heavenly spirit and the worldly evil manifesting at several levels and challenging every life form to keep vigilant and recreate harmony from the depths of chaos.

Thus, in a certain sense, the epistemology, methodology, and axiology of all world cultures are the same, endorsing a paradoxical way of motivating oneself to gain immortality. The scheme given to illustrate the secret of Bhrigu’s conclusion is that from the *summum bonum*, ananda, everything is born by ananda, everything is sustained by ananda, and everything is dissolved back into ananda. Such a resolution wipes away the duality even of a seeker and a seer. Both culminate in the vision of the one nondual truth to which every relativistic truth belongs.

In the vertical/horizontal scheme given here, the vertical parameter runs from the negative alpha point to the peak of omega. Where it is intersected by the horizontal parameter, the point of

intersection stands for the ever-changing I-consciousness in which the subject is transformed to replicate the object, and though the Self is all consciousness and knowledge, the tenor, color, and meaning of this consciousness is always a new life situation.

The scheme has a lower half and a higher half. The lower half represents the relativistic consciousness of the self imprisoned in the mesh of phenomenality and mortality. The conscious life of a person in this negative lower form is always bristling with distress, and again and again renovated by surging hope. When from the intersection point there is a mounting hopefulness, it fills the entire scheme with a figure-eight movement, producing an ascending and descending dialectical polarity in the aspirant's life.

When a light is surrounded by a million mirrors, one who sees the light directly is emancipated from the confusion of the million different reflections in the mirrors. The oscillating consciousness in a physical body, because of the spatial and temporal limitations of the structural and functional peculiarities of its environment, causes the self to be alternately exposed to knowledge and ignorance. The light is the central truth of oneself, but when it is turned towards an object, the object is seen as an "other." This mistaken notion can be corrected by holding oneself firmly to the one unchanging truth, the *paramatma*, the ultimate. Then one comes to accept that all partial illuminations are sustained by the same Self. We mark that aspect in the present scheme as Universal Self Consciousness. In Sanskrit this is *savarthabodham*, the consciousness that every form, name, and meaning is a relativistic attribution of the One Self without a second. When such a unitive vision comes to stay, there are no plural perspectives within us. It is the Absolute which becomes the true 'I' of the seeker.

This brings an altered vision to the self that is seeing truth without blemish, and consciousness becomes permeated with love. Such a consciousness relates itself with all, with an attitude of absolute compassion. Then a contemplative comprehension fills one's being, which is declared in the Upanishads as *prajnanam brahma*.

When the sense perceptions are attuned to wakeful experience, the world seen is one of plurality, with many colors, many forms, and many names, but the contemplative unity of the experience does not remain with a spatial or temporal locus. It becomes all-pervasive. Then in the place of *prajnanam*, there comes one's total identification with the Self. This is an imperiential identification with the only consciousness there is. It does not permit any difference between the seer and the seen. There is only unitive seeing. This is described as "This Self is All," *ayam atma brahma*.

The Absolute can be conceived as one which brings forth countless millions of pleasures and pains. That fecund possibility is called *vibhuti*, specialized manifestations of the Divine. In the Bhagavad Gita, this is exemplified and described as *Vibhuti Yoga*. Then one sees the special manifestations of the Absolute as the fragrance of earth, the taste in water, form in fire, the touch of wind, the encompassing of *akasa*, the stability of an oak, and the all-consuming fire of truth. In so many ways this is a coupling of two exercises in the path of the seeker, that is, to decide what one's sustaining intrinsic values are, called *svadharmanistha*, and out of the emanation of relativistic values, choosing to be with all the auspicious qualities which bespeak the glory of the Absolute, called *samasthakalyanaguna*, the plethora of auspicious qualities. When such kind of awareness of unity becomes a steady state of wisdom, a person becomes blessed with an attitude of maintaining their poise and sensitivity. Arriving at such a state is called *avyakrita*, which is an imperturbed state of only seeing the One. When one becomes established in the retention of unity, which is imperturbably held as one's own true foundation, the state of the *brahmavit*, the state of all as brahman comes to stay.

After attaining that blessed state, if one retains a fragment of ego for the purpose of acting as an agent of true knowledge, a precipitator of goodness, and a bringer of beauty to the world, then that person is called a *brahmavid*. A further excellence can come to that same person identified with the perfection of the Absolute.

That is the state of *brahmavidvilashyam*. This ultimate state of the supremely peaceful and blissful brings an aloneness that has no comparison. This aloneness is called *kaivalya*. When one remains in that state of aloneness, there is no second to shake that unity. Coming to the state of being permanently established in the Absolute is described as *brahmavidvarishthan*, where there is only the pure existence of the pure knowledge of the *summum bonum*, *sat-chit-ananda*. Thereafter, there is no repeated life and death. That is termed as *natpuravritti*, there is no return. On attaining such a state, the original ego, *aham*, is fully transformed into the absolute state of consciousness in which there is no relativistic blemish. The state of that being is *aham brahma asmi*. This peak experience of imperiential identity is ananda.