

Yoga- Vasistha

Book 1. VAIRĀGYA-PRAKARANA (1)

Section 1. DIVINE ADORATION

Bail the Eternal

Om, salutation to the self same Reality, from whom all beings proceed, by whom they are manifest, upon whom they depend, and in whom they become extinct (in the end).

He is the knower, the knowledge and all that is to be known. He is the seer, the (act of) seeing, and all that is to be seers, He is the actor, the cause and the effect; therefore salutation to Him (who is all) knowledge himself.

Salutation to Him (who is) supreme bliss itself, from whom flow the dews of delight (as water springs from a fountain) both in heaven and earth, and who is the life of all.

Section 2. NARRATIVE OF SUTĪKSNA

One Sutīksna, a Brāhmana, whose mind was full of doubts, went to the hermitage of Agasti and asked the sage respectfully.

Oh great sage! you are informed in all the ways and truths of virtue, and know with certainty all the Śāstras, I am in a great doubt (about something) which I pray you will kindly remove.

Tell me whether a man's acts or his knowledge or both of these, is in your opinion, the cause of his emancipation.

Agasti replied- As the flight of birds in the air is effected by means of both their wings, so the highest state of emancipation is attained through the instrumentality of both knowledge and acts.

It is neither our acts nor knowledge alone that produces emancipation, but both together are known as the means of it.

Section 3. ANECDOTE OF KĀRUNYA

I will recite to you an instance on this subject from the old traditions, relating a Brāhmana named Kārunya, who was learned in the Vedas in days of yore.

He was the son of Agniveśya and accomplished in the Vedas and all their branches, and after finishing his studies at the preceptor's, returned to his own abode.

He remained a sceptic at home, holding his taciturnity and inertness to acts: when his father Agniveśya saw his son so slack in his duties, he upbraided him thus for his good.

Agniveśya said- Why, my son, do'nt you discharge your, duties, tell me how can you succeed (in anything) if you remain inactive, and tell me also the reason of your cessation from acts.

Kārunya replied- The offering of daily oblations, and performance of morning and evening devotions during life, are inculcated in the Veda and law as the active duties (of men).

But it is neither by acts or riches, nor by means of progeny, that one obtains his liberation; it is solely by self-denial that Stoics taste the ambrosia (of emancipation).

Tell me my father! which of these two ordinances is to be observed by me? Doubtful of this I have become indifferent to acts.

Agasti said- Hear me my son, that Kārunya after saying so held his silence; when his father seeing him thus, rejoined his speech.

Agniveśya said- Hear me relate a narrative (to you) my son, and you having fully considered its purport in your mind, may do as you may choose (best for you).

Section 4. STORY OF SURUCI

There was a damsel named Suruci, the best of the Apsarā nymphs, who was seated on the mountain peak of Himalaya, beset by peacocks around.

Here Kinnaras inflamed by love sported with their mates; and the fall of heavenly streams (Gangā and Yamunā), served to expurgate the gravest sins (of men).

She beheld a messenger of Indra making his way through the sky; and then this most fortunate and best of Apsarās, addressed him thus-

Suruci said- O you herald of jods, tell me kindly whence you come, and whither are you destined at present.

Section 5. ACCOUNT OF ARISTANEMI

The divine Aerial replied- Well have you asked Oh pretty browed maid, and I will tell you all as it is. Know, Aristanemi the royal sage, who has made over his realm to his son.

He has (now) with religious indifference (to the world), set out to the forest for (practice of) asceticism, and is performing his austerities on the Gandhamādana mountains.

I am now returning from there after discharge of my errand, and repairing to Śakra's (palace) to report the matter.

Suruci said- Tell me, my Lord, what matter has taken place there. I am with submission (much) inquisitive after it, nor should you cause me (the pain of) anxiety.

The messenger replied- Hear me gentle maid, relate to you in length (everything) as it has occurred.

On hearing that the king was practising the utmost rigors of asceticism in that forest, Indra, the lord of Gods, desired me to take this heavenly car and repair at once to the spot.

"Take this car," said he, "bearing the (dancing) Apsarās equipped with all their musical instruments, and furnished with a band of Gandharvas, Siddhas, Yaksas and Kinnaras."

"Convey them," said he, "with all their wired instruments, flutes and drums to the auspices of the Sylvan mount of Gandha Madana.

"There having placed the Prince Arist anemi in the vehicle, bring him to the enjoyment of heavenly delight in this city of Amarāvati (the seat of immortals)."

The messenger said- Receiving this injunction of Indra and taking the car with all its equipments, I proceeded to that mountain.

Having arrived at the mountain and advancing to the hermitage of the king, I delivered to him the orders of the great Indra.

Hearing my words, Oh happy damsel! the king spoke to me with reluctance and said: "I wish to ask you something, O messenger, which (I hope) you will be able to answer.

Tell me what good and what evils there are in heaven, that knowing them (before-hand), I may think of settling there as I may choose.

I answered, saying- In heaven there is ample reward for merit, conferring perfect bliss (to all); but it is the degree of meritoriousness that leads one to higher heavens.

By moderate virtue, one is certainly entitled to a middle station, and virtue of an inferior order, leads a person to a lower position (in the heavens).

But one's virtue is destroyed by his impatience as the excellence of his betters, by his haughtiness to his equals, and by his joy at the inferiority of others.

When one's virtue is thus destroyed, he must enter the abode of mortals. These and the like are the effects of merit and demerit (with us) in heaven.

Hearing this, Oh good maiden, the king answered and said; "I do not, Oh divine messenger! like the heaven that is of such like conditions.

I will henceforth practise the most austere form of devotion, and abandon this my unhallowed human frame in the same way, as the snake abandons his time-worn-skin (slough).

Be you pleased, Oh delegate of the Gods! to return with your heavenly car to the presence of the great Indra whence you come, and fare you well.

The celestial emissary resumed- Thus being bid, I went Oh goodly dame to the presence of gakra to report the matter. Who upon my rehearsal of the matter, was struck with great wonder.

Then the great Indra again spoke to me with a sweet voice and said: "Go you my herald again to that king, and take him to the hermitage of Vālmīki.

"He is well acquainted with every truth, tell him my errand for the instruction of the dispassionate prince, saying-

Oh you great sage! remonstrate with this prince who is humble and dispassionate, and dislike the enjoyment of heaven.

So that this prince who is aggrieved at the miseries of the world, may gradually come to attain his emancipation.

I then went and explained my mission to the royal hermit, took him to the sage Vālmīki (who had grown amidst the ant-hills), and to whom I delivered great Indra's charge for the king's practice (of the means) for his final liberation.

Then the sage (named after the ant-hill in which he had grown), welcomed the King with gentle inquiries regarding his welfare.

The prince replied- "Oh great seer, that are informed in all the truths of religion, and are the greatest of them that know the knowable, your very sight has given me all that I desired, and therein is all my welfare.

"Great sire, I wish to learn from you how I may escape the miseries which arise from one's connection with this world, and which (I hope) you will reveal to me without reserve."

Vālmīki said- Hear me Oh king! I will relate to you the entire Rāmāyana, by the hearing and understanding of which you will be saved even while in this life.

Section 6. HISTORY OF RĀMA

Hear me Oh great and intelligent king, repeat to you the sacred conversation which took place between Rāma and Vasistha relating the way to liberation, and which I well know from my knowledge (of human nature).

The prince said- "O you best of sages, tell me precisely who and what this Rāma was, what was his bondage and how he got freed from it."

Vālmīki said- Hari was proscribed under an imprecation to take upon himself the form of a prince, with an assumed ignorance as that of a man of little understanding.

The prince said- "Tell me who was the author of that imprecation, and how it could befall on Rāma, who was the personification of consciousness and felicity, and the very image of wisdom."

Vālmīki replied- Sanat-kumāra, who was devoid of desires, had been residing at the abode of Brahmā, to which Visnu, the Lord of the three worlds, was a visitor from Vaikuntha.

The Lord God was welcomed by all the inhabitants of the Brahmaloaka as well as by Brahmā himself, except by Sanat-kumāra who was thus beheld and addressed to by the god.

"Sanat-kumāra, it is ignorance that makes you forsake your desires for fear of regeneration (on earth), therefore must you be born under the name of Śara-janmā to be troubled with desires."

Sanat-kumāra in return denounced Visnu by saying- "Even all discerning as you are, you shall have to sacrifice your omniscience for some time, and pass as an ignorant mortal (on earth)."

There was another anathema pronounced upon Visnu by the sage Bhrgu, who seeing his

wife killed (by him), became incensed with anger and said: "Visnu, you shall have also to be bereft of your wife."

He was again cursed by Vrndā ta to be deprived of his wife, on account of his beguiling her (in the form of her husband).

Again when the pregnant wife of Deva-datta was killed (with fear) on seeing the man-lion figure of Visnu.

The leonine Hari was denounced by the husband, who was sorely afflicted at the loss of his consort, to be thus separated from his wife also.

Thus denounced by Bhrgu, by Sanat-kumāra, Deva-datta and Vrndā, he was obliged (to be born in this earth) in the figure of a human being.

I have thus explained to you the causes of all the imprecations (which were passed on Visnu), and will now relate to you all other things which you shall have carefully to attend to.

