

# PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

of Abhinavagupta

The Essence of the Supreme Truth



WITH THE COMMENTARY OF YOGARĀJA

\$24.95 US

Rs 450

The *Panunārthasāra*, "The Essence of the Supreme Truth," is a metrical composition of 105 verses. The author of the original Sanskrit, the great 10th century Kashmiri scholar and sage Abhinavagupta, blended the schools of philosophical and religious thought current in Kashmir at that time and reformulated them in a masterful and beautiful way from the point of view of monistic Shaivism. The extended commentary that accompanies the text here is by his 11th-century disciple, Yogarāja. Abhinavagupta composed this work for spiritual seekers as an introduction to the teachings of the nondual Shaivism of Kashmir. Teaching from within that religious and philosophical stance, he poetically expounds on the universal nature of Shiva as the supreme Lord, and describes key experiences, such as that of spiritual liberation.

Cover image: Helix Nebula, a trillion-mile-long tunnel of glowing gases, photographed from the Hubble Space Telescope in 2002. (NASA/ESA/STScI – from the Hubble Site)

MLBD

Let Lord's blessings  
be showered on you.  
Debasankar  
27/03/2011

# PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

OF ABHINAVAGUPTA

WITH THE COMMENTARY OF YOGARĀJA

MUKTABODHA INDOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH SERIES



# PARAMĀRTHASĀRA OF ABHINAVAGUPTA

WITH THE COMMENTARY OF YOGARĀJA

## Essence of the Supreme Truth

TRANSLATION BY

DEBA BRATA SENSHARMA



Muktabodha Indological Research Institute  
New Delhi, India and Emeryville, U.S.A.

*First Edition: New Delhi, 2007*

Copyright © 2007 Muktabodha® Indological Research Institute, New Delhi, India  
(for India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka). All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2007 Muktabodha® Indological Research Institute, Emeryville, U.S.A.  
(for all other countries). All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means  
electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and  
retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Muktabodha Indological Research  
Institute.

A-329, Shivalik Enclave, Malaviya Nagar, New Delhi 110 017

MUKTABODHA is a Registered Trademark of Muktabodha Indological Research Institute,  
New Delhi, India and Emeryville, U.S.A. .

Published by

Muktabodha Indological Research Institute

A-329, Shivalik Enclave, Malaviya Nagar, New Delhi 110 017

Distributed in India and South Asia by

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

41 U.A., Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007

8 Mahalaxmi Chamber, 22 Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai 400 026

203 Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004

236, 9th Main III Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 011

Sanas Plaza, 102 Baji Rao Road, Pune 411 002

8 Camac Street, Kolkata 700 017

Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004

Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

Printed by Thomson Press

ISBN: 978-81-904489-0-1

तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु ।

*May our study be illumined  
by the light of inner wisdom.*

## CONTENTS

NOTE ON THE SANSKRIT TEXT AND TRANSLITERATION...	ix
FOREWORD .....	xi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	xiii
PREFACE .....	xv
INTRODUCTION .....	xix
TEXT AND COMMENTARY .....	1
APPENDIX The Seven Kinds of Subjects in Creation .....	213
GLOSSARY .....	217
NOTES .....	227
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	245
INDEX .....	247
NOTE ON THE MUKTABODHA INDOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE .....	252

## NOTE ON THE SANSKRIT TEXT AND TRANSLITERATION

The Sanskrit text of the verses of the *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta is taken from volume 7 of the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (KSTS), *The Paramārthasāra by Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*. The verses are written in *āryā* metre except for the first verse which is in *upajāti* metre. Following the convention used in the KSTS edition, a new line begins after the twelfth mora in the first and third lines of each verse in order to show the metre.

In the transliteration of the Sanskrit, hyphens are placed between the stems of compounds and spaces are placed after all word breaks unless prevented from doing so by vowel sandhi.

