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*A reflection on the Teachings of
Gautama Buddha and Ramana Maharshi*

Nagesh D. Sonde

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सोऽहस्मीति अग्रे व्याहारात् अहं वाव सृष्टिरस्मि

A study in the Teachings of *Gautama Buddha*
and *Ramana Maharshi*

*A Brahmin who does not commit himself to Wisdom
is a ब्रह्म हत्यारा a murderer of Wisdom*

- *Bhagavan Sri Raman Maharshi*

Nagesh D. Sonde

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Dedicated to

J K

Who dared me to be instrumental

On the Path to receptivity, reflection and meditation.

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Foreword

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The time has come when we must look again into the lives of our great thinkers and try to understand the real essence of their teachings in the context of the circumstances and the environment in which they lived. Without such sincere effort to grasp the underlying wisdom of these great thinkers there is every likelihood of their thoughts, utterances and preachings being misunderstood and misinterpreted which instead of lifting and benefiting mankind, resulting in unnecessary dissensions, divisions and strife.

The present book 'ASMI' is an honest attempt by its author Shri Nagesh D. Sonde, at studying the lives and teachings of Gautam Buddha and Ramana Maharshi and in sincerely presenting his responses to them in the hope and belief that they would truly represent the essence of their teachings.

While analyzing the teachings of Gautam Buddha and Maharshi Ramana Shri Sonde has also compared and examined their identity or variance with what has been said in the Vedas and the Upanishads, which is thought-provoking. The book deserves serious consideration and will be read with interest both by the learned scholars as well as by spiritual seekers.

Thursday, 9th September, 2004
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sd / - Karan Singh
(KARAN SINGH)

Preface

I remember having read a story.

Once there lived a man, learned in scriptures and perfect in philosophies. He had an inquiring Mind and was always concerned with the world around him, his Individual existence as well as the Primeval Existence. He was neither awed by mysticism of the Seers nor the intellect of the commentators, neither silenced by ancient scriptures, howsoever hoary and hallowed nor by Time which heaped one thought over others. He considered himself to be an intellectual and, therefore, liked rationalizing his emotions. There was always a constant conflict between his emotions, his intellect and the Mind. Peace eluded him, his emotions, intellect and the Mind being in riddles. Often times, his Intellect would desert him and his Mind would bask him in luminosity with Peace and Clarity for which he had no explanation. Words would fail to voice what was experienced by the Mind and his intellect could hardly justify what Mind experienced. Yet he was ever eager to intellectualize ad rationalize every problem that rose up in life.

In the same neighborhood, there lived an old woman who was illiterate and could neither read nor write. She had neither read any scriptures nor understands the mysteries hidden in them. She was neither conscious of her Individual Self nor of the Universal Self. She could neither understand the complexities of samsaara or of the Way of Deliverance. She believed that some Supreme Power controlled her life, who, she was her God, living far above in heavens. Overwhelmed by this knowledge, she worshipped God and prayed for His Grace. She had neither any goals in life nor any purposes to fulfill. She had, however, and unconcealed desire to punish three persons. The first one was the old hag, Shabari, who made the Lord eat the fruits, which she had first tasted

with her unclean mouth. The second one was the destitute Sudama, who had the audacity to offer dry, parched, pounded rice to the Lord, causing his delicate slender throat to bleed. The third one was Arjuna, the arrogant one, who claimed to be a great warrior and yet sat, during the great battle, safely behind the Lord to be shielded by the deadly arrows of the beastly Kauravas. Except these three, she had no other enemies. When she lifted her face up to the heavens, she saw her Lord, showering Grace on her, which would shine in her heart with peace and satisfaction.

A stranger, who observed these two, was perplexed. He did not know who was content and happier, whether the man of wisdom or the woman of simple faith. Because every body knew the intellectual but none were even aware of her existence. When he asked her, she could not even understand his query. The intellectual replied after deliberation. that he would be content to search for and experience than be satisfied with having faith in God. He was always independent in his thoughts and always refused to be awed by mysticism of the Seers or silenced by ancient scriptures. He was impressed by the devotion of the old woman, yet he would not follow her example. He would rather be receptive and intellectual, seeking the Prime Existence than be devoted without inquiry and be doomed.

The stranger was not surprised with the words of the Intellectual who would rather search for the mysterious existence of the Prime Existence he could understand and experience than be satisfied with the unknown and unknowable Existence, which he could neither understand nor experience. He chose to perceive Primeval Existence in its face, if possible, and experience Truth in its essence, drawing out the Prime Existence from obscurity to clarity. In his opinion, it is better to be an intellectual and receptive, ready to err than be silenced by scriptures, howsoever hoary or ancient they might be, to remain dumb, foolish and satisfied.

SUCH IS THE MANNER WHICH I HAVE ADOPTED.

Yet this book is not meant to be biographical accounts of either Gautama Buddha or of Ramana Maharshi, but rather a study of their thoughts in the background in which they lived, reflected and meditated. If they are studied together, it is because there appears uncanny similarity in their experiences and expressions as recorded by their disciples. I have, therefore, used the recorded expressions, as pegs to hang my own responses, and not as re-appraisal and re-evaluation of their thoughts as pointers on the Path to Perfection.

Mind rarely understands other people's thoughts because it is difficult to respond to them, not familiar with the background in which they lived their life. To accept thoughts and beliefs without experiencing them is being open to what Swami Vivekananda cautioned when he said 'It is blessing to be born into a religion but a tragedy to die in one'. While immediate disciples might have the advantage of guidance from the Teachers, subsequent seekers have to depend either on recorded accounts of the disciples or the clarifications of the Commentators, which rarely provide the resonance or the vibrancy of the original thoughts. In a way, they are more the reactions of the disciples rather than the original thoughts. While teachers desire the disciples to use their words as road maps, disciples and the commentators invariably transform them in sectarian faiths and beliefs and institutionalized creeds and religions, losing in the process the lucidity and simplicity of the teacher's moments of luminous experiences.

One should not expect clarity at the very beginning, because even Seers did have moments of obscurity, with doubts and despairs. They succeeded because they rose up even as they fell. I have neither read all the scriptures recording Gautama Buddha's teachings nor all the books on Ramana Maharshi's philosophy. It would, therefore, be presumptuous to claim that I have understood all their thoughts, even as it is futile to expect that their thoughts were as recorded by their disciples.

Oftentimes, Mind records as understood by them. It would be better to accept them as the thread on which one hangs the garments than hope them to be the composition of the cloth.

Therefore, this book should be taken as an attempt to reappraise and evaluate the Teachings of these two savants, but rather as an attempt to glimpse whether truths than to understand them. If this is clearly understood and accepted, then perhaps, one would appreciate and understand the statements made herein.

Bombay

23-05-2005.

AUTHOR.

asmi

A study of the Teachings of Gautama Buddha and Ramana Maharshi

asmi is the statement by the Prime Existence acknowledging its distinct identity as **I- aham** and the fact that it has become effulgent
-Brahman.

The *Prime Existence* when becomes effulgent is *Brahman* and Creation is affirmation of the *Prime Existence* enveloping every aspect of the evolutionary process is inseparable.

This is the *Satya* - the *Prime Existence*, which seers spoke variously in *vedic* scriptures and reflected in *Upanishads*.

The same *Prime Existence* was experienced by seers and sages and spoken by saints and prophets and explained by Acharyas and philosophers.

Krishna enjoins Wisdom of that *Prime Existence* from those who have perceived that principle - *tatvadarshinah*, through humble reverence, through inquiry and through submission.

Wisdom is the entirety and what is sourced from it is Knowledge. Wisdom is unitary and Knowledge is multiplicity.

One remaining in the world has to be the witness not the performer.

That gives an insight in the *Prime Existence*

Introduction

This book is not meant to be a biographical account of Gautama *Buddha* or of Ramana *Maharshi*. The book attempts to bring, if at all, the manner in which they lived their lives and how they responded to the issues which confronted them. Each one responds to life in his own way. Though they were primarily guided by mystical vision, the expression of their vision may guide us to inquire, respond, reflect and meditate on them as they transpire, with a need on every occasion to test and debate, accept or reject them not with hostility but with candor.

When one studies the innumerable and seemingly diverse expressions of the Seers, one comes to a conclusion that there is nothing new or different in what they have spoken than what was said by earlier ones. Nevertheless what they express clarifies the present day turmoil, where one becomes conscious that even as thoughts arise in Mind, they appear having already been spoken by someone and heard or read somewhere earlier. Consequently, there appears nothing new to be expressed but only experience the *Wisdom* which earlier Seers have already given expression, leaving one helpless from saying anything which can remotely be said as *new* and original. One, therefore, remains silent, expressing supreme contempt of those who do not accept the impossibility of human being able to reach out to *the Prime Existence*, except on the basis of what is already revealed.

The inconsistency in one's Mind arises because one is not able to freely source *Wisdom*, which *Knowledge* is projected to represent. A considered view might lead one to accept that unlike

Knowledge which is sourced by Mind through sensory influences, *Wisdom*, having its base in the centre of the heart, is difficult for admittance, because in spite of the *gut-feeling*, what one feels is often overruled by Mind, which is dominated by empirical experiences in *samsaara* to be verily the Mind – ‘*chittam eva hi samsaaram, tat praytnena shodhayet; yachittas tan-mayo bhavati, guhyam etat sanatanam*’ – therefore it should by practice be investigated. What ever the intellect that becomes his Mind, this is the universal truth. ‘*chittasya hi parasaadena hanti karma shubhashubham. . laya vikshepa rahitam amanah kritvaa sunishchalam yada yaaty amanibhavam tadaa tat paramama padam*’ - With the grace of the intellect alone comes the auspicious and inauspicious actions to be terminated. . by making the Mind devoid of the ebb and flow of thoughts, when it is made serene then comes the attitude of mindlessness. Then, that is the supreme stage.

In *Vedic* scriptures, we find Indra, the presiding deity over Mind, replicating himself in many forms, through *maya*, his formatting power - ‘*roopam roopam pratiroopo babhuva tad asya roopam pratichakshanaaya, indro mayaabhiih puru-roop eeyate*’. Thoughts arising in Mind give semblance of reality to *samsaara*.

Brihad Aranyak Up. and *Maitri Up.* speak the supreme dominance of Mind in *samsaara*. ‘*manasaa hy eva pashyati, manasaa shrunoti, kama sankalpo vichikitsaa shraddhaa’shraddhaa dhritir adhritir hrir dhir bhir ity etat sarvam mana eva. . aham so maamedam ity evam manyamaano nibadhnaty aatmaanamaatmanam ity evam purusho adhyavasaayasasankalpoabhimanalingo baddhah, atah vipareeto muktah . .*’ – it is with Mind, verily one sees. that one hears, desire, affirmation and doubt, receptivity and absence of receptivity, commitment and lack of commitment, shame, intellection, fear, all this is truly Mind. Borne along and defiled by the stream of attributes, with unsteady, fickle, bewildered, full of desire, distracted, one gets in to the state of self-love in thinking *I am he, this is mine*, he binds himself with himself as

a bird in snare, contrary to this is the liberation. Since thoughts create *Knowledge*, termination of thoughts suggests Wisdom - deliverance from *Knowledge* or ignorance formatted by sensory influences. Therefore, distinction between *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* is the difference between *the Prime Existence* and the manifested Existence.

The distinction between *Wisdom* (*vidyana*) and *Knowledge* (*vidya*) has often been brought out clearly in *Upanishads*. For instance in *Brihad Aranyak Up.* we find it mentioned that '*andham tamah pravishanti ye vidyaam upaasate, tato bhuya iva tetamah ye tu u vidyayaam ratah*' meaning that those who worship *Knowledge*, in them darkness enters and in those who delight in *Knowledge* there is greater darkness. Therefore '*aatmaanam ched vijaaniyad ayam asmeeti purushah, kim icchan kasya kaamayaa shaeram anusamjvaret*' - he who is enlightened by the *Wisdom* that I am that *Purusha*, then wishing what and desiring what should one suffer in this body. Therefore, '*tam eva dherro vijnaya prajnaam kurveeta brahmanah, naanudhyaayad bahuna shabdan, vacho vigilaapanam hi tat iti*' - Let the wise *Braahmana*, after being aware of Him alone practice *Wisdom*. Let him not reflect on many words for that are mere weariness of speech. Therefore the westerners who are more convinced of the gravitational force comes to be drawn to the gross world on the ground, while the eastern philosophers concerned with levitation force rise on the higher level.

This important distinction between *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* was brought out by Krishna in *Bhagavad Gita*, when he proposed to Arjuna that he would be initiated both in *Knowledge* which is sensory experience as well as *Wisdom* which is supra-sensory - '*idam te guhyatamam pravakshyami anasuyayejnanam vijnanasahitam yaj jnatva mokshyase ashubhaat*'. Here *jnana*, the empirical *Knowledge*, is as important as *vidyana*, the supra-sensory *Wisdom*.

Therefore, to the inquiry '*By whom willed and directed does the Mind illumines the objects, by whom commanded does*

the Breath, the first one moves, by whose will does the humans here speak, which gods is he that prompts the eye to see and the ear to hear?’ Kena Up. replies ‘Other, indeed, is he than the one who is known, and it above the unknown’ clarifying further, ‘That which is not expressed through speech, not thought by the Mind . . . not seen by the eye. . . not heard by ears, but by which Speech is spoken. . . by which Mind thinks. . . by which the eye sees. . . by which the ears hear. . . by which life breathes, is Brahman, and not what people here adore’. That is what the Wisdom to be aware of.

Chhandogy Up. more specifically points out the Wisdom to be sought, ‘atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharam pundreekam vesham, daharo’sminn anataaraakaasha, tasmin yad antah tad anveshtavyayam, tad vaa va vijnaasitavyam’ – Here in the city of Brahma is an abode, a small lotus flower; within it is a small place. What is within that should be sought, for that assuredly is what one should desire to be aware of. Yajnavalkya says – ‘evam va ara idam mahad bhutam anantam apaaram vijnanaghana eva – thus is this great Wisdom, infinite, limitless, consists of nothing but Knowledge’ and also comparing it to a mass of salt, he says further ‘sa yathaa saindhava-ghanah anantaro’bahyah, krtsno rasaghanah eva, evam vaa are’yam aatma, anantaro’bahyah, krtsnah prajnaanghana’ – As a mass of salt is without inside, without outside, is altogether a mass of taste, even so, verily, is this Self without inside, without outside, altogether a mass on consciousness. ‘yenashrutam shrutam bhavati, amatam matam, avijnatam vijnatam iti’ by which the unhearable become heard, unperceivable becomes perceived and inaccessible Wisdom becomes comprehensible, leading one from non-existence to Prime Existence, from obscurity to illumination and from mortality to immortality. It is the heart, the spiritual one on the right side and not the physical one on the left side, which the source of awareness.

Mongezee Tiso, a great thinker of one of the African tribes, known as Xhosa, points out that unlike the European thinkers who consider life to be under the control of Mind, Africans

consider ‘*ambolini*’, the intestines or guts gives the first impulse to *Wisdom*, since one by nature speaks of the *gut-feelings*, which later the Mind transforms in thoughts, ideas and concepts. In *Brihad Araanyak Up*, we are told that *Prajapati* is where the heart is. That is *Brahman*. It is all, contained in the three syllables *hr*, *da* and *ayam*. *Hr* is the splendour which he is possessed with, *da* is what he grants or graces and *ayam* is the place from where he bursts forth in effulgence as heavens and worlds. *Chhandogya Up* too says, ‘*sa vaa esha aatma hridi, tasyaitad eva niruktam hrady ayam iti, tasmad hrdayam, ahar ahar vaa evam-vit svargam lokam eti. Atha ya esha samprasaado’smachhareeraat samutthaya param jyotir upasampadya svena roopenabhinishapdayate , esha aatmeti, etad amrtam abhayam, etad brahmeti, tasya ha vaa etasya brhamano naama satyam iti*’ – Verily the self abides in the heart . Of that the etymological explanation is this. This one is in the heart he who knows this each day after day in to heavenly worlds. Now that serene being rising out of this body and reaching the highest light shines in its own form. He is the self, that is the immortal, the fearless That is Brahman, verily the name of that *Brhaman* is the prime Existence’. The source of all creation thus is the heart.

Maitri Up. accepts that it is the Mind with its bewildering thoughts that formats *samsaara*, with *names* and *forms*, and through its grace alone the impression of auspicious and inauspicious actions is terminated. Since conceptualization is the principal attribute of Mind, freeing it of the ebb and flow of thoughts, it becomes without concepts , as it were (*amanah*) and being equanimous comes to be centred on the indwelling self, which is the supreme state - ‘*chittasya hi parasadena hanti karma shubhashubham . . laya vikshepa rahitam amanah kritvaa sunishchalam yada yaaty amanibhavam tadaa tat paramama padam*’. That is *Satya*, the *Prime Existence*, and the *Wisdom*.

According to *Upanishads*, the singular *Wisdom* manifested as *Knowledge* recognizes itself as *aham*, *asmi* and *Brhaman*, assigning for itself, the *Mind*, *Speech* and *Praana* as instruments

for effluence – ‘*triny aatmane kuruta iti, mano vaacham praanam*’. *Mundaka Up.* says that it was *Brahman*, first among the gods, creator of the universe, repository of *Wisdom*, who taught *Brahmavidya*, *Wisdom of the Prime Existence*, the foundations of all subsequent *Knowledge*, to Atharvan, who in turn passed over the *Knowledge* to others.

Thus what Atharvan received from *Brahma* was the *Knowledge*, a fragment of the *Wisdom of the Prime Existence* which leads him to his enlightenment. He communicated the *Knowledge* to Saunaka and others to be reflected and meditated upon, so that that *Knowledge* would lead them to awareness of the *Wisdom*. *Wisdom* is like the vast ocean and *Knowledge* is like the drops of water from the ocean, appearing as obscure clouds, emptying as exuberant rains, with flashes of lightening and amplified as thunder, flowing like rivers through mountain crevices, blending with earlier streams, spreading the waters and nourishing the lands on the way. *Knowledge* is ever in motion like the rivers, sometime concealed and sometime revealed, no part lost, though appearing as lost, ever in motion like the river, changing in new forms and having new names. ‘As from the luminous fire laid with damp fuel smoke issues forth even so my dear, (as *Knowledge*), *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Athrvangirasa*, history, ancient lore, sciences, *upanishads*, verses, aphorisms, explanations and commentaries issue forth as *Knowledge* from *Wisdom* are all these breathe forth’.

Perceptions, views, opinions, expressions constitute *Knowledge*, which is not independent of *Wisdom*, even as rivers are not independent of the oceans from which they were sourced. *Knowledge* is individuated partial perception of the immutable, eternal, universal *Wisdom*. *Knowledge* is empirical; *Wisdom* is supernal. *Knowledge* is Time, bound by memories of the Past, sensory influences of the Present and aspirations of the Future; *Wisdom* is beyond Time, *kalateeta*, Time by its very character being idea or an impression connecting two events.

Philosophy uses *Knowledge* as its foot stool to reach out *Wisdom*, taking leap from the *known* to the *unknown*. *Knowledge* can never be substitute for *Wisdom*, because part can never be the whole. One has to give up *Knowledge* if one has to be aware of *Wisdom*. Unlike *Knowledge*, *Wisdom* is not open for inspection, reflection of meditation, but is revealed when Mind becomes quiet and equanimous through unrestrained receptivity of the present moment which alone is alive, the Past having died and the future not yet born. *Wisdom* reveals in Mind when thoughts cease or rise or as *Katha Up.* says ‘*When (Knowledge from) the five senses together with Mind cease their normal activities, and the intellect itself does not stir, that they say is the highest state*’. *Wisdom* expands the un-manifest, unexplored mass as *Knowledge*. When *Wisdom* dawns, *Knowledge* becomes useless, even as the stick used to stir the fire of the funeral pyre becomes useless once the body is reduced to the ashes.

The clear distinction between *Wisdom (vijana)* and *Knowledge (jnana)* is the distinction between *the Prime Existence* and *the Distinct Gross Existence*. the former culminates as awareness when the latter becomes the means. No prudent man would, therefore, ever aver that *Knowledge (jnana)* of the *vedic* hymns or any scriptural statements represent wholly, the true, the eternal, immutable *Wisdom (vijana)*. He would at the most claim that his present expressions reveal and authenticate the perceptions of the earlier seers.

Perceptions of the Seers, in spite of the efflux of *Time*, therefore, retain the fundamental unity validating that ‘*Ekam Sad vipra bahudaa vadanti*’ – One is the *Prime Existence*, men of *Wisdom* speak of it variously. There is nothing absolute about any of the ideas, concepts, views or opinions, only thing certain being *Satya*, *the Prime Existence*, which word is derived from the root ‘*as*’ – *to be, to exist*. That which exists eternally, without beginning or an end, without any change in *essence* is, therefore, *Satya*. While every one would desire to speak of and often claims to speak *Satya, the Prime Existence*, find it difficult

even to admit the impossibility of not being able to speak of *Satya*. Men express their experiences because they have to do, without acknowledging that there is nothing in their expressions which can be entirely true or entirely false. Therefore, no one can blame that they have not spoken the truth, complete truth and nothing but the truth. The seemingly difference in their individual *supra-sensory* experiences or to that manner in their communication can only be attributed to the change in the receptivity of the people, period and places when the seers choose to make themselves vocal.

Every idea or a concept depends to lesser or greater degree on the receptivity of the Seer and his ability to express and communicate his experiences, through language which is primarily phenomenal. Therefore, in the end every idea becomes a synthesis of feeling, experience and thought, speech and action till the idea gets frozen as words and crystallized in religious belief, faith or a creed, which followers accept and dissenters object to. Religion is essential in so far it limits its role as an instrument for spiritual advancement; it becomes defective when it becomes bigotry and taken as nothing but the truth.

Seers see *Wisdom* in a grain of sand the immensity of the ocean, philosophers burdened with *Knowledge* end up picking the grains of sand on the sea-shore and proliferating *Knowledge* when they should have delved deep in the ocean. Equanimity of intellect leads to *Wisdom* resolving the diversity in *Knowledge*, through reflection and meditation. Meditation is not thinking about the *Known* but being receptive to the *Unknown*. What the Seers see and experience as purity of *Wisdom*, the commentators and philosophers deliberate and dispute on Seer's spoken words. Seers rarely disagree with one another, displaying an enlightened, refreshing outlook, neither claiming and championing anything as entirely new nor rejecting any thing as entirely false. Therefore, no one blames them having not spoken truth, complete the truth and nothing but the truth. Every concept was reflected and meditated by them, expressing their experiences with sincerity and clarity. In *Knowledge*, earlier

seer's expressions are extended through reflection becoming an essential foundation for spiritual advancement and in *Wisdom* those expressions become harbinger of their own awareness.

Knowledge is aggregation of empirical experiences, of thoughts arising in Mind, concepts born of intellect and vocalized through speech. *Knowledge* then becomes akin to the shifting reflections in a flowing stream, intermittently visible as vague and indistinct view of a mountain amidst mist, making *Wisdom* to be compared to dawn at first indistinct but gradually unfolding with increasing clarity. *Knowledge* is sourced from *Wisdom*, and is not substitute for *Wisdom*, it is not less important than *Wisdom*. Socrates declares in Plato's *Apology* that '*All the other sciences which are not philosophy are more necessary but none is more important than philosophy*'.

The difference, if any, between *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* is that the former has supra-sensory base leading to supra-sensual awareness and solitude of silence as consequence of an alert, conscious Mind, while the latter has sensory base a thing to be acquired, to be possessed through deductive inference of the *data* already available postulating through inductive logic the universal truths. Awareness leads to *Wisdom*, *Knowledge* leads to accumulation to information about the universals by description. *Wisdom* cannot be demonstrated, therefore, is not easy to be assured of *the Prime Existence*, which can be accessed only through patient disciplined equanimity of Intellect in the solitude of Mind but when expressed often ends up as individual judgments and opinions conditioned by such *Knowledge* incapable of accepting anything like absolute *Wisdom*.

Knowledge changes with the passage of time, but not *Wisdom*, which is immutable. Therefore, Seer and prophet claim to reiterate to the new generation the *Wisdom* which has become obscure due to diversity of perceptions, using new vocabulary,

new symbols and practices relevant to the times when they are called upon to do speak, re-establishing the balance and concordance between what the new generations know and what they should be aware of.

The *Vedas – Wisdom* is *nityam, adreshyam, agrahyam, vibhum, sarvagatam, sushooksham, avyayam, anaadi* and *anantam* but when articulated without human effort – ‘*purusha prayatnam vina prakatitabhuta*’ in *vedic* hymns it becomes *Knowledge* about *the Prime Existence, satyam*. What the seers saw through mediation and action, ‘*yaani mantreshu karmaani kavayo apashssyan*, those few have been variously spread forth through in three hymnal scriptures – ‘*taani tretayaam bahudaa santataani*’. They should be practiced persistently for that, verily is the *Path* to the world of noble deeds – ‘*taani aachratha nityam, esha vah panthah sukrutasya loke*’.

Wisdom is singular; *Knowledge* is invariably diverse in expressions. According to *Mundaka Up.* there are two forms of *Wisdom* which are to be known, the superior one and the inferior one - ‘*dve vidye veditavye iti*’. . *para chaiva apara*’. The inferior ones are *Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda* and the supplementary ones like *shiksha* (phonetics) *kalpo* (rituals) *vyakarana* (grammar) *nirukta* (etymology) *chanda* (metrics) and *gyotisha* (astrology) and the superior one is that which reveals the *Akshara* (the Immutable). Therefore, in *Shivasvarodaya* it is said, ‘*na vedam veda ity aahur vede vedo na vidyate, paraatma vedyate yena sa vedo veda uchyate*’ - the *vedas* (scriptures) are not to be referred as *Veda*, for there is no *Veda, Wisdom* in *vedas*. Therefore, much that passes as *veda* is not at all *Veda – the Wisdom*, the eternal, immutable, without beginning or any end, constant, deeply supra-sensory philosophical.

New hymns were included in the collation of the *vedic* scriptures by *Vyasa*, even as some not in mainstream were omitted. Supplementary documents needed new explanations and revised clarifications. Though *vedic* hymns have abiding

influence in spiritual advancement as spontaneous outpourings of the Seers without any human effort – ‘*purusha praytnam vina prakatitbhuta*’ over long periods of time, they have not been the ultimate goal but intermediate instruments for recollecting and experiencing *Veda* as generic aggregation representing *Wisdom*, *para vidya*., Shankara too in the spirit of deep awareness of the *Wisdom of the Vedas*, declared that *vedic* scriptures to be the means to furnish supra-sensory information ‘*shrutishano atindriyaarthavishaye vijnaanotpatau nimittam*’ and further they only point out what leads to the wholesome and what leads to unwholesome ends, thereby indicating particular relationship between means and the ends - ‘*shaastradimeva bhavatui idam ishtasaadhanam idam anishtsaadhanam iti*’.

Yet *vedic* scriptures came to be regarded as that in which mysterious *Prime Existence* finds its source, wherein everything is united as warp and woof and wherefrom everything else emanates, as creation - ‘*venas tat pashyan nihitam guha sad yatra vishavam bhavatyekaneedamm tasminnidam sa vi chaiti sarvam sa otah protashcha vibhuh prajaasu*’ (YV.32.8). Every one is aware and conscious of *Wisdom* but does not have easy access to it, hearing which he does not comprehend. Only to him *Wisdom* comes to be revealed who is spiritually in communion with it – ‘*uta tvah pashyan na dadarsha vaacham uta tvah shrutvan na shrunotyenaam, uta tvasmai tanvam visasre jaayeva patya ushati suvaasaah*’ (RV.X7). And they came to be assiduously guarded, from being corrupted and misused, though all the words used in scriptures do not fully subscribe the experiences of the Seers in purity of perception or in clarity of the Mind.

Sri Aurobindo gives plausible reasons for such concealment, since the instruments are as important as the goal. He says: ‘. . . the *Rigveda* is itself the one considerable document that remains to us from the early period of human thought of which the historic Eleusinian and orphic mysteries were the failing remnants, when the spiritual and psychological knowledge of the race was concealed. . . one of the leading

principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true language of the Gods. This wisdom, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they favoured existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language and words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers’.

In *Rigveda* we find it mentioned when the Wisdom was to be communicated to people, *Vak* was revealed as one of the primary and necessary instrument. The seer says, ‘*When it was desired that the objects be assigned with names, Vak was sent as the earliest of all utterances, through Brihaspati, the first and the foremost. The Speech that was best and stainless, was revealed, along with the divine mystery’* and what scripture further said, ‘*In four groups (Para, Pashyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari) has Vak been classified, all of which the men of wisdom are aware of. In the first three groups are hidden the mystical secrets and men speak only in the fourth classification’*. *Brihaddevata* also pointed out that only he who knows the true meaning of the hymns alone can know the luminous gods – ‘*rucho ha yo veda sa veda devanaam’*, and he who does not know the luminous ones who are abiding in the Space, in whom the divine energy is established, what can the hymns do - ‘*rucho akshare parame vyoman yasmindevadhi vishve nisheduh | yastanveda kim rucha karishyati |’*. Yaska refers them contemptuously as pillars carrying the loads ‘*sthanurayam bharaavaaharah’*’.

Seers accept constant ferment in *Knowledge*, the incredible diversity of perceptions. Dr. A. F. Whitehead says, ‘*The notion of the complete self-sufficiency of any item of finite knowledge is the fundamental error of dogmatism. Every such item derives its Truth and its meaning from un-analyzed reverence to the background which is the unbounded Universe . . . Every scrap*

of our knowledge derives its meaning from the fact that we are factors in the universe, and are dependent on the universe for ever detail of our experience . . . Whenever there is the sense of self-sufficient completion, there is germ of vicious dogmatism'. Therefore, *vedic* scriptures and the supplementary books are accepted as *Knowledge, apara vidya* – secondary in importance, whereas *Veda* is the transcendental *Wisdom*, a comprehensive aggregation of experiences. *Veda* is *vijnanan-ghana*, the aggregate, *comprehensive Wisdom* - '*idam mahad bhutam anantam aparam vijnana-ghana eva . . .*' – this is a great occurrence, infinite, limitless, similar to a mass of *Wisdom (vijnana-ghana)*. *Veda* is not information accessed through sensory instruments but *supra-sensory* awareness. Therefore, in *Shivasvarodaya* it is said, '*na vedam veda ity aahur vede vedo na vidyate, paratma vedyate yena sa vedo veda uchyate*' - the *vedas* (scriptures) are not to be referred as *Veda*, for there is no *Veda, Wisdom* in *vedas*. Much of what passes as *veda* is not *Veda* at all – the eternal, immutable *Wisdom*, without beginning or any end, constant and deeply supra-sensory experience.

'*Vak*' is *Wisdom*, mysterious and inexplicable, only men of *Wisdom* know it comprehensively and what humans speak here is one fourth part of it. The seers are *rishis*, who have *seen* the hymns - *mantradrashita*. *That One*, in whom that *Wisdom* is comprehensively in abidance, is *Purusha*, of whom the seer speaks as, all that has been and all that will be; the immortal beyond transcending the mortal elements – '*purusha evedam sarvam yad bhutam yaccha bhavyam, utaamitatvasyeshano yad annenaatiraahati*'.

There is nothing similar to *Wisdom* in the empirical world, let alone anything superior. In *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna addresses Krishna '*na tvatsamo 'sty abhyadhikah kuto'nyo*'. It is designated as *satyasya satyam, the Prime Existence*. *Wisdom* unfolds in pure immaculate Mind as the primacy of awareness, where there are no doubts but absolute certainty without being able to determine or define the state, which blissful silence where there is clamour of words but only clarity of Mind without any

sensations. Or as *Buddha* refers it as *anatta*, the stage where there is *experience of Bliss without any sensations, saying 'When sensations no longer exist, that verily is the Bliss'*. There is great silence when *Wisdom* illumines the Mind and not the dissension, disharmony or discordance of *Knowledge*.

What is spoken in words is far too restrictive than what was experienced in and perceived in Mind. No one experiences any thing new which was not experienced earlier by others and earlier experiences become useful *data* to support, extend and authenticate the scope of their expressions. As a Haiku poet described his effort of understanding scriptures, '*We rowed in the fog, and out through the fog . . . O how blue, how bright the whole wide sea IS!*' Scriptures, therefore, are never read and never to be read for intellectual stimulation or for entertainment but as first steps to reach spiritual advancement.

It is not possible that the words spoken would ever correspond with the words heard. In fact, using words involves something over and above associating *words* with *meaning*. Since the seer is aware that language does not replace experience, he seeks to extend his earlier *Knowledge* revising his earlier thoughts with new thoughts, making it credible authentication of the *Wisdom* experienced by the Seers. The *vedic* scriptures do not propose one comprehensive philosophy, because they represent diverse perceptions of numerous seers and it is impossible to consolidate diverse expressions adequately in one system and we often see them straining the words to convey unusual meanings. Therefore, while *vedic* scriptures may consist essence of the *Vedas*, they can only end up being momentary and transitory gifted *Knowledge*, *Vedas* remains the eternal and singular *Wisdom*.

Human receptivity uninfluenced by senses is possibly in intermittent rare and brief moments when Mind is in the state of Bliss, when every human being is happy without being satiated, without *knowing* or being able to know the reasons for such happiness. *Upanishads* compare such state with *sushupti*, the *dreamless sleep state*, where Mind is not affected by thoughts

arising in the *Waking state* or in the *Dream state*. *Buddha* describes it as the state of being in '*perennial choice less awareness*', '*Just this is Bliss . . . there is no sensation*'. When asked '*how can there be Bliss when sensations no longer exist?*' he replied '*When sensations no longer exist, that, verily is the Bliss*'. According to *Maharshi* too, natural state of the *Consciousness- I* is the *Dreamless Sleep stage*, where the *conventional I* has neither existence nor any thing with which it could be related. In this state every person resides some time or the other, howsoever brief period it might be, but rarely one is aware of that state. In *Dreamless Sleep state*, individual self is in equanimity of intellect, *Samadhi*, free from sensory influences, on the threshold of merging in *Turiya*, the *bliss of the Prime Existence*, where the mind has no experiences or has absence of experiences, where the self is neither aware of the *Conventional I* or the *Consciousness I*, the state of absolute Silence, when the *I* which investigates or is being investigated does not exist, like the fire becomes extinguished without knowing to which direction it has gone.

Bliss is not circumscribed by the confines of *Time*, with its *past, present* and *future* dimensions. Mental projections and the thought process is what brings the transcendental Mind to the constraints of *Time*, where Mind is said to experience *Bliss* whereas in reality it does not. *Bliss* is beyond sensory experiences. As *Buddha* explained *Bliss* is absence of *sensations*, therefore, of experiences. The sensations of pleasures and pain, of happiness and sorrow, of good and bad are all matters experiences occasioned by sensations, therefore, within the constraints of *Time*. Since *Bliss* is transcendental it has to be '*experienced*' by being beyond *Time*. This is where *Buddha* deviated from the *Brahmannical* interpretations of *vedic* scriptures, which themselves are said to be transcending *Time*, being eternal in *essence* though structured in *form*, expressed in *Time* and circumscribed by *Time*. Therefore are the *sufferings*, because that which owes its origin to *Time* is also ends with *Time*.

Therefore, *Bhagavad Gita* refers the protagonists of *vedic* scriptures, as *vedavaadaratah* – ever engrossed in dialectical arguments and cautions the seekers not to be misguided by the flowery words of these undiscerning ones, who rejoice only in the letter of the *vedic* scriptures assuring heavens after death as the fruits for performance of rites. *Buddha* too voices his concern, ‘*The Brahmins pass over old traditions to next generations, just like a basket is handed over saying: This is true and all else is false*’.

Veda alone, as generic word, represents primary and absolute *Wisdom*. *Veda* is *vidya*, the totality of *Wisdom* capable of being ‘*seen*’ through supra-conscious awareness as *Satya*, *The Prime Existence*, *That One – tad ekam* and not as probable or demonstrative evidence of *That One*. *Knowledge* is relative premise or an alternative proposition. When *Wisdom* is conceived in its expansive sense, one finds validity in *Atharvavedic* seer’s observance that ‘*the Earth that bears people speaking varied languages, with various religions rituals, according the places of their abode, enrich me with wealth in thousand streams like a milch-cow that never fails*’.

Therefore, *Krishna* declares that what he is communicating is nothing but the ancient wisdom, ‘*evam parampraapraaptam imam rajarshayo viduh, sa kaaleneha mahataayogo nashtah paaramtapa*’. *Sa evayam mayaa te’dya yogah proktah puratanah*. *Buddha* tells his father that ‘*The Buddhas who have been and who shall be. Of these, am I and what they did, I do too. And now this which befalls, so fell before, that at this gate a King in warrior’s weaponry should meet the son, a prince in hermit’s clothes*’. He also tells his disciples, declaring that like the ancient seers, ‘*(I) . . . have seen an ancient way, and ancient road followed by the wholly awakened ones of olden times. . .*’ ‘*I am not the first Buddha who neither came upon the earth nor shall be last. In due time, another Buddha will arise in the world, a holy one, a supremely enlightened one endowed with wisdom in conduct, an auspicious one . . . He will reveal the same eternal truth, which I have taught you. He will preach*

you that which is great in the beginning, great in the middle and great in the goal'. Jesus said, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophesies: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil'. Muhammad was not far when he too declared that 'Verily, We (Allah) gave unto Moses the scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him'.

Seers source *Satya, the Prime Existence* because they dare to stand alone and aloof on the circumference in the solitude of silence, detached from the thoughts arising from sensory influences, to observe the *essence* from the center, regretting their communicated words being institutionalized in stratified faiths, beliefs and creeds, subject to discussion, debate and diverse interpretations. Therefore, Spinoza recommended that 'All scriptures were written primarily for the entire people, and secondarily for the whole human race; consequently its contents must necessarily be adapted, as far as possible, to the understanding of the masses', U Pu, a revered Buddhist said, 'Buddhism, like Louis Pasteur, confines its attention to prevention and cure . . . Buddhism points to the Law of Righteousness to be conformed to . . . If the purpose and meaning of plague is not investigated by Louis Pasteur or by any other scientist, why should we waste time to trace its author!' (Quoted by Winston L. King in *Buddhism and Christianity* p.36).

Expression of experience comes in fragments, concealing more than what it reveals. As a consequence, there remains nothing entirely true or entirely false in what they express. Therefore, no one can blame them for not speaking truth, complete truth and nothing but the truth. Every expression, to a greater or smaller degree, depends on speaker's keen perception, depth of experience and ability to express them. It would be presumptuous to claim that one can know and understand thoughts of another. Therefore, it is futile to claim complete access to the entirety of their experiences and thoughts.

Oftentimes when one's Mind is not receptive to the Teacher, one's thoughts unconsciously supplant the thoughts of the

Teacher, *Knowledge* becoming barrier in accessing *Wisdom* of the teachings. Therefore, it would be beneficial to be aware of the contours of one's Mind before one desire to have access to the vibrancy of the thoughts of others. It is better to walk holding ends of the savant's garments rather than to snatch, assume and claim ownership of the garment itself. Because there is nothing in world which can be claimed as entirety of wisdom nor the seers claim to be enlightened all the time, because legends and their life has shown us the moments of doubts and despair, of strength and weakness, of success and failure, fall and rise, encountered by them even after they were enlightened. Teachers would rather desire their disciples to follow their Teachings without having to follow them as persons. They should rather depend on their own perception, using the Teacher's words, at best, as road maps, than be influenced by the splendour of Teacher's illumination. Otherwise, the vibrancy of *Teachings* is lost in the cacophony of opinions and interpretations of the *Teachings* transformed and capsuled as religious belief, faith or a creed and bigotry, *Teacher* remaining as symbol, a *form* instead of representing the *essence* of the *Teachings* being a synthesis of feelings and thought.

Therefore, when one reads ancient scriptures, one need to be conscious that though seer's intent was to communicate Truth as they perceived it, the terminology and the symbols used by them being phenomenal, they are constrained by the language and symbols familiar to the people to understand. Similar while translating ancient texts in a language known to the present generation, care should be taken to retain the sense in which the earlier communications were expressed, without having to stick to the form, because otherwise the *form* would appear archaic and the *essence* slipping by.

Akshara is immutable *essence* and not to be identified with *form* in which expressed. Therefore, to treat *Akshara* not as *essence* but the *form* is mockery of Seer's vision. Gautama *Buddha* teachings were reduced to writing much after he massed over to the *beyond*, and it is quite possible that totality of verbal

inflection and oral modulation could have changed, making a divide between what was spoken and what was heard, what was heard and what was remembered and recollected and finally recorded. Therefore, all teachings began with cautions statement: ‘*Thus have I heard. .’* ‘*Thus did the Buddha spoke to us*’. Yet early records could have been more faithful than the later, when they came up for periodical re-appraisal, reassessment and revision in *Buddhist* councils, each stage becoming more and more controversial and argumentative leaving the simple communication of *Buddha’s* teachings to a complex intellectual theology.

We were more fortunate with the teachings of Ramana Maharshi, whose teachings though were primarily oral, few devotees had recorded them in his own life time and later seen and approved by Maharshi himself. His own writings were few and far in between and by his own admission, he was reluctant to record even the opening words of *Arunachala Hymns* as they flashed in his mind, saying ‘*What have I to do with these words?*’, suggesting possibly the *upanishadic* statement – ‘*yato vacho nivartante apraapya manasaa saha*’.

The effort of the present Author has been being responsive to their *Teachings* in *essence* and not in the *form*. It would be presumptuous to claim to have understood them, but a claim would perhaps be justifiable in saying that he has sincerely endeavoured to be responsive to them. Therefore, his responses to the teachings though appear odd and unfamiliar compared to the documents translated in antiquated words, he is assured of the vitality and vibrancy of Mind, without having to be overawed by the words spoken by those Seers. It has been his belief and hope that his Mind would be receptive to the *essence* of their Teachings, if he refrains from being influenced by their personality.

This, therefore, is one honest attempt.