2. Reason of Writing the Ramayana

Section 1. PERSONS ENTITLED TO ITS PERUSAL

Salutation to the Lord, the universal soul, shining manifest in heaven, earth and the sky, and both within and without myself.

One convinced of his constraint (in this mortal world), and desiring his liberation from it, and, who is neither wholly ignorant of, nor quite conversant with divine knowledge, is entitled to (the perusal of) this work.

The wise man, who having well considered the narrative (of Rāma) as the first step, comes afterwards to think on the means of liberation (as are expounded herein), he shall verily be exempt from transmigration (of his soul).

Know, O destroyer of your enemies! that I have first embodied the history of Rāma in this Rāmāyana (as the preparatory step to salvation).

And I have given the same to my attentive pupil the obedient and intelligent Bharadvāja, as the sea yields his gems to their seeker.

These historical preparatories were rehearsed by the learned Bharadvāja in the presence of Brahmā, seated in a certain forest of the Sumeru Mountain.

Then the lord Brahmā, the great grandfather of the inhabitants (of the three worlds), was so highly pleased with him that he addressed him saying: "Oh my son! ask the best boon that you wish for."

Bharadvāja said- Oh you lord, that are maṣṭer of the past and future times, grant me the desired boon of communicating to me the means whereby people are liberated from their miseries.

Section 2. BRAHMĀ' S BEHEST

Brahmā said- "Go ask diligently of your preceptor Vālmīki, to complete the faultless Rāmāyana that he has undertaken (to write).

By the hearing of which men will get over their manifold errors, in the same manner as they pass over the sea by the bridge built over it by the great Rāma, who was fraught with all good qualities.

Vālmīki said- Saying this to Bharadvāja, the supreme maker of all beings (Brahmā) accompanied him to my hermitage.

In right earnest was the god welcomed by me with the argha and offerings of water and the like, when the lord of truth spoke to me for the good of all creatures.

Brahmā' spoke to me saying -"Do not Oh sage! give up your undertaking until its final completion. No pains ought to be spared to make the history of Rāma as faultless as it ought to be.

By this work of yours men will forthwith pass over this hazardous world, in the same manner as one crosses the sea in a vessel.

Again said the increate Brahmā to me- "I come to tell this very thing to you; that you complete the work for the benefit of mankind."

Then Oh king, the God disappeared from my sacred hermitage in a moment, just as the wave subsides in the water no sooner it has heaved itself.

I was stuck with wonder at the disappearance of that (deity), and then being composed in my mind, I inquired of Bharadvāja, saying-

Tell me, Bharadvāja, what Brahmā spoke (to me) in the hermitage; to which he answered saying-

The God commanded you to complete the Rāmāyana for the good of men, and as a means of their crossing over the gulf of the world.

Section 3. INQUIRY OF BHARADVĀJA

"Now Sir" said Bharadvāja, "explain to me how the great minded Rāma and Bharata conducted themselves amidst the troubles of this world.

Tell me also how did Śatrughna, Lakshmana, and the renowned Sītā, and all those who followed Rāma, as also the ministers and their highly intelligent sons, conduct themselves (on earth).

Tell me clearly how they escaped all its miseries, that I may do the same with the rest of mankind: (for our salvation).

Being thus respectfully addressed by Bharadvāja, I was led, Oh great King! to carry out the behest of my lord (Brahmā, and to narrate the Rāmāyana to him; saying-

Hear my son Bharadvāja, I will tell you all that you have asked, and by the hearing of which you shall be enabled to cast away the dross of errors (under which you labour).

You are wise and have to manage yourself in the manner of the felicitous and lotus-eyed Rāma, with a mind free from (worldly) attachments.

(Know that) Lakshmana, Bharata, the great minded Śatrughna, Kausalyā, Sītā, Sumitrā as well as Daśaratha-

With Krtāstra and the two friends of Rāma, and Vasistha and Vāmadeva, and the eight ministers of state as well as many others, had reached the summit of knowledge (by this means).

Their names are Dhṛṣṭā, Jayanta, Bhāsa, Satya, Vijaya, Vibhīšana, Susena and Hanumān. And also Indrajit (who had attained his high-test knowledge).

These were the eight ministers of Rāma, who are said to have been equally dispassionate in their minds, and content with what was their lot. They were great souls, and free in their lives.

Well my son, if you follow the manner in which these men observed sacrificial rites, gave and received their offerings, and how they lived and thought, you are at once freed from the turmoils (of life).

One fallen in this boundless ocean of the world, may enjoy (the bliss of) liberation by the magnanimity of his soul. He shall not come across grief or destitution, but remain ever satisfied by being freed from the fever of anxiety.

Yoga Vasistha

Book 2. MUMUKSU-VYAVAHĀRA-PRAKARANA (The Means of Final Liberation)

1. Liberation of Śukadeva

After Rāma had delivered his speech in an audible voice before the assembly, he was tenderly accosted by the sage. Viśvāmitra who sat before him; saying-

Rāma! who is the best of the most intelligent, and have nothing more to learn besides all that you have come to know by the nice observation.

You have an understanding clear as the mirror by its own nature (reflecting every image within itself); and yet your queries about the same, serve as the cleansing of the reflector (in order to refract, its light to others).

You have a mind like that of Śuka-the son of the great Vyāsa, who knowing the knowable by intuition, was yet in need of some precepts for confirmation of his belief.

Rāma said- How was it sir, that Śuka-the son of the great Vyāsa who did not rest assured at first of his knowledge of the knowable, came to be settled in his belief afterwards.

Viśvāmitra answered- "Hear me relate to you Rāma, the narrative of Śukadeva, whose case was exactly like yours, and the narration of which is a preventive of future births (in this world).

There is the great Vyāsa sitting on his seat of gold by your father's side, swarthy in his complexion like a coal-black hill, but blazing as the burning sun (by his brilliancy).

His son was named Śuka, a boy of great learning and wisdom, of a moon-like countenance, and a stature sedate as the sacrificial altar.

He reflected in his mind the vanity of wordly affairs like yourself, and became equally indifferent to all its concerns.

It was then that this great minded youth was led by his own discriminative understanding to a long inquiry after what was true, which he found out at last by his own investigation.

Having obtained the highest truth, he was still unsettled in his mind, and could not come to the belief of the certainty of his knowledge.

His mind grew indifferent to its perceptions of the transitory enjoyments of the world, and like the Cātaka thirsted only after the dew drops of heavenly bliss.

Once upon a time the clear sighted Śuka finding his father the sage Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa, sitting quietly alone by himself, he asked him with reverence; saying-

Tell me, O sage! whence this commotion of the world had its rise, and how it may subside. What is its cause, how far is it to extend, and where is it to end?

The sage Vyāsa who knew the nature of the soul, being thus asked by his son, explained to him clearly all that was to be said (on the subject).

Śuka thought that he already knew all this by his good understanding, and did not therefore think much of his father's instructions.

Vyāsa understanding the thoughts of his son, replied to him saying that, he knew no better the true nature of these things.

But that there was a prince named Janaka in this land, who well knew the knowledge of the knowable, and from whom Śuka could learn every thing.

Śuka being thus directed by his father, repaired to the city of Videha at the foot of mount Sumeru, which was under the rule of Janaka.

The club-bearer (door keeper) informed the high minded Janaka of his coming, telling him that Śuka the son of Vyāsa was waiting at the gate.

Janaka who understood that Śuka had come to learn from him, gave no heed to the informant, but held his silence for seven days afterwards.

The prince then ordered him to be brought in the outer compound, where he had to remain in the vexation of his spirit for seven days more as before.

Śuka was then commanded to enter the inner apartment, where he continued a week more without seeing the prince.

Here Janaka entertained the moon-faced Śuka with abundance of eatables, perfumeries and lusty damsels.

But neither those vexations nor these entertainments could affect the tenor of Śuka's mind, which remained firm as a rock at the blasts of wind.

He remained there as the full moon (without any wane or increase), tranquil in his desires, silent and contented in his mind.

The prince Janaka having thus known the (unalterable) disposition of Śuka's mind, had him introduced to his presence, where seeing the complacency of his soul, he rose up and bowed down to him.

Janaka said- "You have accomplished to the full all your duties in this world, and obtained the object of your heart's desire to its utmost extent; what is it that you now desire for which you are welcome at mine.

Śuka said- "Tell me my guide whence sprang all this bustle (of wordly life); and tell me also how it may soon come to its subsidence."

Viśvāmitra said- Being thus asked by Śuka, Janaka spoke to him the same things which he had learned from his great souled father.

Śuka then said- "All this I have come to know long before by my own intuition, and then from the speech of my father in answer to my query.

"You sir, who are the most eloquent of all, have spoken to the same purport, and the same is found to be the true sense of the Śāstras.

"That the world is a creation of volition, and loses itself with the absence of our desires: and that it is an accursed and unsubstantial world after all, is the conclusion arrived at by all sages.

"Now tell me truly you long armed prince, what you think this world to be (whether a reality or unreality); that my mind may be set at rest by you from its wandering all about the world) in search of truth)."

Janaka replied- "There is nothing more certain, O sage! than what you have known by yourself and heard from your father.

"There is but one undivided intelligent spirit known as the universal soul and nothing besides; it becomes confined by its desires, and freed by its want of them.