## FOREWORD

The Muktabodha Indological Research Institute is pleased to bring forward this translation by Deba Brata SenSharma of Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra* with the commentary by Yogarāja. This is an important combination of text and commentary, for together they make accessible a number of key teachings of the nondual Śaiva tradition of Kashmir.

I am delighted that Dr. SenSharma in particular has undertaken this translation and am grateful for his doing so. A member of the Muktabodha faculty and Senior Research Fellow at the Asiatic Society in Kolkata, Dr. SenSharma is a specialist in the Śaivism of Kashmir and in the larger Tantra Śāstra. An author of many scholarly works, he has served as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sanskrit, Director of the Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, and the Dean of Faculty of Indic Studies at Kurukshetra University. At Banares Hindu University he was a student of the late Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, a most informed, knowledgeable, and appreciative scholar of Hindu Tantra and of the Śakta tradition. Dr. SenSharma sat with his esteemed teacher every day for eight years and continues to express his respect for and gratitude to him. Like him, Dr. SenSharma undertakes the study of texts as an erudite, conscientious, engaged and committed participant in the tradition of the scholar-practitioner. Dr. SenSharma seeks a text's nuanced meaning, informed by linguistic precision and philosophical expertise, illumined by traditional commentarial and exegetical works, and enlivened by his own spiritual alignment with the religious and philosophical stance he studies.

The Muktabodha Indological Research Institute is dedicated to helping preserve important religious and philosophical texts from India and the knowledge they hold and does so, in part, by publishing works by highly accomplished scholars who are themselves immersed in the traditions and wisdom associated with that knowledge. We are pleased to include the publication of this book in that endeavor.

William K. Mahony

Professor of Religion  
Davidson College

President  
Muktabodha Indological Research Institute



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the many people who gave their assistance in the preparation of this book.

Firstly I wish to thank George Franklin and Harry Spier who edited the translation. The footnotes and glossary were edited by Chris Thompkins. The Sanskrit was proofread by Nihar Purohit, Kenneth Freeman, and Roberta Pamio. The index was proofread by Kedar Prado and Nihar Purohit. Cheryl Crawford and Hema Patankar designed the cover. Harry Spier was Managing Editor, created the Index, and typeset the book. Martin Epstein data entered the Sanskrit. The English proofreaders were Cynthia Briggs, Eileen Considine, Christina Richardson, Valerie Sensabaugh, and Phyllis Stern. Kenneth Freeman was also responsible for the final-eyes proofreading of the text. Scott Sherman was responsible for print production.

I offer my most sincere thanks to my wife, Mrs. Dipika SenSharma, and to my two daughters, Alakananda and Madhucchanda, for their co-operation in accomplishing this task.

And finally I offer my thanks to to Drs. William K. Mahony, Paul Muller-Ortega, and Constantina Bailly, and to Swami Shantananda for their guidance and overview and to the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute, in particular to David Kempton and Hema Patankar, the previous and current International Executive Directors of the institute, to the SYDA Foundation and Gurudev Siddha Peeth without whose support the publication of this book would not have been possible.

## PREFACE

The *Paramārthasāra* (The Essence of the Supreme Truth) is a metrical composition written primarily for spiritual seekers. The Sanskrit text by Abhinavagupta with the *vivṛti* (extended commentary) by Yogarāja was first published in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (KSTS) volume 7 in Srinagar in 1916 and has long been out of print. Recently the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute has electronically republished the original Sanskrit KSTS volume in their on-line library at [www.muktabodha.org](http://www.muktabodha.org).

L. D. Barnett published a literal English translation of the metrical part of the text in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1910. Kamala Dvivedi translated the work into lucid Hindi, which was published (minus the Sanskrit text) in Delhi in 1984. I have derived immense help from both these works in my rendering of the text into English. I extend my gratitude to their authors for the same.