Gautam Buddha – Life

Gautam *Buddha*, when born in Lumbini in 563 B.C., was named Siddhartha by his father Shuddhodana, who was a king of small principality on the border of India, touching Nepal. His mother Mayadevi died soon after giving birth to him. Legend records that astrologers predicted that he would either be a great King or a great recluse. Therefore, the father looked after the orphaned child with loving care and none of his needs were denied. Unlike other contemporary princes, his education does not seem to have been centred on martial arts and statecraft but also on prevailing philosophies. He grew up to be a sensitive child and later a youth with insight in the life around him. He was married to Yashodhara at the tender age of sixteen and spent joyous days in her company. Soon a son, Rahul was born to him.

The philosophical studies had given him a receptive and reflective Mind, which brought deep sense of sorrow seeing the sufferings in *samsaara*, when he confronted a sick man, an old man and a dead corpse and overwhelmed on the other seeing an ascetic with peaceful bearing, which prompted him to renounce his wife and child, family and his surroundings to ‘*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*’.

Reminiscing his early days as Siddhartha, with his disciples, he confided that, ‘*I too before my enlightenment, being not yet enlightened . . . saw this rightly through*

comprehension that sense-pleasures have little flavor, bring much suffering, bring much despair . . . ‘With power and excessive luxury I was endowed. Then this thought came to me: When an ordinary uninstructed man, subject to old age, to disease, to death, and not having passed beyond what he sees (such one), is alarmed, abashed and repelled . . . I too am subject to old age, to disease, to death, and should I . . . not be repelled . . . ? That does not befit me. As I thus thought all intoxication with life deserted me’.

Majjhima Nikaya further records ‘. . . being aloof from sense-pleasures, aloof from evil thoughts, I attained and dwelt in the first stage of contemplation, which abides with reasoning and with investigation; joyous and blissful state arising from such solitude . . . (realizing that) I too . . . (am) subject to birth, searched for that which is subject to birth, old age, illness, death, sorrow, defilement. . Should I not, after recognizing. . search for the unborn, ageless, non-ill, deathless, grief less, undefiled, unexcelled, burden-free Nirvana?’

Anguttara Nikaya records that, ‘Awaking (to the inevitability of sufferings), the future Buddha sat cross-legged on his couch. . when Distinct Gross Existence in its three forms – the world of desires, world of forms and world without form appeared like a burning mansion to him. A cry emerged from him: O what wretchedness! O what affliction! and he turned his attention to renunciation crying: This very day I must go forth, making the great renunciation’.

It is normal for western students of oriental philosophies to assume their own intelligence in dealing with the ignorant heathens of the east. The east too, impressed by the material prosperity of the west which science and technology had brought for them, assumed that every and any one of them, who claim to have studied the life of orient seers and understood their philosophies, could pontificate on the mysterious and uncivilized philosophies and religions of the east. One such wise man from the west was H. Wolfganag Schumann, a German, who passed judgment that ‘*Siddhartha’s* education, which apparently did

not include reading and writing, was in keeping with tradition (?) among ancient nobility' (Buddhism - An Outline of Its Teachings and Schools), because such expressions could not have been of one who was enjoying merely a princely life of fun and pleasure. Such statement could have emerged only from a superfluous reader of oriental texts, without having in depth spiritual insight. The life as recorded in Buddhist scriptures reveal that even when he was not yet the Buddha, the enlightened one, Siddhartha was intellectually and psychologically was mature on the Path to Perfection. Therefore not only such statements do not warrant but appear the product of immature mind.

When Siddhartha was 29 years of age, after much reflection, he took a dramatic decision that he would renounce life of pleasure of the senses, of his wife, child, family and friends and all royal attractions. In the middle of one dark night, he approached his wife who was in deep sleep with Rahul in her arms. Taking a detached and compassionate look, he tore himself away from the bond which bound him to them and renounced life to *'pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility'*. Then as recounted later, *' . . whilst I was (yet) quite young, with glossy black hair, when endowed with high youth in early prime, though my father and mother were unwilling and they wept and lamented, I caused my hair and beard to be shaved, and I assumed the yellow robes and went forth (from world) pursuing the good, seeking the supreme path of tranquility, I went to where Alava Kalama was'*.

As was the practice in those days, he approached Alava Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, prominent teachers of his day. There he met his first associates - Kondanna, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama and Assaji. As per hallowed practice, he performed austerities, living first on rice and millets, later on a single grain of rice and finally renouncing completely all food and nourishment. The strenuous penance made his golden brown body emaciated, dark and weak, till one day he swooned and fell unconscious. Seeing that mortification of the body does not bring

dispassionate receptivity of the Mind, he reflected, ‘*This system leading to the realm of nothingness, does not lead to. . tranquility, highest knowledge, full enlightenment, peace. . (and) finding that system insufficient and becoming indifferent to it, I departed*’ (*Majjhima Nikaya*). *Nidana Katha* records, ‘*The Great One’s austerity for these six years was like time spent in making a knot in space; and thinking, Truly this austerity is not the way to enlightenment . . he saw that this was not the way to enlightenment and the abandoned that method of attainment through trances*’.

Siddhartha chose not to walk on *Path* which was traversed by earlier Seers, but chose to walk instead where no *Path* was chartered and in doing so opened the doors to yoga and meditation as no one did earlier. After giving up his austerity, he became a *shramana*, wandering seeker, much to the displeasure of his fellow disciples. They deserted him, complaining, ‘*if austerity of six years did not bring him enlightenment, how could wandering as a shramana help him?*’ Unmindful what they said, Siddhartha picked up the minimum eight requisites - three robes, alms bowl, razor, needle, girdle and a water strainer. Wandering from place to place, begging only enough food for the day, he lived in solitude or in the company of like minded *shramanas*.

Not accepting the *Brahmannical* austerities, he chose the *upanishadic* discipline to be receptive, reflective and meditative to the internal *Wisdom* than be content with external *Knowledge*. One night as he was sitting under a *boa* tree, he reflected and meditated on human *suffering*, and slowly and surely his consciousness opened like a lotus flower, petal by petal, receiving the luminous enlightenment of ‘*the causative process forward and in reverse. . origination (and). . cessation of the whole aggregation of suffering*’.

Siddhartha’s earlier journey on the *Path to Perfection* was gradual, but his enlightenment was sudden and immediate. As he sat under the tree with the dark mid-night enveloping him, the layers in his Mind opened up one by one and his enlightenment

cleansed the Mind of its thoughts, memories, concepts which had conditioned his perception, making it free and liberated - *'When natures truly manifest to the strenuous contemplative holy man, then all his doubts vanish'*.

Finally at the end of seven days he experienced, *'When I perceived and understood, my Mind was liberated from the taint of desire for pleasures. . the taint of desire to become and . . the taint for renunciation . . When I was (thus) liberated, there arose in me the awareness of my liberation. I knew Distinct Gross Existence is ended, holy life is being experienced, what must be done is done; there is no survival again in future for this (existence) . . Seeking supreme peace of Nirvana . . (I) attained supreme peace of detachment from gross existence . . my liberation was thus established. . there was no survival again in future'* (*Majjima Nikaya*). Then he rejoiced, *'Blissful is the solitude of the enlightened one, who has realized and comprehends the Law . . Putting away the conceit 'I am', there is the Supreme Bliss'*. (*Vinaya Pitaka*). It is recorded that when *Buddha* was enlightened, *'at that very time, at that very moment, at that very second, a shout went up as far as the Brahma-world, and the ten-thousand fold world shook, shuddered and trembled and a boundless great light appeared in the world surpassing the divine majesty of the gods'*.

As he rose from his seat, *Siddhartha* realized that he has now ascended to be the enlightened one, the *Buddha*. Speaking of his enlightenment he said, *'Just as the blue, red and white lotus, though born in water, grown up in water, reaches the surface standing unsullied by water, even so though born in the world, grown up in the world, I have overcome the world and now abide unsullied in the world; wherefore, you have taken me as the enlightened one'*.

Buddha never assumed the role of a Prophet who had come to re-establish the essence of righteous *Wisdom* in the human life but to share his enlightenment to terminate *suffering* in *samsaara* with humanity. He accepted that *'Both I and you have to travel through this long circle, due to our not discovering,*

not penetrating the four Truths . . . On being enlightened, he averred *'my Mind was liberated from the stain (of ignorance). . . When I was liberated, there arose in me the enlightenment of my liberation'*. His enlightenment was conscious and comprehensive awareness of the *existence* of suffering as reality of life, of the *nature* that suffering, of the *cause* of suffering and of the *way* of terminating suffering.

After his enlightenment *Buddha* remained silent for a long period of time, conscious of the initial opposition of his erstwhile associates. He was also aware of the general reluctance among people to reflect and meditate on *sufferings* and their tendency to take shelter behind beliefs, faiths and dogmas. *Buddha* found people of his days as *'those who in the past for ages, whether devotees or the Brahmins, viewing what is lovely and pleasant in the world, consider it as permanent, as happiness, as reality, as wholesome, as propitious (khemato) have made craving and supports to increase; making the supports to increase they have made sufferings to increase; making sufferings to increase unexcelled complete awakening they had no release from form, from decay, death, no release from suffering'* (*Samyutta Nikaya*).

Therefore, he reflected, *'The generation enjoys, is satisfied with, and delights in attachments. For (such) generation, this principle that is causal, dependent on origin, would be difficult to be seen, hard to understand that pacification of mental aggregates for attaining Nirvana. If I were to explain Dhamma and those others do not understand me, then that would be weariness to them and vexation to me'* (*Nidana-Katha*). His compassion for suffering masses, nevertheless, prevailed over his initial hesitation, he decided to communicate his enlightenment observing that some are *'scarcely tainted and much tainted, with keen faculties, dull faculties, well disposed, ill disposed, docile, in-docile, few who lived perceiving the world beyond, sin and danger - just as in a pond (various kind of) lotuses born and spring up in water but do not emerge from but remained nourished in the water; while others rise above untouched by water'* (*Majjhima Nikaya*).

Buddha never placed himself above others or claimed any divine descent. He would give his own experience, declaring to his listeners that ‘*Before my awakening, monks, when yet I was not fully awakened but was only a Bodhisatva. .*’. As *Siddhartha* he was a *seeker*, an *arhat*, a *Tathagata*, who traversing on the *Path to Perfection*, attained *Buddhahood*, and became *Buddha*. *Madhyamika vritti* defines *Buddhatvam* as ‘*na bhaavo naapi chaabhvo buddhatvam tena kathyate, tasmaad buddh-tatha-prashne avyakrtaamayo matah*’. The *Wisdom* which had attained was eternal, universal and all-comprehensive and not transient, narrow and imprecise *Knowledge* sourced from sensory instruments of cognition. It would be a gross error to assume that *Buddha* was a reformer or a founder of a new religion in opposition to the *Vedic* wisdom, but more as one who had a new perspective of the ancient *Wisdom*. Therefore, he neither claimed to teach anything new nor spoke any thing which was not spoken earlier, professing to lead on the *Path* which earlier *Buddhas* had traversed. For him *Buddha* was one who was endowed with *Wisdom*, the enlightened one. *Wisdom* was one vast ocean and there was freedom for all to source their *Knowledge*, in small or great measure about one or other aspect of *samsaara*.

Buddha’s experience therefore could not really be put into words. They at best could be described what is attributed to himself in *Vajracchedika*, ‘*Just so, Shubuti, I obtained not the least thing from unexcelled complete awakening, and for this very reason it is called ‘unexcelled complete awakening’*’ The *Wisdom* experienced by earlier *Buddhas*, when expressed in words became *the data* which later ones sourced. The *Rigvedic* prayer, ‘*aa no bhadrah krtavao ayantu vishvatah*’ – let noble thoughts come to us from all quarters, mean let *Wisdom* not be segregated in to specific beliefs, faiths or creeds, but be open data bank for all to source, even as ocean can be segregated as eastern or western, southern or northern. *Buddha* himself demonstrated that *Wisdom* is vast and what he communicated was few, even as the *simpa* leaves held by him in his hand are

few while many more are there on the *Tree of Wisdom*, emphasizing that ‘. . . *the things which I have not spoken are more and those which I have spoken are few. . .*’ He is said to have conveyed the Wisdom to Mahakassapa, holding a flower in hand and remaining silent, possibly conveying the enlightenment has to bloom like a flower.

Therefore, even while he sourced from the *vedic* and *upanishadic* scriptures, he remained silent on those concepts which did not serve the purpose which he set for himself. - to terminate *sufferings* in *samsaara* here and now when people are alive and not offer pleasures and happiness in heavens after death. His pragmatic approach lead him to declare ‘*Earlier and today, monks, I teach but one thing: suffering and the termination of suffering*’, because all else ‘*profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural; faculties and supreme wisdom and Nirvana . . . therefore, I have not announced them*’ (*Samyutta Nikaya*).

Buddha’s objection to the *Brahmannical* system was because they were transferring *vedic* scriptures ‘. . . *to next generations, just like a basket is handed over saying: This is true and all else is false*’, this finds echo even in *Upanishads*. Where it is said that ‘*abiding in the midst of ignorance, wise in their own esteem, thinking themselves to be wise, fools, afflicted by troubles go about like blind men led by one who himself is blind*’ (*Mundaka Up.*).

Buddha’s purpose was also different than the one accepted by *vedic* seers or by *Krishna*, which was to restore *Rta* or *Dharma* lost sight of due to efflux of Time but to lift the generation from sufferings in *samsaara*. Though in his reply to his father, he declared that ‘*it is the custom of my race. The Buddhas who have been and who shall be. Of these, am I and what they did, I do too. And now this which befalls, so fell before, that at this gate a King in warrior’s weaponry should meet the son, a prince in hermit’s clothes*’.

This concept was also further extended in later days by one of the later *Buddhist* sect, popular in far-eastern Asian countries and China. *Amitabha Sutra* proclaims, '*In the eastern (western, southern, northern, in zenith as well) direction there are also countless other Buddhas, like Akshobhya Buddha. . Each of them, extending his broad long tongue preaches in his own land and covers a whole cosmos. . Just as I am now extolling the inconceivable virtues of all the Buddhas, all those Buddhas are likewise extolling my inconceivable Dharma. .*' Commenting on this *Sutra*, Chinese Master Ou-I, said '*Space in any given direction is infinite, and there are infinite numbers of worlds there. Since there are infinite numbers of worlds, there are also infinite numbers of Buddhas who dwell in those worlds. .*' *Mahayana Buddhism* too uses the words '*Infinite Life*' and '*Infinite Light*' referring *Amitabha*, saying '*West of here, past hundred billion Buddha lands, there exists a world called 'Ultimate Bliss' (Sukhavati). In this land there exists a Buddha known as Amitabha, who is expounding the Dharma right now*'. All Indian philosophies source base their philosophies on the *data* supplied by these ancient documents and *Buddha* was not different *Buddha* declared: '*The right-farer is not committed to views*'. He had no hesitation to base his exposition of the problem on the basis of the *data* supplied by earlier seers and freely used *vedic* concepts and symbols, though he did. not subscribe to solution subscribed by *Brahmannical* systems through external sacrifices, accompanied by rites and rituals. Because during his generation a well in later days sacrificial rites became increasingly the instruments of economic domination of Brahmins in society. And it is the sacrifices with elaborate rites and rituals which *Buddha* objected since they encourage one to desire things which one is not disciplined for.

He told *Malunkyaputta*, one of the Brahmins intellectual who had joined the congregation: '*The religious life, Malunkyaputta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal. . nor that the world is not eternal. . there still remains the birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery,*

grief and despair, for the extinction of which in present life, I am prescribing. . Accordingly, Malunkyaputta, bear always in Mind what it is that I have not explained, and what it is that I have explained. .’ because mere Knowledge ‘. . . profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, termination, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom and wisdom; therefore, I have not explained’.

However, soon after his enlightenment, when *Buddha* approached his five erstwhile associates, with an intention to share his enlightenment with them, he found them un-responsive, though overwhelmed by his resplendence. They listened to him with awe and respect but did not accept him as *Buddha*, the enlightened one, since he too was till few years earlier a seeker like them. When *Buddha* saw them talking to him in patronizing manner, he said to them: ‘*Monks, do not address Tathagata by name or by appellation ‘friend’! An arhant is Tathagata and a fully enlightened one is a Buddha’.*

Soon his associates were convinced and *Buddha* departed to *Saranath*, near *Varanasi* in 528 B.C. along with them where he gave his first sermon. Never demanding unquestioned obedience, he cautioned the listeners of the two extreme Paths ‘*not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the word - that which is enjoined with passion and luxury, therefore, low, vulgar, common, ignoble and useless; and that which enjoined with self torture, therefore, painful ignoble and useless.’* He recommended, ‘*Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge and tends to calm, supreme wisdom, enlightenment and Nirvana’.*

He proposed *Four Noble Truths* - that in *samsaara* the very Existence is suffering, *Nature of suffering*, *Causes of suffering*, *the Way for Cessation of suffering* and finally *the Way for Cessation of suffering* further consisting *Eightfold Noble Truths- Comprehensive Insight. Comprehensive Intention, Comprehensive Speech, Comprehensive Action, Comprehensive*

Livelihood, Comprehensive Effort, Comprehensive Recollection and Comprehensive intellectual Equanimity.

The Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Noble Truths for termination were not intellectual propositions but conscious, comprehensive truths which one should consciously imbibe with alert mind here and now, in this very moment when he comes to know of them and not later in time. Then and only then one can say that there is suffering and suffering is comprehended. It is such awareness, with an unshakeable comprehension, admission and acknowledgement that made Buddha's existence the last one, there being no further existence.

Buddha traveled far and wide, from place to place, gathering devoted disciples captivated by his teachings. He continued to lay emphasis on internal receptivity rather than on external endowment. Receptivity to *Wisdom* is the crux of *Brahmacharya* - pursuit of *the Prime Existence, Vairagya* – detachment from *samsaara* being the culmination. He rejected the suggestion that his teachings should be recorded in *Sanskrit*, since such a step would keep his teachings away from the common people. *Buddha's* teachings were moment for all; therefore, he spoke in *Pali*, the language of the masses, and embellished his speech with examples drawn from familiar fables and parables.

People were impressed by Buddha's teachings which relied on one's own insight and not on others; therefore, he spoke as one with authority. *Buddha's* experienced *Wisdom* in entirety but his expressions were restricted to termination of *sufferings in samsaara*. *Buddha* identifies *samsaara* with aggregation of the *sanskaaras* on Mind in *the Waking state*, very much in the manner declared in *Maitri Up.* wherein it is said '*chittameva hy samsaaram*' one's Mind, verily, is *samsaara*. The Mind in the *Waking state* is influenced by the senses which create *a Distinct Gross Existence*, which people associate with the body. In *Dream state*, the Mind is not aware of the body but takes the impressions of the *Waking state*, to build an illusory world. In *Dreamless state* Mind has neither thoughts nor conscious of

absence of thoughts, nor even conscious of the body. In that state one experience the silence of the original pure state of the Mind, which is not yet same or like the '*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*' *Prime Existence*.

Samsaara is the aggregate of *sanskaaras*, the *Distinct Gross Existence*, created by sensory influences. One becomes conscious of *samsaara* only when the aggregate *sanskaaras* become burden on Mind, and ceases when they cease to be a burden. Therefore, the Mind should be divested from the formatted *Distinct Gross Existence*, when then becomes liberated from the limited to the limitless *Wisdom*. *Buddha* attributes intense *craving* to possess some thing or the other, to become some thing or the other and to renounce some thing or the other as the *cause of suffering* in *samsaara*. This constant endeavor makes *samsaara* as if it is on fire, the eye, the forms, consciousness, and impressions of sensations, with intense passion, hatred and infatuation. *Samsaara* by itself is neutral and is not the *cause of suffering*; it is attachment to *samsaara* that causes *craving* '*which leads to re-birth, combined with pleasure and craving, seeking (pleasure of the senses) here and there - craving for passion, craving for existence, and the craving for non-existence*'. A man of wisdom having aversion for these, becomes detached and divested of passion, which makes him free and becoming free becomes aware of freedom, his craving for rebirth becomes exhausted, and he lives without hangover of the past and concern for the future, doing from moment to moment, things to be done and knowing there nothing else more need be done.

Buddha says, '*When Noble Truths equanimity of Intellect, insight and liberation are understood and reflected, then craving for Distinct Gross Existence comes to end, is destroyed and now there is no any further distinct gross Existence*' (*Anguttara Nikaya*). Then one reaches the state of *Nirvana*, which is the complete cessation from craving through attachment to the *Distinct Gross Existence*.

For *Brahmins* of his times, *Buddha's* pragmatic approach appeared pedestrian and not mystical and spiritual. Denial of luminous divinities of heaven as the instruments of energy made adoration and worship not necessary and *Brahmins* as primary beneficiaries in bridging the spasm between the divine and the human, through sacrificial rites and rituals, became superfluous. If *suffering* in *samsaara* can be terminated by individual human effort and dependence on one's own light within, then the importance of external agencies becomes diminished. Unlike *Buddha*, *Vedic* seers conceptualized the deities symbolically as energizing powers of Nature but the entire effort ended in making them living gods to be propitiated. Therefore, reappraising the role of the divinities by *Buddha* struck at the very foundation of *Brahmannical* system, frightening *Brahmins* of their importance.

Brahmins insisted that their perception alone is correct and all others were not, and any one who opposes their interpretations were *a-vaiddic*, unrighteous, un-orthodox misguided in believing things which were contrary to the *sanatana dharma* or the perennial principles. *Buddha* refused to enter into such irrational and fruitless debate on the fundamental concepts, remaining silent. Consequently, rather than *Buddha's* teachings, which were drawn extensively from intellectual deliberations of the *Upanishads*, it is the perceived challenge to their dominant position in society that rankled the *Brahmins*, till considerable passage of Time made *Buddha* accessible to the main stream of Hindu thought and *Buddha* came to be seen as one of the avatars, descents of *Sriman Narayan*.

In spite of the vocal opposition from the traditional fold, many intellectually enlightened *Brahmins* joined *Buddha*, though in confused state. Some were not happy with *Buddha's* reluctance to explain questions which were dealt in *vedic* scriptures and *Upanishads*, whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, is finite or infinite, the soul and the body are identical or different from each other, the saints exists or does not exist after death, or both exists and does not exist. *Buddha* considered these queries as

irrelevant and discouraged fruitless arguments and debates. In fact he made it quite clear that '*Verily, the Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life. You do not discern the nature of living or dying. This body will be dissolved and no amount of performance of sacrifices will save it. Therefore seek you real life that is the Mind. Where the consciousness of the Distinct Gross Existence exists, there truth (Prime Existence) cannot come to be luminous. When truth (Prime Existence) comes to be luminous, the consciousness of the Distinct Gross Existence will disappear. Therefore let you Mind rest on truth (Prime Existence), propagate truth (Prime Existence), pay your full attention to that and let it spread wide. The clinging to individuality is perpetual death while moving in truth (Prime Existence) is participating in the eternal life*'.

Unlike *vedic* scriptures which were kept concealed as *chhandas* and *guyam*, secret to be known only by *Brahmins*, *Buddha's Teachings* were open to all people irrespective of class or position, caste or creed. He declared that '*Tathagata has no theories*' and '*Tathagata has no such things as the closed fist of a Teacher, who keeps something back*', though he claimed to have seen '*. . . an ancient way, and ancient road followed by the wholly awakened ones of olden times . . . Along that I have gone, and the matters that I have come to know fully as I was going along it, I have told . . . this brahmacharya, that is prosperous and flourishing, widespread, and widely known, become popular - in short, well made manifest both for gods and men*' (*Samyutta Nikaya*).

Quite contrary to general impression, *Buddha* did not deny the existence of eternal *Self* but gave a different dimension to the word by referring it as the '*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*' *subtle essence* distinct from *anatta* or non-self, the *Distinct Gross Existence*, the body '*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*'. The *Distinct Gross Existence*, being the aggregation of ideas, concepts, opinions and memories created by sensory influences on Mind also cease to exist. The phenomenon moon in the water suggests empirical

experience. The water is the subject and moon the object, so long as there is water, there is the moon in the water, and the moment the water ceases to be so would the moon cease to be. *Nagarjuna*, one of the latter *Buddhist* doctrinaire, clarifies ‘*he (Buddha) taught the existence of Atman when he wanted to impart his disciples the conventional doctrine; he taught the doctrine of not-Self - anatta, when he wanted to impart them the transcendental doctrine. . . . It does not attach importance to the eternal Self of which we know so little and is abstruse*’. Ego is useful as a crutch to lean on in empirical life and not to be fooled of its claims as the ultimate foundation in spiritual adventure.

Buddha does not speak specifically of the eternal *Self* – *Atta* or *Atma*, but he refers the aggregation of *Karmas*, the *Distinct Gross Existence*, as *anatta* or *anatma*. When one experiences *Bliss* saying ‘*When sensations no longer exist, that, verily is the Bliss*’, the absence of sensations appears as the state of non-existence of sensations – *shoonyata*. Therefore, he justifiably asks, ‘*Should I not, after recognizing. . search for the unborn, ageless, non-ill, deathless, grief less, undefiled, unexcelled, burden-free Nirvana?*’

Buddha speaks of suffering in *samsaara*, pointing out that ‘*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*’ and that which is ‘*unborn, not become, not made, un compounded*’ is the self, *Atma*. Human beings suffer because they assume the *Distinct Gross Existence*, which *anatma*, or *anatta*, as the *atma* or *atta* and desire for things which are transient and not eternal, driven by momentary sensory influences. *Buddha* explains the problem as well the solution in lay man’s language and not as an intellectual principle. Drawing their attention to the *samsaara*, he points out that *suffering* exists as its inherent attribute of the problem, which should be tackled by sourcing *Wisdom* and not the collected information which is the aggregate of the sensory influences on *Mind*. Luminous *Wisdom* comes normally to one who divests himself of the burden of *Knowledge* gathered through sensory influences.

Buddha repeatedly talks of living a wholesome life here and now than life after cessation of *the Distinct Gross Existence*, and the life thereafter. The ignorance caused by the impermanent (*anicca*) and not-Self (*anatta*) should be removed, instead of speculating heaven and life after death and heavens as the abode of eternal pleasures, which being mental concepts created by *craving*, which is unsure instrument for deliverance from *sufferings*. A man should be aware of sufferings in *samsaara* and not enter in arguments like the man wounded by an arrow. According to *Buddha* it is *Craving* that drives human beings to *suffering*. Desires by themselves are not harmful but when they turn out to be incessant *cravings* that life becomes miserable. One *craves* for what is born, has become, and is compounded and predisposed to dissolution. Therefore, when Mind is fettered by *cravings*, it is not free to respond from the source. Only the Mind being aware that *craving* is the *cause* that leads to *suffering*, is capable of being free from fetters and free to revel in the state *Nirvana*, detachment of the Mind from *the Distinct Gross Existence* and the *cravings*. It is comparable to the fire which ceases to burn when fuel is denied, without knowing to which direction it has gone, to the east, west, south or the north. When Vaccha remarked that such question does not arise, because fire was burning when fed with fuel and it is reckoned as gone when fuel is denied.

Bhagavd Gita refers it as *Brahmi-stithi* – divine state, in which there is bewilderment, established that state on attains detached state of being in Brahman. – ‘*esha braahmi stithiparthanai’nenam praapya vimuhyati; stithvaa’syaam antakale’pi brahmanirvanam rcchati*’ In Mahabharata too we find it mentioned ‘*vihaaya sarvasankalpaan buddhya shareeramaanasan, sa vai nirvaanam aapnoti nirindhana ivaanalah*’ – abandoning all motivations from intellect, body and mind, he verily departs to the divine state of detachment from body.

Buddha faced persons with absence of receptivity as well those who opposed his teachings, calling it *a-vaaidic*, not in tune

with *vedic* teachings. Unmindful of such setbacks, he continued to communicate his enlightenment to the masses that flocked to his sermons, considering him as the *Light* that leads. Vaccha who was impressed exclaimed, *'Excellent, O Gotama, excellent. It is as if one should set upright what was over-turned, disclose what was concealed, show the path to one who is lost or hold a lamp in darkness so that those who have eyes may see. Even so the Law is made clear by Gotama in different ways. I have come here for refuge, to the revered Gotama, to Dhamma and to the Sangha. Let me be received as a lay disciple taking refuge from this day forth whilst my life lasts'*.

Buddha brought out the difference between a lay person and one who is attained *Nirvana* saying, *' . . . Just as all the great rivers Ganga, Jamuna, Sarasvati, Sarabha, Mahi when they reach the ocean, lose their former names and differences, and are designated as the great ocean, even so these four castes Kshatriya, Brahmana, Vaishya, Sudras when they go forth from the household to the homeless life . . . '* *Brahmin* is one who truly is *'free from anger, dutiful, virtuous, without appetites, subdued and has received his last body, who like water on a lotus leaf, does not cling to sensual pleasures, who knows the end of his own suffering and has put down his burden and is unshackled'*.

Buddha did not desire his teachings to be converted in religious creeds. Therefore, seeing man's identification of his perceived self has given him a uncertain sense of permanence, strengthened by his accumulated memories, he exhorted his disciples to reflect, guided but not led by any one else. He said *'Compounds are subject to destruction, therefore, endeavour with diligence and work out your own salvation'*. *'Live like islands unto your selves. . . as refuge unto your selves, take none other as your refuge, live with Dhamma as your island, as your refuge, take none other as refuge. . . Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help'*. *'Believe nothing, O Monks, merely because you have been told about it. . . or because it is traditional, or because you*

yourselves imagined it. Do not believe what your Teacher tells you merely out of respect for the Teacher. But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find it to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings – that doctrine believe and cling to and take it as your guide’.

Dhamma was his guiding principle and Sangha was the common platform for discussion and consultation. Spiritualism is exclusively an individual endeavour and individual commitment leading to individual enlightenment. The teachings were not meant to create mass hypnosis. He encouraged even during his life time intellectual diversity and left the disciples to sort out the differences, but when diversity leads to dissensions, controversies and disputes among his disciples, though cautioning forbearance. *‘Enough, O Bhikkus, no altercations, no contentions, no disunion, no quarrels’*, because they divert Mind from the primary purpose and bring no fruit at the end of confrontations. He allowed disciples to gather in a congregation, Sangha, as convenient place for inter-action, not as committed adherents to his teachings as a religious belief, creed or religious faith.

Therefore, he discouraged his cousin Devadatta from his desire to lead the Sangha after his passing over, since this would lead dissensions in Sangha. When Ananda asked him, *‘Who shall teach us when you have gone’*, he replied, *‘Surely should there be any one who harbours the thought it is I who will lead the brotherhood, or the Order is dependent upon me, he should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the Order. Now Tathagata thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood or that the Order is dependent upon him. Why then should Tathagata leave instructions in any matter concerning the Order?’*

Buddha never claimed to lead the Sangha, saying that earlier he was only a Tathagata and now *‘I am one who is aware, the enlightened, the Buddha’*. Seeing Ananda’s perplexed face, he asked *‘What, Ananda, does the Order expect from me? I have preached the truth without making any*

distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrines, for in respect of Truth, Tathagata has no such thing as closed fist of a Teacher, who keeps something back' and continuing, 'I am not the first Buddha who neither came upon the earth nor shall be last. In due time, another Buddha will arise in the world, a holy one, a supremely enlightened one endowed with wisdom in conduct, an auspicious one . . . He will reveal the same eternal truth, which I have taught you. He will preach you that which is great in the beginning, great in the middle and great in the goal'.

Buddha had never claimed to be a Teacher for all the times to come, though his Teachings are perennial. He continued to travel from place to place. Soon as seasons changed their course, with months following the days and years following the months, he found travel tiresome. Disciples too saw him tired, sickness and old age wearing away his body. Once Ananda, accompanied by other disciples, approached Buddha, and said 'I have beheld, O Lord, how the Blessed One was in health, how he had to suffer. Though at the sight of the sickness of the Blessed One, my body became weak as a creeper, the horizon became dim, my faculties no longer clear, I took some little comfort from the thought that the Blessed One would not pass away from existence until he had left instructions as touching the Order'.

Buddha too agreed with them saying, 'I have now grown old and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close . . . Just as a worn out cart can only with much difficulty made to move along, so the body of Tathagata can only be kept going with much additional care . . . It may be now Ananda, that you may think thus 'The Word is that of the dead previous Teacher; we have (now) no Teacher. . Not so, Ananda should you regard thus. The doctrine, Dhamma, shown and made known by me to you, will be your Teacher on my passing away. . '

His concern and compassion for his disciples was immense. Then he reflected, 'It would not be right for me to pass away from life without addressing the disciples, without taking leave of the Order.' Therefore, he addressed them, '*It may be now,*

Bhikkus, that some of you may have doubt or perplexity regarding what the Buddha, the Law, the Community, or the Path. Inquire, Bhikkus, do not feel hereafter regret that The Teacher was present with us and we could not question face to face' but seeing their hesitancy at this hour when the Teacher is about to depart, he continued 'It may be now, Bhikkus, that you do not inquire because of respect for the Teacher. (In that case) let friend speak to friend.'

Death is a great mystery which for every one on death makes reflective, from where he arrives and whence he goes, all is mystery. In his quieter moments he feels all that he considered important, substantive, his ideas of good and bad, noble and evil, preferable and not preferable are, *Self, Deliverance* all turn out be of no consequence.

Great thinkers from time immemorial have considered, reflected and spoke on *Death*. But *Death* has not saved even them. *Death* has no respect for childhood, adolescence, youth or an old age. A healthy man as well a sick one can be his food. When one reflects on *Death*, the living becomes important. But what is dieing and what is living; that is the question. A man who commits suicide does not do so because he likes dieing, but he dies because he is afraid to live. Therefore, when one reflects on dieing, living becomes an important subject Then every moment becomes important, though the '*moment*' is but an idea with which we have sought to bind what we consider '*past*' and '*future*' which by themselves are also ideas. In a moment the gross body, which was warm with energy and life becomes cold, supine, a cipher the next '*moment*'.

Death is one great power which nature possesses with which it can snuff out a life out of recognition. When *Death* approaches one need not think of one's preferences one's possessions or one's accomplishments, one's beliefs and one's religion. Every thing the *Death* heralds have to be accepted, is accepted. *Death* is a great mystery which a human being faces in life. He knows what death is, but does not know what *Death* brings out. *Death* brings in him as sense of fear, not because he

does not know what would come to be his state when he dies but because he knows and therefore, is afraid that he would lose what he thinks is his. He thinks that it is his end, he is finished, and he becomes a cipher. *Death* appears a long never ending dream, which no one is ready to accept. Even a man who commits suicide does not desire it to be the end.

Death becomes a great leveler of all dualities. It is *Death* which makes one remain alive. *Death* makes one fear doing any thing sinful or unwholesome act making him a good man, wholesome man. With this intent he follows religions, performs rites and rituals and various teachers. Each day takes you nearer *Death* and away from life. Every thinking person dies each day, when he is deep sleep, and is born again when he wakes up from the sleep. Sleep is close companion of *Death*, making momentarily forget life as one perceives it. No one can escape from this eternal cycle.

There is a story. Once *Death* came face to face before a King. He said '*I am Death. At the end of the Month, I will come to meet you*'. The King became concerned. He distributed his kingdom, his wealth and possessions among his sons and left for the open space, to the forests stayed in a forest amidst the sylvan surroundings, on the lap of nature. He had no cares of the Kingdom, or of neither his family, nor his possessions or of their absence. His shoulders were without burden of possessions and positions, his Mind was at peace, without the clamour of *cravings* and his heart found fulfillment of having done what should be done.

The month came to the end and the King waited for *Death* to come. Then at that moment he saw an eagle flying high in the space with a bird in his mouth, and as he saw the bird slipped from the eagle's beak and fell in his hands. It was alive and he tended it with care. Then he felt *Death* being at his side. *Death* had no ferocious out look but wisdom of the wise. *Death* spoke '*I was thus waiting for you to know what Death means. Your last breath is as uncertain as the breath of this little bird. You*

have lived these last days of your life without baggage on your shoulders and found peace. This is living life, without fear of losing it when I come. Death comes to every one and it should come when you are happy to receive him'. Death's steps are not heard with ears but with heart. Buddha too has considered Death but speaks of living. He speaks Nirvana with Death as the logical state, where detachment from the state of Becoming ends in enlightened state of Being. When his disciples were concerned whether Buddha 'would exist or would not exist', he clarified: 'Come now, mendicants. I enjoin you. Perishable by nature is Individuality, (the distinct gross existence). Therefore, labour diligently. . Live like islands unto your selves, brothers, as refuge unto your selves, take none other as your refuge, live with Dhamma as your island, as your refuge, take none other as refuge'. . . Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help . . . let a brother, as he dwells in the body, regard the body. . the sensations that he, being strenuous, thoughtful and mindful may whilst in the world, overcome the grief which arises from the body, from sensations and he may overcome the grief which arises from craving due to ideas or due to reasoning or to feeling. Those who either now or after I pass over, shall be lamp unto themselves'.

Buddha always placed seekers on the Path to Perfection and guided them through communication and not through compulsion. He counseled patience, since Mind is impetuous and needs settling down; being difficult to be restrained if seeker is ill-prepared. In spite of their long discipleship, observing Ananda mourning about his departure, Buddha said, 'Enough Ananda, mourn not, lament not. Has it not been announced by me ere this time that there is in all, even the beloved and kind, the principle of change, of separation, of transience ? And how in my case is it ever possible that what is born, produced, compounded, dissolvable by nature should not be dissolved? That state is surely not to be found. For long has this Follower been attended with loving kindness, in deed, with loving kind words, with loving kind thought, steadfast, happy, undivided,

and unmeasured? You are well merited. undertake the effort and soon you shall be without taint.’ Till the end, *Buddha* and his Teachings were inseparable.

The day of his passing away came soon. One day *Buddha* ate *Shukara-maddhava*, a dish cooked by disciples *Kunda*, which did not agree with him. *Shukara maddhava* was not a food prepared out *pork meat*, as many early western translators of *Buddhist* scriptures in ignorance concluded but porridge prepared out of *bulbous roots*, wildly grown in forests. Even as *egg-plants* or the *chick-peas* cannot be hatched by a hen and the *peahen peas* are but harmless *Toordal*, *Shukara maddhava* was not food prepared of *pork meat*, but porridge prepared out of roots.

When *Buddha* saw his health deteriorating fast, he called *Ananda* to place his bed between two trees. When *Ananda* asked him how his body should be dealt after his departure, *Buddha* admonished him, “*Busy not yourselves, Ananda, about honouring the body of Tathagata. Apply yourselves, attach yourselves, abide diligently, strenuously, and resolutely to the true good. There are wise Kshatriyas, wise Brahmins and wise householders who have clear faith in the Tathagata. They will do the honour to the body of Tathagata*’.

Buddha after giving his final instructions to his disciples - ‘*Come now, dear monks, I bid you farewell. Compounds are subject to destruction, therefore, endeavour with diligence and work out your own salvation*’, discarded his body in 480 B.C. merging it in the vast Space. Then *Ananda* declared to *Aniruddha*: ‘*The Blessed One is dead*’ which statement was corrected by the latter ‘*The Blessed One, friend, is not dead; he has attained to cessation of perception and sensation.*’

When disciples heard of *Buddha*’s passing over, they wailed. ‘*Too soon has the Blessed One has died. Too soon has the light in the world disappeared*’, then the wise ones comforted them saying: ‘*Enough, friends, mourn not, lament not. Has it not been announced by the Blessed One ere this that*

there is in all. . the principle of transience. And how is it possible that what is born, produced, compounded, dissolvable by nature - that this indeed should not be dissolved? Such state is not to be found . . .’

When the body of the Blessed One was cremated, there was scramble for sharing the relics. Then venerated Dona exclaimed: ‘*The Blessed One had forbearance taught. It is not right that strife should rise over the sharing of the relics of the Best of Men. Let us all, sire, united in accord share the relics in eight parts.*’ And it was done accordingly.

Collation of Buddha’s Teachings

People saw the *Vedas* as mystical, too divine to have been composed by human beings. But *Buddha’s* teachings were of a great Teacher, who was alive to human suffering, a pragmatic thinker and persuasive communicator. His teachings had no mystical style of the *Vedas*, the ornate style of Mahabharat or an emotional appeal of *Ramayana*. Yet in times to come, intellectual *Brahmin* converts to *Buddhism* transformed the simple teachings in to spiritual philosophies. The *Brahmannical* upsurge outsmarted Buddhism, a status as an independent philosophy, a religious faith. When they saw that they could not Buddhism, they included Buddha and his thoughts to make it on of the many sects and not a distinct religion, within comprehensive Hindu religious system – *sanatana Dharma*. In spite of such efforts, *Buddha’s teachings* continued to be vibrant if not in India, surely in the countries across the borders in alien lands like Sri Lanka, Mynammer, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Japan and Korea as a living religion.

Buddha had not committed any of his teachings to writing, his life was testimony and teachings were the testament. Even then the devotees, like Ananda and others, feared that the *Teachings* may undergo corruption in the hands of subsequent generations. They desired to put to writing Buddha’s teachings for future generations, when immediate disciples were alive to the teachings. Therefore, being aware of the words, ‘*We are not*

indeed without refuge; we have a refuge, we have the Dhamma . . .’ echoing in their ears, the disciples assembled under the leadership of Mahakassapa. The few blessed ones tried to recapture the Teachings as they remembered, declaring that they would be recording what they could remember and recollect. They were conscious that there is a great divide between the spoken words and the ones which were heard and listened and what was heard can hardly be conveyed in words therefore, they began recording with candid caution, *‘Thus I have heard . . .*’ Yet Mahakassapa addressed the assembled *Bhikkus* in all humility, *‘If it pleases the assembly that which was not ordained, let the assembly not ordain, and that which was ordained, let it not be revoked ; let the assembly remain devoted to the precepts as they were ordained’*. Ananda gathered the sermons in *Sutta Pitaka*, dividing them under - *Digha Nikaya* (the longer sermons), *Majjhima Nikaya* (medium sermons), *Samyutta Nikaya* (sermons according to topics), *Anguttara Nikaya* (sermons grouped in gradual order) and *Khuddaka Nikaya* (smaller sermons). Upali edited *Vinaya Pitaka* containing rules of monastic discipline.