"You have truly come to the knowledge of the knowable, whereby your great soul has desisted from its attachment to objects of enjoyment and vision.

You must be a hero to have overcome your desire in the lengthening chain of attractive enjoyments from your early youth. What more do you want to hear?

Even your father, with all his learning in every science, and devotedness to austerities, has not arrived to the state of perfection like you.

I am a pupil of Vyāsa, and you are his son; but you are greater than both of us, by your abandonment of the taste for the enjoyments of life.

You have obtained whatever is obtainable by the comprehensiveness of your mind; and as you take no interest in the outer and visible world, you are liberated from it, and have nothing to doubt of.

Being thus* advised by the magnanimous Janaka, Śuka remained silent with his mind fixed in the purely supreme objects.

Then being devoid of sorrow and fear, and released from all efforts, exertions and doubts, he repaired to a peaceful summit of the mount Meru to obtain his final absorption.

There he passed ten thousands of rains in a state of unalterable meditation, till at last he broke his mortal coil, and was extinguished in the supreme soul like a lamp without oil.

Thus purified from the stain of transmigration by abstaining from earthly desires, the great souled Śuka sank into the holy state of the Supreme Spirit, as a drop of water mixes with the waters or merges into the depth of the ocean.

2. Speech of Visvamitra

Viśvāmitra said- Rāma! it now becomes you to have your mind properly purified from its doubts, as it was done in the case of the son of Vyāsa.

You see, O great sages! how perfectly the knowable is known to Rāma, whose good understanding has learnt to feel a distaste for worldly enjoyments, as if they were diseases unto him.

You well know that the fixed principle in the mind of one knowing the knowable, is to have an aversion to all the enjoyment of life.

It is the desire of fruition that chains down a man fastly to the earth; but the knowledge of the frailties here serves to dispel his darkness.

Know Rāma that it is the curtailing of desires which the wise call liberty, and the fastening of our desires to earthly objects, is what is termed our confinement here.

Spiritual knowledge is easily obtainable by most men here, but a distaste to (pleasurable) objects is hard to be had, (however painful it is to procure them).

He who fully comprehends a thing, is said to know it, and who so knows what is knowable, is called a learned man; no earthly enjoyments can be delectable to such high minded men.

The mind that has no zest for earthly pleasures, except the glory of disinterested deeds, is said to be liberated even in the present life.

As there grows no vegetable in a sterile soil, so there grows no disinclination to worldiness, until one comes to know-the knowable reality. (i.e. to say; neither the godly can be worldly, nor the worldly be godly).

Hence know this supporter of Raghu's race to have verily known the knowable, which has made him disgusted with his princely enjoyments.

I tell you great sages that, whatever Rāma has come to know by his intuition, requires to be confirmed by Vasistha for the tranquility of his mind.

It is only a reliance in the Unity, that Rāma now requires for his repose, just as the beauty of autumn depends on the clearness of the firmament.

Let the venerable Vasistha then reason with the high minded Rāma, and restore the peace of his mind.

For he is the master and family preceptor of the whole race of the Raghus; besides he is all knowing and all seeing; and has a clear insight (into all things) of the three times (present, past and future).

Then addressing himself to Vasistha he said-you well remember sir, the instruction given us of old, for pacifying our mutual enmity, and promoting the welfare of the high minded sages.

When our lord the lotus-born Brahmā, seated on the table land of Nisadha mountain, and shaded by the Sarala trees, delivered his wise lectures to us and the sages.

It is by means of that knowledge of liberation that our worldly desires are dispelled like the darkness of night by sun-beams.

Please now, O Brāhmana, to communicate that rational knowledge of the knowable to your pupil Rāma, whereby he may gain the peace of his mind.

It will be no difficult task for you to teach the spotless Rāma, whose mirror-like mind is quite clear to take the reflection.

The wisdom of the holy, their learning of the Śāstras, and the scholarship of the learned, are then only praiseworthy, when they are communicated to a good student, and those who are disgusted with the world.

But instruction given to one who is no student not disgusted with the world, becomes as polluted as milk put in a hide vessel.

Again the instruction imparted by one devoid of passions and affections, fear and anger, pride and sin, serves to infuse tranquility into the mind.

At these words of Viśvāmitra the son of Gadhi, the assembled sages Vyāsa, Nārada and others, honoured his saying with the exclamation "bravo" "well said".

Then the venerable Vasistha brilliant as Brahmā his father, and seated by the side of the king, spoke in reply.

O sage, I will perform without fail, what you have commanded me to do, for who, though mighty, can refuse to perform the behests of the good and wise?

I will destroy the mental darkness of the princes Rāma and others by the light of knowledge, as we dispel the gloom of night by the light of a lamp.

I well remember the instructions which were given of yore by the lotus-born Brahmā on the Nisadha mountain, for dispelling the errors of the world.

Having said so, the high-minded Vasistha made up his mind as one girds up his loins, to deliver his lecture to Rāma for dispelling his ignorance, and showing him the state of supreme felicity.

3. On the Repeated Creations of the World

Vasistha said- "I will now expound to you Rāma! the knowledge that was imparted of old by our lord the lotus-born (Brahmā), after creation of the world, for the peace of mankind."

Rāma said- I know sir, you will expound to me the subject of liberation in full length; but remove first my fallacy about the frailty of this world.

And how it was that, the great sage Vyāsa--the father and guide of Śuka, did not attain to disembodied emancipation (after his death) with all his omniscience, while his son did so.

Vasistha said- (Hear me Rāma), there is no counting of the atoms proceeding from the spirit and forming the three worlds both before and after the birth of the glorious sun.

There is no body even who can count the millions of orbs which at present form the three worlds.

Nor can any one say by calculation, what numbers of creation, will rise from the (unlimited), ocean of divine existence, like its interminable waves (for ever).

Rāma said- It is needless to talk of worlds gone by or yet to come; say what you will of the present (state of existence).

Vasistha said- This world consists of brute, human and heavenly beings, whose lives when they are said to perish in any part of it are really existent in the same part.

The mind is called to be ever-fluctuating, and gives rise to (all things in) the three worlds in itself. It resides in vacuity in the form of the heart, and the increate (God) also residing in the vacuous soul (gives the mind the power to realize the latent ideas of the soul).

The millions of beings that are dead, those that are dying and will die hereafter, are all to be reborn here according to the different desires in their minds.

The external world appearing as a reality, is in truth but a creation of our desires; it is an ideal castle in the air, and a magic view spread before us.

It is as false as an earthquake in a fit of delirium, as a hobgoblin that is shown to terrify children, as a string of pearls in the clear firmament, and as the moving trees on the bank to a passenger in the boat.

It is an illusion as the phantom of a city in a dream, and as untrue as the imagination of a flower growing in the air. The unreality of the world best appears to one at the point of and after his death.

But this knowledge of (the unreality of the world) becomes darkened upon one's being reborn on earth, when the shadow of this world falls again on the mirror of his sentient soul.

Thus there is a struggle for repeated births and deaths here, and a fancy for the next world after one's death.

After one's shuffling off his body, he assumes another and then another form, and thus the world is as unstable as a stool made of plantain leaves and its coatings.

The dead have no sensation of the earth and other elementary bodies, nor of the course of the world; but they fall again to these errors upon their being reborn here.

There is an interminable ignorance resembling an immense river enveloping the face of creation, and breaking into stream-lets of unfordable ignorance.

The Divinity like a sea shoots forth in the various waves of creation, which rise incessantly and plentifully one after the other.

All beings here are but the waves of this sea, of which some are alike to one another in their minds and natures, while others are half alike, and some quite different from the rest.

I reckon yonder sagely Vyāsa as one of the thirty two of these waves, on account of his vast knowledge, and good looking appearance.

There were twelve of them possessed of a lesser understanding, they were the patriarchs of men, and endued with equal energy. Ten of them were men of subdued spirits, and the rest were adopts in their family duties.

There will be born again other Vyāsas and Vālmīkis, and likewise some other Bhrgus and Angiras, as well as other Pulastyas and others in different forms.

All other men, Asuras and gods with all their hosts are repeatedly born and destroyed either in their former or different shapes.

Like this there are seventy two Tretā cycles in a Kalpa age of Brahmā, some of which have passed by and others to follow. Thus will there be other people like those that have gone by, and as I understand, another Rāma and Vasistha like ourselves (by the eternal rotation of ideas in the Divine mind).

There have been ten successive incarnations of this Vyāsa, who has done such wondrous acts, and is famed for his vast knowledge.

Myself and Vālmīki have been contemporaries many a time, as also born in different ages and very many times.

We have been many times, and there were others also like myself, and so was I born also in many forms (in many ages).

This Vyāsa will again be born eight times hereafter, and again will he write his Mahābhārata and the Purāna histories.

He having divided the Vedas and described the acts of Bhārata's race (in the Mahābhārata), and established the knowledge of Brahmā (in the Vedānta), is to attain to his disembodied liberation (after his final termination).

This Vyāsa who is devoid of fear and sorrow, and has become tranquil and emancipate in himself after subduing his mind and discarding the worldly desires is said to be liberated even in his present life time.

The living emancipate may sometimes be associated by his relatives and estates, his acts and duties, his knowledge and wisdom, and all his exertions like other men's or he may forsake them all at once.