As I prepared the translation of the text, keeping in mind the needs of English readers from the West who are interested in understanding the meaning of Abhinavagupta's words, I refrained from giving a literal translation, for sometimes literal translations of religious texts might confuse a reader who is not familiar with technical nuances of a religious treatise. In particular, many times where Yogarāja gives a word-by-word gloss in the commentary, I render the overall meaning he is trying to convey. Anything I have added to the original text is included in square brackets. I have endeavored to preserve the spiritual meaning conveyed by the master and his expert commentator in my English

rendering of the text. I leave it to my readers to judge how far I have succeeded in my attempt.

The layout and typesetting of the book has been designed to facilitate the study of both Abhinavagupta's text and Yogarāja's commentary. The layout has been formatted so that at all times the English translation of the verses is visible along with the corresponding Sanskrit without having to turn the page. In several cases, because of Yogarāja's grouping of multiple verses together in his commentary, it is only possible to have the Sanskrit verses in transliteration, without the devanagari, completely on the same two-page spread as their English translation. The English translation of Abhinavagupta's verses is differentiated from Yogarāja's commentary by font size as well as caption and a generous type size has been used throughout for ease of use.

I dedicate my humble work to the sacred memory of my teacher, the late Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj, who initiated me into the deeply mystical thoughts of this religio-philosophical school.

Deba Brata SenSharma

INTRODUCTION TO THE  
PARAMĀRTHASĀRA



## Historical Context

In medieval times in the beautiful valley of Kashmir, a very wide range of mystically inclined religious and philosophical currents met and interacted, mutually influencing each other. Prominent religio-philosophical schools that prevailed there before the rise of the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir were Yogācāra Buddhism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktism, dualist Śaivism, Sāṅkhya, and Nyāya Vaiśeṣika.

Both of the Saṃkarṣaṇa Pāñcarātra and the Saṃhitā Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavite schools were present, and dualistic Śaivite thought was represented by the Vāmanātha and Eraka schools. The dualist-cum-monistic Śaivism of Bhūtirāja and Kaula Śāktism were popular with the common people, while the philosophy of the Yogācāra Buddhists and that of the Sāṅkhya school caught the imagination of the intellectual classes.

The advocates of a purely monistic Śaivite philosophy, led by Vasugupta, Somānanda, Utpaladeva, and Abhinavagupta, engaged the doctrines of these schools, and emerged as the dominant religious influence in the valley of Kashmir. But during this process of debate and counter-debate, the differing philosophies greatly influenced each other. The monistic Śaivites of Kashmir were deeply influenced by the devotional approach of the Vaiṣṇavites and by the absolute monistic philosophy of the Yogācāra Buddhists. From the dualistic Śaivites they borrowed the central concept that limited beings are wrapped and circumscribed by the three defilements (*malas*). Abhinavagupta was a devotee of the Kaula Śakta school, and his works contain many Kaula expressions and concepts. He was the great synthesiser who

blended all the diverse schools of thought then current in Kashmir and reformulated them in a masterful and beautiful way from the point of view of monistic Śaivism.

## Text of the Paramārthasāra

The *Paramārthasāra*, the Essence of the Supreme Truth, is a work of 105 verses written in the *āryā* metre. It is an adaptation of an earlier Vaiṣṇavite text with the same title by Ādiśeṣa, who is also known as Anantanātha or Ādhāra. This earlier text of the *Paramārthasāra* by Ādiśeṣa contains 85 verses also in *āryā* metre. It was published by T. Ganapati Śastri with the commentary called *Vivaraṇa* by Raghavānanda, as volume 12 in the *Anantaśayāna Sanskrit Series* in 1911.

This earlier *Paramārthasāra* by Ādiśeṣa is considered to be a Vaiṣṇavite text because the first verse is an adoration to Viṣṇu and the text teaches a single unified reality which it calls Vasudeva or Viṣṇu. The final verse declares that the main purpose of the text is to present the essence of the Vedānta philosophy of the Upaniṣads, but in spite of this declaration of its aim it does not follow Śaṅkarācārya's monistic philosophy. Instead, it expounds ideas from classical Sāṅkhya, such as the concepts of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

Abhinavagupta has completely transformed this earlier text into a Śaivite text by retaining some verses unchanged, making alterations to others, and adding additional verses. He has enlarged the text from 85 to 105 verses. Yogarāja, commenting on the final verse, observes that:

*Abhinavagupta, the great follower of the supreme Lord, Paramaśiva, reproduced the description of the supreme truth, given in the past by Lord Śeṣa, by enlarging and refashioning the text to conform with the monistic spiritual experiences of the Āgamic teachings.*

A comparative study of the two texts shows striking and numerous similarities and exact correspondences, confirming that the present text of the *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta is an adaptation of the older text by Ādiśeṣa.