As time passed, many irregularities crept in the compilations, giving rise to contradictory interpretations, which needed revision. Emperor Asoka, therefore, called Second Council in 383 BC at Vessali, almost 100 years later, to regulate the teachings in the true spirit in which they were communicated. In this assembly additional sermons were included in *Sutta Pitaka* and many contradictions were resolved. The third Council was called during the Kanishka (1st - 2nd Century AD) rule, by which Brahmannical and anthropomorphic influences had commenced dominating the Indian psyche. Buddha’s icons replaced Stupas and Bodhi tree as objects of veneration. The teachings received intellectual and metaphysical foundations under the influence of Brahmin intellectuals like Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and others, who had by this time accepted the Buddhist philosophy. Mahayana philosophy was recorded in Sanskrit as against the earlier Sthaviravada,

Theravada or Hinayana which were in Pali. The Third council was held in Pataliputra in 225 B.C. which added many more materials to Sutta Pitaka, Vinaya Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka, which represented the scholar's attempt to systematize spiritual teachings. These slow and steady insertions in the main documents led Buddhism to become anything that was earlier as simple philosophy of the Gautama *Buddha*, ending up in creating diverse philosophies. The vibrancy of *Buddha's* Teachings gave way to structured philosophical schools. While the early Buddhist missionaries took the original writings to alien countries, wise ones, who traveled to alien countries, couched the teachings to suit the local traditions. Bodhidharma had introduced Buddhism to China in 520 AD, converting the then Chinese Emperor Wu of Liang. During 960-1279 AD, the faith became modified under Confucian, Tao and Tibetan faiths. Many of these influences distanced the original teachings of Buddha from the masses, becoming intellectual exercise.

Buddha became a symbol of the enlightened persons, Gautama *Buddha* being one of the many. Discipline of *Dhyana* came to be the foundation of Zen *Buddhism*, influence of *Shakti* cults entered Tibetan *Buddhism*, the concepts of heaven and hell made inroads in *Sukhavati* school of *Buddhism*, which propagated the remote goal of a 'Pure Land', to be 'achieved' with complete faith in Amida (Amitabha). Zen *Buddhism* assumed that even false words could be true, if they lead to liberation; even true words could be false, if they lead to bondage. *Mahayana* sect dominated India, while *Hinayana* in Sri Lanka, Mynammer, Thailand, and the eastern Asian nations. Personality of *Buddha* became diversified as Amitabha, *Avalokiteshvara*, and *Maitreya* with inclusion of *Tara*, female energy in worship.

Helmuth von Glasenapp concludes in his book *Buddhism - A non-theistic religion*, that *Dharma* which is unshakable becomes the firm basis of all that happens in world, the norm which regulates ethical and moral life, which 'manifests itself in the infinite multitude of those forces which are also called

Dharmas by the Buddhists; these are the factors of being which condition each other (samskara), and which produce by their interplay the outer and inner world of an individual. They give rise to the laws of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, and of causal interdependence; they are also active in the norms, rules, commandments, duties, rights, as well as in the teaching of liberation. And they are implicit in the world-transcending, final aim of all striving, in Nirvana, which is also called highest dharma'.

Gautam Buddha - Teachings

Introduction:

All religious movements with slight variation in verbal indulgence agree on single source of supreme power. Whether it is *vedic* statement: '*ekam sad*' or '*Ekam Santam*' - *One Prime Existence* or Abraham assertion '*I AM THAT I AM: and thus shalt thou say unto the children of Isreal, I AM hath sent me unto you*' or *Koranic* statement '*Unto Allah belong the East and the West, and whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's contenance, Lo! Allah is all-embracing, All-Knowing. . Your God is one God; there is no God save him, the Beneficent, the Merciful*', all declare the universal foundation of *One Supreme Power*. Even as for *vedic* seers *Brahman* was *nirarakar* and *nirvikalpa* luminous splendour '*yatra vishvam bhavatyekaneedam*' where every thing exists as concentrate, so was he for Hebrews '*a flame of fire amidst the bush, where the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed*' and for Islam, Allah, '*neither feminine nor neutral, being inconceivable Supreme Being*'. The diversity in expression of *That One* was the consequence of different people, periods and places, '*vipra bahudha vadanti*' '*bahuda kalpayanti*' – which men of *Wisdom* speak variously, is fashioned variously. Though *Wisdom* of the *Supreme Power* was deep and expansive, the *Knowledge* as expressed was superficial and restrictive. Seers think in universalities, but respond in restrictive expressions.

Mundaka Up. suggests the reason for such diversity: ‘*dve vidye veditavye iti. . para chaiva apara*’ two forms of *Wisdom* are to be known – the one superior and the other inferior. In *Maitri Up.* the suggestion was extended clarifying ‘*dve vaava brhamano rupe murtan cha amurtan cha, atha yaan murtam tad asatyam, yad amurtam tat satyam, tad brahma taj jyotih, yaj jyotih sa adityah, sa vaa esha aum ity, etad aatmabhavat, sa tredhaatmaanam vyakruta, aum iti, tiso maatra, etaabhih sarvam idam otam protam chaivaasmiti*’ – Two-fold, verily is the *form of Brahman*, the *formed* and the *formless*. Now, therefore, that which is *formed* is the *non-existence*; that which is *formless* is the *Existence*, *That* is the *Brahman*, that is the luminous one *That* which is luminous is the *aditya* (the primary one). *That*, verily, came to have *Aum* as the the *self*. *That One* became manifest three-fold (as *a*, *u* and *m*), from these all this came to be formed, woven as warp and woof.

Vak, say the *vedic* hymns, is not restricted to *the expressed Speech – Vaikhari* but is also the *all-comprehensive Wisdom*, as *Para*, *Pashyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*, ‘*that was best and stainless revealed*’ which ‘*brihaspate prathamam vacho agram yatprairat*’ – which came to be energized for *Brihaspti* for the first time and which other seers were aware. Only later they sifted it with spirit – ‘*yatra dheera manasaa vachamakrat*’, keeping *Para*, *Pashyanti* and *Madhyama* forms concealed from others and revealing only *Vaikhari*, for the masses for communicating the *Knowledge* of the *divine mystery* concealed in the earlier three.

In *Maitri Up.* it is further said, ‘*dve va va brhamani abhidhyeye shabdas cha ashabdas, atha shabdenaivaas habdam aavishkriyate, atha tatra aum iti shabdo*’ *nenoradhvam utkranto’ashabde nidhaanam eti, athaahaisha gatir etad amrtam, etat saayujyatvam, nirvrtatvam thathaa cheti. . . . dve brahmani viditavye, shabdabrahma paran ch yat, shabdbrahmani nishnatah param brahmadhigachhati*’ – There are, verily, two *Brahmans* to be meditated upon, *spoken* and *non-spoken*. Through *spoken* alone is the *non-spoken* revealed.

The *spoken* here is the *Aum*. Moving upward through it, the one reaches the abiding place in the *non-spoken*. This is the *Way*, this is the *immortal*, and this is the *bliss* and also *tranquil state*. . The two-fold *Brahman* is to be *known*, the *spoken Brahman* and that which is yonder. Those who knows the spoken *Brahman* reaches the *Brahman* which is yonder.

When the *amurtam*, the formless *Aum*, *Brahman* was made manifest as *murtam* with *form*. The *amurtam* was the all comprehensive *Wisdom*, and *murtam* was *Knowledge*. To make the *Wisdom* known, Mind, Speech and Actions became the instruments, Mind preceding the Speech and Actions following the Speech, all this manifest, woven as warp and woof. That which is manifest as *Knowledge* is not eternal, having a beginning and an end, impermanent, changing from time to time, subservient to *Time*, which is said, '*kalah pachati bhutani sarvany eva sa vedavit, yasmin tu pachyate kalo yas taam veda sa vedavit*' – Time ripens the things formed, he who knows thus all the things, in what the time has cooked, he, verily, is the knower of *Veda* (the *Wisdom*).

While the *spoken* words give *Knowledge*, it is by *non-spoken* words alone that one becomes aware of *Wisdom*. According to Shankara, *vedic* scriptures are instruments which furnish *Knowledge*, sensory information about Seer's supra-sensory experiences, pointing out what leads to the wholesome and what leads to unwholesome ends, thereby indicating particular relationship between means and the ends. *Spoken* word is what constitutes *Knowledge*, *non-spoken* awareness constitutes *Wisdom*. Excessive emphasis on *Knowledge* is hindrance, people becoming enslaved by the *form* and not the essence, leading to fundamentalism of faiths, beliefs and religions instead the fundamentals of religion. Extra-ordinary capable of detaching *known* from the *non-known*, reach out to *Bliss of Beautitude*. *Buddha's* purpose was to '*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*', living without any intermediaries as *Buddha* recommended, '*like islands unto your selves, brothers, as refuge unto your selves, take none other as*

your refuge, live with Dhamma as your island, as your refuge, take none other as refuge . . . Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help. ?

Before Aryas settled in India, spiritual quest of the *yogis* and *munis* among non-Aryas, referred in *vedic* scriptures with awe and distaste, was through austerities and penance, unlike the seers of the *vedic* hymns, who relied on prayers, supplication to the divine powers and on supra-sensory revelations. Individual effort primarily attuned to opening one's consciousness for the descent of the divine in human psyche. With the assimilation of non-Arya elements within the Arya mainstream, the non-Arya practices too came to be ingrained among the Aryas. Perhaps, it is this context that when Gautama, Svataketu's father approached Pravaahana Javali, a Kshatriya, for wisdom, he was told that this *Wisdom*, in principle, had not reached Brahmins, therefore, in all worlds this discipline was with Kshatriyas alone. – '*yatheyam na praak tattvatah pura vidya brahmanaan gachhati, tasmad u sarveshu lokeshu kshatrasyaiva prashasanam abhud iti*'. '*prashasanam*' means *discipline*.

During *vedic* era, when thinking was primary and dynamic, intellectual confrontations were minimal, divergent views being considered and accepted as valid perceptions. Only in post-*Vedic* era, the divergent perceptions came to be perceived as *a-Vaidic*, contrary to *Vedic* wisdom, *an-Rta*, contrary to cosmic order and *a-Dharmic*, contrary to righteousness. Such vehemence was contrary to the principles of *sanatana dhrama*. Strangely, the first confrontation to *Brahmannical* came from Krishna, who questioning the primacy given to Indra in worship instead to Mother Nature which sustained their lives. This was perhaps the first departure transforming the performance of sacrifices through rites and rituals to stimulation of energy in performance of action. He cautioned people of the undiscerning ones, who rejoice in the letter of *vedic* scriptures, professing heavens after death through performance of rites and rituals.

Gautam *Buddha* continued in a manner of speaking, this refreshing perception claiming that the *Brahmannical* system

was still passing *vedic scriptures* from generations to generations ‘. . . just like a basket is handed over saying: *This is true and all else is false*’. Pointing out that mere *Knowledge* of the *vedic scriptures* without awareness *Vedas*, understood as *perennial and all-comprehensive Wisdom*, ‘*profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural; faculties and supreme wisdom and Nirvana . . . therefore, I have not announced them . . . earlier and today, monks, I teach but one thing: suffering and the termination of suffering*’.

Both Krishna and *Buddha* were neither rebels nor did they communicate any thing contrary to the *Wisdom* which the seers had experienced and *upanishadic* intellectuals had explained. In fact, Krishna who was initiated by Ghora Angiras after he had become *a-pipasa*, free from *cravings*, on the central theme that in final he was in essence ‘*akshitam asi, achyutam asi, praana samshitama asi ity*’ – you are the indestructible, you are the unshaken, you are one in whom the very essence of life is established. This very wisdom - ‘*rahasyam hy etad uttamam*’, Krishna had earlier handed over to the royal sages, and which having destroyed through lapse of time, he again revealed to Arjuna. In fact he goes further and says, ‘*idam tu te guhyatamam pravakshyamy anasuyave jnanam vijnanasahitam. . .*’ - profound secret of *Wisdom* combined with *Knowledge*

Buddha too was like the ‘*Buddhas who have been and who shall be, of these am I and what they did, I do too*’ and he too passed over the *perennial Wisdom* and the phenomenal *Knowledge* as well. In doing so he had no hesitation to use concepts and symbols of the earlier *Buddhas* (enlightened seers), as *data* during his *saadhana* to extend his experience re-assessing, re-appraising and restating as would be beneficial to the new generations. Without accepting the *Brahmannical* propositions of heavenly pleasures after death of the body, performance of sacrifices through rites and rituals, he gave primacy to the *sufferings* of the general masses in *samsaara* here and now, without having to say any thing that was not said

earlier and thus leading people to a state, where there are no sensations, the very absence of sensations being *Nirvana*, the ultimate Bliss and deliverance.

Therefore, Rhys David was right in pointing out that '*Buddhism flourished within the fold of orthodox beliefs . . . Gautam was born and brought up and lived and die a Hindu; there was not much in the metaphysics and the principles of Gautam which cannot be found in one or the other of the orthodox system and great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier and later Hindu books Such originality as Gautam possessed lay in the way in which he adopted, enlarged, ennobled and systematized that which already been well said by others n the way in which he carried out their logical conclusions, principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers. The difference between him and the other thinkers lay chiefly in his deep earnestness and in his broad public spirit of philanthropy*'.

Buddha's 'Daarshanic' Satya:

Buddha's enlightenment was three Dimensional – Dimension of Time, Dimension in Experience and Dimension of Death.

Mahaabharat speaks of the constructive and destructive *Dimention of Time* – '*kaalah pachati bhutaani, kaalah samharate prajah, kaalah supteshu jagarti, kalo hi duratikramh*' – *Time* ripens he elements, *Time* destroys what is created, *Time* awakens one who slumbers. *Maitri Up.* speaks of Sun as the source of *Time*, and because of its subtle influence, is the proof. Without proof, the thing to be proved can not be grasped. The thing to be proved becomes proved because it contains fragment of that which is to be proved. Through as many parts of *Time* there are, through them only the premise is established. He who worships *Time* as *Brahman*, *Time* goes far beyond. For it has been said, '*From Time all beings flow, from Time they advance in growth, in Time they are laid to rest. Time*

is form and formless as well'. That which is prior the Sun is *Timeless* since *Time* begins with the Sun.

Similar thoughts arose in Siddhartha's mind when he first observed the old man, the sick man and the dead man. As he said on being enlightened as *Buddha*, '*Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain: birth is painful; old age is painful; sickness is painful; death is painful; sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful*'.

Dimension in Experience was experienced when he saw human beings *suffering* and observing *suffering* to be suffering being prime attribute of *samsaara*. '*This is suffering; suffering always exists (in samsaara)*'. It is not a choice or preference but an inalienable and unavoidable reality. Salvation lies in recognizing it, admitting and acknowledging it as fact of life, a reality. His awareness of the corrosive, detrimental, scorching influence of suffering in human life was all-pervasive. '*Everything is burning. The eye is burning, the nose . . . tongue . . . body . . . mind . . . consciousness . . . sense contact and mental contacts is burning . . . pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent, arising from senses and mental contact is burning . . . with the fire of passion, fire of aggression and fire of delusion . . . with birth, aging and death . . . with sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain and despair*'.

He found that very fact of being aware of the fact and acknowledging as reality makes one be relieved of sufferings. But that acknowledgement should be unequivocal, without considerations, reasons and explanations. It is conscious alert awareness that suffering exists as a *Dimension in Experience*. This was *Buddha's* enlightenment.

Buddha became aware of *the Dimension of Death*, which is beyond *Time*, when he saw in the recluse the state he sought to attain and to '*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*' and attained *Nirvana*, the state beyond *Death*, even as *Nachiketa* was initiated in the mystery of *Death* by *Death* himself.

Dhammapada says, 'neither in the space above nor in the depths of the oceans, nor in the caves of the mountains, is such places found where a person may dwell without being overpowered by death'. But human tragedy is that till they confront *Death*, life, relatives and associates, possessions and positions, bondage of the self and its deliverance, gods and divinities alone appear as the most important elements in *samsaara*. Therefore, his desires are centered on possessions, positions, pleasures of senses, self being some unseen, unimportant element not needing immediate concern here and now. Only when he hears the soft steps of *Death* approaching his presence and stares him in his face, all these pale in insignificance and question of the body, which has guarded him during all his *waking state of consciousness* cease to be the centre and the self long overlooked and forgotten looms loud and large for consideration.

Death is a great leveler and all empirical *Knowledge* falls flat and *Mind* seeks to delve deep inwards to source the *Wisdom* to save him. At that moment, *Mind* being least prepared to take a leap from the *known* to the *unknown*, it gropes and grasps, the faiths and beliefs and institutionalized religion and their professed teachers, as the eternal amidst the transient, floundering on the shores, the grains of sand picked in his clenched fist slowly sliding down in frustration. *Thus he experiences the Phenomenal Dimension of Time becoming aware of suffering as the unavoidable and permanent feature of samsaara, the Distinct Gross Existence.*

Therefore, *Buddha* refusal to talk about the subjects dealt in *vedic* scriptures was not because they were irrelevant but because they were not relevant to the purpose which he had undertaken. His main thesis was just that as one whom an arrow has stuck causing immense pain, would rather be concerned with the removal of the arrow and terminating the pain rather be concerned with caste, sex, position, or his height and colour of his skin, even so one who is in *samsaara* would be concerned

suffering and termination of *sufferings* than with the questions whether the world is eternal or not eternal, finite or not finite, whether self and the body are identical or distinct from one another, saints exist after death of the body or they do not exist after death. Therefore he was concerned with pain and sufferings here and now than the pleasures and enjoyments later in heavens after death.

Samyutta Nikaya points out, 'those who in the past for ages, whether devotees or the Brahmanas, viewing what is lovely and pleasant in the world, consider it as permanent, as happiness, as reality, as wholesome, as propitious (*khemato*) have made craving and supports to increase; making the supports to increase they have made sufferings to increase; making sufferings to increase they had no release from form, from decay, from death, without release from sufferings'.

There is nothing in life that changes as the *change itself*. Therefore, he was concerned with *sufferings*, than with intellectual uncertainties. His concern about *sufferings* would be more intelligible if we understand the meaning which he attaches to the word '*dukkha*'. *Dukkha*, is not just '*misery*', '*distress*' or '*torment*' but '*frustration*', '*suffering*' or '*incapability of satisfying or not being able to bear or withstand dissatisfaction repeatedly*'. *Buddha's* emphasis was on suffering in *samsaara*, because in his adolescent age, he was intensely affected and overwhelmed by what he observed as human *sufferings*. *Knowledge* of scriptures by themselves did not resolve his problems nor did his austerity and penance in traditional mould nor even company of his associates. He needed to be wise to the *Wisdom* of *sufferings* as a pervasive influence in life before he could think about the ways of terminating them. Since the life and the conditions around him would not resolve his problem, he chose not to walk on *Path* which was traversed by earlier Seers, but chose instead to walk on the *Path* on a path chartered by his own *Self* and in doing so opened doors to disciplines as no one did earlier. Forgoing company of his associates, he wandered as a *shramana*, living like an island

unto himself, as refuge unto himself, taking none others as refuge, relying on his own receptivity through listening, reflection and meditation on *suffering*.

Though *Buddha* wandered as a lonely swan, neither claiming *descent* of *divine essence* in his *human form*, seeking *ascent* of his *human form* to the *divine essence*. He was not any one special, declaring ‘*both I and you have to travel through this long circle, due to our not discovering, not penetrating the four Truths. . (When I perceived and understood them), my Mind was liberated from the stain. . there arose in me the enlightenment of my liberation. . Just as the blue, red and white lotus, though born in the water, grown up in the water, reaches the surface standing unsullied by the water, even so though born in the world, grown up in the world, I have overcome the world and now abide unsullied in the world, wherefore, you have taken me as the enlightened one*’.

His discipline was rooted on human level though his awareness and enlightenment was divine. The four *Noble Truths* - *Suffering*, the *Nature of Suffering*, the *Causes of Suffering* and the *Way of terminating Suffering*, followed by the eight *Noble Truths* to terminate *suffering* - viz. Comprehensive Perception (*samyak drishti*) and Comprehensive Intent (*samyak sankalpa*), Comprehensive Speech (*samyak vak*), Comprehensive performance of Action (*samyak karma*) and Comprehensive alertness (*samyak ajiva*), Comprehensive Striving (*samyak vyayaama*), Comprehensive Mindfulness (*samyak smriti*) Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect (*samyak samadhi*) were all testimony of the spiritual *Wisdom*, which would lead nowhere as than to *nirvana*, detachment from the Distinct Gross Existence, which is *samsaara*.

Every one of the *Eightfold Noble Truths* is step in the direction to *Nirvana*, which is not *Grace* given but deliverance accomplished through individual effort. None can deny deliverance to one who has strived. No one can grace Bliss of Beatitude to one whose mind is enlightened, as something *seen*, something *heard* something *experienced*. *Buddha*’s purpose was

to clarified to Uttiya, ‘*I show to the listeners, Uttiya, through Dhamma, the higher knowledge for purification of living beings, for overcoming grief and lamentation, for ending suffering and dejection, for attaining the technique for realization of Peace*’. But when Uttiya inquired again: ‘*If then, respected Gotama, higher knowledge shows Dhamma to the listeners, then with such realization, will the entire world escape sufferings by half or by third?*’ (*Anguttara Nikaya*), *Buddha* remained quiet, seeing that Uttiya is not yet fully receptive to his teachings and still inclined to uncertain polemics.

That is what makes and made *Buddha* eternally different, distinct and determine to alleviate the *sufferings* from *samsaara*.

The four Noble Truths

Noble Truths of Suffering

Awareness of which *Buddha* was enlightened was all-encompassing *Wisdom* and not the fragmentary *Knowledge*. His encounter with the sick, the old, the dead and the recluse during his adolescence and the pain to which he was exposed observing their *sufferings* in *samsarra* along with the *data* provided by scriptures and Teachers like Kondana all constituted as *Knowledge* but his enlightenment was the culmination of his own intense reflection and meditation on *suffering*, its *nature*, *causes* and the *ways* of termination was *Wisdom*. *Knowledge* is gathered like honey from various flowers, whereas *Wisdom* dawns like the morning Sun spreading luminosity all around.

Earlier when Siddhartha was not yet the enlightened *Buddha*, he had spoken, '*I perceived and understood, my Mind was liberated from the taint of desire for pleasures . . . taint of desire to become and . . . taint for renunciation . . . there arose in me awareness of my liberation. I knew Distinct Gross Existence is ended, holy life is being experienced, what must be done is done; there is no survival again in future for this (existence) . . . my liberation was thus established*'. Enlightened, he perceived '*material forms, the feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness by which one, in defining Tathagata, might define him, all have been got rid by Tathagata, cut out at the root, made like a palm tree stump that can come to no further existence in future. Freed from reckoning by material forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness, is*

Tathagata. He is deep, immeasurable, and unfathomable, as the great ocean. (To him) neither a statement like arises, nor does not arise, nor even both arises and does not arise apply'.

In *Visuddhimagg*, it is said 'Suffering alone exists, none who suffer; The deed there is, but no doer thereof.' Enlightened, Siddhartha rejoiced, 'Blissful is the solitude of the enlightened one, who has realized and comprehends the Law . . . Putting away the conceit 'I am', this is the Supreme Bliss' 'When I perceived and understood, my Mind was liberated from the taint of desire for pleasures . . . the taint of desire to become and . . . the taint for renunciation . . . When I was (thus) liberated, there arose in me the awareness of my liberation . . . Seeking supreme peace of Nirvana . . . (I) attained supreme peace of detachment from gross existence . . . my liberation was thus established . . . there was no survival again in future' (*Majjima Nikaya*). He had now become *Buddha*, the enlightened one.

The *Noble Truths* were the culmination of his enlightenment of *samsaara* with alert and conscious insight that *sufferings* was inalienable feature of *samsaara*. 'Birth is *duhkha*, decay, sickness is *duhkha*, death is *duhkha* . . . To be bound with things which we dislike and to be separated from things which we like . . . not to get what one desires, is also *duhkha* . . . Everything in *samsaara* is impermanent - the body, sensations, perceptions, *sanskaraas*, and also consciousness. The *samsaara* constitutes a series of *becomings* and *extinctions*'.

His awareness of *samsaara* was that it exercised a corrosive, detrimental, scorching and all-pervasive influence on human life - 'Everything is burning. The eye is burning, the nose . . . tongue . . . body . . . mind . . . consciousness . . . sense contact and mental contacts is burning . . . pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent, arising from senses and mental contact is burning . . . with the fire of passion, fire of aggression and fire of delusion . . . with birth, aging and death . . . with sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain and despair'.

Such awareness did not come to him through empirical or intellectual reflection but as psychological sensation as one would be conscious of warmth of the Sun, soothing sensation of the cool breeze. It is consciousness and awareness that '*Fire Burns*' without having to substantiate that sensation by touching the burning fire. It is consciousness of the pain which a person, wounded by a poisoned arrow would experience, without having to know and analyze, how and by whom and in what manner he was wounded and even without having to describe. As *Buddha* puts it, '*a man wounded by a poisoned arrow, and his friends, relatives and inmates bring a physician or a surgeon to attend him, and if the wounded man were to say, 'I will not have this arrow removed until I know about the man by whom I have been wounded, whether he is a Kshatriya or . . . tall or short, black, or brown, or fair-skinned or . . . or until I know about the bow . . . the bowstring' etc. then ere this was known he would perish*' (*Majjhima Nikaya*).

Therefore, when *Buddha* says that '*This (samsaara) is suffering; suffering always exists*' '*Suffering is understood*' he does not suggest intellectual comprehension through sensory instruments of cognition but supra-sensory awareness that *suffering* is a normal, natural and integral part of *samsaara*, even as '*Fire burns*', '*samsaara is suffering*', over which creatures have no control except being aware and not be attached to things which *cause suffering*. *Buddha* did not describe *suffering* in words known to people at large, because they fall short to give full justification to any awareness.

Buddha poses a question, '*That, which is transient, O Monks, is it painful or pleasant*' and receiving a reply in negative, he declares that within everything that is born or caused to be born, there exist seeds of decay, destruction and death as a principle of transience, of decay, deterioration of destruction. Moment one is born, death becomes a companion, with intervening repeated births as *hiatus*. Krishna observes in *Bhagavad Gita*, '*kama esha krodha esha rajoguna samudbhavah*'— craving and anger to be the outcome of the

modes of passion and ‘*aavrutam jnaanam etena (kaamaropena) jnaanino nityavairinah*’ wisdom enveloped by this insatiable fire of desire is the eternal enemy. *Buddha* too likewise observes, ‘*Everything is burning. The eye is burning, . . . sense contact and mental contacts is burning . . . with the fire of passion, fire of aggression and fire of delusion . . . with birth, aging and death . . . with sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain and despair*’.

Buddha, therefore, calls upon seekers to ‘*scrutinize now with inward reflection . . . these various and manifold sufferings . . . this decay and death . . . which arise in world . . .*’ and accept as undeniable undisputable and incontrovertible truism that the ‘*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*’ alone is true and ‘*no escape could be shown here for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*’, because the *Distinct Gross Existence* which he is conscious is a strange mismatch between what is real and what appears as real, creating obscurity in Mind and *suffering* in *samsaara*.

Buddha observing the nature of *samsaara*, says, ‘*I do not see, monks, any other fetter, bound by which beings rush through, hurry through the long obscurity than the fetter of craving. . . associated with desire and enjoyment, seeking enjoyment everywhere. . . craving for sense-pleasures, craving to become something, craving to deny, reject, renounce things. . . It is the sense initiated craving with passion, that takes delight here and there, for lust, for becoming, for renunciation that leads to re-birth . . .*’

Human beings normally tend to look everything as *cause* and *effect*, because of that because after that. Imagination prompts one to visualize *Time* as having a Past, Present and the Future, whereas *Time* is the space between two events. *Knowledge* is acquired in *Time*, not so the *Wisdom*. *Buddha*’s journey to enlightenment was over a period of *Time* but his enlightenment itself was immediate and instantaneous. *Buddha*’s awareness supra-sensory, beyond *Time* yet corroborating and

validating his empirical experiences. He realized that *samsaara* is aggregation of his empirical experiences, which awareness does not substantiate. Awareness does not come through intent, choice or preference. It comes as mentioned in *Katha Up.* ‘*The Self cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much hearing. He is to be attained only by the one whom te Self chooses. To such person it reveals its own nature*’.

Buddha draws extensively the *data* from *Upanishads*. In *Bihad Aranyak Up.* we find Mind in its prime state as totally energetic, dynamic and vibrant without distinction as luminous or obscure, an experience as in the state of *Deep Sleep*, with complete cessation of all sensations and thoughts. *Buddha* terms it as *Bliss*, which in the state of empirical experiences, becomes the aggregate of fleeting and transitory sensory influences, which create impressions, with permutations and combinations, ever changing and ever evolving in constant state of flux, giving rise to a *Distinct Gross Existence*, formatted with *name* and *form* by the power of *maya*, having no resemblance to the *Prime Existence* at all.

Likewise is the awareness of *Buddha* as *the Noble Truth of Suffering*.

Noble Truth of the Nature of Sufferings

Death for a human being is distant eventuality and not immediate concern. His wife, children, relatives and associates, possessions and positions, gods and divinities, religions and philosophies with all that he is concerned with in *samsaara*. He has seen others dieing but not himself. It is only when *Death* approaches that all these pale in insignificance and the moments of worry and *suffering* crowd his life. Only when *Death* comes, does one realize that one has not really lived. He has neither taken a path from the regular one and he has lived very much in the same manner as others have done., *Death* appears to him as

if all doors are now close, without an opening being left. No one knows what is to happen in future and all doors are closed to the future. He cannot plan for tomorrow, plan for tomorrow. His existence becomes inconsistent and futile for him and that causes despondency and *sufferings* for him

Only when one walks the *Path to Perfection* without planning to see what one wants to see, then the mysteries of life open to him, *Death* does not stop him, *Death* being irrelevant. Just being open to receive, without hindrances of beliefs, faiths, and views and philosophies, one reaches where there is no stopping, no destination. It is like the Sun moving in the sky with no destination to be reached no purpose to be served. As a Zen seer says 'When a fish swims, he swims on and on, and there is no end to the water . When a bird flies, he flies on and on and there is no end to the sky. *Death* is not the end, it the time to rest so that one can walk on the *Path* with renewed vigour. The *Consciousness* within is not lost; it becomes clearer than ever before. It is the body dies and not the *Consciousness*.

Buddha gives a distinct and expansive and comprehensive connotation to the word *suffering*. The word *Duhkha*, which he uses is not 'misery', 'distress' or 'torment' but is also 'frustration', 'suffering' and 'incapability of satisfying or not being able to bear or withstand repeated disappointment'. *Duhkha* has three-fold dimension: *pariyatti* (the statement), *paripatti* (awareness of the statement) and *parivedha* (the consequence of the statement). *Suffering* is physical (*duhkha-duhkha*), when external forces have effect on Mind; consequential (*viparinama-duhkha*), when internal senses have effect; and a synthesis (*sankara-duhkha*) when physical and psychological forces have an aggregate effect. While *suffering* is easily observed, its nature and the extent of its influence is not.

Rigvedic seers in praying Shiva, for deliverance from the bondage of *mortal* (body) but not from the *immortal* (Soul) - *urvarukamiva bandhanaat mrutyor maam vrushneeya, mamamrutvaat*, their intention was to be delivered from

sufferings. For *Buddha*, who did depend on external sources for deliverance, it was not a boon or Grace granted by gods, but individual perseverance which lead to the detachment from *the Distinct Gross Existence*, which is ‘*that what is born, produced, compounded, dissolvable by nature*’, ‘*perishable by nature*’ and subject to ‘*the principle of change, of separation and transience*’. *Buddha*, therefore, brings to human attention, ‘*Verily I say unto you . . . This body will be dissolved and no amount of sacrifice will save it. Therefore seek thou life that is Mind. Where anatta is, there the truth cannot be. When truth (the Prime Existence) becomes luminous, anatta disappears*’. *Dhammapada* too records, ‘*neither in the space above nor in the depths of the oceans, nor in the caves of the mountains, is such places found where a person may dwell without being overpowered by death*’. This is the *Nature of Suffering*.

Enlightened person as well as one who is obscure *suffer* in *samsaara*. But the enlightened person being alert, conscious and aware of *Noble Truth of Suffering* unveils the veil concealing mysteries of *essential Mind*. The obscure person who lacks receptivity, being ignorant of the mysteries of the Mind, ends up being slave to his senses and submits to the travails of *sufferings* as they transpire (*yathabhutam*). It is only when one shifts one’s attention from the subjective to the objective level, that one becomes free of *suffering*. Enlightened person as well as one who is obscure use the same Mind, but while the former one observes *samsaara* as not the true but an illusion created by Mind under sensory influences, the latter influenced by sensory influences, weaves and formats an incredible and bewilderingly illusory *Distinct Gross Existence*, which he assumes to be *the Prime Existence*. Much of the adult human life is spent under such illusion, therefore, they suffer because what they aggregate under sensory influences and assume as real and relevant is not either the eternal *Wisdom* but the impermanent and transient *Knowledge*. The *deliverance* therefore, is from ignorance of the collected information which one refers as *Knowledge*, which impels one to seek a heavenly destination or attain pleasures and

attain *deliverance* from *sufferings* in *samsaara* and in to the state of *Wisdom*, the awareness that *Knowledge* is the product attained and acquired from external sources which gives rise to *the Distinct Gross Existence*. *Wisdom* is what *Buddha* endorses ‘*When Noble Truths of Comprehensive insight (samyak drishti) equanimity of Intellect (samaadhi) and liberation (nirvana) are understood and reflected, then craving for Distinct Gross Existence comes to end, is destroyed and now there is no any further distinct gross Existence*’ (*Anguttara Nikaya*). The problem rests on the power of the Mind to generate thoughts, which give rise createsymbols as things apart from the things themselves. Because idea is more intelligible than reality, the symbol become more potent than the fact, leading us to identify ourselves more with the idea than with fact. When one is no longer conditioned by ideas, the entire relationship between the subject and object , knower and the known, undergoes dramatic change . The knower is no more independent from the known, experiencer no more distinct from the experience. The subjective distinction between ‘me’ and ‘myself’ comes to be terminated and the correct relationship between my self and of the world is discovered, leading one to inductive reflection that my *self* is not different from that of the others. One’s perceived self ceases to be the centre of centrifugal attraction and there is only one centre which is *universe*, all else standing on the circumference. When one is enlightened of the *Wisdom* then just as acceptance or rejection of the statement that *fire that burns* does not disturb the fire, even so acceptance or rejection of *suffering* in *samsaara* does not alter the fact of *Suffering* in *samsaara*.

The *vedic* scriptures symbolizes *Indra* as the luminosity of the Mind and suggest that the world as one *sees* and *knows* is not the real but one formatted through his power of *Maya* as the presiding diety of the Mind - ‘*roopam roopam pratirrho babhoova, tad asys roopam pratichakshanaaya, indro maayaabhihpururoopa eeyate, yuktaa hy asya harayah shata dasha iti*’. *Isha Up.* reiterates rites that the Supreme Lord himself envelops all this in the world ‘*Ishavaasyam idam sarvam*

yat kinch jagatyaam jagat . . .' In *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says 'sambhavaatmamaayayaa' – I come to be energized by my power of *Maya* and, therefore, his true Nature is not perceived - 'naaham prakaashah sarvasya yogamaayaa samavrutaah'. *Maya* is the power (*sakti*) which creates the *World of Manifestation* as well conceals the source. Yaska derives the word *maya* from the root *ma* - to measure or create with *yaa* - that by which a thing is measured or created – 'meeyante parichhidante anayaa padarthah'.

Brihad Aranyak Up. says, one's Mind, verily, is *samsaara* and 'manasaa hy eva pashyati, manasaa shrunoti, kamah sankalpo vichikitsa shraddha ashaddha dritir adhritir hrir dhir bhir ity etat sarvam mana eva . . .' – It is with Mind, verily, one sees It is with Mind that one hears. Desire, conception, doubt receptivity and lack of receptivity, steadfastness and lack of steadfastness, shame, meditation, fear all are, verily the Mind. Therefore, in *Maitri Up.* also we find it mentioned that 'chittam eva hi samsaaram, tat prayatnena shodhayet' - Mind needs to be investigated, because it is nothing but *samsaara* and 'mano hi dvividham proktam shuddham ashuddham' – Mind alone spoke as pure or impure, 'ashuddham kaamasamprkaat shuddham kaamavivritam' – impure when connected with desires and pure when unconnected with them. 'laya vikshepa rahitam manah kritva sunishchalam, yada yaaty amanibhavam tadaa tat paramam padam' - divorcing Mind from wavering thoughts, when Mind goes to the state of no-Mind, then that is the supreme state.

Buddha identifies *samsaara* with aggregation of the *sanskaaras* on Mind, very much the manner, 'The Mind, the indefinable, the infinite, released from all. Here water, earth, fire, air have no foundation; here the great and small, the subtle and the gross, the beautiful and unbeautiful, individual identity completely cease' (*Digha Nikaya*), further points out to ' . . . seek you real life that is Mind. Where consciousness of distinct individual existence is, there truth cannot be. When

truth comes, *anatta*, the distinct gross existence, disappears. Therefore let you Mind rest on truth, propagate truth, pay your full attention to that and let it spread wide. The clinging to distinct individual existence is perpetual death while moving in truth is participating in the eternal life'. The same idea has been conveyed in *Dhammapada*, 'In all things, the primordial element is the Mind. Mind predominates, everything proceeding from Mind. If a man speaks or acts with purified Mind happiness follows him as closely as his indispensable shadow.'

Speaking of the aggregation of thoughts in Mind, he says, 'It is by process of evolution that *samskaras* come to be. There is no *samskara* which has sprung into being without gradual becoming. Your *samskaras* are product of your deeds in former existence. The combination of your *samskaras* is your Self (as separate earthly existence) Whosoever they are impressed there your Self migrates. In your *samskaras* you will continue to live and you will reap in future existence the harvest sown now and in the past'.

Explaining further *Buddha*, says that when the Mind, influenced by senses, projects, it creates a series of sequential sensations (*vedana*), perceptions (*sanna*), personal identities (*sankhara*) and consciousness (*vinnana*) resulting in creation through the power of *maya*, the *Distinct Gross Existence*, with names and forms, which is not only different but also unlike that which was projected or anything else that exists in reality. This consequential aggregate (*upadana kkhanda*) being unlike the *Prime Existence* has neither any resemblance nor any credibility, which neither satisfies desires nor initiates any wholesome performance. The aggregate (*upadana kkhanda*) is what we possess as *Knowledge* of the phenomenal world, which becomes the foundation for future aggregation of *Knowledge*, being identified with one's body, ego and self-sense as '*I*' or the individual Self, visualizing a special relationship.

Such *Knowledge* is not *Wisdom*, since it a distortion of *Existence*, not consistent, not anything like what it is. Therefore,

asking his disciples, ‘*what, monks, is the Universe?*’ Buddha replies ‘*The eye and the forms, the ear and the sounds, the nose and the smells, the tongue and the tastes, the body and the tactile objects the mind and the mental object constitute the Universe*’ (*Sutta Nikaya*). *Majjhima Nikaya* records that: ‘*When an eye and forms are there, then consciousness arises. The meeting point of these three factors is contact; from the precondition of the contact (arises) sensation; from that sensation (arises) perception; from perception (arises) thought; from thought (arises) the projection (of Distinct Gross Existence).*’

Lankavatara Sutra defines the state of primal mind as ‘*chitte tu vai paravrutte na yaanam nac cha yaayanah*’ – When the Mind is in its primal state, there is neither a path to travel nor any traveler. There is no *Becoming* but only *Being*. It is not *Becoming Being* this or that but *Being* not relative state but in an absolute state where there is neither movement nor a mover. Shankara describes that state in *Vivekachudamani*, ‘*na nirodho na chopattir na baddho na cha saadhakah, na mumukshar na vai muktah ity esha paramarthataa*’ – There is neither restraint nor any indulgence, neither any one bound destruction nor origination. There is not one bound nor any one dedicated, neither a seeker of freedom nor one who is freed. Such is the supreme state.

The Mind in the *Waking state* is the *Disinct Gross Existence*, which is ‘*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*’, which people associate with the body. In *Dream state*, the Mind takes both the evils and joys of the *Waking state* the all-embracing material of the empirical world along, tearing them, apart as it were, building up an illusory world in dreams. In *Dream state* many forms are formatted, like enjoying the company of women or beholding a fearful sight. In this state, every one sees the sport but not the Mind. When the Mind tires and there are no desires and no dreams, it is akin to the original pure state of the Mind, which is not unlike the *Prime Existence* the ‘*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*’.

Once when Nakulapita, a householder complained to Buddha, *'I am decrepit, old, aged, advanced in years and life. I have reached the span of my life, ill in body and constantly ailing . . . May the Lord exhort me, may the Lord instruct me'*, the *Enlightened One* said, *'One who put up with this body and complains a moment's health, what is this if not foolishness? . . . you should train yourself, 'Though I am ill in body, my mind shall not be ill'*. Sariputta, a close disciple further clarified *' . . . an unlearned common person, who does not meet the noble ones, who is unskilled and untrained in the noble doctrine looks upon his body as his Self, thinking that his Self consists of the body or that his body is his Self, or that his Self is in his body, is possessed of the thought 'I am the body, body is mine'. The one who is possessed of such thought changes and becomes otherwise, and through the change and alteration of his body there arise grief, lamentation, pain, dejection and despair . . . Such one is ill in body and ill in mind'*.

Buddha then asked Ananda when Sariputta died, what did he take with him, whether it was the body of mortal inclination, or the concentrated wisdom of freedom, of pure insight, awareness and freedom. Seeing Ananda quiet, Buddha remarked, *'Have I not aforesaid pointed out, Ananda, that, in all that is dear and beloved, there is the nature of diversity, separation, and alteration . . . that one could say in reference to what is born, has become, is compounded and liable to dissolution : O let not that be dissolved, such situation does not exist . . .'*

Knowledge of samsara and its transience becomes accessible with aggregation of sensory influences in Mind and with the cessation of such influences, *Wisdom* dawns therein and the true nature of *sufferings* comes to be revealed. Therefore, Mind needs to be divested of the conceptualized, formatted *Distinct Gross Existence*, which is liberation from the limited to the boundless *Wisdom*. Awareness becoming keen and comprehensive perception, insight and understanding, ends up in an indescribable experience, which is not only an

acknowledgement of *suffering* in *samsaara* but also the acceptance of its inevitability in *samsaara*. Awareness leads to *Wisdom* and detachment from *Knowledge*, without having to accept or not to accept, but being fully alert and conscious of its existence.