These beings are either reborn a hundred times in some age or never at all; (as in the case of divine incarnations), and depending on the inscrutable will (Māyā) of God.

There souls undergo the like changes by repetition, as a bushel of grain, which is collected to be sown repeatedly, and to be reaped again and again (in the same or some other field).

As the sea heaves its incessant surges of different shapes, so are all beings born incessantly in various forms in the vast ocean of time.

The wise man who is liberated in his life time, lives with his internal belief (of God) in a state of tranquility, without any doubt in his mind, and quite content with the ambrosia of equanimity.

4. Praise of Acts and Exertions

Vasistha said- I know gentle Rāma that, liberation of the soul, whether in its embodied or disembodied state is both alike, as the sea-water and its waves are the same liquid substance.

The liberation whether of embodied or disembodied spirits, consists in their detachment from the objects of sense; hence the soul unattached to sensual gratification, is (said to be) liberated, having no idea of sensible objects.

And though we see before us the living liberated sage (Vyāsa) as an embodied person, yet we have no doubt of the detachment of his inward soul from the (mortal coil of his) body.

The difference between the embodied and disembodied souls, when they are equally enlightened and liberated, is like that of the seawater in its calm and billowy states.

There is no more difference between bodily and unembodied liberation than there is betwixt the air in motion and at rest.

Liberation whether with or without the body, is productive of unselfishness; we have lost our selfishness ever since we have come to the knowledge of an undivided unity (of the soul).

Now therefore attend to the true doctrine that I am going to deliver to you, which will be a jewel to your ears as it will dispel the darkness of ignorance (from your mind).

Know, O son of Raghu, that every thing in this world is obtainable by our efforts being properly employed (to our purposes).

This (knowledge of truth) rises as the moon (in the human mind), and sheds its cooling and delight-some influence to the heart, that there is no other way to gain the fruits of our exertions but by our efforts.

We evidently see the results of the exercise of our efforts, and nothing coming out from what the dull and mistaken call as chance or fate.

An effort when directed according to the counsel and conduct of the good in the exercise of the action of the body and mind, it is attended with success, otherwise it is as vain as the freak of a madman.

Thus he who wishes to acquire riches, and perseveres in its acquisition, surely succeeds in gaining them; or else he stops short in the midway.

It was by means of the exertion of their efforts that, some particular persons have obtained the paramount dominion of Indra over the three worlds.

It is by the exertion of one's efforts that he attains to the rank of the lotus-born (Brahmā); and some even gain the inward joy of the state of Brahman by it.

It was by virtue of his self-exertion that some body has become the best among men, even as he who bears the ensign of the eagle (Visnu among the gods).

It was by the exertion of one's efforts that some persons succeeded to obtain the forum of Siva accompanied by his female power, and adorned by the semi-circle of the moon in his crest.

Know our actions to be of two kinds namely, those of former and present lives: and that acts of the life generally super-side those of the past.

Know also that energy joined with constant practice, and supported by wisdom and some stimulating force, is able to break down the mount of Meru, and the demerits of acts in the former lives of men.

The exertions of a man proceeding from his good efforts and countenanced by the law, lead to his success, or else they either go for nothing or turn to his disadvantage.

So a man laid up in a state of disability, is unable to twist his fingers in order to hold a little water in the hollow of his palm for drink: while there is another who (by his well directed efforts gets the possession of seas and islands, mountains and cities for himself, supports all his dependents and relations, and does not think this earth too great for him.

Yoga Vasistha

Book 3. UTPATTI-PRAKARANA (Evolution of the World)

1. Causes of Bondage to It

Section 1. EXORDIUM (BHŪMIKĀ)

It is both by means of words and lights (Vāgbhābhis i.e. the words of the scripture and the lights of nature and reason, that the knower of the Great God (Brahmavid), perceives the spirit of Brahmā appearing within himself as in a dream. And he also knows him as such, who understands him according to the purport of the holy text. "What this is, that is the self" (i.e. He is all in all).

This passage shows in short, the visible world to reside in the vacuous bosom of Brahmā at its creation: it is now to be known in length, what this creation is, whence it takes its rise, and wherein it becomes extinct at last.

Hear me, O intelligent Rāma! now expound to you all things according to my best knowledge of them, and agreeably to their nature and substance in the order of creation.

One conscious of himself as a spiritual and intelligent being, views the passing world as a Somnum (svapnam) dream: and this dreaming simile of the passing world, applies equally to our knowledge of ego and tu or non-ego (which is as false as our cognitions in a dream).

Next to the book describing the conduct of the seekers of liberation (mumukshu-vyavahārā), then follows the book of evolution (ntpatti), which I am now going to propound to you.

Section 2. WORLDLY BONDAGE

Bondage consists in our belief of the reality of the visible world (and our relation with its phenomena Gloss). So our release depends on the negation of phenomenals. Now hear me tell you how to get rid of the visible (fettters of our minds).

Whoever is born in this world, continues to progress, till at last he obtains his final liberation, (his ultimum and optimum perfection); or rises towards heaven or falls into hell (under the subjection of his righteous and unrighteous actions (Gloss).

I shall therefore expound for your understanding every thing relating to the production and continuance of things, and their prior states as they were.

Hear me, Rāghva, now an abstract of this book in brief, and I will here-after dilate upon it, as you may wish to know more of this, (theory of production).

Section 3. PHASES OF THE SPIRIT

Whatever appears either as moving or unmoving in this world, know them all as appearances in a dream in a state of sound sleep (susupti); which become extinct at the end of a Kalpa-age. (The events of a Kalpa or day or Brahmā are as his day dream).

Then there remains a nameless and undeveloped something, in a state of deep, dark and dark abyss, without any light or thick-spread (nebulae) over it. (The Teo and Beo of Moses, the tama-teom of Manu and Veda, and the Moisture of Thales).

This great self-existence is afterwards attributed with the titles of Reality (Rta), self (Ātma), Supreme (Param), Immense (Brahmā) Truth (Satyam) and so forth by the

wise, as expressions for the Great Spirit (mahātman) for popular use. (Vide Gloss for definitions of these terms).

This self same spirit next shows itself in another form, which is called the living soul (Jīvātmā), and comes afterwards to be understood in the limited sense of life. (Jīva, Jiv, Zeu or Zeus; Ji and Jān; Zoa Protozoa &c). (But it is the undivided and universal soul of which the divided, individual and particular souls are but parts and particles. Gloss).

This inert living principle (Jīva-Life or the protozoa), becomes according to its literal signification the moving spirit (ākulatām), which afterwards with its power of thinking (manana) becomes the Mind, and lastly the embodied soul (Bhūtātmā). (So says the Śruti; Etasmāt Jāyate prānah, manah, sarvendryanica, Kham, Vāyurūp Prthivī etc. (i.e. From Him- the Spirit, is derived the life, mind and the organs of sense or body, whence he is styled the Living, Thinking and All acting Deity).

Thus the mind is produced and engaged from the quiescent nature of the Great Supreme Spirit to a state of restlessness (asthirākāra) like that of a surge, having itself in the (Pacific) Ocean. (i.e. the restful spirit of God-Brahma is transformed to the restless state of the Mind, personified as Brahmā or Heranyagarbha, called the Ātmabhū- the son of the spirit of God or God the Son, Demiurge).

The mind soon evolves itself as a self volitive power which exercises its desires at all times whereby this extensive magic scene of the world is displayed to our view. This scene is figured as Virājmūrti, or manifestation of the desires of the will of Divine mind, and represented as the offspring of Brahmā in the Indian Theogony. (Vide Manu on Genesis. chap I).

As the word golden bracelet signifies no other thing than a bracelet made of gold, so the meaning of the word world is not different from its source-the Divine will. (The difference is formal and not material and consists in form and not in the substance, the divine will being the substratum of the formal world).

Again as the word gold bears the idea of the substances of which the bracelet is made, so the word Brahmā conveys the meaning of immensity which contains the world in it; but the word world contains no idea of Brahmā nor bracelet that of gold. The substance contains the form as a stone does the statue, but the form does not contain the substance, as the statue may be of earth or metal or of wood).

The unreality of the world appears as a reality, just as the heat of the sun presents the unreal mirage in the moving sands of the desert as real waves of the sea. (So the phantasm of the mind-Brahmā, presents the phantasmagoria of the world (Visvarūpa) as a sober reality).

It is this fantasy (of the reality of the unreal world), which the learned in all things, designate as ignorance- avidyā, nature- sansrti, bondage- bandha, illusion - māyā, error-moha, and darkness- tamas. (To denote our mental delusion and deception of senses. Gloss).

Section 4. NATURE OF BONDAGE

Now hear me relate to you, O moon-faced Rāma! about the nature of this bondage, whereby you will be able to know the mode and manner of our liberation from it (as the diagnosis of a disease being known, it is not difficult to heal it).

The intimate relation of the spectator with the, spectacle is called his bondage to the same, because the looker's mind is fast bound to the object of his sight. It is the absence of the visible objects, therefore, from the mirror of the mind, which is the only means of his liberation. (So also is the removal of the objects of the other senses from the mind).