## The Author

The author of the text is the well known Abhinavagupta, who lived from 950 to 1000 A.D. and who made contributions to many fields, including Indian philosophy, religion, aesthetics, and the dramatic arts. About fifty different works on various subjects are attributed to him. His original works include the *Tantrāloka*, *Tantrasāra*, *Paramārthasāra*, *Tantravaṇadāhānikā*, *Bodhapañcadāśikā*, and *Kramastotra*. In addition he wrote major commentaries on other authors' works and on several tantras, explaining and interpreting them from the viewpoint of monistic Śaivism. The most important of these are his works on the *Mālinī-vijaya-vārtika*, the *Parātriśika-vṛtti*, the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*, the *Bhagavad-gītārtha Saṃgraha*, and the *Krama-keli*. In the field of aesthetics, he wrote the well known *Locana* commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka*, and the *Nāṭyaśāstra Vivṛti*. However, his greatest contribution was to leave as a disciple Kṣemarāja, whose disciple was Yogarāja, the commentator of the present work.



## Yogarāja, the Commentator

I have also translated and included the eleventh-century commentary by Yogarāja. He was a disciple of both Kṣemarāja and Abhinavagupta, and therefore must have lived around 1050 A.D. His commentary makes it evident that he was not only well-versed in the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir but was conversant with the tenets of the other schools of philosophical thought, such as Yogācāra Buddhism, Sāṅkhya, and Nyāya Vaiśaṣika, all of which he presents in a masterful way in his commentary. He repeatedly quotes from the *Bhagavad Gītā* to show that Abhinavagupta's thinking was in harmony with the thought of this popular epitome of practical spiritual philosophy. This commentary is the only work of Yogarāja's available to us today.

## Main Ideas in the Paramārthasāra

### *Supreme Śiva*

One universal reality is postulated, which is called by various names; such as the supreme Lord (Parameśvara), supreme Śiva (Paramaśiva), supreme consciousness (Parāsaṃvid), the supreme subject (Parapramātā), consciousness (Caitanya), and the Self (Ātman).

Since he is the only reality, the supreme Lord is said to manifest himself simultaneously in two forms. He manifests himself as the universe with its infinite variety of limited animate subjects and objects, such as gods, men, animals, trees, and stones; and simultaneously he manifests himself as the transcendent reality. In Śaivism we describe this by saying that the supreme Lord always manifests himself to himself, without the intervention of a second separate entity, by the operation of his ever-vibrating divine Śakti.

### *The Divine Śakti*

Śiva, the supreme reality, is said to be endowed with the divine Śakti, which is unrestricted in nature and therefore called the divine freedom (*svātantrya śakti*). This divine Śakti is not a separate entity associated with the supreme Lord, she is his very nature.

This ever-pulsating divine Śakti is said to function in infinite uncountable ways, but these can be classified under five principle headings: *cit śakti* (power expressed as consciousness), *ānanda śakti* (power expressed as bliss), *īcchā śakti* (power expressed as volition), *jñāna śakti* (power expressed as knowledge), and *kriyā śakti* (power expressed as action).