Suffering is ignorance (*ajnana*) caused by distorted perception of *samsaara*; deliverance, *vimutti* is awareness, *Wisdom* (*vijñana*) of the true nature of *samsaara*. When *Buddha* speaks of *suffering*, it is not as one *Knowledge* to be acquired but as *Wisdom*, the inviolable and universal experience, which makes one aware and acknowledge that '*This is suffering and suffering always exists in samsaara* '.

Knowledge is mechanical response of Mind to sensory influences and memories, not *Wisdom* of the original pure Mind. *Knowledge* substantiates the power of memorizing, remembering and recollecting, repeating what it is heard, seen or learnt. *Knowledge* is reactive, not proactive, repetitive and not creative. *Wisdom* is sourced from primary Mind, therefore not reactive but proactive, authenticating ability to think, without any capacity for individual self-excellence. *Knowledge* assist in receiving insight but does not give insight, which only *Wisdom* does.

When problems are individual, how can the *Knowledge* sourced from external sources help solving them ? *Knowledge* is burden which *Wisdom* finds difficult to re-source. *Wisdom* awakens the energy which is latent, from the burden to view problems afresh and offer individuated solutions. *Knowledge* creates ego, *Wisdom* eliminates it. *Knowledge* makes one arrogant, *Wisdom* makes one humble. People are burdened with *Knowledge*, because it gives prominence to the ego and not to the *Self* within. *Knowledge* gives rise to *the Distinct Gross Existence*, *Wisdom* shows its true nature. Greater the *Knowledge* one has greater does one feel, deeper the *Wisdom*, deeper is his awareness. *Knowledge* gives information about *the Prime Existence*, *Wisdom* reveals the mystery of *the Prime Existence*

becomes revealed. *Knowledge* creates cacophony *Wisdom* overwhelms consciousness with supreme silence. *Knowledge* is alien and dead burden, *Wisdom* is true and vibrant gain. *Knowledge* becomes hindrance, *Wisdom* is an opportunity. Therefore *Knowledge* can only lead to *Wisdom*, but can never be the supplement.

Wisdom alone delivers one from *suffering*, not *Knowledge*, which at best guides one to *Wisdom*. Mind appears outwardly mobile in *Knowledge*, without realizing that what has beginning has also an end, what is born, created and formatted, what is acquired, amassed and stored does also decays, deteriorates and dies. It is only *Wisdom* which through inward perception, independent of the sensory influences, is eternal and ever abiding, deep in awareness. In such awareness there is neither liking nor disliking, neither choosing nor selecting, neither accepting nor rejecting, but observing and recognizing things and events with alert, conscious awareness as they transpire (*yathabhutam*), accepting and acknowledging that *suffering* exists independent of the person who *suffers*, as constant and repeatedly and inalienable feature of *samsaara*, changing, evolving and existing eternally in *Time*. On such awareness, there remains nothing to be acquired, nothing to be accomplished and nothing to be renounced.

While non-humans respond emotively to *suffering*, human beings, generally end up succumbing to *sufferings*. They would rather respond to sensory influences and seek palliatives in diverse faiths, beliefs, creeds and organizational religions in diverse faiths, beliefs, creeds and organizational religions for termination of *sufferings*. Human beings by nature lack the spirit to inquire, investigate, reflect and meditate on *suffering*, its *nature*, *causes* and *ways* of terminating *suffering*, as said in *Bhagavad Gita*, and consequently end up being turned around by *maya*, as if they were mounted on a machine. Instead of reaching out to higher plane, like the energetic fire man slides like water to an irrational, impulsive emotional, foolish, destructive level in life.

In *samsaara* influenced by senses, an unwise man rests his actions on *hope*, extends them by *hope*, sustains them by *hope*. If *hope* finds fulfillment in possessions, then enhancement of the possessions is *hoped* for. If *hope* finds no fulfillment, then alternative hopes are sought. Life becomes constant and continuous search for satiation of senses and hoping for happiness and contentment, *hope* becoming the foundational support to live life. If *hope* does not bring fulfillment repeatedly, Mind seeks fulfillment in renunciation of possessions and positions. It is continuous state of effort and anguish. It is the fear of the past, inexplicable present and uncertainty of the future, not getting what one desires, fearing to lose what one possesses that makes people wander around without development of wholesome nature, though heart inclines towards good actions and denies injustice and yet not hesitating to accept what is unjust and unwholesome.

Such attitude towards life is due to excessive dependence on *Knowledge* sourced from sensory influences than on *supra-sensory Wisdom*. Just as one does not *suffer* of things which are not *known* or things which are concealed, even so he does not *suffer* if one has *Wisdom* to be aware and understands. Such one being aware of the *nature*, the *causes* and the *ways* of terminating *sufferings*, is not attached to the things in *samsaara* as 'me', 'myself' and 'mine', with *names* and *forms*.

Suffering by itself is objective, neutral, harmless and ineffective and becomes subjective, prejudicial, persuasive and effective only it is acknowledged as personal event and not a universal phenomenon. To be aware of *Suffering* in all its three-fold dimension '*kama-loka* (the world of desires), *rupa-loka* (the structured world) and *arupa-loka* (the unstructured world)', one needs *Wisdom* (*vijnaana*) to be conscious of *suffering* and that there is nothing, whether conscious or unconscious, which is not subject to change, deterioration or decay and death; not the *Knowledge* (*jnaana*) about *suffering* and its consequences. *Buddha*, points out that, '*. . . there is in all, even the beloved and*

kind, the principle of change, of separation, of transience'. Everything is momentary and transient, because its origin, evolution and cessation is bound by *Time*, because every thing one observes is the consequence of what one experiences in Mind through sensory influences as *the Distinct Gross Existence* and not as *the Supreme Existence*.

If *suffering* is ignorance (*ajnana*) the distorted perception of *the Supreme Existence* then deliverance is from *the Distinct Gross Existence*. Only then one is in the state of *non-suffering*. Disgust of desires is not cessation of *craving* which comprehensive perception - *samma ditthi* of *the Prime Existence* alone brings about. *Buddha's* awareness is that *samsaara* is full of *asavanam*, taints causing *pain, obscurity* and *suffering* as they transpire (*yathabhutam*). Only comprehensive, wholesome, alert insight unveils in the *samsaara* as it really is and not as *perceived*, then there is *Wisdom*. *Buddha* is not an imaginative poet but a sensitive Seer, therefore, his awareness is pragmatic, not intellectual, humane, not philosophical. Therefore, his teachings have compelling and convincing force as immediate concern of rich and the poor.

This is *The Noble Truth of the Nature of Sufferings*

Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering

Wisdom of the fetters which cause one to suffer is in itself deliverance from *samsaara*. *Brihad Aranyak Up.* earlier had declared, 'A man who does not crave, he who is without craving. who is freed from craving, whose craving is fulfilled, whose craving is for the Self, his breaths do not depart him. Being a man of Wisdom he goes to Wisdom, the Brahman . . . If a person is wise to the fact that his Self, verily is 'I am this' then wishing what, and craving for what should he suffer in his body? Verily when we are here (in this body) we may know this, if not, then great is the danger. Those who are wise become immortal while others go only to sorrow and sufferings '.

Desire by itself is neither beneficial nor harmful. Krishna says that performance of action which is not contrary to *Dharma* is, verily, *Brahman* - '*dharmaviruddho brahma'smi*'. Indian philosophy requires enterprise (*artha*) and desires (*kama*) to be based on *Dharma* for attaining deliverance (*Moksha*). But if desires come to be associated with anger and end up becoming intense *Craving*, it becomes devouring adversary.

In *vedic* scriptures we find creative process being founded on *svadhaaya*, the *self-Impulse*. '*Then (in the beginning) neither existence nor non-existence was there, and That One alone was breathing by self-Impulse*'. The *self-Impulse* is the creative energy (*shakti*). It is said '*shivah shaktyaa yukto yadi shaktah prabhaavitum, na ched evam devo na khalu kushalah spanditum api*' – Only when united with *Shakti* can *Shiva* manifest his power, but without her, the God cannot even bestir. *Shiva* is the earth of the land which *Shakti* makes it moist and energetic.

Chhandogya Up. declares that in the beginning, prior to this creation, the creator being alone, *desired* to be many, '*bahu syaam prajaayayeyeti, tat tejo'srajata*' and then he spread forth. He *desired*, let me have a second, '*so'kaamayata, dvituyo aatma jaayeti*', therefore, *Shakti* became his *self-Impulse*. In *Bhagavad Gita* too Krishna says that '*prakritim svam adhishtaya sambhamy aatmamaayayaa*' – he manifested establishing himself in *Prakriti*, the creative energy. In line with *Upanishadic* prescription, Krishna too points out in *Bhagavad Gita*, that '*kaama esha krodha esha rajogunasamudbhavah, mahashano mahapaapaapma viddhy enam iha vairinam*' – It is craving, it is anger, born of passion, all consuming and sinful. Know this to be the enemy. '*tasmad aasaktah satatam kaaryam karma samachara, aasakto hy aacharan karma param aapnoti purushah*' – Therefore, without attachment perform always your actions to be accomplished, for man attains to the supreme state performing actions without attachment.

Buddha's desire to reflect on *the Nature, the Causes* and

the Ways of termination of sufferings, was not to acquire intellectual Knowledge, but founded in righteous resolve to have the *Wisdom of suffering*. Therefore, his concentration is not on *iccha* wish or desire, but on *tanha*, intense *Craving*, the consequence of the unregulated and unwholesome desires. *Buddha* commences the search for *the Cause of Suffering*, with reflection on ‘*What causes man to be born? What in him does stray? What undergoes change? What does undergo re-birth? From what does release cannot be found?*’ and concludes that it is not desire *per se* that causes a man to be born, but its intense *Craving* that causes a man to be born. It is Mind, with aggregate of thoughts, that strays and undergoes change and it is again the same aggregate of thoughts at the time of the death and disintegration of the body that undergoes re-birth - ‘*Craving causes man to be born. It is the Mind that strays. Sentient aggregation undergoes re-birth. No release is found here from sufferings*’.

Buddha attributes the *cause of suffering* in *samsaara*, to intense *craving* for pleasures and passions, for possessions and positions, for denying or renouncing the *Distinct Gross Existence* which he has been told to be transitory and impermanent. He says ‘*I do not see, monks, any other fetter, bound by which beings rush through, hurry through the long obscurity than the fetter of craving. . associated with desire and enjoyment, seeking enjoyment everywhere. . craving for sense-pleasures, craving to become something, craving to deny, reject, renounce things. . It is the sense initiated craving with passion, that takes delight here and there, for lust, for becoming, for renunciation that leads to re-birth . . .*’.

It is *tanha*, *craving* that leads one to assume the temporal, empirical *Distinct Gross Existence* as ‘*me*’, ‘*myself*’ and ‘*mine*’, having a *name* and *form*, subject to deterioration, decay and destruction, which is transitory, impermanent and non-eternal, open to deterioration. In such state, one has pleasure as well as pain, happiness as well as sorrow. Therefore one is inclined to choose and select, reject and renounce, having little chance for

Mind to be receptive to the resonance of wisdom. When one is conscious of the existence of *suffering* as one inseparable factor of *samsaara* and understands the nature of *samsaara*, one also becomes aware of the *Causes of Suffering* .

In existence, they appear energizing ever on fire, the eye, the forms, consciousness, impressions of sensations, with intense passion, likes and dislikes, hatred and infatuation. *The Distinct Gross Existence* by itself is neutral and is not the *cause* of *suffering*; it is attachment to them that causes *craving* ‘*which leads to re-birth, combined with pleasure and craving, seeking (pleasure of the senses) here and there - craving for passion, craving for existence, and the craving for non-existence*’. *Wisdom* demands that one should be detached and divested from these psychological inclinations, on being free from them, he would be aware of the freedom, from the constraints. His craving even for rebirth becoming exhausted, he lives without hangover of the past and concern for the future, doing things, in the present moment to moment, to be done and knowing there nothing else more need be done.

Buddha says that once the cause of *suffering* is *known* then there is cessation of *craving* without any traces, abandoning attachment to the *Distinct Gross Existence*, through awareness of the *Four Noble Truths of sufferings* and following the *Eight Noble Truths* - ‘*When Noble Truths equanimity of Intellect, insight and liberation are understood and reflected, then craving for Distinct Gross Existence comes to end, is destroyed and now there is no any further distinct gross Existence*’ (*Anguttara Nikaya*). That is *Nirvana*, which is the complete *cessation* of attachment to *Distinct Gross Existence* and *cravings* arising therefrom.

Mind is compared to a vast ocean in which *Wisdom* in entirety has its abode. Human emotions due to unregulated and uncontrolled thoughts, rise in Mind, the ocean, creating turbulent waves, *the carvings* due to unregulated, sensory influenced *Knowledge*. Then such *cravings* become a taints, *asavanam*, in

Mind, causing a person to float aimlessly ending up in *suffering*. When the same turbulent waves, the thoughts, are restrained the ocean, the Mind is at peace, with equanimity of intellect, peace and tranquility.

In such state the person has neither craving nor non-craving, as in the case of Deep sleep, which *Brihad Aranyak Up.* describes: '*This verily is his form which is free from craving, free from evils, free from fear. This is verily his form in which his desire is fulfilled, in which the self is his desire, in which he is without any desire, free from any sorrow*'. The *Upanishad* uses the word '*kama*' for desire and '*atichhando*' for craving. *Buddha*, therefore, recommends attending the Cause for suffering, promptly and with alacrity as one would attend to the wound of the man suffering pain, without inquiring before the poisoned arrow is removed, whether, how and by whom and in what manner he was wounded. The important thing is to remove the *asavanam*, which are not sins committed but ignorance one has about *suffering*.

What is it that impels a person to *Crave* when Mind in its primeval stage is pure, wholesome and untainted. It is the Mind which is contaminated by sensory influences, holding various views, forming, changing faiths, belief, religions and creeds, that impels a person to *Crave*. *Madhyamika Sutralamkara* says '*na bhavo naapi cha abhavo buddhatvam tena kathyate, tasmad buddha-tathaa-prashne avyakrtamanyo manah*' - neither mental disposition nor absence of disposition does characterize attainment of enlightenment, therefore, the question of enlightenment may be said to be untainted, wholesome and pure mind.

He says, '*Not in the space above nor in depth of oceans below nor in the centre of the caves in the mountains, nay nowhere in the world is such place found where a man can dwell without being over powered by death*'. A normal person finds no release from *samsaara*, so long as he is bound, influenced and controlled by the aggregate of thoughts in Mind.

The attachment leads to craving for the present *Distinct Gross Existence* and in turn leads to the birth to a subsequent *Distinct Gross Existence* which becomes the nucleus around which the remainder of the earlier *karmas* gather. To terminate the *Karmic* cycle of cause and effect, one has to cease being influenced by the sense, which will result the Mind being at peace and tranquil, giving no occasion for conceptual *Distinct Gross Existence* to be formatted with name and form.

Buddha unfolded the layers of consciousness of sound to reach out to the enlightenment of the non-sound. *Maitri Up.* says ‘*dve vaa va brahmani abhidhyeye shabdasya chaashabdashcha, atha shabdenaivaashabdam avishkriyate, atha tatra aum iti shabdo’nenordhvam utkranto’shabde nodhaanam eti, athaahaisha gatih, etad amratm, etad sayujyatvam, nrvratamatahaacheti*’ - there are two *Brahmans* to be meditated upon, sound and non-sound, analogous to *Knowledge*, acquired through sensory influences from life or from scriptures and *Wisdom* acquired through supra-sensory sources. Sound is *AUM* and non-sound is *Brahman*. By sound alone is the non-sound revealed. This is the Way, this is immortality, this is immergence, this is tranquility.

This is the discovery of the permanent, immutable, eternal Mind in its pristine purity, independent of the impermanent, transitory, not eternal *Distinct Gross Existence*, which changes, deteriorates, decays and is destroyed. The empirical Mind is a confused mind, a maze of responses confused by external attractions and allurements caused by sensory influences. The Mind becomes free and pure when these confused maze of attractions and allurements becomes weakened, decayed, disintegrated and finally destroyed and eliminated from Mind. *Maitri Upanishad* says, Mind, verily, is the cause for bondage and liberation - ‘*mana eva manushyaanaam kaaranam bandha-mokshayoh*’. *Yoga Vashishtha* says ‘*chittam kaaranam arthaanaam tasmin sati jagat-trayam, tasmin ksheene jagat ksheenam tat chikitsyam prayatnatah*’ - thought is the cause of all things. When it is active there are the three worlds (of past,

present and future); when it subsides the world subsides. Therefore, the mind should be treated with diligence.

Non-attachment of Mind to the attractions and allurements eliminates the *craving* for things, not because they cause disgust but realization and the sense of discrimination absolves Mind, Speech and Action from the pernicious effects that *cause suffering*. There is no need to cease desiring things, except the need to cease *craving* for things. *Sufferings* come to a human being, not because his desires are not fulfilled, but because even when they satisfy, such satisfaction turns out to be temporary *hiatus*, before desire for additional or enhancement of his desires or for extending them becomes intense as *craving*. The *craving* for things need not necessarily end in satisfaction, because the events which contributed to satisfaction or the satisfaction may not be as anticipated.

Every desire has seeds which accentuate further desires. Desire when influenced by senses end up in empirical world, which is not same as *the Prime Existence* and when otherwise, desire leads one to investigate and finally reach out to that which '*is an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*'. When the desires are divorced from *the Prime Existence*, it becomes intensely compulsive, which whether satisfied or not, leading finally to *suffering*.

Therefore, the Mind should be made stable, devoid of desires, shorn of modifications of thoughts, restraining the sensory influence, to attain *bliss* in the *Self* within. When such steps are undertaken, then that becomes the original supreme state of the Mind - '*laya vikshepa rahitam manah krtvaa sunishchalam yada yaaty atmanibhaavam tada tat paramam padam*' (*Matri Up.*). *The Blessed One* too, therefore, recommends elimination of responses in Mind, which give rise to *craving*. '*With cessation of this very craving, without retaining any remnants or traces, there is cessation of combined aggregation (upaadana) ; with cessation of combined aggregation there is cessation of Distinct Gross Existence (bhava)*'".

Buddha's teachings were not addressed for the enhancement of pleasures, either here on earth or later in heavens, but for being aware of the *nature, causes and ways of terminating the sufferings* even as they transpire (*yathabhutam*), here and now. Till one reaches the state of *Nirvana*, where there is complete cessation of attachment to the gross body. Accepting that desires by themselves are neither good nor bad, and that *the Distinct Gross Existence* is but a product of mental idea *Buddha* commends: '*Whatever deed, monks, has been performed without greed, without hatred and free from delusion . . . the deed is annihilated, cut off at the root, made similar to a uprooted palm tree, prevented from becoming in future, not subject to the law of becoming (i.e. Karma)*' (*Anuttara Nikaya*).

On hearing *Buddha's* clarification, Ananda wondered, as if it was an intellectual revelation, '*It is surprising, it is strange. How profound, is the causative process and its illumination how profound; yet to me it seems altogether clear*'. Seeing Ananda not grasping the essence of his communication, *the Blessed One* said, '*Not so, Ananda, not so. The causative process, indeed, is profound and its illumination is profound. Not understanding this law . . . mankind cannot get . . . beyond wandering in samsara. If one sees merely enjoyment in the ideas, or the combination of aggregates and abides therein, craving increases. Because of craving, there is combination of aggregates, because of the combination of aggregates, there is individual identity, because of the individual identity there is earthly existence, because of Distinct Gross Existence there is decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair . . .*'

It is only when '*the material form of the right farer, by which one sets him apart, is rejected, severed at the root, rendered like an uprooted palm-tree, deprived of the Distinct Gross Existence, that it does not proceed (to any further existence) in future. Tathagata, indeed, is such one delivered from the Distinct Gross Existence, profound, immeasurable, unfathomable, even as the great ocean . . . With cessation of the*

Distinct Gross Existence, there is cessation of the sense of individuality (jati) ; with cessation of individuality, there is cessation of idea of its decay, death, grief, lamentation, sorrow, dejection and despair” (Samyutta Nikaya).

Thus is the *Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering* to be known as insight, awareness, and consciousness of the vibrant and pro-active essence of which suffering is the form.

Noble Truth of termination of Suffering

The Noble Truth of termination of Suffering is awareness of *sufferings* and the awareness itself eliminating the *Causes* that lead to *suffering*. In *Buddha's* terminology, words like ‘*Cause*’ does not mean ‘*because of that*’ and ‘*Effect*’ as ‘*after that*’. Though *Path* leads to the destination, the *Path* cannot be the destination. The *Premise* cannot be the conclusion; yet just as one can discern the *Path* in the *destination*, even so one discovers in *Premise* in conclusion. . *Lankaavataara Sutra* describes deliverance as ‘*chitte tu vai paravritte na yaanam na cha yaayinah*’.

Then, alert, conscious awareness of *suffering* becomes the *prior form*; alert, conscious awareness of the *Cause* becomes the *connection*: *termination of sufferings* becomes the *later form* and *Nirvana* - deliverance from *Distinct Gross Existence* becomes the *junction*. *Siddhartha's* clarity of Mind was the *prior form*, his reflection and meditation was the *connection*, his enlightenment was the *later form* and his deliverance – *Nirvana* and *Buddha nature* was the *junction*. In *Nirvana*, there is no distinction between the Knower and the Known. *Madhyamika vritti* says : ‘*apraheenaam asampraaptam anuchhinnam ashaashvatam, aniruddham anutpannam etet nirvaanam uchyate*’.

Here in awareness, there was neither sensory-influence nor any physical effort; neither external support nor internal intellectual reflection but constant and uninterrupted mediation in alert and conscious Mind. There was no intellectual striving

but conscious awareness in Mind, without effort or striving. The enlightenment was neither linear nor sequential but sudden and unanticipated. *Awareness* or *Enlightenment* was not intellectual proposition but psychological disposition, where Mind revels in its pristine pure state, without knowing *what, when, where, how* and *why*. It dawns like the morning Sun from the previous dark night, without knowing when darkness ended and the dawn descended, *when, where, how* and *why*, the luminous light in four quarters. The moment one is enlightened and awareness of *suffering*, dawns on him, that very moment, *suffering* looses its sting, and the *Four Noble Truths of Suffering* and *Eight Noble Truths of Termination* became the panacea.

Mind does not need to be made *perfect*, because it is primarily *pure* and *perfect*. All that is needed is to cleanse the moss, the ignorance, *asvanams*, taints that had gathered on Mind, Speech and the Actions. Enlightenment does not create *the Prime Existence* nor does it terminate *suffering*, it only makes one aware of *the Prime Existence* and the inalienable nature of *sufferings* in *samsaara*. That is *Comprehensive Perception* - *samma diithi*.

Though inquiry in the *Nature, Causes* and *Termination* of *Suffering* is intellectual *Knowledge* in the beginning based on earlier *data* it ends as *Wisdom* and conscious awareness. *Buddha* without being intellectual but primarily emotive makes a profound statement that '*decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, union with unpleasant and separation from the pleasant is suffering and also the wish which one does not fulfill is suffering, in short samsaara itself is suffering*'. *Samsaara*, as aggregation of sensory influences, is structured as a *Distinct Gross Existence* of 'me', 'myself' and 'mine', of names and forms, which being the '*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*' is transient and impermanent. Therefore, he poses the question, '*Is it right then to regard that which is impermanent, sorrowful, subject to the law of decay*' as the goal to be sought, and receiving a reply in the negative, offers *the Way of terminating the sufferings*.

Since when a tranquil Mind desires to know, then the memories, created by earlier sensory influences together with those in the present cause the Mind to be vitiated. Therefore, it is said, '*chittam kaaranam arthaanaam tasmin sati jagat trayam, tasmin ksheenejagat ksheenam tat chikitsyam prayatnatah (Yoga Vashistha)*' - Mind, verily, is the cause of all activities. When active, the three worlds come about; when dormant, the worlds too subside. Therefore, this problem should consciously be investigated.

Buddha suggests for clarity of the *Nature, Causes and Ways* for terminating *sufferings* to direct the Mind inward, to the very source and not to the external supports, the faiths, beliefs and religions. He insists on the seekers to '*Scrutinize now with inward reflection . . . these various and manifold sufferings . . . this decay and death . . .*' If *suffering* suggests accumulation of empirical physical or psychological experiences (*upaadhi nidhaanam*), then deliverance would be from rejection of the supports, founded on uncertain and unsteady *data*. When Desecrates said '*I know, therefore, I am*' it was more an affirmation of his *Knowledge* than the supra-sensory *Wisdom*. *Knowledge* is easy to be investigated not so is *Wisdom*, where the empirical Mind does not have access. Therefore, it cannot be sourced through gross organs of perceptions or through sensory contacts. It needs a distinct and different instrument for perception as well as for dissemination. The words which Seers use to express their supernatural experiences fall short of being the adequate medium for communication because of the limited range of their dissemination. Spiritual expressions, as in the case of *vedic* hymns, are said to have sourced from super-sensory organs, subtle and sensitive. The *vedic* seer expresses his inability when he says '*My ears are open to hear, my eyes to see. The luminous Light within my heart shines yonder in space. My Mind roams with thoughts far, but what shall I speak and what, verily shall I think ?*'. Mind of the Speaker as well as the Seeker should be qualified and competent to observe and witness, to be receptive, reflective and meditative of *suffering*. Only that

will bring perfect state of understanding - *samma ditthi*.

Buddha does not speak of *papa* and *punya* as the *causes* or the *consequences* as he would speak of *ignorance* and *awareness*, *right way* and the *wrong way*, *wholesome* (*kushala*) and *unwholesome* (*a-kushala*), *morality* and *immorality*. He emphasizes that ‘*When Noble Truths are understood and reflected, when equanimity of Intellect is understood and reflected, when noble insight is understood and reflected, when noble liberation is understood and reflected, then craving for the Distinct Gross Existence is terminated . . . is destroyed and there is no now any further distinct gross existence.*’ (*Anguttara Nikaya*).

Buddha’s purpose of distinguishing the body from Mind was eloquently expressed later in days when once a householder, *Nakulapita* approached him and complained, ‘*I am decrepit, old, aged, advanced in years and life. I have reached the span of my life, ill in body and constantly ailing . . . May the Lord exhort me, may the Lord instruct me*’. The *Enlightened One* said, ‘. . . *One who put up with this body about and complains even a moment’s health, what is this if not foolishness? Therefore, you should train yourself, ‘Though I am ill in body, my mind shall not be ill*’. *Sariputta*, close disciple of the *Buddha* further clarified the meaning to *Nakulapita*. ‘. . . *an unlearned common person, who does not meet the noble ones, who is unskilled and untrained in the noble doctrine looks upon his body as his Self, thinking that his Self consists of the body or that his body is his Self, or that his Self is in his body, is possessed of the thought ‘I am the body, body is mine*’. *The one who is possessed of such thought changes and becomes otherwise, and through the change and alteration of his body there arise grief, lamentation, pain, dejection and despair . . . Such one is ill in body and ill in mind*’.

Craving as *ignorance* making vision indistinct and obscure, restricts the insight and deliverance hindered, whereas *awareness* broadens the horizon, clears the vision, delivers from bondage,

without having to accept another bondage. Religions and philosophies, though seek to spiritualize human life, often end up collecting followers than seekers, projecting themselves as the sole guide, goal and refuge for salvation, through whom alone souls could find deliverance. *Sharaddha* has something to do with *shru* – to listen or be receptive to absorb every sight, sound, smell and touch as one traverses in space on the *Path to Perfection*. Therefore, it cannot be blind and insensitive faith in someone or some else's thoughts.

Buddha's teachings, therefore, were essentially centered on what needs to be done to make one terminate the *sufferings* in *samsaara*, by being receptive to the illusory character of *the Distinct Gross Existence* as compared to the true manifestation of *the Prime Existence* which being beyond human comprehension is referred by *Upanishads* as *neti neti, not this, not this*, not any thing like or similar to what is seen here in *samsaara*. *The Distinct Gross Existence* is particularized as *this* and *that* and defined with *names* and *forms*. When one becomes aware of the 'unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded' *Prime Existence*, then one's thinking is not formatted by sensory projections on Mind. *Buddha* does not refer *the Distinct Gross Existence*, as *maya* but stipulates it as '*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*'.

The Noble Truth of the Termination of Suffering consists inter-related, inter-connected, inter-dependent actions which are complementary and supportive to one another, categorized in three groups - *Prajna* (awareness), *Shila* (ethics and morality) and *Samaadhi* (equanimity of Intellect). *Prajna* encompasses *Comprehensive Perception* and *Comprehensive Intent*. *Shila* encompasses *Comprehensive Speech*, *Comprehensive Action* and *Comprehensive living*. Finally, *Samadhi* encompasses *Comprehensive Striving*, *Comprehensive Mindfulness* and *Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect*.

Thus were the *Noble Truths* explained by *Buddha*.

The Eight Noble Truths

The *Eight Noble Truths*, which *Buddha* suggests for termination of *Suffering* are categorized in three groups – ***Prajna*** (awareness) which encompasses *Comprehensive Perception* and *Comprehensive Intent*; ***Sheela*** (ethics and morality) encompasses *Comprehensive Speech*, *Comprehensive Action* and *Comprehensive living*; ***Samaadhi*** (equanimity of Intellect *Samadhi* encompasses *Comprehensive Striving*, *Comprehensive Mindfulness* and *Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect*.

Prajna : Comprehensive Perception

The Prime Existence in essence is *Para* – supreme *Wisdom*. It is what *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of as eternal unmanifest, beyond even the unmanifest, which does not perish even when all existence perishes - ‘*paras tasmaat tu bhaavo’nyo’vyakto ‘vyaktatvaat sanaatanah,yah sa sarveshu bhiteshu naashyatsu ns vinaashyati’*. Spoken as the ultimate goal, that unmanifest is Imperishable –‘*avyakto’kshara ity uktas tam ahuh param gatih’*.

Since *Wisdom of the Prime Existence* being supreme and subtle is beyond sensory perception, therefore, difficult to be accessed through the language of the masses. *Taittiriya Up.* points out, ‘*yato vaacho nivartante apraapya manasaa saha,*

aanandam brhmana viddvan na bibheti kadaachana'- where speech (of the masses) returns with Mind , not attaining the one who has attained the bliss of *Brahman*, is not frightened of any one. *Wisdom (vak)* is accessed by Seers, who are aware of all its four forms; the first three first forms of *Wisdom – para, pashyanti* and *madhyama* having been retained with themselves, only the fourth, *vaikhari* is known to the common masses. It is concealed from common people because they are not initiated and therefore not qualified to be receptive to the mystical essence of the first three forms. Even when Seers expressed their experiences in *vedic* hymns in what appears as *vaikhari*, the true sense continued to be concealed from the masses, in symbolic and mystical suggestions. Therefore, *Rigveda* speaks of people, who seeing perceive not, hearing are not receptive, saying that only to the wise one, *Vak* reveals her form, true essence, as a chaste woman would reveal to her husband (*RV. X.71*).

Buddha, therefore, says that the ‘*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*’ comprehensive *Wisdom* can be accessed only through *Comprehensive Perception*, not through superficial one, unlike ‘*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*’ *Knowledge*, which is structured by organs of sense and of action and, therefore, restrictive in its reach. *Knowledge* can not meet the definition of that ‘*why which the unherable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived and the unknowable becomes known*’ because *Knowledgeable* man is one like *Narada* who only knows the words but not a knower of self – ‘*mantra-vit evaasmi naa atma-vit*’, *aatma-vit* (*Chandogya Up.*). These persons are like those mentioned in *Katha Up.* who abiding amidst ignorance proceed to lead others to *Wisdom*, which lies beyond the simple, careless, deluded by *the Distinct Gross Existence*, thinking this the world, there is no other. *Wisdom* is not accessible Even after hearing variously, *Wisdom* is not accessible, even after hearing it is not understood. Wonderous is he who can communicate *Wisdom* and skillful is he who sources *Wisdom*, wonderous is he who understands when communicated even by man of *Wisdom*, because taught by an

inferior, Wisdom is not truly understood, because it is communicated in various ways. Unless communicated by one who has the Wisdom himself there is no way of being aware of the Wisdom, being inconceivable and subtler than the subtle – ‘*aneeyaan hy atarkyam anu pramasit*’.

In *Comprehensive Perception* one sees things as they are and not as what one would like it to be or as one imagines or desires it to be. *Wisdom* is not manifest as something to be known as an object but something to be experienced as *the* subject. It is the ground, the basis, the foundation of all that is to be known. *Maitri Up.* says, ‘*He who having senses indrawn as in sleep, having perfectly pure thoughts as in dream, not being controlled by senses while in cave, perceives one called Pranava, the leader, luminous, sleepless, un-decaying, deathless, sorrowless, becomes himself Pranava, the leader, luminous, sleepless, un-decaying, deathless, sorrowless*’. This *Comprehensive Perception*.

In empirical phenomenal world, the aggregate perceptions dominate thinking process. Since an ordinary person is led to respond to *manifestation* with a Mind influenced by the senses, his actions become imbalanced, not having been sourced from primary Mind. Therefore, he errs in his judgment and *suffers*. A man of *Wisdom*, with restrained senses perceives *manifestation as it really is* and therefore, does not *suffer*.

Buddha makes distinction between *dharmakaya* – *Existence* as the *eternal, immutable, real essence* and *rupakaya* - *Existence* as transient, decaying deteriorating and dissolving mutable *form* therefore, *not real*. *Wisdom* responds to *dharmakaya* as *wholesome essence* whereas *Knowledge* responds superficially to pragmatic and practical *form*. *Shraddhavan* is one who is receptive to supra-sensory resonance without being influenced by senses, with beliefs, faith, creed or religion, possessed of *Comprehensive Perception*, which begins as intellectual exercise and ends up in conscious awareness. Therefore, *Knowledge* which is product of sensory influences

and have a beginning and an end do not and can not be the *Comprehensive Perception*. *Knowledge* commences with statements like 'I know', 'It is reasonable, sensible proposition'. *Wisdom* being *deep insight, alert consciousness and choice-less awareness of 'the unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded'* is *Comprehensive Perception*, being aware of 'suffering' accepts it as undeniable fact of *samsaara*, and accepting 'things as they are', without having a view or forming an opinion, rises above *sufferings*.

For such one there is nothing to be gained in future or nothing to be lost of the past, accepting every event in the present moment, as thy transpire without the burden of memories of the past or aspirations of the future.

Comprehensive Perception is linear flow like a stream, whereas *Knowledge* has threefold dimension, *the perceiver, perception* and the *process of perception*. In *Comprehensive Perception* all these three as well as views, opinions cognitions and convictions converge and merge like the diverse streams in one ocean in one unified awareness, to source *Wisdom* in fullness and entirety, luminous and clear of what was spoken experienced in seclusion and concealed from the *unqualified, unresponsive* masses. A man of logic infers that rivers *exist distinct as parts in the ocean*, a man of *Wisdom* sees, with keen insight and *Comprehensive Awareness*, is aware that the streams *have become the Ocean*.

Comprehensive Perception is becoming conscious, on waking up from sleep, that what was seen in dreams is not real but what Mind conceives and formats, with *form* and *name* when one goes to sleep or as *Brihad Aranyak Up.* says, '*sa yatra prasvapiti, asya lokasya sarvaavato maatram apaadaaya, svayam vihatya, svayam nirmaaya, svena bhaasa, svena jyotisha prasavpiti*' – When one goes to sleep, he takes along the material of this all-embracing world, himself tears it apart, himself builds it up, he sleeps by his own brightness, by his own light. That is the stage when one is enlightened that the

phenomenal world, *samsaara*, is not *Existence* but *maya*, an illusion in Mind with *names* and *forms*. When one is aware, one is just aware without needing any substantiation, as *svayam saakshi* - self-evident and *svayam siddha* - self established.

Prajna : Comprehensive Intent

The word *Satya* is derived from the root ‘*as*’ to be, to exist and therefore, when *Rigvedic* seers perceived *That Alone*, to exist, breathing singularly - ‘*svadhayaa*’ by *Self Impulse*, when neither *Existence* nor *non-Extistence* were ever there, before bursting forth as *Brahman* from the root *br* to burst forth in effluence. This *Prime Existence* became the origin and foundation of its creative activity. *Upanishads* mentioned that when *Brahman*, became manifest, it recognized itself as ‘*aham*’- the *I*, ‘*asmi*’- the *Existence* declaring ‘*aham vaava srishtir asmi*’ - that I, verily, am all this creation. Like all earlier *upanishadic* teachers *Buddha* too was enlightened to ‘*the unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*’ *Prime Existence*.

In creation, *self-Impulse* became ‘*dharmaaviruddhao kaama*’, primary purpose consistent with the perennial righteousness, for initiating and energizing the created constituents to similar *desire* towards higher consciousness and to inquire, investigate, form thoughts, concepts, faiths and beliefs in Mind.

In spite of such suggestions of irrefutable foundations, human beings sink in *samsaara*, *the primordial world* under *sensory influence* giving rise to the aggregation of emotional, impulsive, irrational and destructive tendencies instead of walking on the Path to Perfection and reaching out to a supernal ideal. Without a balanced wholesome nature, good thoughts do not come and even if they come they do not transform themselves into good actions, while on the other hand, under influence of senses and provoked by uncontrolled ego-sense, they do not hesitate to accept what is unjust and unwholesome. William

James, the western philosopher, rightly points, '*Everyone must at some time have wondered at the strange paradox of our moral nature, that, although the pursuit of outward good is the breath of its nostrils, the attainment of outward good seem to be its suffocation and death*'.

The misconceived '*Existence as Perceived*' overwhelms '*Existence as It IS*' becoming the goal leading one to frustration and suffering in *samsaara*. While seers '*see*' the *Wisdom of the whole* in every fragment created, '*seeing the sea in the grain of sand*' as it were, the ordinary persons of low intelligence not being receptive to the *essence* contained in the *form*, cannot '*see*' '*the sea in the grain of sand*' and on the contrary assume *the grain of sand itself to be the sea*.

'*Existence as It IS*' is the aggregate subtle and spiritual *Wisdom of the Prime Existence*, while the '*Existence as Perceived*' is the distinct and gross *Knowledge of the manifest primordial Existence*. Wisdom does not eliminate *the manifest primordial Existence*; it only removes the obscurity and ignorance of *the manifest primordial Existence*, through purposeful, wholesome and luminous *Intent* to inquire, investigate and observe using Mind, as the stick to stir the fire and in that process Mind itself ceasing to exist along with the thoughts therein.

Mind in *essence* is wise, but sensory thoughts make it obscure. Mind not burdened by thoughts, memories, opinions, concepts and desires and open to be receptive is that of an innocent child. As *Brihad Aranyak Up.* suggests, '*Therefore, let a Brahmin (the man of wisdom) denying the burden of his learning, desire to live as a child . . . Rejecting both meditative and the non-meditative perceptions, he becomes a Brahmin, (a Knower of Brahman)*'.

Therefore, *Comprehensive Intent* through inquiry, reflection and meditation de-condition the Mind, along with the thoughts - '*what one knows*' and opening it '*what one should know*'. Without **Prajna** – awareness of *Comprehensive*

Perception and Comprehensive Intent, insight and understanding - **Shila** the *Comprehensive Speech, Comprehensive Action and Comprehensive Living* are not possible.

Therefore, one should now take up Sheela which is Comprehensive Speech, Comprehensive Action and Comprehensive Living.

Sheela : Comprehensive speech

When *the Prime Existence* desired burst forth in effluence, it kept *Mind, Speech and Prime Breath* for itself as the instruments – ‘*triny aatmane’kuruta iti, mano vacham praanam*’. *Mano*, Mind confers *Comprehensive Perception and Comprehensive Intent*, *Vak* – *Speech* confers *Comprehensive Speech* and *Praana* confers *Comprehensive Action and Comprehensive Living* and *Prime Breath* confers *Samaadhi (equanimity of Intellect Samadhi* encompasses *Comprehensive Striving, Comprehensive Mindfulness and Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect*.

Comprehensive Speech gives expression to the *Comprehensive Perception and Comprehensive Intent*. But *Vak* - *Speech* is not *vaikhari*, what is spoken by masses, but also in *para, pashyanti* and *madhyama*, which are kept concealed by seers with them alone. *Vaikhari* based on conventional codes of communication, is not capable of expressing what was *perceived or intended* in entirety, because the codes are what people of different places generally accept as social agreement, what word shall stand for what word, at any particular or over a period of time. This enables members of a community or by extension people of a region to gather together bound by bonds of classification, valuation and acceptance of social and cultural bonds. In using *vaikhari* for communication depend primarily on socially and generally accepted signs, symbols, drawings and designs, parables and legends, familiar to the speaker as well as to the listeners. Therefore, in communication, Mind precedes the Speech and Actions follow the Speech.

Speech expands what was *intended and perceived*, dealing with the primary five *Ws* - *who, what, when, where* and by *whom*. Since the Teacher's objective is to communicate effectively and conclusively and the objective of the seeker is to be clarified in entirety, both the communicator as well as the communicated one should be mindful, conscious of qualification of the Teacher and receptivity of the disciple. Therefore, in *Taittiriya Up.* the Teacher prays Indra, the presiding deity over Mind, to make his body vigorous, his speech exceedingly sweet, his ears abundantly receptive and protecting and preserving what he has heard. He also desires that aspirants should come to him in large numbers, from all quarters, well equipped, well restrained and peaceful. In *Katha Up.* Yama as the Teacher informs Nachiketa that '*Not by reasoning is this apprehension (of Wisdom of Brahman) attainable, but dearest taught by another, is it well understood. You have obtained it, holding fast to the truth. May we find, Nachiketa, another querist like you*'. Further he cautions, '*Taught by an inferior man, This One cannot be truly understood, as This One is thought of in many ways. Unless taught by one who knows This One as himself, there is no going there for it is inconceivable, being subtler than subtle*'.

Comprehensive Speech, therefore, has to be caring, compassionate and composed, '*Better than a thousand words devoid of meaning is a single word which can bring tranquility to one who hears it*'. Mind in its primary state, is a tranquil powerful instrument, being more comprehensive internally than what it appears to be externally. Empirical Mind plays a superficial role in seeing, listening, tasting and touching whereas Primary Mind is deeply receptive, reflective and meditative. Empirical Mind reacts to sensory influences, craving for '*things*', initiating *actions*, creating a formatted *Distinct Gross Existence* which is not *the Prime Existence*. Not that *the Distinct Gross Existence* is of no consequence but being founded unstable foundation but conclusions drawn from supra-

sensory *Existence* assure wholesome receptivity, scrutiny and discernment beyond human sphere.