The knowledge of the world, ego and tu (as separate existences) is said to be an erroneous view of the soul (which is one and the same in all): and there can be no liberation of one, as long as he labours under this blunder of bheda- jñāna or knowledge of individualities. (This is called savikalpa- jñāna or cognition of biplicity, which cannot lead to Kaivalya mukti or the felicity derived from a knowledge of universal unity).

To say that the soul is neither this nor that (nedam-nedam) is but false logomachy, which cannot come to an end. The discrimination of alternatives serves only to increase the ardour for the visible. (i.e. the ardour of induction spreads the infection of materialism. The idle neti-neti and tanna-tanna of Vedanta Philosophy is mere amphiology and prevarication of both, as idem et non idem).

It is not to be obtained by sophists by the chopping of logic or by pilgrimage or ceremonial acts, any more than by a belief in the reality of the phenomenal world. (All these are observances of the exoteric faith and blind persuasion, but do not appertain to the science of esoteric spiritualism. Gloss).

It is hard to avoid the sight of the phenomenal world, and to repress one's ardour. for the same. But it is certain that, the visible can not lead us to the Reality, nor the Real mislead us to unreality. (i.e. the spiritual and physical knowledge are mutually, repugnant to each other).

Wherever the invisible, inconceivable and intelligent spirit is existent, there the beholder views the visible beauty of God shining even in the midst of atoms (i.e. every particle of matter, manifests the beauty of its maker; unless there be a dull mate real object to intercept the sight of the intelligent soul).

The phenomenal world has its rise from Him, yet those ignorant people that depart from Him to the adoration of others, resemble fools, that forsake rice to feed upon gruel. (i.e. they take the shadow for the substance).

Although this visible world is apparent to sight, yet O Rāma! it is but a shadow of that Being, who resides alike in the smallest atom as in the mirror of the mind, that receives the image of the largest as well as minutes things. (Compare. As full and perfect in a hair as heart. Pope).

The spirit is reflected in every thing like a figure in the mirror, and it shines equally in rocks and seas, in the land and water, as it does in the mirror of the mind. (compare; Wherever I cast my eyes, your beauty shines).

The visible world is the scene of incessant woes, births, decay and death, and the states of waking, dreaming and sound sleep, are presenting by turns the gross, subtile and evanescent forms of things for our delusion.

Here I sit in my meditative mood (anirūdha), having wiped off the impressions of the visible from my mind; but my meditation is disturbed by the recurrence of my remembrance of the visible: and this is the cause of the endless transmigrations of the soul (i.e. the reminiscence of the past is the cause of our everlasting bondage in life).

It is hard to have a fixed (nirūdha) and unalterable (nirvikalpa) meditation (samādhi), when the sight of the visible world is present before our bodily and mental vision. Even the fourth stage of insensible samādhi called the turīya, in the state of sound sleep (susupti), is soon succeeded by one's self-consciousness and external intelligence.

On rising from this state of deep meditation, one finds himself as roused from his sound sleep, in order to view the world full of all its woes and imperfections opening

wide before him. (Compare, "I wake to a sea of troubles, how happy they who wake no more. Young).

What then, O Rāma! is the good of this transient bliss which one attains by his temporary abstraction (Dhyāna). when he has to fall again to his sense of the sufferings to which the world is subject as a vale of tears. (Compare. "When the cock crew I wept &c" Young's Night Thoughts).

But if one can attain to a state of unalterable abstraction of his thoughts from all worldly objects, as he has in his state of sound sleep (susupti), he is then said to have reached the highest pitch of his holiness on earth. (For it is the entire oblivion of the world that is necessary for our spiritual perfection, as it is said, "forget the present for the future").

No body has ever earned aught of reality in the scene of unreal vanities; for whenever his thoughts come in contact with any outward thing, he finds it inseparable from the blemishes of existence. ("Vanity of vanities, the world is vanity. Ecclesiastes.")

Should any body (in the practice of the fixedness of his attention), fix his sight for a while on a stone, by forcibly withdrawing it from visible objects, he is sure to be carried away afterwards by the visible pressing upon his sight.

It is well known to all that an unflinching meditation, having even the firmness of a rock, can have no durability, in the practice of the Yogī owing to his worldly propensities.

Even the nirūdha or steadfast meditation which has attained the fixedness of a rock, cannot advance one step towards the attainment of that tranquility which has no bounds to it. (i.e. the everlasting bliss of liberation or moksa).

Thus the sight of phenomena being altogether irrepressible, it is a foolish supposition of its being suppressed by practices of Japa-tapa or prayers and austerities and the like acts of devotion.

The idea of the phenomena (drsyadhi), is as inherent in the mind of the spectator of the visible world, as the seeds of the lotus flower are contained in the inner cells of the pericarp.

The ideal of the phenomenal world (drsyadhi), lies as hidden in the minds of the spectators of the outer world, as are the in-born flavour and moisture of fruits, the oil of sesame seeds; and the innate sweet scent of flowers.

As the fragrance of camphor and other odoriferous substances inheres in their nature, so the reflexion of the visible world resides in the bosom of the intellect.

As your dreams and desires rise and subside of themselves under the province of your intellect, so the notions of things always recur to your mind from the original ideas the them impressed in the seat of the visible (the mind).

The mental apparition of the visible world, deludes its beholder in the same manner, as the visual appearance of a spectre or hobgoblin, misleads a child (to its destruction).

The notion of the visible world gradually expands itself, as the germ of the seed shoots forth in time, and spreads itself afterwards in the form of a plant.

As the minute germs and animalcules, which are contained within the bosoms of fruits and embryos of animals, expand them selves to wonderfully beauteous forms afterwards, so the seed of this world (originally) lying hid in the Divine Mind, unfolds itself in wonderful forms of the visible phenomena in nature.

2. Description of the First Cause

Section 1. NARRATIVE OF THE AIR-BORN AND AERIFORM BRĀHMANA

Vasistha resumed: Hear me Rāma; now relate to you the narrative of one Ākāsaja or air-born Brāhmana, which will be a jewel to your ears, and enable you the better to understand the drift of the book of Genesis.

There lived a Brāhmana Ākāsaja by name, who sat always reclined in his meditation, and was ever inclined to the doing of good to all creatures.

Finding him long-lived, Death thought within himself saying- It is I alone that am imperishable, and devour all things one by one.

How is it that I cannot cram myself with this air-born, wherein I find my teeth as blunt in him, as the edge of a sword is put to the bluff by the solid rock.

So saying, he proceeded to the abode of the Brāhmana, intent upon making an end of him; for who is of so dull a nature as is not alert in his practice.

But as he was about to enter the house, he was opposed by a gorgeous flame of fire, like the conflagration of final destruction on the last day of the dissolution of the world.

He pierced the ambient flame and entered the dwelling, where seeing the Brāhmana before him, he stretched his hand to lay hold on him with all avidity.

He was unable even with his hundred hands (i.e. with all his might) to grasp the Brāhmana, as it is impossible for the strongest to withstand the resolute man in his wonted course.

He then had recourse to Yama- his lord to clear his doubt, and to learn why he could not devour the air-born (being).

Yama replied saying- Death, trust not too far your own might, that makes you mighty to destroy the living. It is the act of the dying person that is the chief cause of his death and naught otherwise.

Therefore do you be diligent to find out the sets of the person you intend to kill; because it is by their assistance only that you can't seize your prey.

Here upon Death betook himself gladly to wander about in all places under the horizon. he roved over the habitable parts, as also throughout the lacual and fluvial districts.

He traversed the forests and jungles, marshy and rocky grounds and maritime coasts, and passed to foreign lands and islands, and pried through their wildernesses, cities and towns.

He searched through kingdoms and countries, villages and deserts; and surveyed the whole earth to find out some act of the Brāhmana in any part of it.

At last Death with all his search and effort, came to find the acts of the air-born Brāhmana, to be as nil as the offspring of a barren woman; and his mind as transfixed (in meditation) as if it were a rock.

He then returned from his reconnoitring to his all-knowing master Yama, and besought his advice, as servants do in matters of doubt and difficulty (how to proceed).

Death addressed him saying- "Tell me my lord, where the acts of the Air-born Brāhmana are to be found," to which Yama after a long head-work, replied as follows.

Section 2. STATE OF THE SOUL

Know, O Death! that this air-born seer has no acts whatever; for as he is born of empty air so his doings are all null and void. (i.e. the bodiless spirit or mind is devoid of acts requiring physical means and appliances).

Who so is born of air, is as pure as air itself, and his no combination of cause or acts like all embodied (beings).

He has no relation with acts of his prior existence. He is nil as the child of an unprolific woman, and as one unborn, uncreated and unbegotten.

Want of causes has made him a pure vacuous being, and the privation of prior acts has made him as nil as an ethereal arbour.

His mind is not ruffled as those of others, by reason of the privation of his former acts; nor is there any such act of his present state, whereby he may become a morsel to death.

Such is the soul seated in the sheath of vacuity, and remaining for ever as the simple form of its own causality (svakāraṇa), and not guided by any extraneous causation whatever.

It has no prior deed, nor does it do any thing at present; (i.e. neither led by predestination, nor actuated by present efforts); but continues as something in the shape of aeriform intelligence.

Our inference of the actions of breathing and motion by the agency of the soul, is a mere supposition; because the soul is devoid of every thought of or tendency to action.