*Cit śakti* (power expressed as consciousness) is that aspect of the divine Śakti which enables the supreme Lord to reveal himself. By its power he shines forth alone, experiencing himself as the *pure I* (*aham*). *Ānanda śakti* (power expressed as bliss) is that aspect of the divine Śakti by which the supreme Lord is *full-in-himself* (*paripūrṇa*) and therefore always satisfied and resting in himself. *Īcchā śakti* (power expressed as will) is that mode of the divine Śakti through which the supreme Lord has the unlimited will to create. *Jñāna śakti* (power expressed as knowledge) is that aspect of the divine Śakti by which the objects of the universe, which are all manifestations of his Self, are made conscious. *Kriyā śakti* (power expressed as action) is that mode of the divine Śakti whereby the supreme Lord is able to manifest all of his intentions. It is the power by which he is able to manifest himself as each and every form during his creative activity.

These five different expressions of the one divine Śakti enable the supreme Lord to manifest himself as the universe by means of his free and independent will using his own

Śakti as the material and himself as the screen on which he manifests. Thus the universe, with its infinite variety of subjects and objects, is in reality only the supreme Lord's self-manifestation. Expressed in the terminology of the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir, we say that the manifestation of the supreme Lord as the universe is his self-expansion of his Śakti aspect.

### *Five Functions of the Lord*

Śiva, the supreme Lord, through his divine Śakti, which constitutes his very nature, continually performs the five functions of self-limitation (*nigraha*), creation (*sṛṣṭi*), sustenance (*sthiti*), absorption (*saṁhāra*), and the bestowal of grace (*anugraha*), causing the never ending manifestation and dissolution of the universe in a beginningless cycle.

The manifestation of the universe begins when out of his own free will Śiva limits himself. This voluntary limitation of himself causes his absolute nature as the supreme subject to move to the background of his self-experience. By voluntarily assuming the forms of limited subjects and objects, Śiva manifests the different levels of creation that constitute the universe. The universe starts as a divine idea in Śiva with no actualisation in gross form, but soon this idea is manifested in concrete form by his *māyā* and *prakṛti śaktis*. This is the creation function of the Lord.

After creating the universe, he sustains it for a while and then re-absorbs it into himself during the cosmic dissolution. All this is a part of the divine play that Śiva performs voluntarily and perennially as an expression of his delight.

The Lord's dispensation of grace is unique and lies on a different plane from his functions of creating, maintaining, and dissolving the universe. The supreme Lord is the



perennial source of divine grace which flows toward the self-contracted subjects for their redemption. It is the act by which he puts an end to his manifested contracted form, thereby restoring himself to his original divine status. Thus the cycle of functions that started with his voluntarily imposing self-limitation on himself and with his assuming a contracted form, comes to an end with the infusion of divine grace which terminates his cosmic play, the manifestation of the universe.

### *Śaivism as an Idealistic School of Thought*

Since the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir considers the universal manifestation to be contained in seed form as an idea conceived by the supreme Lord, some scholars such as the late K.C. Pandey have described its philosophy as idealistic.

Just as creative works originate as an idea of the artist, sculptor, or author, in the same way, the idea of universal manifestation arises in the mind of the supreme Lord before it is actualised by him through his *māyā* and *prakṛti śaktis*. In verse 13 of this work, Abhinavagupta uses an analogy from life to explain the world manifestation from the viewpoint of the supreme Lord. He says that when reflected in a clear mirror, an entire village with all its diversity doesn't appear to the perceiver to be different from the mirror, the reflecting medium, but at the same time the objects reflected in the mirror appear different from each other in accordance with their nature. In the same way, the universal manifestation appears to the supreme Lord as non-different from himself, when it is known by him in seed form as an idea existing within himself. It only appears as different from himself when he projects it outwards in a concrete form, characterised by infinite multiplicity. However, at no point does the supreme

Lord's experience of identity with the world manifestation cease. He is always conscious of his twofold relationship with the world manifestation, a relationship of identity and of identity-in-difference. The thread of unity underlying multiplicity always remains as the dominant idea in his experience of the universal manifestation.