The *Intent* which one has in Mind needs to be translated in speech so that it may be put to actions. Not by professing philosophical principles does one become religious but by being constantly, continuously and conscientiously being receptive to every tone and inflection of the Teacher's speech, being reflective on the things instructed and imbibing them in one's heart does one become religious. Therefore to those people who wanted to discuss philosophies and intellectual theories, *Buddha* remained silent and not responding even at the expense of being misunderstood. As *Dhammapada* points out – '*Not only today but since ancient times, they have always been criticized, those who remain silent, those who speak much and those who speak little*'.

It is human to select one's likes and pleasure and conceal one's dislikes and sorrows, preferring and choosing some and rejecting and evading the others. Mind in its pure primary stage is alert, conscious and aware of the universality of Existence, therefore, in that stage it has nothing to choose and nothing to deny, accepting every things as they come to be, *yathabhutam*. Preferring and choosing, rejecting and evading is nothing but ignorance. Not being selective is being responsive to everything without dissent, digression or distraction. When awareness in Mind leads Speech to be wholesome it becomes the *Comprehensive speech*.

Therefore, men of *Wisdom* being conscious, careful and clear of the thoughts arising in Mind, transform them in restrained Speech. They do not strew pearls of *Wisdom* either before swine or before the unqualified, ineligible and unworthy. Without desiring any fruits for their actions, they revel in the solitude of silence, '*being light unto themselves*' and not relying on any one else.

Sheela : Comprehensive Action

When Speech is in conformity with Mind, the Action that follows becomes *Comprehensive*. *Shila* is excellence of Mind, Speech and Action, with constructive evaluation of the *essence of the Prime Existence* in Mind, disciplined communication in Speech performance of ethical or moral Actions. Only then will the Mind will have clarity of thought, Speech will have principled communication and Actions will lead to alert insight and conscious awareness. Speaking about *the Path to Perfection*, Buddha maintained that, '*I teach Simha, the non-doing of such actions as are unrighteous either by deed or by word or by thought ; I teach the non-being of all the conditions of heart which are evil and are not good. . . . He who has freed himself, Simha, from all those conditions of heart which are evil and not good, he who has destroyed them as a palm tree which is rooted out so that it cannot grow up again such as a man has accomplished the eradication of (conditioned) self*'. *Dhammpada* too recommends : '*If he seeks his own happiness by harming others, bound by hate, he remains the slave of hatred. To neglect what should be done and to do what should be neglected, to increase in arrogance and negligence*'.

Comprehensive Action, therefore, is the culmination of integrated Mind and Speech, embellished and reinforced by moral intent and ethical action, making receptivity, *shraddha* evident through inquiry, reflection, meditation in *suffering* and not through rites, rituals or prayers. *Comprehensive Action* transforms earlier *Karma* to be in tune with present *Karmas*. No one can transgress and not be accounted for. When the laws of *Rta* is interfered or broken, some are born happy and noble while others are not. '*It is through difference in their Karma that men are not all alike; but some are long lived some are short-lived and some are sickly*', says Buddha. '*If any one says that a man must reap according to his deeds, in that case there is no religious life nor is any opportunity offered for entire extinction of sufferings. But if any one says that a reward a man reaps accords with his deeds in that case there is religious life*

and opportunity is offered for extinction of the entire sufferings'. Buddha continues 'Whatever deed, monks, has been performed without greed, without hatred and free from delusion . . . this deed is annihilated, cut off at the root, made similar to a uprooted palm tree, prevented from becoming in future , not subject to the law of becoming (i.e. Karma)' (Anuttara Nikaya).

Dhammapada says, 'If a man speaks or acts with pure mind, happiness follows him as closely as his inseparable shadow . . . He who has discarded all impurity, who is firmly attached to the precepts of morality, who knows how to moderate his appetite, and who is loyal, he, truly, is worthy to wear the yellow robe . . . Though he may recite only a tiny portion of the sacred texts, if he puts into practice their Teachings, having rejected all passion, all ill-will and all delusion,, he possesses true wisdom . . . he shares in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One . . .'

The concepts of *paapa* and *punya* are alien and irrelevant in *Buddhist* philosophy, except as ethical and moral precepts. Extinction of *Karma* is not dispensation by Gods but is inference of *Wisdom (prajna)* and ignorance (*ajnana*), wholesome (*kushala*) and unwholesome (*a-kushala*) the proper (*shreya*) or pleasant (*preya*) thoughts, speech and actions. Therefore, one should be concerned more with the *Cause* that formats our shapes our thoughts, speech and actions than rue over the *Consequences*. If one is wise to the *Cause*, the *Consequences* will take care of themselves. Extinction of the *Cause* ensures annihilation of the *Consequence* and with annihilation of the *Consequence*, Mind reverts to its original pure and peaceful composure.

Buddha accepts the *Karmic* cycle as inevitable in the process of *thought-word-deed*. When Artabhag Jaratkaru asks Yajnavalkya, 'Verily, one becomes good by good action, bad by bad actions' his reference is to *Karma*. When Janaka also asks him, he replies, 'As one performs his actions, as one behaves,

even so does he become. The performer of good actions becomes good; the performer of bad actions becomes bad . . . Others say a person consists of desires; as his desires are, so is his will. As his will, so is his action and whatever is his desires, that he attains'. In like manner *Buddha* responds, 'Whatever deed, monks, has been performed without greed, without hatred and free from delusion . . . this deed is annihilated, cut off at the root, made similar to a uprooted palm tree, prevented from becoming in future , not subject to the law of becoming (i.e. *Karma*)' (*Anuttara Nikaya*).

Speaking to one of the disciples, *Buddha* clarifies 'For liberation of the mind of the immature, *Megghiya*, five conditions for maturity avail . . . a mendicant brother has five good companions . . . He is dutiful. He abides restrained by the rules. Perfecting himself in conduct and behaviour, seeing the danger (even) in small errors, he takes up and disciplines himself in the precepts. He takes pleasure in and receives willingly and easily such discourse as is elevating and suited to deliverance of the Mind. He abides strenuous in what he has undertaken for the abandoning of the evil thoughts, for originating good thoughts, steadfast, persistent, not shrinking from the burden of righteous thoughts . . . He has insight, is endowed with insight into the origin and disappearance of the noble, penetrating, leading to the complete destruction of suffering . . . And standing fast in these five qualities, four further qualities must be cultivated - perception of the unclean, for abandonment of desire, loving kindness, abandonment of ill-will; introspection with restraint of breath, for controlling discursive thought ; perception of the transient, for destruction of conceit I am.' (*Anguttara Nikaya*).

Actions are not distinct or independent of others. *Karma* is *sabba-sankhara-samatho*, all-comprehensive aggregation. Though *Buddha* does not often delve on *Death* or life after death, he speaks of as natural course that after decay, deterioration and death of the body, *Karmas* of the past and of the present pass on to take refuge in a new *Distinct Gross Existence*.

Buddha maintains, 'I teach non-doing of such actions as are unrighteous either by deed or by word or by thought ; I teach the non-being of all conditions of heart which are evil and are not good. . . . He who has freed himself from all those conditions of heart which are evil and not good, he who has destroyed them as a palm tree which is rooted out so that it cannot grow up again, such man has accomplished the eradication of (conditioned) self'.

One who is fully attuned in this manner is one who is can undertake *Comprehensive Action*.

Sheela : Comprehensive living.

Though the eight-fold Noble Truths are not linear, there is imperceptible flow of attitude towards conscious performance of actions. Therefore, *Comprehensive living* follows *Comprehensive Perception* and *Comprehensive Intent*, *Comprehensive Speech* and, *Comprehensive Action*, without engaging in any conflicting, inconsistent or incongruous evaluation of things as good and bad, beautiful and ugly and noble and ignoble but accepting every event as it transpires without judgement or an opinion. He is aware that the moment there appears something as good, beautiful and noble, the idea that some other things are bad, ugly or ignoble springs up in Mind, making one live life not *comprehensively* but in *fragments*. Such life is dichotomous, pretentious and partial in perception. Because the moment one prefers, chooses and selects good, beautiful and the noble that very moments he disapproves, denies, and rejects the bad, ugly and the ignoble. Subjective perceptions are constrained, constricted, partial therefore, not entirely true, being relative to people, places and periods, and therefore, subject to diverse perceptions.

The Prime Existence is the sole and absolute existence, *ekam sat*, which *Mundaka Up.* declares as *adreshyam* (not perceivable), *agrahyam* (ungraspable), *agotram* (without family), *avarnam* (without designation), *achakshu'nityam tad*

apaani paadam (without sight, hearing, hands or feet), *nityam* (eternal) *vibhum* (all-pervading), *sarva gatam* (omnipresent), *sushuksham* (exceedingly subtle), *avyayam* (immutable), *bhutayonim* (origin of all creation). *Brihad Aranayak Up.* declares that *Satya* has a covering which is *a-Satya*, that which is false. *Satya* is here in the heart – *hrydi ayam iti*, here, the place is known as *hrydayam*. That serene being rising out of this body and reaching the highest light appears in his own form. He is the *Self*, that is immortal, the fearless. That is *Brahman*. Verily the name of that *Brahman* is *Satya*.

Comprehensive Living is not having intellectual *Knowledge* about life but being conscious aware of the *Wisdom* of life which is ‘*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*’. For *Buddha*, being committed inwardly to *Dharma* is as important as committing oneself to outward *sadhana*. An intellectual life is irrelevant if it does not lead one to be alert, conscious and aware to the life as it gets ahead. One accepts *Prime Existence* in entirety or not at all. Only a man of *Wisdom* is receptive to every thing - *anor aneeyam mahato mameeyan* - smaller than the small and greater than the great without preferring, choosing and selecting. For such one there is no sorrow nor any revulsion, as mentioned in *Isha Up.* – ‘*yas tu sarvaani bhutaani aatmany evaanupashyati, sarvabhuteshu chaatmani atato na vijugupsate*’. *Wisdom*, unlike *Knowledge*, is not open to inference being comprehensive vision and deep insight.

Mind in *essence* in form – *kaaya* is pure, transparent as a clean sheet of glass. When it receives a coating of the silver lining (*darpa* - ego), it becomes *Darpana*, a mirror, in which *the Distinct gross Existence*, as aggregation of innumerable sensory influences. What is *Satya* - the *Kaaya* or the *Darapana* ? *Kaaya* symbolizes the essence while *Darpana* validates the ego-centric manifest form. So long as Intellect is, so long will the ego arise. Only when the ego rests and subsides, the *Wisdom of the Prime Existence*, *Satya* becomes luminous.

Seeking a pure and transparent Mind, not influenced by senses, is not denying the relevance of the senses or the manifest world, but investigating the relevance and efficiency of the empirical Mind in accessing *the Prime Existence*. There is very possibility for the truth not knowing what is false; but it is inconceivable that for one who speaks untruth, truth is not known. Subjective is what the Mind perceives with sensory influences and what the intellect authenticates as *Distinct Gross Existence*. Objective is *the Prime Existence*, eternal, immutable, permanent or all pervading and all-comprehensive, not changing as the sensory influences change.

Hindu Philosophy does not accept the *Judaic* concept of *Satan* as the non-luminous and evil, co-existing, equal in importance and influence concurrently with the *Divine*. The moment one accepts the existence of concurrent influence of *Satan*, the all-pervading power of the Divine becomes suspect and discounted. Creation can not countenance two diverse and contradictory forces, with diverse influences.

Hindu philosophy suggests all creation to an all-powerful and all-pervading *Prajapati*, all creatures being his offspring and belonging to the same sole centre of energy, equal in opportunities but having receptivity one differing from the other. Therefore, the possibility of some being luminous *devas*, with enlightened thoughts and others being non-luminous *asuras* or *satanic*, obscure with sensory influences. The enlightened *devas* represent the Wisdom and the obscure un-enlightened *asuras* representing *Ignorance*. Once the ignorance is removed from mind of the *asuras*, even they can become the luminous ones, the *devas*. Contrarily, when *devas* succumb to non-luminous thoughts, they descend to the lower levels, becoming *manavas* or *asuras*, depending the extent of ignorance in their Mind.

When one becomes enlightened, their supra-sensory perception becomes pure and pristine Mind, not with any contradictory attributes or dispensation, becoming, verily, one with one's Self. *Brihad Aranayak Up.* recommends, '*Brahmanas*

having known that self, having overcome the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, the desire for worlds, live like a mendicant . . . Let a Brahmana, after he has done with learning, desire to live like a child . . . Having done with both non-meditative and meditative states, then he becomes a Brahmana, knower of Brahman'. At other place the same upanishad says, 'If the person knows the Self as 'I am this', then wishing what and desiring what should one suffer here in the body? . . . (therefore) Let a man of wisdom (Brahmana) knowing the Prime Existence (Brahman – One who is the effluence of Brahman) practice that wisdom. Let him not reflect on diverse manifestation (shabdaan); for that would be mere weariness of the Speech'.

According to Hindus, life is a composite whole, to be experienced in every stage of life – childhood, in adolescence, in youth and old age, following a well defined objectives of *Brahmacharya, Grihsthashram, Vanapsrastha* and *Sanyaas*. For that purpose he bases his *Artha* – enterprise and *Kama* desires on *Dharma* so that wholesome *Moksha* or *Nirvana* may be achieved. In that state of *bliss*, he is not trailed by good or by evil, having passed over to the beyond, to *the Prime Existence*, where nothing could conflict with one another, be contrary to one another, every thing seen flowing from the same source, the Mind.

The Mind of an ordinary person is directed to external world, which gives rise to thoughts, concepts, opinions, creating a distinct and unreal *Distinct Gross Existence*. Since all subsequent thoughts begin and end on that foundation, the empirical world is one great make-believe world, neither same nor similar to *the Prime Existence*. This is the *Waking state* of human life of a human being. When he sleeps, he takes up with him the sensory influences of the *Waking state*, giving rise to the *Dream state*, which is neither similar to *the Distinct Gross Existence* nor to *the Prime Existence*. When he goes to the Deep Sleep stage, he neither aware of the *Waking state* nor of the *Dream state*, and in that state, he desires no desires, sees no dreams. This is the pure and pristine state of Mind, free from

craving, free from evils, free from fear. That is the form of the Mind when all desires are fulfilled, in which being itself becomes the fulfillment of his desires, in which he without desires becomes free from sorrow.

The traditional Mind thinks life in fragments as empirical and spiritual, with constant endeavour to over come one by the other. Fragment cannot see the whole. Such Mind prefers the luminous and denies the obscure. The Mind which is free from sensory influences and temporal thoughts, being open to respond to the supernal influences, perceives life *as It is*, as non-dual entity, neither picking nor choosing things as good, noble and beautiful and rejecting the bad, ignoble and ugly. Such Mind opens *Knowledge* wide to the sensuous and the spiritual contributing the entirety of *Wisdom*, Just as a tree needs roots growing deep down it needs also the open space to spread its branches and burst in flowers. Travesty is that religion speaks of the roots and spirituality of the branches and flowers, and one hankers for permanency when the transient is overwhelming. Bonding with the image while ignoring the reality. It is only when the temporal and the spiritual converge and religion becomes the foot stool for the spiritual, that the human being becomes whole and wholesome.

This is true form of the Mind, which in words comparable to *Self* described by *Brihad Aranyak Up.*, when one realizes *the Distinct Gross Existence*, experienced during Waking state to be illusory in comparison with *the Prime Existence* even as on waking from sleep one realizes the *Dream state* to be illusory in comparison with the *Waking state*.

Comprehensive living is living as an alert, conscientious *Witness* to life, with full awareness but not with attachment, which is the product of ego. Appearances and disappearances in life are in relation to the *Witness*, without whom appearances and disappearances is impossible. Mind is like a sculptor who chips off the stone piece by piece till that which was in his Mind comes to be revealed. As *Buddha* pointed out '*You do not*

discern the nature of living or dying. This body will be dissolved and no amount of performance of sacrifices will save it. Therefore seek you real life that is the Mind. Where the consciousness of the Distinct Gross Existence exists, there truth (Prime Existence) cannot come to be luminous' Therefore, 'Come now, mendicants. I enjoin you. Perishable by nature is Individuality, (the distinct gross existence).'

Comprehensive Living needs positive forces to lead one to a higher, luminous and enlightened plane and not the negative forces of darkness which pull back one to lower, non-luminous and obscure plane. *Comprehensive living* is akin to performance of a sacrifice. *Chandogya Up.* clarifies that which people here refer as *yajna* (sacrifice), *sattraayanam* (protracted sacrifice) or *anaashakaayanama* (fasting) is the disciplined life of a student of sacred wisdom (*brahmacharyam*). His first twenty-four years are the morning libations (*praatah-savanam*), the next twenty-four years are the mid-day libations (*maadhayndinam savanam*) and the next forty-eight years are third libations (*treetya savanam*). When he hungers and abstains from pleasures, they are initiatory rites (*deeksha*); when one eats and enjoys pleasures, they are *Upasada* rites; when one laughs, eats and has sex, they are recitations of scriptures and finally when one performs austerities, gives alms, is righteous, is non-violent, truthful, these are the *dakshina* – gifts for the priests. Thereby, in final hours one takes refuge in three thoughts – You are indestructible (*akshitam*), you are the immutable (*achyutam*) and you are the very essence of life (*praana-samsthitam*).

Buddha emphasizes that for a man of *Wisdom*, *sadhana* is living an intelligent, disciplined, moral and ethical life. One should seek to live a wholesome life, knowing that he does not stand at the centre but on the periphery of *the Primal Existence* and his ego-sense should not keep him apart from other elements in creation.

Buddha's teaching was not an intellectual statement, a doctrine, a commandment, a belief, a faith or a dogma, but

Truth, recollected and revealed, alert, wakeful, conscious awareness of the totality of life *as it exists, as it transpires*, inclined primarily and naturally to *Rta*, the cosmic law. It is choiceless awareness of one's Self by one's self. Giving to Gautami the quintessence of *Dhamma*, he said : '*Of whatever teaching you are sure that it leads to passion and not to peace ; to pride and not to humility ; to doing much and not the little ; to love social intercourse and not the solitude ; to the idleness of Mind and not to the earnest striving of Mind, is hard to pacify or easy to pacify, that O Gautami, is not Dhamma*'. *Dhammapada* says, '*. . . in truth, it is difficult to master oneself. In truth one is one's own master. For what other master can there be? By mastering oneself, one acquires a mastery which is difficult to achieve*'.

This is Comprehensive Living.

The *Comprehensive Speech, Comprehensive Action and Comprehensive Living* leads to *Samaadhi* (equanimity of Intellect) represented by *Comprehensive Striving, Comprehensive Mindfulness and Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect*.

Buuddha did not concentrate on intellectually absorb his Teachings a something to be remembered and recollected as *saddhana* unswerving awareness through *Comprehensive Striving, Comprehensive Mindfulness* and well as *Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect*.

A *Buddhist* tale typifies the compassionate manner in which he initiated disciples towards *Samadhi - equanimity of Intellect*. Many had joined *Sangha* and accepted the discipline of the *Bhikkhus*. These were primarily the precepts for external deportment – initiation in *Dharma*, in *Sangha* as a *Bhikku* and surrendering to *Buddha*, not as a person but as the embodiment of enlightenment. These were not exclusive bur complimentary to one another. In *Buddha's* ministry, no discipline was obligatory, except in so far as it would further in his *saadhana*.

Living was not in isolation but in congregation for exchange of ideas and not for compulsory or obligatory initiation in a faith, belief or a dogma. When *Buddha* was alive and teacher, he was the *Blessed One* and the disciples were the fortunate ones who could approach the Teacher with doubts and problems. The term *Bauddhas* came much later after his passing away when the disciples collected his Teachings and addressed themselves to them more as what has been spoken by the Teacher than as the guides to ‘. . . endeavour with diligence and work out your own salvation’, to ‘Live like islands unto your selves . . . as refuge unto your selves, take none other as your refuge, live with Dhamma as your island, as your refuge, take none other as refuge . . . Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help’ and to ‘Believe nothing, O Monks, merely because you have been told about it . . . or because it is traditional, or because you yourselves imagined it. Do not believe what your Teacher tells you merely out of respect for the Teacher . . . But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find it to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings – that doctrine believe and cling to and take it as your guide’. The objective *Nirvana* was clear the *Path* to that *Perfection* was required to be practiced in depth and comprehensively.

A legend speaks of a *Bhikku* who was deputed by *Buddha* to receive *Bhiksha*, alms from residence of a particular lady. When the *Bhikku* was calling on for *Bhiksha*, desires would arise in his Mind. The lady would perceive these unexpressed desires and accordingly fulfill them. Observing these unusual incidents occurring without fail, the *Bhikku* wondered that if his desires for things like food could be foreseen by the lady, she might also perceive the desires for lust, even when they rise involuntarily in his mind. Frightened of such an eventuality, he asked the lady how could she foresee his desires, she replied: since she had been initiated by *Buddha* on being aware of the events taking place around her in life, she knows every thing that transpires around her. Hearing this, the *Bhikku* became enlightened to the reason

why Buddha had deputed him to that lady. From then onward, his Mind remained instead of being concentrated on the act of seeking *Bhiksha*, became meditative and continued to be meditative thereafter without allowing desires to rise up in his Mind. Thus he soon became enlightened to the sufferings in *samsaara* and was delivered to *Nirvana*. All thoughts, speech and actions arise through our state of meditation and not purposeful concentrated determinations. Without having to choose between the right and wrong, the good and bad, he accepts whatever comes spontaneously with a thing which is beautiful in itself without there being anything like an ugly staring him.

When one sees such one approaching you becomes aware of his presence without having to be announced. *Comprehensive Living* is not some thing new to be achieved but something that is to be lived. Living is not behaving in any one particular manner because it has not a *form* but only an *essence* which has its own source of sustenance. *Comprehensive Living* is opening the window for breeze, the light to flow in. One who lives a Comprehensive life has its own dignity which cannot be compared with any other thing. It is not relative but natural state where every thing booms, his very nature being the act of blossoming. . *The test of being in Nirvana lies in Comprehensive Striving, Comprehensive Mindfulness and Comprehensive equanimity of Intellect.*

Samadhi : Comprehensive Striving :

Comprehensive Striving does not mean physical exertion but alert conscious, focused, resolute, determined and decisive attempt to be and not become enlightened. It is not possible unless one is has not overcome hindrances, who is not tranquil, who is not composed or equanimous in intellect and meditative in Mind. Not through acquired Knowledge, not through modulated speech, not even through calculated actions but through scrutinization of Mind in its natural state, through

meditative Mind, through detachment every thing that is consequential of cravings, arriving at detachment from that which is made and won by what is done. Not for him who is attached too much or who abstains too much, who is exceedingly docile and lethargic or who is too much active and energetic is one enlightened to the state of meditative *Bliss*.

Comprehensive Striving is with conscious and alert awareness to an unambiguous Mind with discriminative, disciplined and determined austere thoughts, harmonious dedication and devotion to action. *Comprehensive Striving* demands eternal vigilance, attentive mind and well-equipped organs of sense and of action. Because what one intends to perceive, one ends up in perceiving. If one's performance of actions has to authenticate one's Intent, one's performance should be attuned to one's inherent attribute, attitude and aptitude.

Because, *Comprehensive Striving* commences as pure, wholesome *Intent* expressed in noble *Speech* and translated in noble *Actions* without being influenced by senses and formatted as concepts. Only in a pure unadulterated Mind does '*the unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*' come to be revealed. Only a Tree rooted firmly in earth and allowed to rise feely in the sky above and spread its branches abundantly in space. Only a free Mind flowers and around a restrained Mind, only the weeds to grow. A receptive Mind allows free flow of wholesome thoughts; controlled Mind capsules, contrives and structures a Mind, manipulated by sensory influences in unguarded moments which burst open, letting loose the suppressed desires damaging the psyche and psychology of a person. Therefore, *Buddha* recommends, '*Whatever deed, monks, has been performed without greed, without hatred and free from delusion . . . this deed is annihilated, cut off at the root, made similar to a uprooted palm tree, prevented from becoming in future , not subject to the law of becoming (i.e. Karma)*' (*Anuttara Nikaya*).

Anguttara Nikaya records five conditions for liberation of Mind, conforming to and abiding in *Dhamma*, perfecting ethical conduct and moral precepts, and disciplining receptivity to precepts and rejecting evil thoughts and persevering in virtuous thoughts. By not denying desire but rejecting *cravings* one would lead to perceiving *the Prime Existence as it is* nor as it is *formatted*.

Kindness, compassion and rejection of ill-will and hatred towards others, rejecting the conceit ‘*I am*’, denying *the Distinct Gross Existence* and accepting universal brotherhood will enlighten one to the question one is born happy and noble and others are not. ‘*It is through difference in their Karma that men are not all alike; but some are long lived some are short-lived and some are sickly*’ says *Buddha*. Therefore, he attributes sufferings to ‘. . . *their wicked conduct, their unjust conduct . . . some beings with the cessation of their body, after death . . . go the bad way, come to places of pain, to hell . . . (If) owing to their conduct in agreement with the teaching, their considerate conduct, some beings with the break up of the bodies after death, go the good way come to the heavenly world.*’ (*Anuttara Nikaya*).

Buddha does not speak of heavenly world, as the place where one enjoys perennial pleasures but as the state where the Mind is calm like a lake without ripples and thoughts do not rise creating *the Distinct Gross Existence – samsaara*. *Dhammapada* says, ‘*If a man speaks or acts with pure mind, happiness follows him as closely as his inseparable shadow . . . He who has discarded all impurity, who is firmly attached to the precepts of morality, who knows how to moderate his appetite, and who is loyal, he, truly, is worthy to wear the yellow robe . . . Though he may recite only a tiny portion of the sacred texts, if he puts into practice their Teachings, having rejected all passion, all ill-will and all delusion,, he possesses true wisdom . . . he shares in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One . . .*’

Samaadhi : Comprehensive Mindfulness

Comprehensive Mindfulness is being alert, conscious, attentive, vigilant and observant to *the Prime Existence as it is*, with pleasures and pains, happiness and sorrows, good and bad, the beauty and ugliness existing simultaneous and concurrently with each other comprehensively un-affected by sensory influences. Then one becomes aware and acknowledges, as something *seen*, something *heard* and something *experienced*, that *samsaara* is *suffering* and that *the Distinct Gross Existence* is an illusion which creates *craving to possess (kama-tanha)*, *craving to become (bhava-tanha)* and *craving to renounce as self-denial (vibhava-tanha)*. Thus enlightenment is not achieving something but dispensing the erroneous perception and ignorance that *the Distinct Gross Existence* is the foundation of pleasures, happiness, the good and the beauty. An enlightened one, as declared by *Buddha*, transcends the influences and responses of *the Distinct Gross Existence*. *Buddha* says, 'A monk when he sees with his eyes a form, he clings neither to the entirety of appearance nor to its elements. Only when desire, aversion, bad and unwholesome mental influences overpower him that he lives without the eye-consciousness and its restraint.' (*Diggha Nikaya*).

Comprehensive Mindfulness has no *form* that one can identify, there being aware of the *essence* alone, the Mind as the abiding foundation in which one revels in *the Prime Existence*. The opening words of a Zen poem open with the words 'The perfect Way (*Tao*) is without difficulty, save that it avoids picking and choosing. Only when you stop liking and disliking will all be cleared. A split hair's difference and heaven and earth are set apart. If you want to get the plain truth, be not concerned with right and wrong. The conflict between the right and the wrong is the sickness of the Mind'. The state of watchful Mind, where one is conscious of clarity and candor perceiving comprehensive entirety, responding to thoughts as they arise, without categorizing, evaluating or judging them as good and bad, beautiful and ugly, truth and untruth, wholesome or

unwholesome. Every thought, every experience is allowed to enter Mind, without one being conscious or aware of their origin, their preservation or annihilation.

Comprehensive Mindfulness is being enlightened suddenly in the primary state of Mind, in the solitude of silence, where nothing is remembered, where nothing needs to be remembered, nothing recollected, nothing needs to be collected, nothing responded from earlier thoughts and consequently seeing nothing or receiving nothing but being fully conscious of the *Time* as it moves along. *Comprehensive Mindfulness* is and not *becoming enlightened* progressively in course of *Time*. It is like the rivers flowing, unconcerned by surroundings, sharing waters with others who dip their pails in, without any conscious attempt to give and freely giving. It is like flowers flowering not knowing when the flower was a bud and when it bloomed. It is as Zen seer would say, '*Fire does not wait for the sun to be hot, nor the Wind for the Moon to be cold*'. Or as he would say, '*Sitting quietly, doing nothing, spring comes and the grass grows by itself*'. The clue for *Comprehensive Mindfulness* lies in the saying of Yun-men, '*In walking, just walk. In sitting just sit. Above all don't wobble*'.

Unlike concentration of the Mind, *Comprehensive Mindfulness* is not being mindful about something. While concentration needs an object to concentration, meditation is dropping all objects and being aware of *awareness* itself. When one is aware of *pure awareness*, then thoughts do not arise, objects are not desires, dreams do not come in the way, whether consistent or inconsistent, relevant or irrelevant. One is in an absolute state of *Comprehensive Mindfulness*, an absolute silence, absolute emptiness and perfect *bliss*.

Awareness is something like fire, hidden in bush, bursting in flames without having to announce its arrival and its presence. The Sun shines without knowing what darkness is. Because when sun shines darkness does not exist. If a seer has to speak of his enlightenment, then it is like Sun announcing the dawn.

When one is enlightened the whole existence becomes enlightened. Then he sees every thing as one only. As Isha Up. says '*yasmin sarvaani bhutani aatmavaabhud vijaanatah, tatra ko mohah kah shokah ekatvam anupashyatah*' when one becomes aware that all Existence has become one, then what delusion and what sorrow could there ever be?

Buddha said when he was enlightened, every existence was enlightened. Then every one is a *Buddha*, whether he is conscious of such awareness. Just being available, being open, being you *Comprehensively Mindful* you are a *Buddha*, the enlightened in a state of *choiceless awareness*, where solitude and silence become sensitive, kindness and compassion flow as natural as breath, surging thoughts do not disengage clarity of the Mind, like wild weeds messing calm waters of the lake. Then one sees in one's heart clarity of one's *essence* as one would see depth of the lake clear and calm. Then prayer becomes not supplication seeking blessings and bounties but opening the Mind to the receptivity and resonance of *the Prime Existence*, through dialogue and reflection in silence, meditation becoming the *Way of life*.

Samaadhi : Comprehensive Equanimity of Intellect

Samadhi is made up of *sama* (equanimous) and *dhi* (Intellect) - Equanimity of Intellect. *Samadhi* is not the goal but only a step, the final one in the process to reach the Goal. It is the state which Kath Up. designates as the highest state - '*yadaa panchaavatishante jnaanaani manasaa saha, buddhischana vicheshtati, taam aahuh paramama gatih*' - when the five (organs) knowledge (of senses) together with the cease (their functions) and the intellect itself does not stir, that, they say, is the highest goal - *paramam gatih*. *Dhammapada* says '*appamaado amatpadam, pamaado macchuno padam*' distraction of mind is not a virtue but stability is. In stable mind, senses have no influence. Up. considers it as Yoga, *sthiraam indriya dhaaranam*, where Mind sources the totality of *Wisdom*

in its pure state of being. *Knowledge* is fragmentation of *Wisdom* as the past, present and future whereas *Wisdom* is the totality of the Past, Present and the Future, *kalaateeta*, beyond the confines of in sectorial segments. Neither *Wisdom* nor *Knowledge* brings *samaadhi* - equanimity of intellect; but *Wisdom* is closely identical. In *samaadhi Knowledge* ceases to be a burden or an impediment but becomes elevated as luminous *Wisdom*. *Samadhi* is the last frontier of *the Eight Noble Truths* to be crossed over.

It is a state of *being* aware, not *becoming* something or reaching somewhere. Enlightenment not being an intellectual phenomenon, but psychological awareness, awareness of not this or that, however much noble, luminous or splendrous it may be. Moment a thing is recognized, it authenticates previous experience, conceptualized as thought. In *samaadhi*, there is no sensation therefore, no thoughts. It is the state where the senses are absent, thoughts are absent. Mind becomes like that a new born child, free of sensory influences and essentially pure and pristine.

Brihad Aranyak Up., therefore, recommends that the man of wisdom (*Brahmanas*) having known the Self, having overcome the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, the desire for worlds live performing actions seeking wisdom of Brahman. (*bhikshaacharyam charanti*) . . giving up his claim to scholarship (*pandityam cha nirvidya*) lives like a child (*balyena tishthaseet*) . . living both in non-meditative and meditative states, he verily, becomes a *Brahmana*, (the knower of wisdom). To be a child means to be receptive conclusively like a child, without being subject to sensory influences, the thoughts ideas, opinions, theories and egos rising there from. In *samadhi*, where Mind is de-conditioned, the enlightened has a Mind deep, vast and mystical, as primary instrument which *the Prime Existence* had made for self.

Krishna compares *samaadhi* as a state where desires born of *Will* are abandoned by restraining sensory influences and

attaining tranquility step by step, with steady and firm determination. *Buddha* says, ‘*A single day lived in the perception that all things appear and disappear is worth more than a hundred years spent not knowing that they appear and disappear . . . When a mendicant brother, by destruction of the taints knows fully and realizes his Self here in this world itself and enters liberation of mind (cheto-vimuttim) liberation of intellect (punna-vimuttim), enters the state without taints (an-asavam) and dwells therein - that is highest and most exalted state for realizing which the mendicant brothers with me lead the holy life (brahmacharyam)*’ (*Digha Nikaya*).

Equanimity of Intellect is the threshold of deliverance. Having walked on the *Path* as *Tathagata*, *Buddha* points the *direction* to deliverance but does not take him taking his hand. Scriptures do not enlighten but only guide, point out the *Way* but do not assure the goal. Shankar says that vedic scriptures are only the means to know what is beyond the supra-sensory perception as Shankara puts it, ‘*shrutishcha nao'teendriya arthavishaye vijnaanotpattau nimittam*’. The *Path* has to be traversed, the *Cross* has to be borne and the goal is to be reached by the seeker himself and not by one, who having traversed the *Path* has already reached the goal.

Buddha too says, ‘The religious life, *Malunkyaputta*, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal . . . nor that the world is not eternal. . there still remains the birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair, for the extinction of which in present life, I am prescribing . . . Accordingly, *Malunkyaputta*, bear always in *Mind* what it is that I have not explained, and what it is that I have explained. .’ and that mere knowledge ‘. . . profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, termination, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom and wisdom; therefore, I have not explained’. Knowing the caste, gender, the status of one who struck the arrow will not relieve the pain; only the removal of the arrow from the body will give solace.

Wisdom is not sought in the cacophony of the market place but in the solitude of silence, not in external world but in innermost heart. Therefore, *Buddha* appeals his disciples to ‘*labour diligently. . Live like islands unto your selves, brothers, as refuge unto your selves, take none other as your refuge, live with Dhamma as your island, as your refuge, take none other as refuge . . Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help*’. It is truly said ‘*Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He is not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn. The Cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul, the Cross in thine own heart alone can make the whole*’.

Only on transcending the state of *samaadhi*, the seeker enters the portal of deliverance, *Nirvana*, detachment of one’s self from the gross body, thus transcending ‘*sat cha a-sat cha abhavat, niruktam chaaniruktam cha, nilayanam chaanilayam cha, vijnaanam chaavijnaanam cha, satyam chaanratam cha, satyam abhavat, yad idam kim cha tat satyam ity achakshate*’ - he becomes both the *Existence* and the non-*Existence*, the defined and the undefined, founded and non-founded, the *Wisdom* and the non-*Wisdom*, the *celestial* and that which non-*celestial*. As *Existence* he became whatever there exists here. That is what they call *Existence*.

Released from the bonds of *samsaara*, he reaches *Nirvana*, which is not extinction of Self but its detachment from *the Distinct Gross Existence*. Detachment leads to termination of the *craving to possess*, the *craving to become* and the *craving to renounce*. *Vimukti* is deliverance from *the Distinct Gross Existence*, the bonds, the ignorance and, therefore, from *sufferings*. One is not conscious when deliverance arrives; though it was ever there concealed within as potential force, becoming luminous in rare moments, without being recognized and acknowledged.

Buddha assures: ‘*When a mendicant brother, by destruction of the taints knows fully and realizes his Self here in this world itself and enters liberation of mind (cheto-*

vimuttim) liberation of intellect (*punna-vimuttim*), enters the state without taints (*an-asavam*) and dwells therein - that is highest and most exalted state for realizing which the mendicant brothers with me lead the holy life (*brahmacharyam*)' (*Digha Nikaya*). 'Such is the virtuous conduct (*silam*), such is the equanimity of intellect (*samadhi*), such is the consciousness (*panna*). When infused by *sila*, equanimity of intellect is most fruitful, most commendable, when infused by equanimity of intellect, reason is most fruitful, most commendable. The Mind (*chittam*) infused by reasons completely liberated from passions, passions of lust, of separate earthly existence, of erroneous outlook, from ignorance.' Then 'the material form of the right farer, by which one is set apart, being rejected, severed at the root, rendered like an uprooted palm-tree, deprived of the distinct earthly Existence (*ana-bhava-katam*), it does not proceed (to any further existence) in future. Tathagata, is one such who is delivered from the Distinct Gross Existence, profound, immeasurable, unfathomable, even as the great ocean . . .' (*Samyutta Nikaya*).

An enlightened *Haiku* poet says: 'We rowed in the fog, and out through the fog . . . O how blue, how bright the whole wide sea IS!' Or as *Vinaya Pitaka* says : 'Hardest of them to see would be the pacification of all individual identity, by abandoning all the foundations, destruction of craving, absence of desire, cessation of living in the state of non-attachment with gross existence'. *Mundaka Up.* describes the Supreme *Brahman* as ' *na tatra suryo bhati, na chandrama tarakam, nemea vidyuto bhanti, kuti;yam agnih; tam eva bhantam anubhati sarvam,tasya bhasaa sarvam idam vubhaati*'. In similar fashion we find the state of *Nirvana* being described in *Udana*, one of the main Buddhist scripture ' *yattha aapo cha pathavee tejo vaayo na gaadhati, na tattha sukka jotaani, aadichho nappakasati, na tattha Chandrama bhati tamo tathaa na vijaanati*'.

Living in such state of non-attachment with *the Distinct Gross Existence* is being in the state of *Nirvana*, the enlightened state when *Siddhartha* became the *Buddha*.

Nirvaana.

Buddha declared that he was enlightened on getting rid of the '*material forms, the feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness by which one, in defining Tathagata, might define him, all have been got rid by Tathagata, cut out at the root, made like a palm tree stump that can come to no further existence in future. Freed from reckoning by material forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness, is Tathagata. He is deep, immeasurable, and unfathomable, as the great ocean. (To him) neither a statement like arises, nor does not arise, nor even both arises and does not arise apply*'.

The moment one is born, *death* is his constant companion, because being born is being born with a form. Whatsoever *form* one has, *death* is sure to terminate it. *Self* has neither form nor any centre, being vast as space having similar abidance in all *forms*. *Buddha* calls it *Dhamma*, the universal principle at the centre of existence. *Self* has no *form*, except when human being consider it to have one, when ego associates it with the *form*. Then the self becomes the form in phenomenal world.

Ego has such a strong influence on Mind that *death* for human being becomes *death* of his *self* rather than *death* of his ego-centered *form*, the gross body. But *death* cannot be of his *self*, which is the '*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*' *essence* infused in every form to the tip of the nails, as it were, when the *undifferentiated* became *differentiated*; *death* can only of the transient *form*, '*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*'. One sees *forms* of others decaying

deteriorating and dying but not being conscious of his own *form* decaying, deteriorating and dying. Therefore, *Death* itself does not frighten him; what frightens him is not knowing what *death* really means and what *death* has in store for him (!). It is more about his ignorance of *Death* that worries him, than the *Knowledge* about *Death*.

This is the *Truth* which the human being is not aware therefore, suffers. Therefore, desiring possessions and attached to them, desiring to be some one or something, and concerned of losing them than what he would gain. He worries not because he *knows* what *death* is, but because he *does not know* what *death* brings in its sequence.

In *Rigveda*, the enlightened seer prays Lord to deliver him from *death* of the *mortal form*, but not from the *immortal essence* - *maamrutatvaat*, separating the *essence* like a cucumber from its stem - *urvaarukamiva bandhaanat*. It is ignorance that makes men recite *Mahamritynjaya mantra*, as a cure for overcoming *death* of the *mortal form* and not for assuring the *immortal essence*. *Bhagavad Gita* declares '*jaatasya hi dhruvo mrtyur dhruvam janma mrtasya ch*' – for one who is born, death is certain and certain as well is birth for one who is born, assuring further '*dehi nityam avadhyo'yam dehe sarvasya bhārata, tasmaat sarvaani bhutani na tvam shochitum arhasi*' – the dweller (the Self) in the body of every one O Bharata, is eternal, and can never be slain. Therefore you are not justified grieving about all creatures.

When *Buddha* saw his disciples worrying about his decaying and deteriorating form, he too consoled them, saying, '*Perishable by nature is Individuality, (the distinct gross existence) . . . Has it not been announced by me ere this time that there is in all, even the beloved and kind, the principle of change, of separation, of transience ? And how in my case is it ever possible that what is born, produced, compounded, dissolvable by nature should not be dissolved? That state is surely not to be found*'.

For human beings, the relevance of form and the essence abiding therein becomes clear when one understands that in *Waking* state one is primarily conscious of one's *form*, the body. But in *Dream* state, he is not conscious of his body. The *essence* within the *form* takes the experiences from the *Waking* state - '*asya lokasya sarvaavato maatraam*', snatching them on its own - '*svayam vihatya*', and builds it up on its own - '*svayam nirmaaya*', sleeps in its own brightness - '*svena jyotishaa prasavapiti*' and becomes luminous - '*svayam jyotir bhavati*'. In *Dreamless* state, one is not conscious either of the *form* or of *essence*. Therefore, in *dreamless* state he desires no desires, sees no dreams, does not experiences pleasures or pains, happiness or sorrow, experiencing *peace* and *bliss*. This is the state where the *form* is detached from the *essence*, and is detached from the *form*, the state of *Nirvaana* - *nir* = without *vana* = form or the body.