It sits meditating on itself as inseparable from the Supreme Intelligence, just as the images (in painting and statuary), are inseparable from the mind of the painter and sculptor.

The self born Brāhmana is as intimately connected with the objects of his thought, as fluidity is associated with water and vacuity with the firmament.

His soul is as immanent in the supreme, as motion is inherent in the winds. It has neither the accumulated acts of past lives, nor those of its present state. (i.e. It is neither a passive nor active agent of prior or present acts; but is an indifferent witness of the acts of the body and mind).

It is produced without the co-operation of accompanying causes, and being free from prior motives, it is not subjected to the vicissitudes concomitant with human life.

It is found to be no other than its own cause; and having no other cause for itself, it is said to be self produced.

Say, how can you lay hold on that being that has done no act before, nor is in the act of doing any thing at present? It is then only subjected to you when it thinks itself mortal: (But he that knows his soul to be immortal is not subject to death).

Who so believes his soul to be- of this earth, and thinks himself to be an earthly being, he may be easily overtaken by you; (whose power extends over earth-born mortals only).

This Brāhmana is a formless being, by reason of his disowning the material body. Hence it is as hard for you to enthrall him, as to entwine the air with a rope.

Death rejoined saying- Tell me my lord! how may the unborn Aja or the self born svayambhū, be produced out of vacuum, and how can an earthly or other elemental body be and not be (at the same time).

Yama replied- This Brāhmana is neither born nor is nil at any time; but remains for ever the same, as the light of intelligence of which there is no decay.

There remains nothing at the event of the great Doomsday, except the tranquil, imperishable and infinite Brāhmana himself in his spiritual form.

This is the nature of the everlasting vacuum, too subtile in its essence, and devoid of all attributes; but viewing present before its mind, the stupendous cosmos in the form of a huge mountain in the beginning of recreation. (The mind is the noumenon- Brahma, and the phenomena of the world is the gigantic macrocosm known as Virājmūrti.

Being of the nature of intelligence it is imperishable; but those who view the spirit in the form of any phenomenal body, are liable to perish with it like all embodied beings.

Thus this Brāhmana remained in the womb of vacuity' in the beginning, in his state of unalterable, vacuous intelligence.

It is purely of the nature of the inane understanding, and of the form of a vast expanse of omniscience; having neither body nor organism; no acts nor agency, nor desire of any kind in itself.

That which is simply of the form of vacuum and pure light, is never beset by the snare of pristine desires, as a corporal being.

It has nothing to know or see without itself (i.e. beyond its self-consciousness). The only conception that we have of it, is what resembles an extended intelligence. (i.e. an all-diffusive omniscience).

Under these circumstances, how is it susceptible of any earthly or other external form? Therefore O Death! desist from your attempt to lay hold on the same.

Hearing these words of Yama, Death thought upon the impracticability of laying hold on empty vacuity by any body, and sorrowfully returned to his own abode.

Rāma said; you said sir, that Brahmā is your great grand-sire; I think it is he that you mean to say as the unborn, self born, universal soul and intelligence.

So is this Brahmā! Rāma as I have spoken to you, and it was with regard to the same, that the aforesaid discussion was held of yore between Death and Yama (Pluto).

Again when Death had made an end of all living beings at the interval of a manvantara, he thought himself strong enough to make an attempt to bear down upon the lotus-born Brahmā also.

It was then that he was admonished by Yama, saying- It is your habit that makes you go on your wonted course of killing.

But the super-ethereal form of Brahmā too is beyond your reach: it being simply of the nature of the mind having connection with its thoughts only, and no concern with the actual forms of things.

It is of the form of the wonderfully vacuous intellect, having the faculty of cognition in it. Thus the intellect being but vacuum, has neither any cause for it, nor any effect produced by it.

As the aeriform volitive principle in men, manifests itself without being connected with material forms, so is the self-born (Brahmā) manifest to all in his own immaterial nature.

Like strings of pearl appearing to view in the clear firmament, and forms of cities seen in a dream, the self- born (Brahmā) is manifest of, himself without relation to external objects.

As there is no beholder nor any thing beholder of the solitary Supreme spirit which is the intellect itself; so is the mind manifest of itself (without its looking at or being looked upon by any body).

It is the volitive mind which is called Brahmā and volition being a spiritual faculty, has no connection with any material substance.

As the mind of the painter is fraught with images of various things, so is the mind of Brahmā full of figures of all created beings.

The self-born Brahmā is manifest in his own mind as Brahmā is manifested in the vacuous sphere of his intellect. He is without beginning, middle and end, and appears to have a figure like that of a male being, while in reality he has no body, as the offspring of a barren woman.

3. Causes of Bondage in the Body

Rāma said - It is even so as you have said, that the mind is a pure essence, and has no connection with the earth, and other material substances; and that it is verily Brahmā itself.

Now tell me, O Brāhmana! Why the remembrance of his former states in the past and previous Kalpas), is not (to be reckoned as) the cause of his birth, as it is in the case of mine and yours and of all other beings.

Vasistha replied- Who ever had a former body, accompanied with the acts of his prior existence, retains of course its reminiscence, which is the cause of his being (reborn on earth).

But when Brahmā is known to have no prior acts, how is it possible for him to have his reminiscence of any thing?

Therefore he exists, without any other cause except the causation of his own mind. It is by his own causality that the Divine spirit is self-born, and is himself his own spirit.

He is everlasting, and, his body is born of itself from the self existent Brahmā. This unborn or self-born Brahmā has no material body whatever, except his subtile ātivāhika or linga deha.

Rāma said- The everlasting body is one thing (called the Sūksma śarīra or subtile or immaterial body), and the mortal body is another (called the sthūladeha or the gross and material frame). Now tell me sir, whether all created beings have a subtile body also as that of Brahmā?

Vasistha replied- All created beings that are produced of a cause, have two bodies (the sūks ma and the sthūla or the subtile and the gross). But the unborn being which is without a cause, has one body only (which is called the ātivāhika or the everlasting spiritual body).

The increate Brahmā is the cause of all created beings, but the. uncreated spirit having no cause for itself, has one body for it.

The prime lord of creatures has no material body; but manifests himself in the vacuous form of his spiritual body.

His body is composed of the mind alone, and has no connection with the earth or any other material substance. He is the first lord of creatures, that stretched the creation from his vacuous body (or spiritual essence).

All these are but forms of the images or ideas in his vacuous mind, and having no other patterns or originals in their nature. And that every thing is of the same nature with, its cause, is a truth well known to all (from the identity of the effect and its material cause).

He is an in-existent being and of the manner of perfect intelligence. He is purely of the form of the mind, and has an intellectual and no material entity.

He is prime (cause) of all material productions in the physical world, and is born of himself with his prime mobile force in the form of the mind.

It was by the first impulse given by the prime moving power, that this expanse of creation came to be spread in the same ratio, as the currents of air and water (or the velocity of winds and tides), are in proportion to the impetus given to them.

This creation shining so bright to our sight, has caught its light from the luminous mind of the formless Brahmā, and appears as real to our conceptions (as they are ideal in the Divine mind).

Our vision in a dream is the best illustration of this (unreality of worldly things); as that of the enjoyment of connubial bliss in dreaming. It is then that an unreal object of desire, presents itself as an actual gain to our fond and false imagination.

The vacuous, immaterial and formless spirit, is now represented as the self born and corporeal lord of creatures in the form of the first male. (Protogonus or the only begotten son of God).

He remains undiscended in his state of pure intelligence; but becomes manifest to all by the evolution of his volition. He is indiscernible in his absolute state (of inaction); but becomes conspicuous to us in the display of his nature (in creation).

Brahmā is the divine power of volition (or the will of God). He is personified as the first male agent of creation, but devoid of a corporeal body. He is only of the spiritual form of the mind, and the sole cause of the existence of the triple world.

It is his volition that makes the self-born (Brahmā) to exert his energies, as human desires impel all mankind to action: and the vacuous mind manifests itself as a mountain of desires.

It then forgets its everlasting and incorporeal nature, and assumes to itself the solid material body, and shows itself in the shape of a delusive apparition (in his creation).

But Brahmā, who is of an unsullied understanding, is not involved in oblivion of himself, by the transformation of his unknowable nature to the known state of volition (or change of the nirguna to saguna).

Being unborn of material substance, he sees no apparition like others, who are exposed by their ignorance to the misleading errors of falsehood, appearing in the shape of a mirage before them.

As Brahmā is merely of the form of the mind, and not composed of any material substance, so the world being the product of the eternal mind, is of the same nature with its original archetype.

Again as the untreated Brahmā is without any accompanying causality with himself, so his creation has no other cause beside himself (i.e. There is no secondary cause of the universe).

Hence there is no difference in the product from its producer; because it is certain, that the work must be as perfect as its author, (so says the Śruti- Pūrnat pūrnam).

But there is nothing as a cause and effect to be found in this creation, because the three worlds are but the prototypes of the archetype of the divine mind.

The world is stretched out in the model of the Divine mind, and not formed by any other holy spirit. It is as immanent in the mind of God, as fluidity is inherent in water.

It is the mind which spreads out this extended unreality of the world like castles in the air, and builds Utopian cities (by its imagination only).