*Comparison to the Yogācāra Theory of Vijñānavāda.*

It is likely that the philosophy of the Yogācāra Buddhists influenced the monistic Śaivites in formulating their view that the manifested universe is identical to the supreme Lord whose nature is pure consciousness. But the monistic Śaivites modified the basic Yogācāra concept that worldly objects are not different from pure consciousness to conform to their viewpoint of monistic Śaivite idealism. This Śaivite view—which is characterised by the concept that the universal manifestation, prior to its being projected out by the supreme Lord in concrete form, exists within himself as an idea—should not be confused with the subjective idealism advocated by the Yogācāra school of Buddhism.

According to the Yogācāra school of Vijñānavāda, everything cognised in this world as subject or object exists only as the stream of consciousness in the perceiver, and thus the entire objective world exists in the perceiver. This theory of the Yogācāra Buddhists is given the name of *subjective idealism*.

Yogarāja in his commentary on verse 6 quotes from the Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti's *Pramānavārtika*, and points out that the view of the Yogācāra Buddhists that no objects are separate or different from the stream of consciousness, though appearing similar to the monistic Śaivite view that everything manifest is a self-manifestation of the supreme Lord and not

different from him, is in fact a very different view. Yogarāja points out that the Buddhist view regards all objects as superimposed on the stream of consciousness and therefore as unreal, while the monistic Śaivites regard all objects as real self-manifestations of the supreme Lord whose nature is also pure consciousness. The monistic Śaivites of Kashmir regard the manifestation of the universe to be as real as the supreme Lord himself, since it is created by him out of his own Self by his own divine free will. Initially the universe exists within the supreme Lord as a divine idea which he later projects outside of himself. It is given concrete form through the operation of his *māyā* and *prakṛti śaktis*. Thus the universe is the actualisation of his divine will to become many and manifest himself as such.

Some monistic Śaivite texts, including those written by Abhinavagupta, describe the manifestation of the universe as the self-expansion of the divine Śakti aspect of the supreme Lord's nature. They say that when the Śakti opens herself out (*unmiṣati*), the universe comes to be, and that when she closes herself up or withdraws within herself (*nimiṣati*), the universe disappears as a manifestation conceivable and describable by thought and speech (*vācya-vācaka*).

From the point of view of the supreme Lord, his self-manifestation as the universe is his involution or descent into the gross form of matter. But he does not undergo any change nor does he deviate from his status as the absolute supreme Being, rather he experiences the entire universe that consists of thirty-six tattvas as always resting within himself and as manifesting with himself as the background. He remains as he ever is, the immutable, transcendent absolute.



### The Created Universe or Thirty-six Tattvas

Monistic Śaivism considers the universe to consist of thirty-six *tattvas*, or levels of creation. These are *śiva tattva*, *śakti tattva*, *sadāśiva tattva*, *īśvara tattva*, *śuddha vidyā tattva*, *māyā tattva*, *kalā kañcuka tattva*, *vidyā kañcuka tattva*, *rāga kañcuka tattva*, *kāla kañcuka tattva*, *niyati kañcuka tattva*, *puruṣa tattva*, and *prakṛti tattva* and her twenty-three emanations, which are the *buddhi*, the *ahaṁkāra*, the *manas*, the five organs of knowledge, the five motor organs, the five subtle elements, and the five gross elements.

In the various Indian philosophies, the term *tattva* is used to signify a primary constituent of creation or a fundamental phase of reality. In the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir, however, it implies a step in descent by the supreme Lord towards his becoming the material universe. The thirty-six *tattvas* thus represent thirty-six steps of descent into creation, in which he voluntarily assumes different roles as innumerable types of subjects, objects, and the means of enjoyment that constitute the manifest universe. But the thirty-six *tattvas* are also the thirty-six constituents of the universe and of embodied individuals. Thus they are manifested both in a macrocosmic form as the entire cosmos and in a microcosmic form as the constituents of the embodied individual.