Krishna refers *Nirvana* as '*shantim Nirvaana paramam*' as the supreme state of peace and '*brahma-nirvaanam*' integrating in *effluence* of the *Prime Existence*. *Nirvaana* is terminating the ego-centric *form* and being in timeless, spaceless, changeless, eternal self-luminous peaceful *essence*, the *bliss*. The person ceases to be constrained by '*what is born, has become, is made, is compounded*' *form*, and becomes integrated with the '*unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded*'.

What Upanishad refers as being in Brahman, Buddha refers the state as *Nirvana* being without sensation, being in the Bliss of Being. '*Seeking supreme peace of Nirvana . . (I) attained supreme peace of detachment from gross existence*', which Buddha compares it with the state where '*material forms, the feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness . . all have been got rid of . . cut out at the root, made like a palm tree stump that can come to no further existence in the future. Freed from reckoning by material forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness, is Tathagata. He is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable, as it the great ocean. Neither a statement like Arises apply, nor does a statement does not arise apply, nor*

even a statement both arises and does not arise apply'.

Nirvaana is not becoming righteous, wholesome or religious. Once Buddha asked 'If one should ask of you, on what does this fire depend which burns in front of you? what would you answer ?' and when answered 'This fire which burns before me depends on fuel of grass or wood', he continued 'But if . . . the fire should be extinguished would you be aware that it was extinguished . . . (and) if one should ask you . . . to what region (katamam disam), east or west or north or south has the fire gone hence, what would you answer ?' 'This does not arise, O Gotama, for the fire burnt depending upon the fuel of grass or wood, and when this has been consumed and no other fuel is obtained, on being without nourishment, it is reckoned as extinct.'

Similarly *Nirvaana* is being with thoughts sensations in Mind. *Buddha* said '*This is Bliss . . . there is no sensation*' and when he was asked '*But how can there be Bliss when sensations no longer exist?*' he replied '*When sensations no longer exist, O brother, that, verily, is Bliss . . . Just as the great savor has one single taste, the taste of salt, this Law and the discipline has one sensation, the sensation of liberation*'. It is '*ceasing to have lust, hatred, delusion*', '*perennial choice less awareness*'. It is the state where *the Prime Existence, Satya* alone is revealed as *IT IS*, luminous and resplendent and not concealed and obscure.

Nirvaana is the state '*When a mendicant brother, by destruction of the taints knows fully and realizes his Self here in this world itself and enters liberation of mind (cheto-vimuttim) liberation of intellect (punna-vimuttim), enters the state without taints (an-asavam) and dwells therein - that is highest and most exalted state for realizing which the mendicant brothers with me lead the holy life (brahmacharyam)*' (*Digha Nikaya*). It is similar to what *Brihad Aranyak Up.* meant when it said '*yada sarve pramuchyante kaama ye'sya hridi shritah, atha mratyo'mrato bhavati, atra*

brahma samashnute' - when all desires that dwell in the heart are cast away, then does the mortal becomes immortal, then here itself he attains Brahman. Since death is in relation to the body *Nirvaana* is possible even when a person is still having his body. Only when the Mind, detached from the body, is not concerned with performance of the transient actions that the state of *Nirvaana* comes about and the performance of action, earlier or present, are terminated, like barren seeds.

Nirvaana is said to be *amata* (immortal) or *a-kata* (unmade or uncreated). *Buddha* calls it like fire merging in the vast Space, '*The mind released is like an extinction of a flame*', the '*fire . . . (dependent) upon the fuel of grass or wood, and . . . has been consumed and no other fuel is obtained, on being without nourishment, it is reckoned as extinct*'. '*Extinction*' is not the correct word to be used in reference to the Mind, but rather Mind being in its pure, primal state. As Zen Buddhist explains: '*If the Mind is at peace, erroneous views disappear by themselves*'. On moral and ethical grounds *Buddha* said that '*What is Nibbana? The destruction of lust, hatred, delusion - that is Nibbana . . . what is arhatam? Destruction of lust, hatred and delusion. That is arhatam*' (*Samyutta Nikaya*). It is '*choiceless awareness*'. *Buddha* uses *Nirvaana* in this sense but is largely understood as negation, because of the words used by him like '*nirodha*', '*trashnaya kshaya*', '*asamskrta*', '*anatta*', '*anicca*', '*amata*', or '*a-kata*', which give negative sense.

Nirvaana is '*the sphere where there is neither earth, nor fire, nor air; neither the sphere of the infinite space nor the sphere of infinite consciousness, nor infinite sphere of nothingness nor the sphere of non-perception or perception; neither this world nor the world yonder nor both; neither the sun nor the moon. I declare monks, that there is no coming and going, neither duration nor destruction, nor origination, It is without basis, development and condition. This is the end of suffering*'.

Nirvaana is the luminous moment in *Time*, when the *Prime*

Existence, without desires, perceptions or concepts remains unchanged, un-changing, ever evolving, singularly conscious and alive, breathing alone by *self-impulse*. It is '*whatever deed, monks, has been performed without greed, without hatred and free from delusion . . . this deed is annihilated, cut off at the root, made similar to a uprooted palm tree, prevented from becoming in future , not subject to the law of becoming (i.e. Karma)*' (*Anuttara Nikaya*). *Nirvaana* is the state of Mind, with no thoughts having been arisen with thoughts having ceased to exist, *being* in its original state beyond human ken. *Nirvaana* is *existence* without beginning or any end.

Nirvaana is when one's *mindfulness* is alert perceiving *sufferings* in *samsaara*, recognizing, admitting and accepting it without indulging, glorifying or suppressing and denying, rejecting sensory influences, views and opinions but with full awareness that *desires* and *sufferings* co-exist in life, though impermanent, transitory, evanescent and unsatisfactory. Just as restraint is different from restriction, cessation too is different from annihilation. Cessation is psychological acceptance that *cause-effect* syndrome as natural attribute in cosmic cycle; annihilation is physical interference with the natural course, initiated by intellect and ego. It is craving to renounce what one desires to renounce.

Nirvaana is not *Shoonyata* or *nothingness*. It is a positive state where the Mind dis-associating itself from the body and the consequent *Distinct Gross Existence*. *Nirvaana* is letting go one's craving, *nirodha sacca* - true cessation, where Mind is alert and at peace and not forcible denial or rejection. The person qualified to be on *the Path to Perfection* is an *Arhant*. and not with the past or the future. He is one concerned with the present moment as it rises and ceases and not with the past or the future. For such one *Sangha* is not a gathering place but a refugee where the Mind rests in clear state of alertness in *Dhamma*. *Nirvaana* is freedom from *the World of Appearance*, not from *the World of Manifestation*, ever being in bliss of *the Prime Existence*. When desires cease from Mind, and one needs

nothing to possess, nothing to be achieved and to be renounced, then that is being in *Nirvaana*. It is where there is never any *Becoming* but ever *Being*. *Becoming* connotes extension of present to the future, which needs Mind to conceptualise; *Being* suggests ever present state where neither the past memories nor the future aspiration burden the Mind.

As Vinaya Pitaka says : ‘Hardest of them to see would be the pacification of all individual identity, by abandoning all the foundations, destruction of craving, absence of desire, cessation of living in the state of non-attachment with the Distinct Gross Existence’. Siddhartha from the moment he was enlightened lived the remaining days in the state of Nirvaana, till His immortal Self was detached from the mortal coil.

Ramana Maharshi - Life

Ramana *Maharshi*, named Venkataramana, was born certainly not in a princely family, not even in a family which can be said as rich. No prophesies were announced when he was born and no one even bothered to prophesize that a resplendent soul was within their fold. No extra-ordinary events took place in his childhood and adolescent days. They were like those of any child born in similar circumstances. The family could not afford to give him the education like the one given to Siddhartha Gautama nor a life of leisure and pleasure. He went to the local school and led ordinary life.

His father Sunderam Ayyar was employed as an accounts clerk, later changing his profession to legal practice in Dindigul, a small town in Tamil Nadu. His mother was not educated, but literate enough to read *Periya Purana* in Tamil, recounting the deeds of sixty-three saints of Tamilnadu. Like many Brahmin ladies of her times, she was god-fearing and superstitious by temperament. There was no surfeit of any religious or intellectual achievements in the family, though his father's uncle and his elder brother were the two persons who had renounced world to lead life as a *sanyasi*. These incidents were seen more as aberrations than desirable pursuits by the family.

When Venkataramana's father died, his mother went with her children to live in her brother's residence in Madura. Venkataramana had his elementary education in Scott's Modern School and later in American Mission High School, but he

showed no inclination to studies. But his health was robust and he was given to sleep for long hours. He was fond of sports but rarely mixed with boys of his own age. No extra-ordinary intelligence was seen in his childhood nor any spiritual inclination; no signs of spiritual bliss nor any mystical visions were perceived. One thing that separated him from others was his extreme fascination for *Arunachala* and for reading *Periya Purana* in his mother's company. He was ecstatic reading about *Arunachala* and the extra-ordinary deeds performed by the saints.

His early signs of going in meditative mould were not observed. As he recalled later, '*Some festivities were going in the house and every one had come to attend. Later, they left for the temple only to return late at night, leaving me alone in the house. I read for some time and later closing the windows and locking the front door, I went to sleep. When they returned home from the temple all their attempts to wake me up failed. Finally they opened the door with the help of spare key, kept with the neighbors. But all their attempts to wake me failed miserably. I knew nothing of this till I was told about it in the morning . . .*'

His family did not attach any importance to this event, except attributing it his habitual laziness and dullness. On another occasion, however, he had an extra-ordinary experience, which was to transform his entire life. Venkatramana recalled it later. '*It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I had seldom any sickness and on that day too there was nothing wrong with my health. But suddenly a violent fear of Death came over me . . . I just felt I was going to die and began to think what I can do about it. It did not strike me to call any of the relatives or a doctor. I felt that I have to solve the problem myself. The shock of the fear that I may now die drove me inward to think for myself. Without framing the words, I asked myself: 'Now that the Death has come what it means? What is Death; what is it that dies; concluding that it is the body that dies.'* I dramatized the event

of Death. I laid myself on the back with my limbs stretched out stiff . . . and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to my inquiry. I held my breath with my lips closed tight, so that no word either I or any other word may come out. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is now dead. It will be carried stiff to the cremation grounds, there to be cremated and reduced to ashes. But does the death of the body means that I am dead? Is the body, I? The body is insentient and inert, whereas I feel the presence of my personality and the resonance of the 'I' too within me and without the body. Then 'I' should be the spirit transcending the body. The body seems to die, not the spirit, for Death cannot touch it. That means 'I' am the Deathless spirit.' All this did not come through any rationalization; it flashed with me vividly as living Truth, perceived directly without going through the thought-process. 'I' was something real, the only thing real in my present state of being. All conscious activities connected with the body are centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards the 'I' or the Self acquired all my fascination. Fear of Death vanished, absorption in the Self continued in unbroken stream from then onward. Other thoughts too passed along as musical notes would do, but the 'I' continued to dominate as the sruti note underlying and blending with all rest of the notes. Whether the body was engaged in speaking, reading or in any thing else, 'I' still continued to be central point. Prior to this event I was not conscious of my Self nor was I attracted to it.'

This extra-ordinary experience, referred as *Death Experience*, was similar to the one which Nachiketa had. *Katha Up.* concludes 'Then Nachiketa, having gained the wisdom declared by Death, and the whole of Yoga, attained Brahman and became freed from passion and from death. And so may any other knows this in regard to Self'. Buddha too had experienced his enlightenment in similar manner 'When I was (thus) liberated, there arose in me the awareness of my liberation. I knew Distinct Gross Existence is ended, holy life is being experienced, what must be done is done; there is no

survival again in future for this (existence).(Majjima Nikaya)'. Venkataraman's experience was similar from his encounter with *Death*, when he became enlightened about the Self, the 'I' dwelling within his body. The experience, which was sudden and unexpected, without austerity or penance, shook him to the core. 'Prior to this event I was not conscious of my Self nor was I attracted to it' he almost said sheepishly. But it had a great influence in his life. Recalling the experience which he had remarked: 'It was quite sudden', he said while resting in *Ramanashrama*, in later days, 'It is said that I took twenty minutes to realize' After a moment there came another outburst, 'It may be a moment' correcting himself he said again 'Even that is not correct . . . where is the Time-element in it?' (The Mountain Path, vol. 23.2).

From that time onwards his life changed dramatically. *Death experience* was watershed in his spiritual life. He lost interest in his family and friends, in his life and surrounding, his entire attention being overtaken by the 'I'. His attention was increasingly rooted on *being* silent in solitude. He continued to go to school by force of habit but his Mind was neither engaged in what was spoken nor what was heard. His desire for food waned; he ate whatever was given to him without any emotion. He became meek, submissive and reclusive, with his ego vanished. His visits to Minakshi temple became frequent, where he would be seen, completely oblivious of himself, with eyes transfixed on the idols of Minakshi or Shiva, tears rolling down his cheeks and body shivering with thrill passing through his body.

Members of the family did not give much attention to him, attributing it to his lazy behaviour. They were annoyed with him more than were concerned about him. Left to himself, he became increasingly stranger to his family and the surroundings. Friends chided him sarcastically as pretender, a *yogi*. The first signs of his future life were already visible, though none did recognize them. He became increasingly silent, distancing himself from his family and friends.

The defining moment came when being un-successful in his repeated attempts to concentrate on his lessons, once he pushed his books aside and fell in reverie. Seeing him sitting still doing nothing, his brother Nagamani taunted him saying, '*Those who fake to be sanyasis, do not stay at home to enjoy the pleasures of the senses*'. That very moment, his attachment to *samsaara* was severed like the fruit which becomes detached from the tree. He took the momentous decision, as if in daze, to reach out to his real '*I*' within and was on his way to *Arunachala*. He left a note to his family in which he used words spiritually significant, '*I have set out in quest of my father in accordance with His command. It is on virtuous enterprise that this has embarked ; therefore let none grieve over this act and let no money be spent in search of this*'. Buddha too had in similar manner tore himself from the emotional bond with his family and friends, to renounce life to '*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*'.

His biographers record his tortuous and confusing journey to *Arunachala*, without knowing that his chosen destination was *Tiruvannamalai*. Each word of the last note which he left showed the supreme state in which he was in. There were unmistakable signs that his journey from the individual '*I*' and '*this*' towards a universal source, '*the father*' had already begun.

While embarking on his journey, he had picked up few coins to meet expenses of his rail journey. He sat in the train not knowing whether the train would take him to *Araunachala*. A maulvi guided him on the way saying to *Arunachala* saying that it is same as *Tiruvannamalai*. On the way having no money to buy rail ticket, he walked the rest of his journey, eating whatever food he could get from pious persons on the way. On 1st September, 1896, he reached his chosen destination, his legs leading him involuntarily to the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord *Arunachala*. Spreading his arms wide, Venktaramana declared '*Father, I have come*', which itself was acknowledgement of his being enlightened. This was one momentous moment, when he

visited for the first and the last time he visited the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.

Thereafter, he went to the temple tank and divesting himself of his sacred thread severing all the traces of his identity, the conventional 'T', he sat in the temple precincts. Seeing him sitting in silent solitude, oblivious and unconcerned of his body and the world outside him, the children playing in the temple precincts, surprised to see a child of their own age, sitting meekly and quietly doing nothing, pestered him throwing stones at him, till a *sadhu* known as Sheshadrishwamy drove them away. From that time onward, he took upon himself to look after the young boy. He called him *brahamanswamy* but could not prevent the children troubling the young recluse. To avoid this, *Brahamanswamy* went and lived in the ant-infested, dirty underground chambers of the temple, known as *Patala Lingam*. Even here the children did not leave him alone and seeing the commotion, a devotee of the *Arunachala Venkataram Naikar* saw in the cellar the bright eyes of a young boy, unconcerned of being pestered and completely oblivious of the sores on his body. He lifted him softly and shifted him to his mango-orchard *Gurumurtam* in February 1897.

Brahminsawmy did not need the external world nor was he concerned with its illusory existence. For weeks and months he remained scarcely moving and never speaking. It was a great moment of renunciation but he did not seem to encourage others following his step. As explained by him in later days to his devotees, '*Renunciation does not mean outward denial of clothes or abandoning home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachment . . . One who really renounces does in fact merges himself with the world and expands his love to embrace each one who constitutes the world. His attitude gets rooted in universal love than rooted out of the family love . . . He who thinks of renouncing when he is not yet ready to do so, creates more problems than solves . . . Great souls who abandon the worldly life do so not out of aversion to the family life but because of the extension of their*

compassion to cover all mankind . . . When your love extends to cover all, when the heart extends to embrace all creation, then there is no question of giving up this or that ; you will drop of your temporal life a ripe fruit that drops from the tree. The whole world then becomes your family ’.

The detachment of *brahmanaswamy* with his body was intense and he remained in that trance-like *Bliss of Beatitude*. In later days he recalled some of these events, saying ‘*Some times I opened my eyes and it was morning, sometimes it was evening. I did not know when the Sun rose and when it set’* His *sadhana* was to be *receptive* to the ‘I’ within. He said that his actions were often misunderstood. If he closed his eyes, people would say that he is in meditation; if he refrained from talking, they would assume that he was observing *mauna*; if he did not eat, it was taken that he was fasting. But the actions did not affect his *Bliss* since they were natural responses to nature’s dictates. His actions were spontaneous like seeds sprouting, breeze blowing, the rains, the seasons and the birds singing. He would see, listen, smell and touch everything, without any impressions on his Mind.

Those who would come to visit *Arunachala* temple would not fail to have his *darshan*. Some came with curiosity and others through faith. but no one knew his identity or where he came from, till at constant insistence of the devotees, he revealed himself as ‘*Venkatraman Tiruchuzhi*’. He was impervious of the people who brought fruits and flowers and of the things happening around him Many stayed to tend his needs others hoping for a word to be spoken or a glance of grace to be bestowed. Some *sadhus* took upon themselves to guide him in his *tapas*, scarcely realizing that they needed guidance more than the *brahmanaswamy*. Few local residents like Sheshadriswami, Palaniswami, Shivaprakasam Pillai, Natesha Mudaliar, and B.V Narasimha Swamy gathered around him with a pious hope that one day they will be blessed by words of hope.

As more and more persons came for his *darshan*, he felt

inconvenienced and left the place in May 1898 to live in an adjacent mango orchard belonging to Venkataram Naicker. Here for the first time he came across many scriptures and Palaniswamy communicated various philosophical doctrines. *Brahmnaswamy* found the scriptures authenticating what he himself personally experienced. *Maharshi* imbibed all wisdom from the moment he had his first '*Death experience*' severing his ties with the gross form to reveal his true essence – *Real 'I'* behind the *phenomenal 'I'*. At that time, he said '*I did not yet know that there was an Essence or Impersonal Real underlying everything and that God and I were both identical with It. Later at Tiruvannamali, as I listened to the Ribhu Gita and other sacred books, I learnt all this and found that theywereanalysing and naming what I had felt intuitively without anlysis or name*'. Therefore, there was no difficulty in grasping the theories once the practice itself was perfect.

For long family members were ignorant about his whereabouts till a family acquaintance, Nellippier, brother-in-law of Venkatraman's mother, happened to visit *Tiruvannamali*, hearing about a divine child. He was surprised to see there none other than the long-lost nephew. Nellipier pleaded him to return but *brahmanaswamy* sat unconcerned and unmoved, neither speaking nor noticing his presence. Even when his mother Alagammal came to *Tiruvannamalai* and recognized him inspite of the wasted body and matted hair. Even her pleadings for his return left *brahmanaswamy* unmoved, neither responding to her presence nor her plea. One of the devotee, Pachaiyappa Pillai who saw the grieving mother, implored him at least to recognize her presence by speaking some words. He wrote on a small piece of paper, '*Your mother is weeping and pleading. Why do you not at least respond to her? Whether it is 'yes' or 'no', you can say so. Swami need not break his silence. Here I have kept pencil and paper. He may be kind to write whatever he pleases*'. *Brahmanaswamy* wrote back: '*The Ordainor controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdhakarma. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may.*

Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain quiet.” Mother’s heart was broken by this curt reply and she left the place for the time being, soon to return to stay with him permanently.

Two years after his first coming to *Tiruvannamalai*, *brahmanaswamy* shifted to *Arunachala* mountains in 1898, and never left the place, as he said later *‘In the end everyone has to come to Arunachala’*. First, he stayed in Virupaksha caves, Sheshadriswamy remaining close by. He walked all over the hills and explored the different caves. Sometime he would stop at Padmanabhaswami or Jatai swami’s ashram and read some of the books which were with him. On reading the incidents mentioned in the books, he realized that what is being mentioned and described there was the experience which he himself had gone through.

Sheshadriswamy was another ascetic with whom he was familiar. Sheshadriswamy was intellectually and spiritually highly advanced. Once earlier in Mango-grove, sitting in his presence, Sheshadriswamy marveled *‘It is not clear what is going in his mind’*. Receiving no response, he remarked *‘If one worships Arunachala, he will grant salvation’* whereupon he received a quick reply, *‘Who is it that worships and who is the worshipped?’* Pleased to receive the unexpected reply, Sheshadriswami burst out in laughter, *‘That is just what is not clear’* and turning his face to the mountain crest, prostrated.

For *brahmanaswamy*, *Arunachala* mountain was the centre of energy infusing every corner in the world. In 1912, on his way to Virupaksha cave, he experienced what can be termed as *nirvikalpa Samadhi*. He recounted it later, *‘The landscape in front of me disappeared as a bright white curtain, drawn across my vision and shut it out . . . There was a stage when I could still see a part of the landscape clearly while the rest was covered . . . I stopped lest I would fall . . . When darkness and faintness came over me a second time I leaned against the rock*

till it cleared. The third time when it happened I felt it safer to sit . . . Then the bright white curtain completely shut off my vision, my head was swimming and my circulation and breathing stopped. The skin turned livid blue. It was the regular death hue and it got darker and darker. Vasudeva Shastri took me to be dead and held me in his arms and began to weep aloud and lament my death. I could distinctly feel his clasp and his shivering and hear his words of lamentation and understood their meaning. I also saw the discoloration of my skin and felt the stoppage of my circulation and breathing and the increased chilliness of the extremities of my body. My usual current of awareness still continued in that state also. I was not I the least afraid and felt no sadness at the condition of the body. I had sat down near the rock in my usual posture and closed my eyes and was not leaning against the rock. The body, left without circulation or respiration, still maintained that position. This state continued for some ten or fifteen minutes. Then a shock passed suddenly through the body and circulation revived with enormous force and breathing also, and the body perspired from every pores. The colour of life reappeared on the skin. I then opened my eyes and got up and said 'Let us go'. We reached Virupaksha caves without further trouble. This was the only fit which I had in which both circulation and respiration stopped'.

In 1916, mother Alagammal returned back to Tiruvannamalai, since her brother-in-law Nelliappier had died and she had no other place to go. In the beginning she stayed with Echammal, a devotee, fearing that if she approached *brahmansvami* he may leave the place in silent protest. Soon *brahmansvami* left Virupaksha cave to live in Skanadashrama. No one speak to him about mother since that would leave him sit unmoved and in silence.

Once when *Maharshi* was in trance, the mother who was sitting nearby, experienced the extra-ordinary spiritual form of he son. She realized her folly in attempting to appropriate the vast space within the limited form as her son. She realized the

supreme spiritual eminence in one whom till then she considered as her son. The vision widened to include all as her children, bringing her on the road to deliverance. *Brahmanswamy* from then reciprocated the change in her and later when mother fell ill, he tended her with solicitude and prayed *Arunachala* for her recovery. He said '*All women are my mothers*'. In the beginning she will feel hurt but as time passed the feeling that she was mother of a sage vanished and she devoted to serves other devotes as well.

Thereafter *brahmanswamy* encouraged her spiritual initiation, when she came to Skandashrama to stay and prepare meals. Soon her younger son too joined her. The changed environment did not affect *brahmansvami's* composure. Though compassionate and courteous in his dealings he insisted on strict discipline for his mother was limitless, slowly weaning her away from orthodoxy and superstitions. The devotees had assembled irrespective of their caste and religion. This became a great family, making Sheshadriswamy joke about *brahmanswamy* leading the life of a householder and pointing out to every one coming to Skandashrama, the '*householder up there*'.

Brhamnaswmy did not consider himself to be householder just because his mother was with him. He would say '*Why should you think that you are a householder ? Similar thought that you are a sanyaasin will haunt you even if you gout as one . . it is your mind that haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body, the world and it makes you think that you are householder . . It is no help to change the environment. The one obstacle is the mind and it must be overcome whether in the home or in the jungle. If you can do it in jungle why not in the home?*'

Many like Shivaprakasam Pillai, Natesh Mudaliar, F.H. Humpreys Paul Brunton came under his divine influence, soon to be joined by Ganapati Shastri, an intellectual, pre-eminent in Sanskrit language and highly accomplished in *Vedas, Upanishads* and *mantra shastra*, honored as *Kavyakantha*, came to

Tiruvannamalai in 1907 during one of his visits to holy places. Some one spoke to him of a *brahmanaswamy* on the hills. Being curious, he repaired to *Arunachala* mountains in search of him.

It was the auspicious ninth day of *Kartika*, when he saw he saw him leaning on a rock outside Virupaksha cave. His very sight overwhelmed him and *Kavyakantha* involuntarily fell at his feet. After some composure he said: '*All that has to be read, I have read; even Vedanta shastra I have understood; I have performed Japa to my heart's content; yet I have not understood to this day what tapas means. Therefore, I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of tapas*'. When *brahmanaswamy* replied, the words were profound. He said, '*If one watches whence the notion 'I' arises, then the mind is absorbed in That. That is tapas. When a mantra is repeated and one watches the source from whence resonance of mantra is produced, the mind is absorbed in That. That is tapas.*'

Ganapati Muni stood transfixed with wonder at this unexpected reply since all these years he was concentrating on *knowledge*. Here was one who shifts the emphasis from *knowledge* to the *knower*. This broadened his entire perspective and gave him, as never before, the clarity of vision. He stood gazing the calm face of the sage, who knew *Satya, the Prime Existence, as some thing seen*. An enlightened soul, a divine being in human flesh, a great Seer, *Maha Rishi* or *Maharshi*, thus did he address the *brahmanaswamy*. From then onward, Venkatramana, who was known as *brahmanaswamy* came to be referred as ***Ramana Maharshi***.

Around 1920, mother's health started failing and deliverance came in 1920. During the least days here on earth, *Maharshi* was ever at her bed-side. The greatest tribute which a son can give to a mother was to be given by *Maharshi* terminating all her prior *Karmas* in this very life and liberating her *Self* from the cycle from the birth and death. It was not an ordinary death but supreme deliverance. Therefore, neither *Maharshi* nor any one else took the bath, since he declared '*She*

did not die, she is absorbed . . . there is no pollution in this case'. Her body was interned at the foot of the hill, where presently the Matrubhuteshawar Temple stands in Ramanashram.

This was an extra-ordinary event, unknown in spiritual history. Explaining, therefore, this strange event, *Maharshi* said: *'Innate tendencies (sanskaras) and the subtle memories of past experiences (karmas) lead to consequential possibilities of them becoming active. In her case, memories of each one of such past experiences (karmas) were rolling in her subtle consciousness, even though her outer senses and consciousness had already ceased to be active. In that state her Self was experiencing through series of such karmas, thus avoiding the need for her to take another birth to experience them. This continuous experiencing in this very moment made it possible for her Self to unite with the Supreme Self. The Self was gradually uncovered of all the subtle sheaths, before it reached finally the state of Supreme Bliss of Liberation, from which there is no return to ignorance.'* Recalling a similar case in previous occasion, when he had tried to assist Palaniswami to attain *Mukti* but was not successful since being still attached to his 'ego' he opened his eyes half-way during the process. Though *Maharshi* believed in *prarabdha-karma*, he did not countenance with *destiny*. He said, *'That which is called destiny preventing meditation, exists only to the extrovert and not the introvert Mind. Therefore he who seeks inwardly in quest of the Self, remaining as he is, does not get frightened by any impediments that may seem to stand in the way of his carrying on his practice of meditation. The very thought of such obstacles is the greatest impediment'*.

Further he had said, *'As beings reap the fruit of their actions in accordance with the God's laws, the responsibility is their and not His'*. *'The best course, therefore, is to remain silent'*. He explained, *'all actions that the body performs are already decided upon at the time it comes into existence: the only freedom you have is whether or not identify yourself with the body'*.

Till then *Maharshi* was staying in *Skandashram* and coming down to foot-hill of the mountains. One day as usual he came down but did not return and devotees seeing that he was sitting near the mother's tomb, they all came down to live there along with him. He informed them, '*It was not on my own volition that I moved from Skandashrama, something brought me here and I obeyed. It was not my decision but the Divine Will*'. Thus came the *Ramanashrama* to be founded.

Maharshi had ceased since long to identify his self with the body, experiencing a strange sense of unity of his 'I' with every other thing in creation authenticating what *Isha Upanishad* declared '*yas tu sarvaani bhootaani aatmany evaanupashyati, sarvabhooteshu chaatmanmi tato na vijigupsate*'. The thoughts arising in his mind ceased to be his individual thoughts and acquired universal dimension, every thing appearing same. In his outlook there was absence of distance between him and all others around him. The mountain, the trees, the waters, animals, birds and human beings were of equal importance and relevance to him. There was n question of his withdrawing or remaining aloof from any one. His thoughts were universal therefore, he knew the thoughts of other even before they were vocalised by them. During every moment he was awake sitting on the sofa, and rarely slept, his Mind a clean sheet of water every thoughts reflecting temporarily without leaving any traces.

Maharshi was an adept, without having to be initiated, without claiming to be one was a *Guru* who removed ignorance and put the seekers on the *Path to Perfection*. Impulse had come for him from within for him, silently or loudly. For others there is need for a *Guru* to stir the Impulse which lay within each of the seeker dormant. For many *Tapas* was an arduous effort; for him it was as natural as breathing. People gathered in *Ramanashrama* seeking wisdom, clarification of doubts, compassion and relief from *sufferings*.

Even though *Self* is immortal, the body in which it is housed is mortal, subject to decay, deterioration and dissolution.

Maharshi's body was not different. He was never in pink of health, his body having been ravaged by intensity of the austerities. Recurring rheumatic pain in joints made him uncomfortable and difficult to walk. In his life he rarely slept, leaning on the bed and resting intermittently during the night.

Brihad Aranyak Up. says, 'yada sarve pramuchyante kaama ye'sya hridi shritah | atha martyo'mrto bhavati atra brahma samaashnute' – When all desires that dwell in the heart are cast away, then does the mortal becomes immortal, then he attains here itself *Brahman*. Having detached his self from his body in this life itself and remaining in body, *Maharshi* was a *jivanmukta*, a *Paramahamsa*. *Jabala Upanishad* describes a *Paramahamsa* as one whom without effort, without self-sense, intent only on meditation, establishes himself in the higher self, keen of terminating the influence of evil deeds, and gives up attachment to the body by renouncing it. For him the spirit within his body and the *Reality* that was without in the space around were not different. He was one who had no desire, his desire was centred in his Self and his desire had become, verily, the Self.

Maharshi was aware of his *Being* and had the first glimpse of *Death* in his adolescence. *Tapas* was his natural mode and he never had to strive or restrain breath with effort. *Ramana*, the subtle essence was different from *Ramana*, the human form. He was conscious of this but the people around him continued to see *Ramana* as though he was the physical form. Therefore, when they saw him clapping his hands rhythmically when songs in praise of *Ramana* were sung, they were surprised, till he replied that *Ramana* was the eternal essence which has presently has taken abidance in the gross form. It is the gross form that claps in adoration of the eternal essence within. He explained 'In the case of *jnani* the rise or existence of the ego is only apparent and he enjoys his unbroken transcendental experience in spite of such apparent rise or existence of the ego, keeping his attention always on the Source. This ego is harmless; it is like

the skeleton of a burnt rope - though it has a form, it is no use to tie anything with.'

The continued austerities and advancing age had left signs of deterioration on his body. When the first signs of cancerous growth appeared on his body, people grieved about *his* health but he gave scant importance to the malady of the body. And *Maharshi* remarked, *'They take this body for Bhagavan and attribute suffering to him. What a pity? They are despondent that Bhagavan is going to leave them and go away – where can he go and how?'* They offered him various remedies and *Maharshi* accepted treatment as compassion to others, in spite of the cancer eating his vitals, causing him immense pain. His detachment to the body was so complete that he would say *'There is pain'* in the body and never *'I have pain'* in my body. Cohen records him saying, *'If the hands of the Jnani were cut with knife there would be pain as with every one else but because his mind is in bliss he does not feel the pain as acutely as other do'*. If one were to express concern about his health, he would say *'There is no need to alarm. The body itself is a disease. Let it have its natural end. Why mutilate it?'* He would assure *'The jnani who has found himself as formless pure Awareness is unaffected though the body be cleft with a sword. Sugarcandy does not lose its sweetness though broken or crushed'*. He said *'I am only ill if you think I am; if you think I am well I shall be well'*.

Having no personal desire for treatment, he would remark *'Have I ever asked for any treatment? It is you who want this and that for me, so it is you who must decide. If I were asked I would always say, as I have said from the beginning, that no treatment is necessary. Let things take their course'*. When a woman devotee told him, *'Bhagavan! Give this sickness to me instead. Let me bare it'* he asked her to find out who had given him this sickness in the first instance. His surrender of the body to the Will of the Ordainer, who *'controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdhakarmas'* was complete. In spite of the pain in the body, he would remark *'One should witness*

all that happens'. Even in pain, his sense of humour did not desert him. When he was informed that a woman in grief was banging her head on the pillar he remarked '*Is that so? I thought she was trying to break a the banana leaf on which we have eaten?*'

The devotees were distraught seeing *Maharshi* in pain and even ventured to suggest that if he *wills*, he could cure himself with one single thought only to be rebuffed with disbelief, '*Who could have such thought? . . . Who is there to Will this? . . . Every thing will come right in due course*'. He would say, '*Why should he carry the burden of coconut*' or would inquire '*When we have finished the meal do we keep the body alone, when it needs four persons to carry?*' There was nothing more to *Will*, when *Ramana*, the *Universal Consciousness* has taken charge of the body. When one becomes conscious and aware of the working of the Cosmic Cycle, one participates but does not complain. He had said earlier, '*whatever is destined not to happen, will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain*'. This was not fatalism but conscious acceptance of the eternal Law.

Maharshi epitomized the statement in *Bhagavata Purana* : "*Let the body, the result of fructifying Karma, rest or move about, live or die, the Sage who has realized the Self is not aware of it, just as one in drunken stupor is not aware of his clothing*". If he does not, then who else will represent truth of the statement? When *Mahidas Aitarey* was overtaken by sickness, he is said to have prayed, '*O you vital Breaths, O Adityas, let the third libation of mine continue to a full length of life. Let not me, the sacrifice be broken off in the midst of the vital breaths, the Aityas*'. He is said to have risen, and became free of illness. And when sickness came to him he said '*Why do you afflict me with this sickness, me, who am not going to die by it?*' He lived a hundred and sixteen years. He too who knows this lives to a hundred and sixteen years.

In *Chhandogya Up* it is said that the Self is indeed all this world. Verily, he who sees this, who thinks this, who understand this, he has pleasure, delight, union, joy, independence, unlimited freedom. *'He who sees this does not see death, nor illness nor any sorrow, . . . he obtains everything, obtains everything, obtains every where . . . When nourishment is pure nature is pure, memory becomes firm. When memory remains firm, there is release from all knots of the heart. To such a one who has his stains wiped away, the venerable Sanatkumar shows the further shore of darkness. Him they call Skanda, yes him they call Skanda'*. It is no wonder that Ganapati Muni referred as Kartikeya or Dakshinmurti.

One was the devotee who was consoled, *'Suppose you go to a firewood depot and buy a bundle of firewood and engage a collie to carry it to your house. As you walk along with him, he will be anxiously looking forward to the destination so that he can throw off his burden and get relief. In the same way the jnani is anxious to throw off his mortal body'* After some time he spoke again correcting himself, *'This exposition is all right as far as it goes, but strictly speaking even this is not accurate. The jnani is not even anxious to shed his body; he is indifferent alike to the existence or non-existence of the body, being almost unaware of it'*. He would often remark: *'They take this body for Bhagavan and attribute suffering to him. What a pity! They are sad that Bhagavan is going to leave them and go away; where can he go and how can he go?'* He would remark *'You attach too much importance to the body'*. To one of the earnest devotee he asked, *'Do you know what Moksha is? It is getting rid of the sense of misery, which is unreal and attain Bliss, which is always there. That is Moksha.'*

The days passed in to weeks and weeks to become months. *Bhagavan* remained a spectator and witness to the events that were passing before him, even while he continued to cooperate with doctors and devotees. His Grace continued to be showered on his devotees even while he was suffering the disease. To the

attendants who were looking after his conveniences, he said '*The English have a word Thanks but we only say santosham*'.

As *Ramana* was leaving the body which had been his abode for all these years, the grieving devotees spontaneously sang in unison the hymn '*Arunachala Shiva*'. On hearing the chant, *Maharshi* opened his eyes briefly and as the words seeped in his consciousness, a smile hovered on his lips and tears of *bliss* streamed from the corner of his eyes. When the end came, a long breath passed out without effort, without struggle, without even any sign that *Death* has taken hold of the body. *Ramana* entered the Space softly to merge gently in *Lord Arunachala*. As was the case of *Markandeya*, so in the case of *Ramana Maharshi*, *Death* was defeated and the *Deathless Spirit strode undefeated, unconquered and free*.

Devotees from far and wide had gathered at the *Ashrama* to have a last glimpse of the frail body which had housed the vast indomitable Spirit. If life is made up of thoughts then *Death* was no stranger to *Maharshi*, having visited once during his adolescence, *Death* was not stranger in his youth, when he roamed around *Arunachala* Mountain. Even in the last moments when his wasted body lay on the couch, *Death* stood waiting by the side, for his spirit preparing to leave the body, *Death* stood waiting for the indomitable immortal self to leave but unable to seize the indomitable spirit *Ramana*.

Ramana still lives in *Ramanashrama*, wandering around in on *Arunachala* mountain, in and outside *Tiruvannamali*, in every one's Mind, Speech and Actions.

Ramana Maharshi - Teachings

Introduction

Satya the eternal *essence* as *the Prime Existence* and *creation*, the transient *forma* as *the Manifestation* are same. *Brihad Aranyaka Up.* says that in the beginning, Self was alone in an abiding place - ‘*aatmaivedam agra aseet purushavidhaah*’ and seeing none other than the self, conducted himself as ‘*I am*’ - ‘*so’nuveekshya naanyad aatmano’pashyat so’ham asmieety vyavaharat*’. Then *the Prime Existence* acknowledging, ‘*aham brahma asmi*’ - I (Supreme Being) am the effluence said, ‘*aham vaava srishtir asmi*’ - I am verily the creation and ‘*aham vaava srishtir asmi, aham hi idam sarvam ashraksheeti, tatah srishtir abhavat. srishtyaam ha asyaitasyaam bhavati ya evam veda*’ – I, indeed, am all this creation for *I* produced all this. Therefore He is the creation. The *form*, the part is same as the *essence*. But the form, the creation appears as *illusory* and *false*, because ‘*tesham satyaanaam sataam anrtam apidhaanam*’, though the desire is in tune with *Satya*, it comes to be formatted as complex world of faiths, beliefs and religions with diverse perceptions, and thus concealed by *anrta*. Desire is *anrta*, contrary to the cosmic principle - ‘*ta ime satyah kaamah anrataapidhaanah*’.

Krishna declares in *Bhagavad Gita* that to keep the creation in motion, the Lord in ancient times, instituted *Yajna*, sacrifice along with men saying ‘*By this shall ye bring forth and this shall be unto you that which will yield the milk of your*

desires'. He also created for himself Mind, Speech and Primal Breath as the three instruments of energy - '*mano vacham praanam, triny aatmane kuruta*'. But with the efflux of Time perceptions change the *form* concealing, and obscuring and making the eternal *essence* ambiguous. Therefore, when there is decline in righteousness of *Mind, Speech* and *Actions* and increase in unrighteousness, as Krishna assured, the divine *essence* descends in human *form*, to invigorate the ancient *Wisdom* by destroying obscurity through reinterpretation and restatement of righteousness, according to the needs and temperament of the period, place and people.

When seers communicate their vision to the masses, they also use the syntax and symbols known to them, though in that attempt, some thing of their original vision is lost and their communication being less effective, because those to whom it is communicated rarely possess the receptivity to access mystery of their experiences. Therefore, some communicate their vision through speech, others through silence and others through action.

The people, on the other hand, enamored by the personality of the seers, without being receptive to their Mind, Speech or Actions, are left without being receptive either to their vision or to their expressions, the seers being left to observe and rue that some are '*scarcely tainted and much tainted, with keen faculties, dull faculties, well disposed, ill disposed, docile, indocile, few who lived perceiving the world beyond, sin and danger - just as in a pond (various kind of) lotuses born and spring up in water but do not emerge from but remained nourished in the water; while others rise above untouched by water*' remain unconcerned reveling in the vibrancy and bliss their experiences.

Hindu way of life believes and accepts the concept of *avatara*, the descent of *Divine essence* in *human form* as well as ascent of the *human form* to *Divine essence*. Since Ramana Maharshi has been accepted by and large as one of the outstanding Teachers of the present times, the question needs to

be considered whether he was a *descent* of the *Divine Essence* in *human form*, as his appellation *Bhagavan* suggests, or as the *ascent* of a *human form* to *Divine Essence*. In our religious history, we have seen large number of *human form* ascending through austerities, penance and intense devotion to *the Divine Essence* and rare are instances where *the Divine Essence* has descended in *human form* for protection of the noble, for destroying the ignoble and establishing righteousness.