There is no such thing as materiality, which is as false a conception as that of a snake in a rope. Hence it is no way possible for Brahmā and other beings to exist as individual bodies.

Even spiritual bodies are in-existent to enlightened understandings. As for the material body, it has no room in existence. (Matter or a corporeal substance or an unseen substratum is a non-entity. Berkeley).

Man (manu) who derives his name from his mind (mana) is a form of the volitive soul called Virañci (Lat. vir- inchoate the inchoative spirit of Brahmā); and has for his dominion the mental or intellectual world mano-rājyam (Lat. mentis regio vel regnum) where all things are situated in the form of realities.

The mind is the creative Brahmā called Viriñcitvas (Lat. Virncoativus), by the exercise of its inherent sankalpa or the volition of incipience or creation- sirsksa; and displays itself in the form of the visible universe by development of its own essence.

This Viriñci or the creative power is of the form of the mind manas, as the mind itself is of the form of Viriñci also. It has no connection with any material substance, which is a mere creation of the imagination: (That is to say; matter is an imaginary substance or substratum of qualities only).

All visible things are contained in the bosom of the mind, as the lotus-bud and blossom reside in the seed of the lotus. Hence there is no difference between the mental and visible appearances of things, nor has any one ever doubted of it any, where.

Whatever things you see in a dream, whatever desires you have at heart and all the ideals of your fancy, together with your ideas, notions and impressions of the visibles, know your mind to be the receptacle of them all.

But the visible objects relating to the option of the mind (i.e. which are desirable, to every one), are as baneful to their beholder, as an apparition is to a child. (i.e. they are equally tempting and misleading to all).

The ideal of the phenomenal drisyadhi, develops itself as the germ contained in the seed and becomes in its proper time and place a large tree, (comparable with the great arbor of the world known as sansāramahī ruha or Vrksa).

If there is no rest with what is real, there can be no peace with the phenomenals which are full of troubles, and give no solace to the mind. It is impossible that the feeling of the perception of visible will be ever lost to their perceiver (observer), though its subsidence only is said to constitute liberation.

4. Description of Night-Fall / Nature of the Mind / Kaivalya

Section 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE NIGHT-FALL

Vālmīki related- While Vasistha the leading sage, was thus going on with his lecture without interruption, the whole assembly was intent upon listening to it with a fixed tone and tenor of their minds.

The string of bells (tied to the waists of warriors) ceased to jingle, every one was motionless, and even the parrots in the cages ceased to warble and flutter.

The ladies forgot their dalliance and were quietly attentive to the sermon: and all in the royal hall, were fixed in attention as they were paintings and statues.

There remained but an hour to the closing of the day, and the sun-beams became agreeable to all. The busy bustle of the world was dwindling away with the glimmering light of the setting sun.

The beds of full-blown lotuses exhaled their fragrance all around, and soft Zephers were playing about, as if to attend the audience.

The sun glided away from his diurnal course, and advanced to the top of his solitary setting mountain, as if he meant to reflect on all that he had heard.

The shades of night began to over the landscape, and the frost to overspread the forestlands; as if they were cooled by the cooling lectures on philosophy.

Now failed the concourse of the people in all directions, as if they had availed themselves of the instructions of the sage to abate the fervour of their exertions.

All objects on earth cast their lengthened shadows, as if they stretched their necks to hear the preaching of Vasistha.

The chamberlain then advanced lowly to the monarch of the earth, and begged to inform, that the time for evening ablution and service, was about to expire.

Upon this the sage, Vasistha, curbed his sweet speech and said- Let thus far, mighty king! be your hearing of this day and I will resume my lecture, and speak of other things to-morrow.

Here the sage held his silence, when the king responded "Be it so as you will," and rose from his seat.

He honoured for his own good, that godly sage and the other seers and Brahmanas, with due respects and offerings of flowers, water, worthy honorariums, fees, gifts and homage.

Then rose the whole assembly with the king and the assemblage of sages; and the gems and jewels that decked the persons of the princes and people, shed their lustre on the faces of all.

There was a commingled tinkling of the bracelets and armlets of the throng caused by the collision of their bodies (in their egress), and mixed flashing of the necklaces and brocades that decorated their persons.

The jewels attached to the tufts and crests of hair on the tops of their heads, emitted a jingling sound resembling the humming of bees amidst their flowery braids.

The face of the sky on all sides, that shone with a purple hue reflected by the golden ornaments on their persons, seemed as it was pleased with the wise sayings and sense of the sage.

The aerial visitants vanished in the air, and the earthly guests repaired to their respective habitations on earth where they all performed their daily (evening) services in their own residences.

In the, meantime sable night made her appearance on earth, and like a bashful young lady, withdrew to the closet apart from the rest of mankind.

The lord of the day passed to other lands to shine upon them, for verily it is the vowed duty of every good person to give the benefit of equal light to all.

The shade of evening yielded all sides, and uplifted the canopy of the starry sphere on high, which like the vernal atmosphere, was emblazoned with the starlike flowers of kinśuka.

The birds of air took to their repose in the hollows of mango trees, or on the tops of Kadamba arbours, as honest people of fair dealing, find their rest in the purity of their minds, and contritences of their inward hearts.

The skirts of the clouds tinged with red by the slanting beams of the setting sun, and with a shade of yellow hue upon them, decorated the western hills with vests of yellow garb while the sky crowned their heads with gemming wreaths of starry groups.

The Goddess of evening (Vespera), having departed after receiving her homage (by the vespers of mankind), was followed by her train of dark night shades, appearing as black-bodied friends- Vetālas, (night roving niśācaras of deserts).

A gentle and cooling breeze was blowing softened by the dew drops of night, and opening the petals of the Kumuda flowers (nylumbium), and bearing their fragrance all round.

A thick gloom covered the face of nature, and the stars were hid under the mists of night, and all the quarters of the skies, seemed with their overhanging loose and hairy mists, as the faces of widows shrouded by the dark dishevelled hair of mourning (for their departed lord the sun).

Now appeared the moist orb of the moon in her ambrosial form in the milky ocean of the sky, to moisten the mundane heat with her milkwhite beams (sudhā-subhra-dīdhiti).

On her rising, the thick mists of darkness fled from the eastern hemisphere, and became invisible in the air; as the darkness of ignorance is put to flight from the minds of monarchs, by their attendance to the sayings of wisdom.

Then the sages and seers, the rulers and priests of the people, took their rest in their respective beds, as the words of Vasistha which were full of meaning, reposed in the recesses of their hearts.

As the thick darkness of night, resembling the dark complexion of death, receded from the arena of the skies, there followed close on its foot-steps the dewy dawn of the day with her slow moving pace.

The twinkling stars now disappeared from the sky, as the flowers on the trees were blown away by the breeze, and strewn on the ground as the fallen stars of heaven.

The sun became visible to the eyes, which his rays had roused from their sleep, as the new-rising faculty of reason becomes conspicuous in the minds of enlightened great souls.

Fragments of clouds shining with solar gleams, spread a yellow mantle over the eastern hills, which were still decorated with strings of stars, pendant on the crests of their lofty heads (like strings of pearls suspended to the crowns of kings).

All the terrestrial and celestial congress assembled again at the royal hall, in the order and manner (of their meeting) of the day before, after the performance of their morning services. (originally *prātastanāh* matins or matutinal ceremonies).

The whole assemblage took their seats as on the previous day, and sat unmoved in their places, as a lotus-lake in its calmness after a storm.

Section 2. NATURE OF THE MIND

Then Rāma addressed the most eloquent of sages Vasistha, with his mellifluous words regarding the subject under investigation, (the nature of the mind).

He said- Tell me plainly, O venerable sir! about the form of the mind, which developed itself in all things of the universe, as they were offshoots of it (or manifestations of the mind).

Vasistha replied- Rāma! there is no form whatever of the mind, that may be seen by any body. It has nothing substantial besides its name as that of the formless and irremovable vacuity; (with which it is compared in its all-comprehensiveness, all-diffusiveness and all-pervasiveness).

The mind as an ens or entity (*sat*), is not situated in the outer body (or any part of it), nor is it confined in the cavity of the inward heart or brain. but know it O Rāma, to be situated everywhere, as the all encompassing vacuum. (Being all-pervading and all-diffusive in its nature as vacuity itself).

This world is produced from it, and likens to the waters of the mirage. It manifests itself in the forms of its fleeting thoughts, which are as false as the appearance of secondary moons in the vapours.

The thinking principle is generally believed as something intermediate between the positive and negative, or real and unreal, you must know it as such and no other (i.e. neither material as the body, nor immaterial as the soul, but a faculty appertaining to the nature of both).

That which is the representative of all objects is called the mind: there is nothing besides to which the term mind is applicable.

Know volition to be the same as the mind, which is nothing different from the will, just as fluidity is the same with water, and as there is no difference between the air and its motion in the wind. (The inseparable property answering for its substance).

For wherever there is any will, there is that attribute of the mind also and nobody has ever taken the will and the mind for different things.

The representation of any object whether it is real or unreal is mind, and that is to be known as Brahmā the great father of all.

The incorporeal soul in the body is called the mind, as having the sensuous knowledge or everlasting ideas of the corporeal world in itself (i.e. the sentient and thinking soul is the same with mind).

The learned have given the several names of ignorance, intellect, mind, bondage, sin and darkness, to the visible appearance of creation.

The mind has no other image than that (of a receptacle and reflector of the ideas) of the visible world, which, I repeat to say, is no new creation; (but a reflection of the mind).

The visible world is situated in an atom of the great mind, in the same manner, as the germ of the lotus plant is contained within its seed.

The visible world is as innate in the all-knowing mind, as the light is inherent in the sunbeams, and velocity and fluidity are inborn in the winds and liquids.

But the visionary ideas of the visibles are as false and fleeting in the minds of their observers, as the form of a jewel in gold, and water in the mirage; and as wrong as the foundation of a castle in the air, and the view of a city in a dream.

Section 3. KAIVALYA OR MENTAL ABSTRACTION

But as the phenomenal appear as no other than real to their observer, I will O Rāma! cleanse them now from your mind as they do the soil from a mirror.

As the disappearance of an appearance makes the observer no observer of it, know such to be the state of the abstraction of the mind from whatever is real or unreal in the world. (This is called Kevalībhāva or non-chalance of all things).

This state being arrived, all the passions of the soul, and the desires of the mind, will be at rest, as torrents of rivers at the calm ensuing upon the stillness of the wind.

It is impossible that things having the forms of space, earth and air (i.e. material objects) will present the same features in the clear light (of induction), as they do to our open sight.

Thus when the observer comes to know the unreality of the phenomena of the three worlds, as well as of his own entity, it is then that his pure soul attains to the knowledge of kaivalya or soleity of divine existence.

It is such a mind that reflects the image of God in itself as in a mirror; while all others are as blocks of stone, and incapable of receiving any reflexion at all.

After suppression of the sense of ego and tu (or both the subjective and objective knowledge), and the error of the reality of the outer world the beholder becomes abstracted and remains without vision of external things in his sitting posture.

Rāma rejoined- If the perception of entity is not to be out down, nor an entity become a non-entity nor when I cannot view the visible (which are the causes of our error), as non-entities.

Then tell me O Brāhmana! how to uproot this disease of our eagerness for the visible from the mind, which bewilders the understanding, and afflicts us with a train of troubles.

Vasistha replied- Now hear nay advice, Rāma, for the suppression of this phantom of phenomenon, whereby it will surely die away and become utterly extinct.

Know Rāma, that nothing that is, can ever be destroyed or become extinct; and though you remove it, yet it will leave its seed or trace in the mind.

This seed is the memory or such things, which reopens the ideas of the visible in the roln, expanding themselves in the fallacious notions of the forms of big worlds and skies, mountains and oceans.

These (wrong notions) called dosar or faults and defects of understanding, are obstacles in the way to liberation; but they do not affect the sages who are found to be liberated.

Again if the world and all other things are real existences (as the Sānkhyas maintain): yet they cannot confer liberation on any one; because the visible, whether they are situated within or without us are perishable themselves.

Learn therefore this dreadful proposition (solemn truth), which will be fully explained to you in the subsequent parts of this work. (Note : Adreadful dogma it is to physicists and "ādivādi" or asserters of the encipientes mundi or beginning of the world).

That all things appearing in the forms of vacuity, elementary bodies, the world, and ego et tu, are non-entities, and have no meanings in them.

Whatever is seen apparent before us, is no other but the supreme Brahma himself and his undecaying and imperishable essence.

The plenitude of creation is an expansion of his plenum, and the quiet of the universe rests in his quietude. It is his beom which is the substance of vacuum, and it is his immensity that is the substratum of the immense cosmos.

Nothing visible is real, and there is neither any spectator nor spectacle here. There is nothing as vacuity or solidity in nature, but all this is but a piece of extended Intelligence.

Rāma rejoined- The adages relating the grinding of stones by the son of a barren woman, the horns of a hare, and the dancing of a hill with its extended arms.

And the oozing of oil from sand, the reading (of books) by dolls of marble, and the roaring of clouds in a painting, and such others, are applicable to your words (of the reality of an unreal essence of God).

I see this world to be full of diseases, deaths and troubles, mountains, vacuities and other things, and how is it sir, that you tell me of their non-existence?

Tell me Sir, how you call this world to be unsubstantial, unproduced and in-existent, that I may be certain of this truth.

Vasistha replied : Know Rāma, that I am no inconsistent speaker, and hear me explain to you how the unreality appears as real, as the son of a barren woman has come to rumour.

All this was unproduced before, and did not exist in the beginning of creation. It comes to appearance from the mind like that of a city in a dream. (i.e. they are all but creations of the mind and fancy).

The mind also was not produced in the beginning of creation and was an unreality itself. Hear me tell you therefore, how we come to a notion of it.

This unreal mind spreads by itself the false and changing scenes of the visible world, just as we dream of changeful unrealities as true in a state of dreaming. (Here the dreaming philosopher sees dreams in his dream).

It then exerts its volition in the fabrication of the body and spreads far and wide the magic scene of the phenomenal world.

The mind by its potentiality of vacillation has many actions of its own, as those of expansion, saltation, and motion, of craving, roving, diving and seizing, and many other voluntary efforts (the cause of physical operations).

5. On the Original Cause (MULA-KĀRANA)

Rāma said- Tell me, O chief of the sages! what cause is it that leads to our misconception of the mind, how it is produced and what is the source of its illusion.

Tell me sir, in brief of the first production (of the mind) and then, O best of the eloquent, you may tell the rest, that is to be said on the subject.

Vasistha replied- Incident to the universal dissolution, when all things were reduced to nothing, this infinity of visible objects remained in a state of calm and quiet before their creation.

There was then the only great God in existence, who is increate and undecaying, who is the creator of all at all times, who is all in all, and supreme soul of all, and resembling the sun that never sets.

He whom language fails to describe, and who is known to the liberated alone; who is termed the soul by fiction only, and not by his real nature (which is unknowable).

Who is the prime Male of Sāmkhya philosophers and the Brahmā of Vedānta followers; who is the Intelligence of gnostics and who is wholly pure and apart from all (personalities).

Who is known as vacuum by vacuists, who is the enlightener of solar light, who is truth itself, and the power of speech and thought the vision, and all action and passion forever.

Who though ever existent everywhere appears as in-existent to the world, and though situated in all bodies, seems to be far from them. He is the enlightener of our understanding as the solar light (of the world).

From whom the gods Visnu and others are produced as solar rays from the sun; and from whom infinite worlds have come into existence like bubbles of the sea.

Unto whom these multitudes of visible creations return as the waters of the earth to the sea, and who like a lamp enlightens the souls and bodies (of all immaterial and material beings).

Who is present alike in heaven as in earth and the neither worlds; and who abides equally in all bodies whether of the mineral, vegetable or animal creation. He resides alike in search particle of dust as in the high and huge mountain ranges; and rides as swift on the wings of winds, as he sleeps in the depths of the main.

He who appoints the eight internal and external organs (Puryastakas) of sense and action to their several functions; and who has made the dull and dumb creatures as inert as stones, and as mute as they are sitting in their meditative mood.

He who has filled the skies with vacuity and the rocks with solidity; who has dissolved the waters to fluidity, and concentrated all light and heat in the sun.

He who has spread these wonderful scenes of the world, as the clouds sprinkle the charming showers of rain; both as endless and incessant, as they are charming and dulcitate to sight.

He who causes the appearance and disappearance of worlds in the sphere of his infinity like waves in the ocean; and in whom these phenomena rise and set like the running sands in the desert.

His spirit the indestructible soul, resides as the germ of decay and destruction in the interior (vitals) of animals. It is as minute as to lie hid in the body, and as magnified as to fill all existence.

His nature (Prakrti) spreads herself like a magic creeper (māyā latā) all over the space of vacuity, and produces the fair fruit in the form of the mundane egg (Brahmānda); while the outward organs of bodies, resembling the branches of this plant, keep dancing about the stern (the intelligent soul), shaken by the breeze of life which is everfleeting.

It is He, that shines as the gem of intelligence in the heart of the human body; and it is he from whom, the luminous orbs constituting the universe, continually derive their lustre.

It is that colossus of intelligence, which like a cloud sheds ambrosial draughts of delight to soothe our souls, and showers forth innumerable beings as rain drops on all sides. It bursts into incessant flashes showing the prospects of repeated creations which are as (momentary as) flashes of lightnings.

It is his wondrous light which displays the worlds to our wondering sight; and it is from his entity that both what is real and unreal, have derived their reality and unreality.

It is the insensible and ungodly soul, that turns to the attractions of others against its purpose; while the tranquil soul rests in itself (as in the spirit of God).

He who transcends all existences, and by whom all existent beings are bound to their destined actions in their proper times and places, and also to their free actions and motions and exertions of all kinds.

It is he who from his personality of pure consciousness, became of the form of vacuum (pervading all nature), and then by means of his vacuous mind and empty thoughts filled it with substances, wherein his soul was to reside, and whereon his spirit had to preside.

Having thus made the infinite hosts of worlds in the immense sphere of the universe, he is yet neither the agent of any action nor the author of any act in it; but remains ever the same as the sole one alone, in his unchangeable and unimpairing state of self-consciousness, and without any fluctuation, evolution or inhesion of himself, as he is quite unconcerned with the world.