Maharshi was unlike many others seers and saints. He was neither disillusioned by illusory nature of *samsaara* nor was there any intense desire to know that ‘*by which the unheard becomes heard, unperceived becomes perceived, the unknown becomes known*’ or ‘*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*’. If there was anything that lead to him to enlightenment, it was the fear of *Death* to inquire what it that dies is and what is it that lives. What we have observed was that his *Death Experience* was not the beginning

Maharshi was unlike others seers and saints. He was neither disillusioned by illusory nature of *samsaara* nor was there any intense desire to know that ‘*by which the unheard becomes heard, unperceived becomes perceived, the unknown becomes known*’ or ‘*pursue the good and seek the supreme path of tranquility*’. If any thing it was the fear of *Death* that drove him to inquire what it that dies is and what is it that lives. But his *Death Experience*, coming unexpectedly as spontaneous outburst of spiritual effluence, was not the beginning but culmination of his earlier austerities and penance during his innumerable earlier lives. His renunciation from *samsaara*, *detachment form his body and the life around him*, refuge in *Arunachala* were not extension of his penance but *being in Bliss*, authenticating *the divine essence* in him, as naturally as luminosity of the Sun, vibrancy of the Wind and energy of the Fire.

Generally, it has not been given to every one to experience the entirety of *Maharshi's Teachings*, because men often hear

what they think they have heard or hear what they choose to hear. They rarely listen what is spoken, be receptive to what is spoken since his Mind is already burdened with *Knowledge* gathered earlier from other sources, making them think that they know and what they think they know. They come to be assured that they are on the proper *Path* and what they know is what is worth *knowing*. This is the eternal manner of the people, which prevents them from distinguishing their *Knowledge* from the *Wisdom* which they have come seeking

His articulated expressions, at best, have served as his attempts to communicate through extension of his Grace than extending the *Wisdom* which had experienced. Though what he spoke was not any thing really new but was revalidation of expressions of earlier seers, the manner he communicated was to give new dimension to the earlier revelations. Therefore, a prudent person would hesitate to claim that his enlightenment alone represents the exclusive *Truth*, while enlightenment of others are probable, possible and true, if they are not wholly *false*.

In rare cases seers shake the conditioned *Knowledge* of the seekers by igniting their imagination to open the windows of their minds to receive the fresh breeze of *Wisdom*. Every human being feels assured of his experiences without needing it to be justified or fortified by the visions of the seers, without realizing that while seers have been able to hold to their experiences consistently for extended time, ordinary human beings have not been able to hold them even for briefest moments. Therefore, understanding the seer's vision is one thing and being conscious and aware of the same becomes difficult, because the personality of the seer often interferes the *essence* of his enlightenment. One is more concerned being a *Advaitin Dvaitin*, a follower of Ramakrishna, Aurobindo, Maharshi, Krishnamurti and score of other teachers than of their teachings.

Maharshi's teachings being intellectual and mystical, few could access his teachings intellectually and rare was the one

who was enlightened in this very life. Majority of people not concerned being either *Advaitin* or *Dvaitin*, flocked under the traditional belief that association with spiritually enlightened sages and saints brings merit in life, leading one step further in the long process of spiritual adventure. Some wanted to listen to the teachings to confirm whether their perceived experiences were authentic. Therefore, if one says that *Maharshi* is his Guru, because he finds peace in the presence of his magnetic personality or because agrees with what *Maharshi* has spoken than that does not mean that he has understood the essence of the teachings as much as he has the form of *Maharshi's* thought process, without at the same time claiming that he is enlightened.

In fact it is presumptuous for any one to claim that their opinions and views on *Maharshi's* teaching are authoritative and perceptions of others fall short of. One observes that even many of the devotees who had gathered around him, though spiritually very high on the pedestal like Sheshadriswamy, Palaniswami and Ganapati Muni or intellectually advanced like Shivaprakash Pillai, Devaraj Mudaliar, Natesh Mudaliar, Paul Brunton, F. H. Humphreys were found wanting on the hump of their spiritual journey.

When *Maharshi* declared that Mother '*did not pass away, she was absorbed*' he had said that he had given *Mukti* – deliverance to her from the '*series of experiences, thus avoiding the need for rebirth and making possible Union with the Spirit*'. Later explaining the process by which Mother was delivered, he said: '*Innate tendencies and the subtle memory of the past experiences leading to future possibilities became very active. Scene after scene rolled before her I subtle consciousness, the other senses having already gone. The soul was passing through a series of experiences, thus avoiding the need for rebirth and making it possible Union with the Spirit. The soul was at last disrobed of the subtle sheaths before it reached the final Destination, the Supreme Peace of Liberation from which there is no return to ignorance*'. *Maharshi* observed that it was possible for others also to be delivered through that process.

Recalling an earlier instance, he continued '*in her case it was success; on previous occasion I did the same for Palaniswami, when the end was approaching, but it was failure. He opened his eyes and passed away*'. He however remarked that though the attempt found no success, it was not complete failure because even though the ego was not re-absorbed in the *Self*, the manner of its departure was such as to indicate a good rebirth.

There were others like Ganapati Muni who was keen on liberating India from foreign rule. He wanted to use spiritual power to uplift mankind from *I-am-the-doer- illusion*. Maharshi counseled him to restrain his ambition saying that it is better to regenerate and revitalize one self, leaving the burden to the Lord. He asked Paul Brunton '*What is the use of knowing about everything else when you do not yet know who you are?*' F. H. Humphreys who was anxious to possess occult powers and inquired whether he can perform miracles like Jesus, was told that miracles do not come about just for asking but only as spiritual effervescence.

It is essential for one to come to *Maharshi* not as one learned in scriptures and philosophies but with child-like simplicity, because only in such open receptive mind that the seeds of *Wisdom* can be sowed. One may recall Jesus saying, '*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed unto babes*'. He was one who does not speak '*as the scribes but as one having authority*' (Gospel according to St. Mathew). *Maharshi* explained philosophy to the intelligent and used *puranic* legends, parables and day to day events for explaining to the common masses. When disciples queried Jesus '*Why speakest thou unto them in parables*', he replied '*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . Therefore, speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing hear not, neither do they understand. . For the people's heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and*

hear from their ears and should understand with their hearts .
. ' Similar was *Maharshi's* approach in clarifying the doubts of the seekers.

This is the tragedy of human mind. Many spiritually advanced saints either directed seekers to approach *Maharshi* or as in the case of Anandmayee Ma, a spiritually advanced saint, who on her visit to *Ramanashrama* after *Maharshi's samaadhi*, was displeased with the undue deference shown to her presence, even as there were many politicians, philosophers, educationists and administrators who basked in the glory of the importance given to them instead of they being humble in the presence of one who had seen *Death* in its face. Simple mass of people flocked to him either as an object of veneration or expecting blessings and miracles from him. *Maharshi* was a shepherd like Jesus, who gathered, sheltered and gave refuge to the wayward sheep. *Maharshi* was aware that when the sower goes forth to sow, some seeds fall upon stony places and others wither away, those which fall on the good ground bring forth fruit.

Maharshi's Daarshanic Satya:

Maharshi's enlightenment was not contextual it was existential. Though born in Brahmin family, he was neither educated in religious concepts *Brahman*, *Eternal Essence*, of heavens or hells nor was he initiated by a *Guru*. Whatever little of religion he knew was through *Peria Purana*, while reading to his mother. He had reasonably good and healthy life and experienced no uncommon *sufferings* which would lead him to desire deliverance. He never reflected on death or the life hereafter, his *Death Experience* being his first encounter with the fear of death. Recalling his experience he remarked in later days, '*It was quite sudden. . a violent fear of Death came over me. . I just felt I was going to die and began to think what I can do about it. The shock of the fear that I may now die drove me inward to think for myself.*

The *Death Experience* was not, however, the result of listening, reflection or meditation on any principles or concepts

of which he was not even aware at that age. In later days he said '*I did not yet know that there was an Essence or Impersonal Real underlying everything, and that God and I were both identical with it*'. Not being highly educated in philosophical terms, his response was simple and without framing words, he reflected and concluded, *Now that the Death has come what it means? What is Death; what is it that dies; concluding that it is the body that dies*' He reasoned, '*this body is now dead. It will be carried stiff to the cremation grounds, to be cremated and reduced to ashes. But does the death of the body means that I am dead? Is the body, I? The body is insentient and inert, whereas I feel the presence of my personality. . I should be the spirit transcending the body. The body seems to die, not the spirit. . That means I am the Deathless spirit*'.

Both the inquiry and *enlightenment* as living Truth were sudden, immediate, simultaneous and concurrent in extraordinary moment in Time, without going through any thought-process. From that moment onwards his fear of *Death* vanished and he remained absorbed in unbroken *Bliss*, whether engaged in speaking, reading or in any thing else. Speaking about the realization in later days, he pondered, '*It is said that I took twenty minutes to realize*', then wondering '*It may be a moment*' and finally clarifying '*even that is not correct . . . where is the Time-element in it?*'.

A question, therefore, arises whether the enlightenment was the ascent of the *Maharshi's human form* to *Divine essence* through series of austerities and penances over innumerable previous lives or the descent of the *Divine essence* in *human form* at one specific point in *Time*! Because when on one side it is said that an *Individual Self* takes innumerable lives to reach the *Universal self*, both the *ascent* as well as the *descent* appears as sudden when one perceives humanity submerged in ignorance and darkness, large number of *individual selves* appearing to be quarter-way on the *Path*, some half-way on the *Path*, few on the last lap of the *Path* on the hump, as it were' and one amongst the many crossing the hump to enlightenment. As Krishna

declared, among thousands, scarcely one strives for Perfection and of those who strive and succeed, scarcely one is aware of *Me* in primary essence - '*manushyaanaam sahasreshu kaschid yatati siddhaye, yataanaam api sidhhaanaamkaschin maam vetti tattvatah*'.

Therefore, it is difficult for any one to know for certain at what stage one is at any given point of *Time* or whether any one has reached or surmounted the hump on *the Path to Perfection*. One observes instances of a Sanatkumars, a Dhruva, a Prahlad, a *Buddha*, Shankara, a Jnaneshvar, a Chaitanya, a Ramakrishna, a Ramana Maharshi and innumerable others experiencing *Bliss* from the moment they were born, in childhood or in adolescence, while others experience as young person or some even as they are about cast their mortal body.

It stands to reason that on reaching *Perfection* one should exclaim, even as *Buddha* did when enlightened - '*When I was liberated, there arose in me the awareness of my liberation. I knew Distinct Gross Existence is ended, holy life is being experienced. . there is no survival again in future for this (existence). . my liberation is established. . there was no survival again in future*' or for Maharshi to announce that '*Fear of Death vanished, absorption in the Self continued in unbroken stream from then onward. Other thoughts too passed along as musical notes would do, but the 'I' continued to dominate as the shruti note underlying and blending with all rest of the notes. Whether the body was engaged in speaking, reading or in any thing else, I still continued to be central point*'. For both of them from that time onward every moment was living in the present, with each early moment passing without any attachment to them and living every new moment as it came without any expectation. The death of the past without any regret was simultaneous with birth of the future without any expectations, even as with the end of darkness one becomes aware of the birth of light. As *Bhagavad Gita* assured, '*On this Path, no effort is ever lost and no obstacle prevails; even a little of righteousness saves from fear*'.

Since *Maharshi* had neither religious training nor spiritual initiation, his enlightenment could be either as the descent of *divine essence* in his *form*, or the ascent of his *human form* to *divine essence*, as fulfillment in this life of his austerities and penances in *the Path to Perfection*, when slight push was enough to bring enlightenment. On enlightenment he realized that ‘*The soul had given up its hold on the body when it renounced the idea – I am the Body*’, needing no one to certify his Bliss which he was reveling in. When he was experiencing he was not aware what he was being aware of, the non-awareness itself being *Bliss*. If he found in later days scriptures speaking about similar experiences than it was more in the nature of empirical authentication than the need for certifying his experiences for him.

Having traversed the *Path*, validating the *upanishadic mantra* ‘*asato maa sad gamaya, tamaso maa jyotir gamaya, mrtyor maa maamrtam gamaya*’, he placed his first step in *Tiruvannamali* on 1st September, 1896 and registered his presence with *his father*, in the *sanctum sanctorum* of *Lord Arunachala*. Having done what was to be done, he never visited the temple again. Thence onward, he was in one continuous *Bliss of Beatitude*, one with *his father*, observing everything that was transpiring but not identifying himself with anything. He spent his early days as a recluse ‘*living in enlightened state of Sat-Chit-Ananda*’, impervious of his body and the surroundings, in *Patala Lingam* sanctuary in *Arunachaleshwar* temple in *Tiruvannamalai*. He symbolized the state of *Being*, described in *Brihad Aranyak Up.* – *etam eva viditvaa munir bhavati, etam eva pravrajino lokam icchantah pravrajanti, etad ha sma vai tat purve vidvaa, sah prajaam na kaamayate, kim prajayaa karishyaamah yesham no’yam atmaayam loka iti*’ - On being enlightened in this manner, one becomes contemplative, realizing that to be his sphere of action they wander around, knowing, verily, thus the ancient ones did not desire company of people, saying what have we to do with people, when we see the world in the Self? He lived thereafter the life of a *Brahmana*, the

enlightened knower of wisdom, because ‘reflection on many words is weariness of Speech’ to him. As he recalled later, ‘Sometimes I opened my eyes and it was morning, sometimes it was evening. I did not know when the Sun rose or when it set’. Maharshi explains, ‘In the case of jnani the rise or existence of ego is only apparent and he enjoys his unbroken transcendental experience in spite of such apparent rise or existence of the ego, keeping his attention always on the Source. This ego is harmless; it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope – though it has a form it is no use to tie anything with’.

The enlightenment demonstrated the detachment of his *self* from body and the ego, that when he wrote the brief note to his family, when he left for *Arunachala* he left it unsigned. The note spelt out his goal - ‘*I have set out in quest of my father. . It is on virtuous enterprise that this has embarked. . Let no money be spent in search of this’*. Like Siddhartha, who had embarked on the journey, ‘*Seeking supreme peace of Nirvana*’, he too started ‘*in quest of my father*’ having attained ‘*detachment from gross existence*’ and liberation completely established and reveling with alert consciousness the universal awareness as declared in *Isha Up.* ‘*yas tu sarvaani bhutaani aatmanyavaanupashyati, sarvabhuteshu chaatmanam tato navijugupsate*’ – seeing all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings.

With such comprehensive vision, he observed even animals, birds and even trees as not something less than equal with human. He never referred them as ‘*it*’ but as *he* or *she*. Cow was *Laksmi*, dogs were *Kamala* and *Chinna Karuppan*, the monkey was *Nondi*. When *Laksmi* was on death bed, *Maharshi* was at her side with her head on his lap. It is claimed that she was delivered to heavens and so it is mentioned on her grave, which is next to the earlier graves of the deer, crow and dog. Like animals and birds, even reptiles were at ease with him, and he would observe that this was their natural habitat; therefore, they should be allowed to live at peace.

His response to spiritually advanced seekers was intellectual and philosophical. When Sheshadriswami remarked *'If one worships the Lord Arunachala, he will grant salvation'*, Maharshi queried *'Who is it that worships and who is the worshipped?'* and realizing the import, Sheshadriswami burst out, *'That is just what is not clear'*. It was not that Sheshadriswami was completely new to spiritual way of inquiry. Once he was found staring at a buffalo when he was asked what he is doing. He said pointing out to the buffalo *'Tell me what is this?'* When he was told it was a buffalo, Sheshadriswami burst out in his characteristic way, *'Is it a buffalo? A buffalo? You buffalo, call it Brahman'*. In *The Eight Verses* addressed to Lord Arunachala, Maharshi contemplates: *'Who is the seer? When I sought within, I watched the disappearance of the seer and what survived it. No thought of 'I saw' arose, so how could the thought 'I did not see' arise? Who has the power to convey this in words when even You in ancient days could do it only through silence? Only to convey Your state through silence You stand as Mountain shining from heaven to earth'*. This is perfect example of those for whom every thing in creation is one and same - *'yasmin sarvaani bhutaany aatmaivaabhud vijanatah | tatra ko mohah kah shokah ekatvam anupashyati'* – When to one all beings have, verily, become one with his own self, then what delusion and what sorrow can be to him who has seen the Oneness ?

Till the last moment of his existence in the gross body, even when it was decaying and deteriorating with cancerous growth eating his vitals, he remained supremely detached from the body. He would not ever say *'I have pain'* but always remark *'There is pain in the body'*. He never asked for treatment for cancer and yet out of compassion would never object when it was given. He would remark, *'Have I ever asked for any treatment? I have said from the beginning, that no treatment is necessary. Let things take their course'*. When doctors wanted to operate the wound he would say *'There is no need to alarm. The body itself is a disease. Let it have its natural end. Why mutilate it?'*

People wondered at his sense of detachment, when they observed him clapping his hands when the hymn, *Ramana Satguru* was being sung and he replied, '*Ramana Satguru is everywhere and everything. Why do you limit it to this form?*' He epitomized what *Mahabharata* said, '*naitaadrasham brhahmanyaasti vittamyathaikata samata satyataa cha sheelam stithim dandanidhaanam aarjavam tatas tatashchoparamahkriyaabhyah*' – For a knower of *Brahman* there is no wealth comparable to the sense of oneness, of equality, truthfulness, virtue, steadfastness, non-injury, integrity, and withdrawal from all activities.

His refusal to give primacy to the body appeared natural when seen in the context of his reply to his Mother when she waned his to return home, '*The Ordainor controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdhakarma. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain quiet.*' This does not mean that he was superstitious. He said, '*The all actions that the body has to perform are already decided upon at the time it comes into existence; the only freedom you have is whether or not to identify yourself with the body*' believing in the causative process of nature, that '*As beings reap the fruit of their actions in accordance with god's laws, the responsibility is theirs, not His*'. Clarifying further, he said, '*That which is called destiny, preventing meditation, exists only in an extrovert Mind and not in an introvert Mind. Therefore he who seeks internally in quest of the self, remaining as he is, does not get frightened by any impediments that may seem to stand in the way of carrying on his practice of meditation. The very thought of such obstacles is the greatest impediments*'.

Maharshi the Teacher:

The traditional hymn lauds *Guru* as *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Maheshvar* and as the *Supreme Brahman* - '*Gurur Brahma*

Gurur Vishnu Gurur devo Maheshvarah, Gurur saakshaat Parabrhamā, tasmai Gurave namaha'. In *Katha Up.* Yama conveying the mystical word *Aum* to Nachiketa says that '*Not by reasoning is this apprehended, but by taught by another does one become aware. . He who cannot be even be heard by many, whom even by hearing many do not know, wondrous is he who can teach and skillful is he who become aware of him and wondrous is he who knows, even when instructed by the wise. Taught by an inferior man He can not be truly understood, as he is reflected in many ways. Unless taught by one who knows Him as himself, there is no going thither for it is conceivable, being subtler than the subtle*'.

Since Ramana Maharshi reveals in effulgence and dispels ignorance more in silence than through speech, and when a seeker was asked whether he had heard of *Dakshinamurty* and receiving his affirmative reply as the one who gave silent *upadesha*, Maharshi had said, '*That is what you will get here*'. If any devotee did not understand what he *had to* convey, he would say, '*I am communicating, but you don't seem to receive*'. His enlightenment was blossoming of the flower or tranquillity of the flowing stream, himself reveling the colours and smells and sharing the awareness as they pass by, remaining oblivious like the river *Ganga*, which flows not to provide waters to the people on the banks, but also not objecting if they seek to share its waters. Like *Ganga* he remained on his course, not traveling to communicate his enlightenment but sharing it with those who sought the waters.

Many humans may drink the waters from auspicious *Ganga*, but few receive merits and become luminous. When a devotee asked whether, '*Is it possible for all seekers, whatever their spiritual credentials, to adopt straightaway and put into practice this method of inquiry in quest of Self?*', he replied '*No, it is intended only for ripe souls. Others should get the necessary training and practice through other methods as are suited to their individual temperament, psychological and moral*'. This was evident how varied were the devotees and how

diverse was the communication. Among the disciples were mystics like Palaniswamy, Sheshadriswamy, Ganapati Muni and seekers like Shivaprakash Pillai, Devaraj Mudaliar, Natesh Mudaliar, Muragannar, F. H. Humphreys, Paul Brunton and simple souls like Echammal, Mother, Kunjuswamy and the vast number of people who flocked to him.

Maharshi's views on Gurus reflect the state of his enlightenment. When some one pointed him that according to Sri Aurobindo he had no Guru, he said, 'That depends on what you call a Guru. He need not necessarily be in human form Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus - the elements etc. That means that any form in the world was his Guru. (But) Guru is absolutely necessary'. Though in Maharshi's case it was his Self who was Guru, communication becomes easier if it is from a Guru who has a human form (sakaar) rather than from an impersonal form (niraakar). He said to a devotee that, 'Two things are to be done, first to find a Guru who is outside yourself and then to find Guru within'.

He is firm belief was that 'The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depth of the Self', he mentioned to Swami Yoganada that every one should have a Guru, because 'there can be no mass instruction' and 'it depends on the temperament an spiritual maturity of the individual'. In fact 'The Guru or Jnani sees no difference between himself and others. For him all are Jnanis, all are one with himself, so how can Jnani say that such and such one is his disciple? But the un-liberated one sees all as multiple, he sees all as different from himself, so to him the Guru-disciples relation is a reality, and he needs the Grace of the Guru to waken him to reality. For him there are three ways of initiation, by touch, look and silence'. 'Guru is like an ocean. If one comes with a cup he will get a cupful. It is not use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him'.

Thus he was not a Guru in the traditional sense. He did not

consider communication as *Teaching* but as sharing. *Maharshi* did not encourage intellectual curiosity or un-necessary and unhelpful austerities, penances or even enterprises. His concern was towards encouraging them to *inquire* in the *I*. He would pose them a question, 'Why do you want to know what you will be when you die, if you do not know what you are now? First find out what you are now'. When some one reminded him that *Buddha* had refused to be drawn to speak about God, *Maharshi* had replied, 'In fact *Buddha* was more concerned with directing the seeker to realize *Bliss* here and now than with academic discussions about God and so forth.' If seekers sought his guidance found that another *Teacher* like him is not to be found - 'vaktā chaasya vaadrg anyo na labhyah', that is because the *Wisdom*, spoken by an inferior person, is not truly apprehended having been thought in many ways. Unless spoken by one who knows that one as himself, there is no going further in that direction, for it is inconceivable and subtler than subtle.

Yet, educated persons as well common masses felt assured with *Maharshi* is their *Guru*. Major Chadwick was one such person who continued to assert that '*Bhagavan* does have disciples', even when *Maharshi* had clarified, 'As I said, from *Bhagavan's* point of view there are no disciples, but from that of the disciples the *Grace* of the *Guru* us like an ocean'. *Maharshi's* biography records that '*Few* were so persistent as *Major* in their demand for an assurance. The statement involving recognition of duality would not be made, but short of that *Sri Bahaman* admitted being a *Guru* clearly enough . . .' Mr. Bose, another disciple, insisted that '*I* am convinced that a *Guru* is necessary for the success of *saadhaka's* efforts' to which *Maharshi* is reported to have remarked '*Practice* is necessary for you, the *Grace* is always there', continuing after brief silence, '*You* are neck deep in water and yet you cry out that you are thirsty'.

Many came for clarifications and some others for curiosity and yet some others to be assured that he were what they believed to be *their Guru*. This is not to question *Major*

Chadwick's or Mr. Bose's devotion to *Maharshi* but it shows how overwhelming is the human need for support that rarely do they give up the support even after they have been pointed the *Way*. The strength of conviction to proceed on the *Path to Perfection* does not prevent them from holding to the support. It comes to basic urge among seekers who prefer to feel secure in the support than in the essence which the support gives.

Maharshi normally never ventured to speak on his own, though he would not hesitate to speak when seekers sought assistance. Perhaps alluding to his own experiences, he conveyed to Ganapati Muni, when he said *'If one watches whence the notion 'I' arises, then the mind is absorbed in That. That is tapas. When a mantra is repeated and one watches the source from whence resonance of mantra is produced, the mind is absorbed in That. That is tapas.'* And later when once Ganapati Muni asked, *'Is seeking the source of I-thought sufficient for the attainment of all my aims or is mantradyana needed'* *Maharshi* replied seeing his ambitions for regeneration and revitalization of spiritual values of the country, *'The former will suffice'*. When Ganapati Muni continued he added, *'It will be better if you throw the entire burden on the Lord. He will carry all the burdens and you will be free from them. He will do his part'*.

Like Ganapati Muni, Humphreys was also eager to help the world and for him was the advice *'Help yourself and you will help the world. . You are in the world, you are the world. You are not different from the world nor the world is different from you.'* When he inquired whether he can perform miracles like Krishna and Jesus, *Maharshi* remarked, *'Did any of them, when he performed them, feel that it is he who was performing a miracle?'* To Paul Brunton who asked about *Maharshi's* views on the future of the world, the reply was *'Why should you worry about the future? You don't even know the present properly. Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself. . As you are, so is the world. Without understanding yourself, what is the use of trying to understand the world?'* For

Maharshi learning was not as important as reflecting and meditating on what has been learnt. In supplementary Forty Verses, he says *'What avails the learning of those who do not seek to wipe out the letters written by fate, by inquiring, 'Whence is the birth of us who are learned?' They have made themselves like a gramophone. It is the unlearned that is saved rather than those whose ego has not fallen down despite their learn'*.

Though *Maharshi's* teachings were intellectual, he was accessible to all. Questions were asked and replies were given to each one were nevertheless adapted to suit to each one's character. *Maharshi* was cautious when dealing with lay persons. They were go dealt with kindness and compassion, knowing their mind is naturally less receptive because of the cares and worries in *samsaara*. It is often their dejection with the life than its rejection as reality that drives human beings to seek solace in spiritual truths. To one such devotee who had asked whether inquiry in the self is possible for all seekers, whatever their spiritual stage or methods be, he quietly explained, *'No, it is intended only for ripe souls. Others should get the necessary training and practice by adopting such other methods as are suited to their individual development, mental and moral'*. For them he suggested other methods like religious and devotional observances, meditation, invocation, mantras and *pranaayama* all of which *'alone lead to vichara'*. As he put it *'A master of meditation, though his eyes and ears are open, fixes his attention firmly on That which he sees, and sees neither nor hears nor has any physical consciousness at all, neither mental but only spiritual'*.

Maharshi recommends restraint of the Mind and thereby denying the thoughts from surfacing therein and not controlling the Mind, thereby preventing the thoughts arising therein. If the Mind is controlled with force or through any other methods, like intoxicants, then it remains dormant as long as the controls remain, only to spring back with vehemence; once the controls are removed. They resume their earlier activities; so long there

exist even slightest trace of impulse in Mind. Control means force, which the Mind revolts against, whereas restraint means conforming consensus. It is an extra-ordinary experience where Mind itself becomes the instrument of its own inquiry as well as the object of inquiry, by which process the true identity of the Mind comes about, and at the end of inquiry, Mind ceasing to be, just as the stick used for stirring funeral pyre is reduced to ashes once pyre and corpse are burnt to ashes.

He pointed out that there is close relationship between ego and *praana*. Therefore when the mind is restrained through *peanayama*, the thoughts and the ego also come to be restrained. Elimination of the thoughts from Mind does not mean rejecting the thoughts, but observing them as they rise in a detached state of Mind. Then elimination becomes natural because as they rise one becomes conscious with alert Mind. If the Mind is *quietened* through controls or any other methods, then it remains quiet as long as the controls remain, only to spring back with vehemence; once the controls are removed they resume their earlier activities, so long there exist even minimum trace of impulse in Mind.

Even like *Buddha*, *Maharshi* too had nothing to be hidden from the other human beings and his response was immediate, bringing the most abstruse and profound philosophical mysteries down to the level of common people. Even as his reply was highly spiritual in the beginning, his replies to him in later days were as prosaic as replies to any one else. His idea of devotion, *Bhakti* was not restricted to external surrender to the personality or the form of *Guru*, but one's *Self*, even while remaining distinct also being in communion with his mind, as said in *Bhagavad Gita* - '*avibhaktam cha bhuteashu vibhaktamiva cha stitham*', coming back to his *being* - '*madbhaavam aagachhati*'. Only then all the preconceived thoughts, concepts, memories and opinion cease to exist without any trace like the camphor which when burnt leaves no traces at all. *Sharanagati* is not mindless submission to the *form* but to the *essence* of his teachings without any reservation or any conditioned mind. One

cannot share *Wisdom* unless one is fully receptive in Mind, Speech and Actions. Only when disciple's mind is open only then does *Guru's* grace becomes vibrant and invigorating.

Maharshi's Wisdom was deep and comprehensive, therefore, he used the concepts and the vocabulary, symbols and the signs, the words and the phrases from scriptures since seekers were familiar with them. *Maharshi* recommends restraint of the Mind for denying the thoughts surfacing therein and not controlling Mind through force to prevent thoughts arising therein. If the Mind is controlled with force or through any other methods, like intoxicants, then it remains dormant as long as the controls remain, only to spring back with vehemence; once the controls are removed. They resume their earlier activities; so long there exist even slightest trace of impulse in Mind. Control means force, which the Mind revolts against, whereas restraint means conforming consensus.

Therefore, *Maharshi* would not approve *Hatha Yoga* for controlling Mind, instead suggested the seekers to be meditative in natural state of awareness, by inquiring '*Who am I?*'. Therefore, he rarely would use words in the sense of '*crushing the thoughts*' when the intent is to '*restrain the thoughts*' or '*terminate the thoughts*'. He mentioned that even after the state of equanimity of intellect (*samaadhi*) is realized, the Mind should continue to be in meditative mode.

It is an extra-ordinary experience where Mind itself becomes the instrument of its own inquiry as well as the object of inquiry, by which process the true identity of the Mind comes about, and at the end of inquiry, Mind ceasing to be, just as the stick used for stirring funeral pyre is reduced to ashes once pyre and corpse are burnt to ashes. He pointed out that there is close relationship between ego and *praana*. Therefore when the mind is restrained through *pranayama*, the thoughts and the ego also come to be restrained. Elimination of the thoughts from Mind does not mean rejecting the thoughts, but observing them as they rise in a detached state of Mind. Then elimination becomes

natural because as they rise one becomes conscious with alert Mind. If the Mind is *quietened* through controls or any other methods, then it remains quiet as long as the controls remain, only to spring back with vehemence; once the controls are removed they resume their earlier activities, so long there exist even minimum trace of impulse in Mind.

Many who came to '*inquire who am I?*' controlling their minds ended up wishing to control the affairs of the Ashrama. Maharshi said once, '*People walk up the drive to the Ashrama in search of Deliverance and then get caught in Ashrama politics, forgetting the purpose why they came here. If such matters were their concern, they need not have come to Tiruvannamali*'. When some people came to Ashram to reorganize the administration, he wondered '*I wonder what they come here for? Do they come to reform themselves or the reform the Ashram?*'

That is the tragedy.

Inquiry in the Naure of I.

Whether in the *vedic* scriptures or in *upanishads*, *Inquiry* has been dominant force in spiritual quest. '*Unknowing I ask of those who know, as one ignorant would ask for the sake of Wisdom, what is it that One that has upheld the six regions in the form of the unborn?*', '*Who is the divinity we shall adore with our oblations?*', '*Who verily knows and who can here eclare it, whence was it born and whence came this creation?*', '*He from whom this creation came into bein, whether He upheld it or did not, He who oversees it in the eternal regions, He verily knows or perhaps He does not know*' and '*My ears open to hear, my eyes to see, this Light within me shines beyond. My Mind roams with thoughts far beyond, what shall I speak and what, indeed, shall I think?*' Shankara says in *Vivekachudamani*, '*ko naama bandhah kathamesha aagatah ktham pratishaasya ktham vimokshah ko'saavanaatmaa pramah ka aatma tyorvivekah katham etaduchyataam*' – What

is bondage, how did it come, what is its nature and how does one delivered? What is not the self what is the supreme Self and how does discriminate between the two? Please speak to me about all these.

When Shivaprakasam Pillai encountered *Maharshi* strolling on *Arunachala* mountains, the first question which he asked was ‘*Who am I? And how salvation is to be achieved?*’ *Maharshi* had replied: ‘*By incessant inwards inquiry, Who am I you will know yourself and thereby attain salvation*’. In *Upadesha Saaram*, he says one should inquire ‘*aham ayam kuto bhavati chinvatatah ayipatatayaham nijavicharanam*’ He told Paul Brunton, ‘*What is the use of knowing about every thing else when you do not know who you are. . it is the one infallible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned, absolute being that you really are*’.

Maharshi considers inquiry in the nature of *I* as ‘*the one unfaillible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned absolute Being, which you really are*’ and says ‘*There is no other adequate method except self-inquiry. If the mind is quietened by other means it stays quiet for some time and then springs up again and resumes its former activity*’. He pointed out to Shivaprakasham Pillai that ‘*If the Mind, which is the cause of all thoughts and activities, disappears, the external objects too would disappear. Mind is only thoughts, it is a form of energy. It manifests itself as world. When Mind sinks in Self, then the Self is realized; when the Mind issues forth, the world appears and the Self is not realized.*’ ‘*The purpose of inquiry is to focus the entire mind at its source. It is not a case of one I searching another I*’. When thoughts rise up in mind during inquiry, one should not follow them but watch them as they arise – what is this thought? where did it come from, and to whom? To me – who am I? Even if impure thought rise in mind, let them be. Even as one watches the thoughts rising in mind, they come to be terminated, reverting to their source. All thoughts are inconsistent with realization. The right thing to be done is termination of the thoughts of oneself as well others as they

arise. Maharshi says, *'Once we take away the world, which causes our doubts, the clouds in our mind, then the light of God will shine clearly through. How is the world taken away? When for example instead of seeing a man you and say, this is God existing as body, which body answers more or less perfectly to the description of a God, then it would as a ship meets the description more or less of the wheel'*.

Searching for *I* does not mean searching for God, though search for the *I* leads one to be aware that *I* and the God are not distinct and different but the same. As he puts it, *'Knowing one's Self is knowing God. Without knowing one's Self, imagining a thing as a deity, different and distinct, and meditating thereon, is like measuring one's shadow by one's own foot or like throwing the precious stone in one's own possession for the sake of trivial shell'*.

Speaking of a *jnaai* as compared to an ordinary person, he says, *'In the case of a jnaani the rise or existence of the ego is only apparent but he enjoys his unbroken transcendental experience in spite of such apparent rise or existence of the ego, keeping his attention always on the Source. The ego is harmless; it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope - though it has a form, it is of no use to tie anything with'*. *I* is something with which one begins inquiry and at the end it the same *I* cease to be just as the stick used for stirring funeral pyre is reduced to ashes once pyre and corpse are burnt to ashes.

The process should be continued, *'As long as there is the least trace of impulse in mind . . . each time a thought rears up its head it should be crushed (crushed may not be the proper word to be used, 'terminated' would be more appropriate one), it with inquiry. Terminating the thoughts at the source is called vairagya'*. Maharshi further explains that *'As one progresses on the inquiry in the nature of I, it will be found that I as such does not exist, having vanished somewhere in the course of the inquiry and silence descends'*.

In the process of inquiry, Maharshi cautions, *'Never yield*

your mind to doubts but dive deep in your Self with firm resolve . . . When you have any doubts, do not try to explain them but try to know to whom such doubts come about ? . . . As long as there are even minimum impulses in mind, thoughts will continue to rise . . . Each time a thought rears its head, resolve it through inquiry . . . Therefore, inquiry continues to be necessary till the Self is realized . . . inquiry is a mental activity, which destroys all mental activities including the experiencing mind . . . (When) the I-thought is destroyed, breath and other senses subside. The ego as well as the primal breath, have common source’.

Inquiry in the *I* leads cessation of thoughts arising in mind, which is not same as rejecting them but investigating them as they rise and being detached with them. Understanding thoughts begins with knowing how they arise in mind as well as how they cease without giving any opportunity to rise again. Thus the entire process of inquiry, ‘*Who am I?*’ is the foundational sheet anchor for understanding the illusory nature of the phenomenal *I* and awareness of the universal *I* rather than random intellectual investigation. It is not a *goal* to be reached or *becoming* some thing but the *state* to be in or just *being*. The inquiry was not mechanical but psychological. It is asking literal questions or understanding intellectual problems but being aware of *me*, along with its *name* and *form*, which *karmic* layers of earlier lives, encase in Mind as aggregated *samskaras* in present life. Inquiry of the *I* is not a *goal* to be reached or *becoming* some thing but the *state* to be in or just *being*.

Maharshi’s Teachings:

If in *Maharshi’s Teachings* one seeks to find or advocates any departure from traditional philosophy then he is bound to be disappointed. In fact there can no deviation from eternal Truth but only difference in perception, each one making it clearer in the context of the people, place and the period. Seers, therefore, always maintain that what they are communicating was nothing

new but reiteration and re-establishment of the ancient truths. It was so with the vedic seers, even it was so with *Buddha*, Krishna, Abraham, Jesus or Muhammad. None ever claimed that they have to come tell something new by denying what is old. The Prophets were as traditional as the priests, who were carrying over the Truths 'to next generations, just like a basket is handed over saying: This is true and all else is false', 'abiding in the midst of ignorance, (as said in *Mundaka Up.*), 'wise in their own esteem, thinking themselves to be wise, fools, afflicted by troubles go about like blind men led by one who himself is blind' .

In spite of that, each prophet has been distinctive in his vision and unique in his communication, with dramatic shift from scriptures as the source to the individual self as culmination, from objective foundations to the subjective source. *Maharshi* was more in tune with *upanishadic* intellectuals, and with the approach adopted by *Buddha* in dealing with the problems in *samsaara*. He too did not rely excessively on sacrificial rites and rituals though had not objection if considered as disciplining one's Mind and interpreting *vedic* and *upanishadic* scriptures giving them a refreshing dimension. *Maharshi* had not used scriptural wisdom to be enlightened nor had he gone through traditional initiation, austerities or penances. But his approach to scriptures was deferential, seeing that much of his enlightenment and experiences were authenticated by the thoughts expressed in them.

Maharshi's insistence to base the search on fundamental query on 'Who am I?' appears dramatic and tradition-shattering as was *Buddha's* concern for human *suffering*. The manner they attended to these questions was also distinctly individualistic. While *Buddha* did not quote from the scriptures obviously because they had a great psychological influence on the masses, preventing them to consider any deviation, *Maharshi* quoted scriptures in detail, because they helped the seekers to relate his teachings with the traditional wisdom, at the same time not

making a fetish of the scriptures or the traditional *dos* and *donts*, *rites* and *rituals* of the formalized religious institutions.

Maharshi's very first reply to Shivaprakasam Pillai's query 'Who am I? And how salvation is to be achieved?' was 'By incessant inwards inquiry, Who am I you will know yourself and thereby attain salvation' set the trend of his Teachings. He brought the search for Wisdom from from the objective scriptures to the subjective level of the *self* within. He brought in further focus his reply to Pillai whenhe pointed out to Paul Brunton that, 'The first and foremost of all thoughts, the primeval thought in mind of every human being, is the thought I. It is only after the birth of this thought that all other thoughts can rise at all. It is only after the first personal pronoun I has risen in mind that the second thought could mentally follow the I thread, until it takes you back to its source. You would discover that, as it is the first thought to appear so it is also the last one to disappear. This is a matter which can be experienced'.

There was no reference to *Brhaman*, the divinities, the self, karma, *papa* and *punya* or to the heaven and earth. Nor was there the classic *upansihadic* reply 'It is that which is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, speech indeed of the speech, the breath of the breath, the eye of the eye . . . That which is not expressed through speech .. mind .. eye . ear . . . breath, but that by which speech .. mind .. eye . ear . . . breath, becomes active ; That, verily, know thou is Brahman and not what people adore'. It was described in *Brihad Aranyak Up* that the One manifesting as many with *essence* and *form* and entering in the forms to the tip of the nails or like the razor in the razor-case or as fire in fires-source. Further we are told that knowing I, verily, am all this creation, for I have produced all this *That One* became all this creation. *Shankara* says that since every thing constitutes *Creation*, including the *individual I*, the *self*, to consider it as distinct and independent of the *Creation*, or the *universal I* or the *Self*, is error. At the same time to associate

'the empirical I – the ego with the *individual I* or the *self* is also an error.

Maharshi by using words like *'the real individual I* for the *self* and *'the unreal empirical I* for illusory *self*, his teachings become extension and confirmation of the eternal *Prime Existence* *'seen'* by earlier seers. It is because the message of the earlier seers becomes obscure, misunderstood or variously understood due to efflux of *Time*, *Divine essence* is said to descend periodically from age to age to proclaim righteousness in its proper perspective using contemporary words, vocabulary, expressions and parables. In this connection, Krishna's declaration is often quoted that though unborn and imperishable, He, as *the Prime Existence* establishes himself with *Prakriti* from age to age - *'ajo'pi sann avyayaatmaa bhutaanaam ishvaro'pi san prakritm svaam adhishtay sambhavaami aatmamaayayaa'*.

It is not necessary for the *Divine essence* to descend Himself every time and in every occasion. Having declared, *'aham vaav srishtir asmi, aham heedam sarvam ashkrshiti. Tatah srishtir abhavat'* and *'sa esha iha pravishtha aanakhaagrebhyah yathaa kshurah kshuradhane'vahitah syat'* one is assured that in every created gross form the *Divine essence* is infused. Since *Maharshi's Death Experience* is viewed as unexpected and sudden, his enlightenment leads many to believe that it was confirmation that *Divine essence* descended in *Vankatraman's form* for re-establishing eternal truth in new context. The descent was perceived as from *Dakshinamurty*, since *Maharshi's* teachings were often communicated in silence. His teachings were unlike those of many earlier *Gurus* because his teachings were dependent on temperament and the spiritual maturity of individuals in present age rather than for mass instruction. *Maharshi's* emphasis on inquiry in the nature of *I*, was individual as *'the one unfallible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned absolute Being, which you really are'* and *'There is no other adequate method except self-inquiry.*

If the mind is quietened by other means it stays quiet for some time and then springs up again and resumes its former activity’.

His *Death Experience* was without backdrop of any intellectual or spiritual initiation. He experienced that in spite of the decay, dissolution and destruction of his gross body, *the individual real I* would remain throbbing, which means that with destruction of the body, *the individual real I* does not cease to be. He also realized that what people generally consider as *I* is not the *self* or *individual real I*, but the *empirical I* or the illusory *I*, which has surreptitiously taken the place of the *individual real I*.

Maharshi did not follow the traditional course of initiation nor did he concentrates on what *Chhandogy Up.* refers as ‘*this city of Brahman . . . What is within that is to be sought, for that, verily, is what one should be aware of*’. *Brihad Aranyak Up* has cautioned that only here in this present life we may have *Brahma-jnanan*, if we do not have, then great is the destruction. ‘*ihaiva santo’tha vidmas tad vayam, na chet avedair mahati vinaashah*’. *Maharshi* having been enlightened of his *I*, he addressed himself to people who desired to know their own *individual self*, querying Paul Brunton ‘*What is the use of knowing about everything else when you do not yet know who you are?*’ He would say, ‘*Knowing one’s Self is knowing God. Without knowing one’s Self, imagining a thing as a deity, different and distinct, and meditating thereon, is like measuring one’s shadow by one’s own foot or like throwing the precious stone in one’s own possession for the sake of trivial shell*’.

Therefore, he prevails on seekers to investigate the *empirical I*, pointing out that when he is on that search, the *empirical I* would be seen to fall off on the way-side and the *individual I* would be shining in its stead, leading him eventually to the state when there would be nothing like *I* at all and every thing is the *Universal I*, he revels in the *Bliss of Being*.

This is what happened to *Maharshi*. Thereafter, he had no purpose carved for him unlike *Buddha* who saw his purpose as

investigate in the Nature, Causes and Ways of terminating suffering in *samsara* and thereafter communicate his enlightenment to 'the generation (which) enjoys, is satisfied with, and delights in attachments'. He gave replies to the queries addressed to him all his life, sharing his enlightenment rather than communicated it. Therefore, his replies were one to one basis and not congregational. He commenced his teachings by asking them to ask themselves "Who am I?". Because what they assume as *I* is not the *real I*. He pointed that in empirical world, it is common for one to make statements like '*I went, I came, I was, I did*' making it appear that it is *empirical I* which he refers. But actions like '*going*' and '*coming*' have reference to the body. Therefore, when one says '*I came*' '*I went*' '*me*', what he primarily refers is the body though human Mind associates it with *the individual I*. Maharshi attributes this to the influences of the senses on Mind which gives a erroneous picture of perceived objects as something which bears no similarity with the original.

Maharshi explained the reasons for such presumption saying, '*Even as the satva-guna (luminous attributes) of the Mind, essentially pure and untarnished like space, becomes distorted when clouds pass across, even so does the individual real I becomes (distorted in perception. (and) . . . the pure satvic-mind, of pure knowledge, forgetting its own nature on account of ignorance, gets transformed as the world under tamo-guna (obscure attributes) and influenced by rajo-guna, (the dynamic attributes) imagines 'I am the body, the world is real' and acquires consequent merits and de-merits through attachment and aversion. The residual impressions (vasanas) lead one to attain the cycle of birth and death. But the Mind, getting rid of defilement through performance of detached actions over many past lives, listening to the scriptures aided by competent teacher, reflects on their meaning and meditates, gains the natural mental state of the universal Self, which is the result of the continued contemplation that 'I am the Primal Existence (Brahman)'*'.

Clarifying further, he said to Paul Brunton, ‘*The sense of (empirical) I pertains to the person, body and the brain. When a man knows his true self (the individual real I) for the first time something else arises from the depths of his being and takes possession of him, that which is (the Universal I or the Self), behind the mind is the infinite, divine, eternal. Some people call it the Kingdom of Heaven, others call it soul and others again call it Nirvana, Hindus call it liberation; you may give whatever name you wish. When this happens a man has not really lost himself; rather he has found himself*’. The experience of the *individual real I* is possible only when one realizes that the *empirical I* as is the insufficient and the inefficient *I* because it is not the *individual I, the self*, that which bursts out of *the Prime Existence*.

The great tragedy of human beings is the ignorance under which he leads life under sensory influences, giving rise to the ego-sense which gives him the illusion that the *empirical I* is the real *individual real I*. Such superimposition of the aggregated subjective empirical thoughts, memories, ideas, concepts, views, opinions, beliefs and faiths, shapes the human Mind, makes one to live one’s life according to the world perceived by Mind under sensory influences and not as the life really. This is the root cause of all sufferings in *samsaara*. In fact *samsaara* is nothing but superimposition such erroneous impressions on mind, as said in *Maitri Up.* ‘*chittam eva hi samsaaram*’. The panacea is ceasing to be influenced by the earlier impressions and the elimination of new impressions rising in Mind. This has been recommended by all seers over the ages, but few follow their suggestions, because the bonds which the erroneous perception which bind the *individual I or the self* to the *empirical I*, is strong and difficult to be cut asunder. ‘*The wise perceive clearly by the Wisdom of Brahman, the blissful immortal which shine forth. The knot of the heart if then cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds terminate when He is seen – the highest and the lowest*’, says *Mundaka Up.*

Maharshi points out that just as manifestation of *the Prime*

Existence is with its *essence* in diverse *forms*, even so is man's *essence* is seen only when it shines through his actions. When in sleep or he is dead, one does not see his *essence*, because of the absence then of the luminous *Prime Existence*. If the *Prime Existence* had not become manifest in myriad *forms*, one would not have realized that in between the *Prime Existence* and his manifested forms, there exists the *essence* which is luminous.

Then again, Mind is like a pure white screen without any impressions. When Mind is illuminated or energized by the *Prime Existence*, who is within, His luminous light passes through the body, which is like a glass prism, manifesting as diverse *thoughts* and *forms* bursting out like multitude colours from the prism. In empirical world only the consequence is seen, not the *source*. If the source the *Prime Existence* or the light is removed from the body or the light from the prism, the diverse thoughts will cease as would the colours. Then purity of the Mind or the white sheet will be visibly experienced. Once thoughts cease, the Mind regains its original state, pure and unalloyed. With the clarity of vision and purity of the heart, *Jnani* would then experience the *Prime Existence*, the source of all the diverse thoughts. In fact the dawn of light and termination of ignorance are concurrent. It is not *this* after *that*, but *that* and *this* are immediate, simultaneous non-dual experience.

Death Experience was not the conclusion but the testimony and testament that the Mind has regained its pure *form*, the world of perception (*drishyavaritam chittamatmanah*) and the perceiving Mind (*chitvam darshanam*) becoming one with the *Prime Existence* (*tatva darshanam*). The *Death Experience* was a perceptible shift of the Mind from external objective *forms* to the internal *essence*. Then one performs actions without being aware of the actions being performed or identifying oneself with the actions of the results – '*drirshyavaritam chittamatmanah chitva darshanam tatva darshanam*' (*Upadesha Saram*).

Maharshi says when the idea of '*I am the body*' '*I am doing this*' loses its significance, Mind merges in the *Self*,

loosing its attachment to erroneous ideas. Then whatever one does, he does without being conscious of his body. Therefore, as Maharshi told *Shivaprakasham Pillai* that it is only through inward inquiry *Who am I* that one knows who is it that acts and who is it that is aside watching and not partaking in the actions of one's empirical I. He becomes aware that *'the real I or self is not the body, nor any of the five senses, nor the sense-objects, nor the organs of action, nor the prana, nor the mind, nor even the deep sleep state where there is not cognizance of these . . . After rejecting each of these and saying 'these I am not', that which alone remains is the I and that is Consciousness . . . It is Sat-Chit-Ananda in which there is not even a slightest trace of the (empirical) I thought. This is called Mauna –silence or Atman. That is the only thing That Is'*. This is a thought similar to the one expressed by Buddha, when he said that experiences of Bliss is *'When sensations no longer exist, that, verily is the Bliss'*. Maharshi pointed out that Bliss is natural state of the self, therefore one should endeavour to be spontaneously blissful.

Maharshi pointed out the Mind to *Shivaprakasham Pillai*, as the source of the empirical I. Therefore, *'If the mind, which is the cause of all thoughts and actions vanishes, then external objects will also vanish . . . The mind is only thoughts. It is the form of energy. It manifests itself as the world. When the mind sinks internally deep in the Self, then the Self is realized. When the mind issues forth externally, the world appears and the Self is not realized'*. Maharshi's clarification of the of consciousness was that *'The consciousness I is not the body, nor the senses, nor the sense-objects, nor the organs of action, nor the breath, nor the mind . . . When one realizes after inquiry that none of these is the consciousness I then awareness comes to him of the consciousness I, which has neither beginning nor the end and exists eternally, with or without appendages. The consciousness I is Sat-Chit-Ananda, where there is no slightest consciousness of the erroneous I thought, associated with body*

and the senses, when everywhere, every thing is without distinction’.

Bliss of Being is not being in possessions or having achievements but performing actions being neither attached to the possessions nor denying the achievements. Janaka was the great King of Mithila and yet he could say, ‘anantam bata me vittam yasya me naasti kinchana, mithilaayaam pradeptaayaam na me kinchit pradayate’ –Infinite indeed is my wealth of which nothing is mine. If mithilaios burnt, nothing that is mine is burnt’. Blessed are those who can say as in Kulaarnava Tantra, ‘advaitamkechid icchanti dvaitam icchanti chaapare, mama tatvam vijaananto dvaitadvaita vivarjitam’ – some desire duality and others non-duality, my principle is to be devoid of both duality and non-duality. Brihad Aranyak Up. declares ‘Where there is duality as it were one smells . . . sees . . . hears . . . speaks . . . thinks . . . understands another. But where everything has become with the Self, then by what and whom should one smell . . . see . . . hear . . . speak . . . think . . . understand another . . . By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what should one know the Knower?’ This question does not arise for a Buddha or a Maharshi, who have Wisdom of the Prime Existence being is the state of Bliss. This is Mauna –silence which alone That Is or as expressed by Buddha, Bliss is ‘When sensations no longer exist, that, verily is the Bliss’.

Therefore, when one came with intention to travel on the spiritual Path, renouncing family and the world, Maharshi pointed out to him that ‘Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes abandoning home etc. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments’. Another one was interested to be a sanyasi, not remaining a householder, for him Maharshi remarked, ‘Why do you think that you are that you are a householder? Similar thoughts that you are a sanyasi will also haunt you even if you go out as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go

to the jungle, it is your Mind that haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and it makes you think that you are a house holder. If you renounce you will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the household and the environment of the jungle for that of the house. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. The mental obstacle will always remain therewith you. . . The obstacle is the mind and it must be overcome whether at home or in jungle . If you can do it in the jungle, why not in the home?’

Maharshi pointed out that the feeling that ‘I work’ is the obstacle of the ego and not living in samsara. Devaraj Mudaliar records Maharshi having clarified, ‘It is possible all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as the real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self one’s duties will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows in reality that he is not the character he plays but some one else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling ‘I am_the body’ disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing in the body should shake you from being in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, anymore than the actor being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting the part on stage’.

In Upadesha Saram Maharshi asks, ‘nashtamanasotkrshtha yoginah krtuamasti kim, svasthim yatah’ – when mental thoughts are terminated by a Yogi, what karmas would there remain to be performed? Here Maharshi gives a new dimension to the statement in Maitri Up. ‘yathaa nirindhano vahnih svayonaava upshamyate, tathaa vritti-kshayaat chiitam svayonaava upashamyate’ – even as fire without fuel becomes extinct in its own place, even so with disengaging the Mind from modification, thoughts calm down in the source. Therefore, Maharshi recommends cessation of the thoughts through

pranayama, meditation and invocation and not through forcible rejection of thoughts as in *Hatha Yoga* or termination of thoughts through drugs.

Since inquiry is an individual enterprise through Mind Speech and Action, *Maharshi* lay down that ‘*The purpose of Self-inquiry is to focus the mind as the source of I and not a case of one I searching for another I*. Normally when one searches one hopes to find it. But *search* for the *I* is not a search in the normal sense. Only in the *Waking state (jagratavastha)*, a person is conscious of his body, ego and the empirical *I*. In *Dream state (svapnaavastha)*, even though he takes the experiences of the *Waking state* with him, he is not conscious of the body or the empirical *I*. In that state the self by its own power creates distinct personality. In *Dreamless state (sushupti)* he is not conscious of his body or its absence. That is the state in which a person experiences something similar to *Bliss*. *Upanishads* describe it as the state where the Self desires no desires, free from craving, evils, fear, Self itself becoming the desire, there being no desires, no relatives, neither scriptures nor gods, neither good nor evils, there being no one else, nothing else distinct, where Self becomes transparent like water where *silence alone Is* and where *sensations no longer exist*. ‘*eshasya paramaa gatih, eshasya paraa sampat, eshasya paramo lokah, eshasya paaramaanandah ; stasyaivaanandaasyaanyani bhutaani maatraam upajeevanti*’ - This is his supreme goal; this is his supreme treasure; this is his supreme world; this is his supreme bliss. On a particle of this very bliss, creatures live. It is the state where the individual self is in *Samadhi*, the equanimous intellect, free from sensory influences, ready to be identified with *Turiya, the Prime Existence*, where the mind has no experiences or has absence of experiences.

Mandukya Up. says that the *Waking (Vishva)* and *Dream states (Taiajas)* are both conditioned by *cause* and *effect*. Therefore but *dreamless state (Prajna)* is conditioned by the

cause alone. But in *Bliss (Turiya)* these two (*cause* and *effect*) are not established – ‘*karyakaaranabaddhau taavishyete vishvataijasau, prajnah kaaranabaddhastu dvau tau turye na sidhyatah*’. Similarly non-existence of duality is common to both *Prajna* and *Turiya*. But *Prajna* is associated with sleep in the form of cause, which does not exist in *Turiya Waking (Vishva)* and the *Dream* state (*Taiajas*) are associated with the condition of dream and sleep ; But *Prajna* is condition of sleep *without dream*. In *Turya*, one sees neither sleep nor dreams.

It is the state which *Brihad Aranyak Up.* describes, ‘*aatmaanaam ched vijnaanitavyad ayam asmiti purusha, kim icchan kimayaa shareeram anusamjvet*’ - if a persons knows the Self as ‘*I am This*’ (*Aham Brahma’smi*), then wishing what and desiring what should he suffer in the body? ‘*Yasyaanuvittah pratibuddha aatmaasmin sameedehye gahane pravishah, sa vishvakrt, sa hi sarvasya karta, tasya lokah sa u lokah eva*’ - Whoever has found and has awakened to the *I* that has entered in to this perilous inaccessible place (the body) he is the maker of the universe, for he is the maker of the world, verily, he is the world itself. ‘*praanasya praanam uta chakshus chakshuh uta shrotrasya shrotram, manaso yemano viduh, te nichikyur brahma puranama agryam*’ – They who know the life of the life, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, and the mind of the mind, they have realized the ancient primordial *Brahman*. ‘*tam eva dhiro prajnaam kurveeta brahmanah naanudhyaayad bahun shabdaan vaacho vigalapanam hi tat iti*’ - Let a wise Brahmins after knowing him alone, practice wisdom. Let him not reflect on many words, for that is mere weariness of speech. *Maharshi* was one who was thus enlightened. Therefore generally silence was the form of his speech. He told a devotee that a Brhamin who is not engaged in searching his *I* or in being wise in Wisdom of Brahman is one like a *brahmin-killer*, *brhamahatyaari*

It is same as *Maharshi* pointing out that on the way of searching for *I*, the *I* itself falls off on the way and is not be seen or as Buddha saying the absence of sensation itself is *Bliss*.

Maharshi says, 'He said All thoughts are inconsistent with realization, The right thing to do is to exclude thoughts of oneself and all other thoughts. Thought is one thing and realization is quite another'. In dreamless sleep (*Prajna*) one is not aware of *self* and *non-self*, *Existence (satya)* and *non-existence (an-Rta)* Bliss (*Turiya*) is the ever existent state and ever all-seeing. Both in dreamless sleep and Bliss, one is cognizant of any thing, but dreamless sleep is associated with sleep as *cause* and *effect*, but Bliss is not due to sleep. *Upanishad* further points out that in *dream stage* one has erroneous perception of *Reality*, sleep being non-awareness of the *Principle*. When it is prevail over, *Blissful state, Turiya* is perceived. When one wakes up from sleep influenced by *maya*, then he becomes aware of the unborn, non-dreaming and the non-dual. Just as one on waking from the *Dream state* or the *Dreamless state* becomes aware and enlightened that what he had seen in *Dream state* or not seen in *Dreamless state* is not true but an illusory perception, even so when he wakes up to enlightened state, he becomes aware that the *empirical I*, from which base he was operating is not the *individual real I*.

The search for *I* is simultaneous and concurrent activity where thoughts are observed as they come without accepting them or rejecting them, considering thoughts as natural attribute of the Mind. Not being attached to thoughts is as good as having no thoughts at all. Since thoughts are natural corollary of vibrant Mind no one can control them arising in mind. Therefore, the next best thing one can do is to restrain them arising in Mind and observe them as they come and go, without being attached to them, allowing them to pass as clouds do in the sky without affecting the Space.

Human being desires the *Bliss* not briefly during *Dreamless state* but also for extended period, which is beyond the bliss in the three states - *Vishva, Taijas* and *Prajna* states, with which he is familiar in his primordial empirical life. *Upanishad* says that 'Just as a gold smith taking a piece of gold turns it in to a new and with more beautiful shape, even so the self, after

having thrown the previous body, makes one for himself a new and of beautiful shape like that of the fathers, the *gandharvas*, the gods, the *Prajapati* or Brahma. Because that self is indeed, *Brahman*, identified as Wisdom, Mind, primal Breath, sight, hearing, earth, water, air, ether, luminous and absence of luminosity, desire and absence of desire, anger and absence of anger, righteousness and absence of righteousness, and all the things. Thus the spiritual development of the individual self is brought out, showing primarily that the *individual self*, indeed, is the supreme *Self, Brahman*'. These sentiments he desires to associate with and makes his own. Krishna said '*prajaahati yada kaamaan sarvaan partha manogataan aatmany evaa'tmana tushtah stithaprajno tado'chyate*' – When a man puts away all the desires of the mind, and is self in content in self then he is stable in intelligence. *Samadhi* is being stable, equanimous, in intellect. That is the stage where the self is at the hub before he takes a leap in the state of *Bliss*.

The *sadhaka* becomes aware that his thoughts are structured, therefore he should remain detached from them. Because '*As you are so is the world. Without understanding yourself what is the use of trying to understand the world?*' he would ask. Krishna said '*prajaahati yada kaamaan sarvaan partha manogataan aatmany evaa'tmana tushtah stithaprajno tado'chyate*' – When a man puts away all the desires of the mind, and is self in content in self then he is stable in intelligence. *Samadhi* is being stable, equanimous, in intellect. That is the stage where the self is at the hub before he takes a leap in the state of *Bliss*.

The *individual self* is a distinct entity in the perennial cycle of creative activity, born, sustained and merges back with the Creator at the end of the cycle. Therefore, birth, growth and death is common to the body but to the self, body being the external *form* and the self being the internal *essence* of the *Brahman*. Just as the change of the garments does not mean death of the body, the change of the body also similarly does not mean the death of the self. The body is transient and mortal, not

so is the self which is eternal and immortal. Therefore with the death of the body the self is happy that it has a new and better shaped body in which it can progress, a new set of garments in which it can revel. Therefore, wise men who are aware that the self is the *divine essence* which has entered the body to the tip of the nails like the razor in the razor-box, fire in the fire-source, do not grieve when the body ceases, but are happy and not frightened of death but welcome the new opportunity and a new form to realize its true identity.

By death of the body, *Maharshi* means the *death* of the *body-consciousness*. He showed by his own example that it is possible for one to be in the gross body and yet be detached from his *body-consciousness*. Therefore, termination of the attachment to body is detachment from the *body-consciousness*. He says, '*Let your vision be unified and withdrawn from the objects, body external and internal. Then as differences disappear, so will one progress*'. As he says '*The world is not external to you. Because you wrongly identify yourself with the body, you see the world outside you and its suffering becomes apparent to you; but the world and its sufferings are not real. Seek the reality within and get rid of the unreal suffering . . . Physical pain only follows body-consciousness. Mind is unaware of the body and cannot be aware of its pains or pleasures. Pains are dependent on the ego; they cannot be without the 'I' but the 'I' can remain without them*' (Mountain Path Vol 23.2).

That means pain and pleasures increase or decrease in the ratio to which Mind is attached to the body. The only way to terminate pain of *suffering* is to restrain the Mind from objects of sensory influences. When one observes without craving for them and uses them without being attached to them, he is said have a restrained Mind. Because fault lies not in the objects being transient, subject to decay and destruction, not even in desiring them but by not allowing the senses transforming them in intense cravings. *Maharshi* was always reluctant to talk of death and life after death, but he would never hesitate to address

disciples who spoke of the *empirical I*, and things which go to strengthen it without at the same addressing oneself to reflect and meditate on the *individual real I* which one really is. It is his experience, therefore, the suggestion when one is on the inquiry 'Who am I' that *I* itself ceases to in the course of such inquiry, leaving one's self be free and full of *Bliss*.

When he was drawn attention to *Buddha's* reluctance to discuss the matters of philosophy, *Maharshi* remarked, '*Buddha was more concerned with directing the seeker to realize the Bliss here and now than with academic discussions about God and so forth*' and further saying, '*Why do you want to know what you will be when you die, before you know what you are now? First find out what you are now*'. *Maharshi's* Teachings were primarily intellectual, though he did not encourage philosophical and dialectical thoughts and discussions for their own sake, since much sound does not necessarily mean much light. For simple people he recommended devotion as practical and more suitable, not in itself as the goal but as a path to reach the goal. Even actions sincerely performed lead one to a meditative Mind, when great truths may be revealed. Surrendering one's Mind to be receptive to teaching was welcome but not blind faith in a Guru, in beliefs and faiths unless they become precursor and assist in the inquiry of the *I*.

Maharshi was conscious that even though *the phenomenal I* is considered as a fiction and illusion, it has to be accepted as equally useful medium for living life before ignorance is removed. If one does not know that ignorance, how can one be have *Wisdom*? *Maharshi's* view about the *World, Ego-sense* and *Gods* were in the nature of temporary supports to be set aside once one becomes conscious of the *Shivasvaroopa or Atmasvaroopa* as the foundational *Realty*. The reality is to be realized and experienced through internal inquiry and not through external aids, howsoever auspicious, ancient and hallowed they may appear to be. Unless the *Seer* knows serpent, as something seen and experienced, how would he realize through inquiry and reflection that it is but a rope seen

erroneously as serpent. However, when thoughts vanish from Mind, the speech and action also vanish and what remain is the *Bliss* and a supreme sense of detachment of the *self* from the *body*. *Maharshi* had experienced the detachment of his *self* from the *body*, quite early in his adolescence, which became accentuated in his youth and confirmed and firmly established in his later days.

People were dramatically confronted with this reality as his body lay ravaged from the cancerous growth. There is a strong traditional view that a *jnani's* body should not be mutilated. But when devotees saw the disease increasingly overtaking his body, they suggested many remedies. *Maharshi* was exceedingly compassionate with their distress more than inconvenience to himself, remarking '*Have I ever asked for any treatment? It is you who want this and that for me, so it is for you to agree about it among yourself. I were to be asked I would say, as I have said earlier, that no treatment is necessary. Let things take their own course*'. When a suggestion was made that the growth should be operated, he did not object except mildly cautioning, '*There is no cause for alarm. The body itself is a disease, let it have its natural end. Why mutilate it?*'

Making a reference to *Bhagavat Purana*, he said '*Let the body, the result of earlier karmas remain still or move about, live or die, the sage who has realized the Self, is not aware of it, just as one in drunken stupor is not aware of his clothing*'. Some time he refer to *Yoga Vashishtha* where it is said, '*The jnani who has realized himself as the formless pure awareness is unaffected though the body be severed with a sword. Sugar candy does not loose its sweetness through broken and crushed*'.

It is not that *Maharshi* did not experience pain, though he attributed it to the Mind, saying '*Where is pain if there is no Mind?*' He would say that '*There is pain in the body*' but would never utter the words '*I have pain in the body*'. His only regret was that '*They take this body to be Bhagavan and attribute*

suffering to him. What a pity! It is not that he did not show natural reaction to heat and cold, pain and pleasures, saying 'If the hand of the *jnani* is cut with knife, there would be pain in the body as with any one else's case but because *jnani's* mind being in bliss, he does not feel the pain as acutely as others would'. His immense capacity to disengage his mind from his body was, therefore, proverbial, because he was neither attached to his body nor did he identify himself with it. He was one who having becomes universal having attained his full potential. But when human being are potentially universal in *essence*, then tend to be small attaching themselves to the controlled confined *form*, being more attached to it with a gravitational earthly or gross force than be moved up by levitation, the Grace of the spiritual force.

Yet out of Grace and compassion towards his devotees he would go through all treatments suggested by them and when some of the medicines or treatment were unsuccessful, he consoled the doctors, '*I hope you were not disappointed that even after such treatment, the medicines did not help*'.

His reference to the body to the banana leaf which is thrown after the meal is over, or to the burden which a coolie carries on his head and feels relieved when it is unloaded, saying further that similarly the *jnani* is also anxious to throw of his mortal body, all showed his supreme sense of detachment from his body. One unasked he clarified, '*Do you know what Moksha is? It is getting rid of non-existent misery and attaining the bliss which is always there, that is Moksha*'. When Buddha was asked '*But how can there be Bliss when sensations no longer exist?*' and he replied '*When sensations no longer exist, that, verily is the Bliss*', '*the perennial choiceless awareness*', which *Maharshi* describes as the stage when one finds the *I* which one is inquiring ceases to exist in the course of the inquiry, like the extinguished does not know to which direction it has gone. '*Although the Self experiences in the state of waking, dream and dreamless sleep abiding in the eyes, in throat and the heart, in reality it never leaves its principal seat*

which is the heart. In the lotus of the heart, which is every one's nature being that of mind-space, the luminous Self shine as I. As it shine thus in everybody, this very self is referred to as the Witness (sakshi), and the Transcendent (turiya). The ego-less Supreme Brahman which shines in all beings as the internal luminous I is the self-space; that alone is the absolute Reality. This is the state of supra-transcendence (turiyatita) . . . Because Brahman shines in the heart of all souls as the Self, the Brahman is known as hridayam, the heart . . . The evidence for the fact that Brahman which shines as Self, resides in the heart of all, is that all people indicate themselves (intuitively) by pointing to the chest when saying I'.

Maharshi not tiring from replying innumerable questions asked, perhaps fondly hoped that some at least would follow the path pointed out by him. But people were more interested in satisfying their curiosities, discussing so-called philosophical problems and satisfying their individual egos than denying the same and finding a wave-length which will be beneficial to them. Religious leaders as well heads of religious movements came to *Ramanashram*, as did the political and social activists, eager seekers from the west, intellectuals from different religious disciplines came to see a living legend. Ashram inmates were inundated with simple people who flocked to get a *darshan* or grace flowing from *Maharshi*. But *Maharshi* sat with detached supreme isolation, his compassionate glance hovering on every one who came to him, irrespective of position, religion, class or caste, full of love and immense grace, comforting in silence rarely speaking except questions were sincere and devotion was simple and genuine.

In the last days, as even in earlier ones, he would assure his abiding presence among the devotees, whether now or later, whether they visit Ashram or remember him from distance. His remark addressed to a devotee who was sad about leaving the *Ashrama*, after staying there for forty years, was testimony of his grace and love for people. He had said, '*Here is someone who has been listening to my teachings for forty years and now*

says that he if going somewhere away from Bhagavan! . . . They take this body for Bhagavan and attribute suffering to him. What a pity! They are sad that Bhagavan is going to leave them and go away; where can he go and how can he go?

Maharshi explained, clarified and enlightened many who came to him, and each one went with their own cup, empty, half full or completely full and received his Grace as much as that cup had place to receive. He would be philosophical and mystical with the intellectuals, compassionate and considerate with the simple and he could be silent and curt with the argumentative. Some were intellectuals needing convincing rationally others were devotees who sought grace of the teacher and clarifications for the problems faced by them in their life, yet there were still others who came to scoff and exhibit their ignorance which took to be wisdom. Therefore, to say that he was receding to merge in vast space of *the eternal Prime Existence*, because even when he was abiding in the human form, he and *the Prime Existence* were never distinct, he himself being *the Prime Existence* within and without. Having no desires, his desire being his *Self*, casting away desires, he was abiding in his *Self*; the mortal became the immortal - *atha martyo amruto bhavati* - and attained *Brahman* in this very body itself - *atra Brahma samashnute*, as said in scriptures.

As days passed and as his physical body was suffering, Maharshi's his living in human form was as dramatic as his detachment from that form, his *Death Experience* continued to be experienced even to the last days. He had neither inclination for treatment nor any aversion. He had implicit faith that the *Will* of the *Ordainer* who '*controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdhakarmas*' will prevail. His rejected the desire of the innocent devotees to be cured by his *will power*, saying '*who is there to Will this?*' and assuring that '*Every thing will come right in due course*'. He was the epitome of the statement in *Bhagavata Purana*: '*Let the body, the result of fructifying Karma, rest or move about, live or die,*

the Sage who has realized the Self is not aware of it, just as one in drunken stupor is not aware of his clothing'. Moksha to him was getting rid of the burden of the body, it was 'getting rid of the sense of misery, which is unreal and attains Bliss, which alone is Reality'. 'When we have finished the meal do we keep the body alone, when it needs four persons to carry?'

He was enlightened to the truth which *Brihad Aranyak Up.* declared on knowing that Self is all this world. He who sees this, thinks and understands this he has pleasure in self, delight and union, joy in the Self. He is independent , has unlimited freedom in all worlds . . For such one who sees everything obtains every thing everywhere sees neither sorrow, nor illness nor death. To such one whose stains have been wiped off, people call Skanda, yes, him they call Skanda.

The Light is Light illumining the dark corridors of human consciousness, whether it shines in one form or the other, whether seen during the day or concealed from sight during night. Therefore, Blessed was the Body that housed such Light within; Blessed is the land that gives that Body a place to dwell in; Blessed is the Day when that Light flashed in this land of ours.

Epilogue

My Life

Essence of one's *Being* is the *self* and *form* of one's *Being* is the embodied body. The source of the *essence* is the *Heart*; the source of the *form* is the aggregate conventions, customs and practices conceived and confirmed by *Mind*, which is one of the eight forms which Nature has become manifest, the other seven being Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Weather intellect and I-sense. When the undifferentiated *Brahman* becomes differentiated as *essence* and *form*, it is the *essence* enters the *form*, not the other way. The *Heart* within *feels* primarily, instinctively and naturally; *Mind* influenced by the responses of the senses thinks and compromises secondarily, intellectually and rationally. Therefore, what one *feels* is what one is in *essence*, what one *thinks* is what one compromises intellectually. What one *IS*, internally is different than what one appears to be externally. Spiritual instinct is founded on *Heart* and never on *Mind*. Temporal behaviour is founded primarily on *Mind* and rarely on the *Heart*.

Therefore, I have tried to keep my *self* grooved to the primary principle, 'असतो मा सद्गमय, तामसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्योर्मामृतं गमय |' – from non-existence may I go to the Prime Existence; from obscurity may I go to the luminous enlightenment; from death (of the mortal body) to the immortality (of the self within) and praying the ॐ, the Eternal Sound, Earth, Space and the Heavens above and *That supreme Savita*, the divine intellectual magnificence, as an intermediate austere penance to energise my

intellect - ‘ॐ भूः भुवः स्वः | तत्त सवितृ वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो नः प्रचोदयात्
 ||’ – O the Eternal Sound, O, Earth, the Space and the Heavens above. I pray *That supreme Savita*, the divine intellectual magnificence, that may invigorate my intellect and finally knowing that the essence, the *self*, is distinct and different from *form*, the body in which it is embodied, offer obeisance to one having three eyes (third one being the eye of *Wisdom*), who is fully endowed with fragrance to release me like a cucumber from its stem, from my mortal (*form*) but not from the immortal (*essence*) - ‘>यंबकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् | उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामस्तात् ||’ (VII.59.12).

Since then, I have endeavoured to live *My Life* knowing that the lives and the thoughts of others are based on their experiences, even as my life is based on my experience, the experiences and thoughts of others can at best be pointers, road-maps shaping the directions which I would take but thy can never direct either my experiences or thoughts, and surly not my destination.

I think that I was born with the sensitivity of my mother and the pride of my father. During the last sixty years or so of my present conscious life, my *self* has swung from *Heart* to *Mind*, conscious of the emotions of my heart at the same time being controlled by the mind to compromise the thoughts arising therein. Though I have tried to live by the feelings of my Heart, I found that in primordial life, one is obliged to give shape to them compromising them to suit the thoughts of the Mind.

Therefore, majority of my actions are by way of compromise to the dictates of the prevailing circumstances justifying my actions to the circumstances, rather than natural inclination of the feelings of my heart. Therefore, while my actions may have pleased or displeased others, they have rarely fulfilled the feelings of my heart. What we feel is what the heart dictates but what we perform is what we thinking mind. *Samsaara* is all that which our mind thinks about than what we feel in our heart, as declared by *Maitri Upanishad* declares – ‘चित्तमेव संसारम्’.

For many years I was impatient with such dichotomy in my life and I struggled through unsuccessfully, giving pain and distress to myself and to the people whom I was associated, loved and respected. I was confused and often questioning the problems which appeared to me. My early responses hovered between crude assumption that *This is life* and that *Life must have some meaning and purpose*. After going through many vicissitudes in life, more psychological than physical and after intermittent conclusion that since one can not live in *samsaara* by the inclinations of the heart one is constrained to compromise one's feelings to the demands of the mind, I took a hasty step to renounce and join some monastical order.

At this stage, I came across a woman, a Mother to those who needed compassionate love, whom I explained my resolve to her. Her advise was motherly and practical. She said that human life is rare opportunity given to human beings in furthering divine Intent, as ordained by him without desiring things of which we have neither any idea not intense desire. Therefore one should live life as ordained by him, leaving Him to show the light on the *Path* ordained.

At that moment, I could not understand her advise but accepted it because it had come from her. Later when I took to reading *upanishads*, I found her advise reflected: 'ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा मा गृधः कास्यस्विद्धनम्' (*Isha Up*) - All this whatever there exists in the world is enveloped by God. Enjoy that in the spirit of renunciation, do not covet what has been ordained for others. Later I was influenced by what *Buddha* spoke about *suffering* as existing always with birth, decay and death as inalienable and unavoidable reality in *samsaara*. His statement that everything is impermanent - body, sensations, perceptions, *sanskaraas*, consciousness and events opened to the reality of the life, constituting a series of becoming and extinction, for which his diagnosis was *craving*, associated with desire for possessions and pleasures of senses, craving to become or not to become something, craving to deny, reject, renounce things. The influences continued with Ramana

Maharshi who declared, 'The Ordainor controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdhakarma. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain quiet'.

Since then I have chosen to listen to advise from every one reserving my counsel to my own self, ready to overlook their pompous announcements and passing errors, remaining ever eager to learn lessons which they are eager to give. But no advise has been influenced me more than the one which Socrates gave to Crito, '*Do you be reasonable and do not mind whether the teachers of philosophy are good or bad , but think only of philosophy herself. Try to examine her well and truly; and if she be evil seek to turn away all men from her; but if she be what I believe she is, then follow her and serve her and be of good cheer*'. This led me to accept life as it is instead of seeking to change it. Since that time onwards, I have not denied any one giving me their advise, though out on my own reflection I have not followed all of them. I have been primarily guided that performance of actions is not one time activity but a continuous one, to be repeatedly attempted and acted upon. Even if I fail often, I believe that I have also risen up often. That is what I consider what life is all about.

This enabled me to some extent to balance my actions to my feelings. Since feeling is the manifestation of the *Self*, I kept my feelings to myself trying to be true to my *Self* and compromising my actions on accepting that that was so ordained for my *self*. I accepted that people by and large are not evil but misguided, therefore, it in fairness I should be kind and compassionate to others than remain aloof. I was often reminded that I should not be concerned with others but with my own *self*. This did not appeal my heart and I continued to extend my help even when such help was misused or rejected outright.

In doing what I was doing, I know that I have often been

miserable and unhappy in temporal life. At the same time, I am conscious that if I am what I am today, fortunate to be blessed in marital companionship, filial relationship and immense spiritual satisfaction as well as material needs, it is to a large extent due to the feelings which I had for the people at large and the blessing and love which I have received from others. Therefore, I have no reasons to regret the way I have lived

I consider that one should do what one is ordained and lead to do, whether others like it or not, though it would be judicious to temper one's actions with one's feelings. Then one is not required to regret or feel hurt that his actions have not found favourable response. It would be dishonest if I say that I was disappointed when my intentions were misunderstood or when disregarded. Every time I feel sad and let down, I go within my *self* and reflect on action of others as well as my own. If I consider my action right, I would find no reason to change. If I find I have been wrong, I have quietly changed the course of my actions.

I have, therefore, sought meanings to the words listening with heart and intellectually reappraising, revising and rededicating, to broaden my perception without being in a hurry, without being despondent if I fail, rising up to stand even as I fell on the Path to Perfection, knowing that one step leads to another. I believe that my experiences are my responses to the resonance in my heart. They are as real to me as they were real to many others. I may often fail in relating by expressions to my experiences. But no one can deny me the right to say that I have tried and possibly failed. Can the antelope climb the trees or the leopard change its colours? I have made a tryst with my self and I am sure that I will not fail. I do think that I do what is natural to me. If some one would say that I have not succeeded enough, then they do not know, will never know how much I have tried.

Now what does future hold for me? I do not know. One does not know what death really means even though one is concerned that the moment one is born *Death* becomes his

constant companion. Krishna said for one who is born death is certain and birth for one who has died. Nachiketa pointed out how it was with earlier and later ones; like corn a mortal ripens and is born again. They declare that *Death* worries one not because he knows what *Death* is, but because he knows not what *Death* means and what it has in store for him. When they refer *Death*, they do not mean death of the *self* but death of the body, the aggregation of the five elements of Nature and of mind, intellect and I-sense. When *self* identifies itself with the body which decays, deteriorates and dies, he suffers because while the five elements re-enter their sources, the *self*, with mind, intellect and I-sense as aggregate *karmas* pass on to the *new body*, which is again aggregation of the five elements of nature along with mind, intellect and I-sense. Men of *Wisdom* like Yajnavalkya recognized this and spoke of Karma as the determining agency that controls and regulates the lives of men in accordance of *Rta*, the cosmic law and *Dharma*, the perennial principles of righteousness.

It is said that in the intervening period when *self* departs from one body and has not yet entered another one, it has no distinct identity except as the subtle *self* with mind, intellect and I-sense along with the aggregate *karmas*, since there is no medium through which the subtle *self* could establish a distinct identity. The *self* detached from earlier consciousness is said either to rest in *Yama's* abode to live among the luminous ones – ‘स नो देवेष्वा यमद् दीर्घमायुः प्र जीवसे ॥’ (X.14.14), till it finds another body or hovers in a state of suspended animation as a blithe spirit, being still attached to the earlier body and dissatisfied because it is unable to establish contact with them. While *self* detached from earlier associations finds itself in the abode of *Yama* in the company of the gods and noble ancestors, those who remain in suspended animation are spurned by *Mrityu*, from entering his abode. Therefore, a seer prays the *Mrityunjaya mantra* for deliverance from the bonds of mortal body (with distinct consciousness) but not from the immortal existence - ‘उर्वा रूकमिव बन्धनात् मृत्योर मुक्षीय मामृतात् ।’.

This is a remarkable piece of reality about *Death*. The *self* in body does not know death comes to the body, nor when it departs from the body and not even aware of its departure or of its destination. When *self* in body confronts *Death*, then life, possessions and positions, relatives and associates become or should become superfluous, *self* having no more conscious concern of them. In life the *self* is embodied and is attached to the body. Moment the *self* departs from body, it finds itself everywhere. It is seen possible for men of *Wisdom* to remain unattached to the body, even while they are in embodied. For others, the *self* departs from the body or is delivered from its limited, mortal confines.

Thus *Death* seems to reveal to one his nature and not the life, which is burdened, conditioned and mesmerized by the illusory of world of empirical experiences. *Death* this comes as a great leveler because it opens for one who sees, the real nature of his *self*. When one realizes that even the bodies of luminous gods, seers and sages, saints and sinners decay, deteriorate and die and *Death* comes to a child as well as to adolescent, to young as well as to an old man, then he is not inordinately concerned with *Death*. Why then does one become concerned with *Death*, when it is inevitable. It is not because he is aware of what death is but because he is not aware what death means but because he is worried of the loss of his possessions and positions, relatives and associates.

For a sensitive person, *Death* is not a pessimistic thought but a practical proposition. If one knows what is *Death*, then he would not search for worthless *Knowledge* but would delve in deep and profound *Wisdom*. *Rigvedic* seer postulates that sons of the unenlightened (असुरस), the heroes, who are seekers of heaven see beyond their limited perspective, – ‘महस्युत्रामो असुरस्य वीरा दिवो धर्तार उर्विया परि ख्यन् ॥ उशन्ति घा ते अमृतस्य एतदेकस्य चित् त्यजसं मर्त्यस्य | नि ते मनो मनसि धाय्यस्मे जन्तुः पतिस्तन्व ॥ मा विविश्याः ॥’ (X.10.2-3).

OTHER BOOKS WRITTEN BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

1. Sri Madhva's Commentary on *Isha & Kena Upanishad*.
2. Sri Madhva's Commentary of *Katha Upanishad*.
3. Sri Madhva's Commentary on *Mandukya Upanishad*.
4. Sri Madhva's Commentary & Summation on *Bhagavad Gita*.
5. Narada's Aphorisms on *Bhakti*
6. A study on Three *Vedie Suktas*
7. Commentary on Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Upadesha Saram*.
8. Commentary on Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Sat Darshna*.
9. Philosophy of Sri Ramana Maharshi.
10. Shankara's Hymn of *Dakshinamurti* with *Manasollasa*.
11. Conservation and Preservation of Wealth - Commentary on *Sri Sukta*.
12. Life & Teachings of *Sri Manik Prabhu*.
13. *Ganapati Atharvasheersha*. With brief Explanatory Notes.
14. *Dakshinatya Sarasvats*.
15. *Inclined Ladder* - Commentary on *Shankara's Sadhana Panchkam*