During creation each higher *tattva* is the cause of the next lower one, but the entire act of creation, which is the unfolding of the *tattvas*, is accomplished by the supreme Lord outside of time, with time itself manifesting at the level of one of the intermediate *tattvas*. Each higher *tattva* is relatively more subtle in nature than its next lower *tattva*, which is more gross and extrinsic. Also each higher *tattva*, as the cause of the next lower one, permeates and pervades it. Thus the *śiva tattva* directly permeates the *śakti tattva*, which



pervades all the other ones. Thus each lower *tattva* draws its existence from the immediately higher *tattva* that is its material cause.

In some texts of monistic Śaivism, including the *Paramārthasāra*, the *tattvas* are divided into two domains (*adhvas*): the pure domain (*śuddha adhva*) that extends from the *śiva tattva* down to the *śuddha vidyā tattva*, and the impure domain (*aśuddha adhva*) that extends from the *māyā tattva* down to the final gross level of *pṛthvī*.

Thus the first five levels of creation, namely *śiva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, and *śuddha vidyā*, are said to manifest as a result of the operation of the divine Śakti in its pure form, which is technically called *mahāmāyā*. It is said that the supreme Lord, in order to manifest himself as the universe, first negates his self-experience as the *pure I* (*pūrṇāham*), the transcendent absolute. This causes a void in his experience of himself, which is filled up by his experiencing himself as the universe. The universe, in the pure domain (*śuddha adhva*), exists as an idea within the supreme Lord without any physical or material representation.

But the impure domain (*aśuddha adhva*), containing the thirty-one levels of creation beginning with the *māyā tattva* down to the most materialistic *tattva*, the *pṛthvī tattva*, is characterised by the operation of *māyā*. Thus all the levels in this domain are characterised by *māyā*, which causes the appearance of limited nature and discreteness. By the operation of the *prakṛti śakti* all the levels of creation assume concrete material form. The all-embracing unity is then obscured by discreteness and multiplicity, which are the two characteristic features of this region (*adhva*).

Thus the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe is accomplished by him in two distinct phases. The first phase is the appearance of the universe as an idea, in

his self-experience when the pure *tattvas*, the *śiva*, the *śakti*, the *sadāśiva*, the *īśvara* and the *śuddha vidya tattvas* are manifested. The second phase of his self-manifestation begins when he projects all the impure *tattvas*, beginning with *māyā tattva* down to *pṛthvī tattva*, which lie absorbed in him before they are manifested.

The universe that is revealed in the self-experience of the supreme Lord as an idea represented by the pure *tattvas* is comprised of two distinct poles of experience: the subject and the object. These are symbolised by the *aham* and the *idam*. The *aham* represents the supreme Lord as the subject who experiences himself as the universe in the absence of a second, and the *idam* symbolises the totality of the universe in subtle form which he experiences on the pure levels.

### The Four Eggs

In verse 4 of the *Paramārthasāra*, Abhinavagupta broadly classifies the thirty-six *tattvas*, or levels of creation, into four divisions called *eggs*. These are the *śakti egg*, the *māyā egg*, the *prakṛti egg* and the *pṛthvī egg*. Yogarāja, in his commentary on this verse, explains that these four divisions are called *eggs* because they are shells that conceal the true nature of the supreme Lord. Considered hierarchically, the topmost egg, the *śakti egg*, contains the other three eggs, the *māyā egg* contains the next two, and so on. Each of these eggs is governed by a presiding deity. Yogarāja names these governing deities as Sadāśiva, Guheśa (Rudra), Viṣṇu, and Brahmā.

### *Nature of Bondage*

In the manifested universe there are seven kinds of subjects existing at different levels in creation (see the Appendix for a detailed description of these subjects and their place in creation). Three of these types are enwrapped by one or more of the three different types of defilements (*malas*) and are therefore fettered beings. These bound subjects are the Vijñānākalas (unembodied fettered subjects conscious of their real Self), the Pralayākalas (disembodied, fettered subjects immersed in ignorance but possessing potential, limited authorship), and the Sakalas (embodied, fettered beings, ignorant of their real divine nature). All of these subjects are limited in nature on account of their being enwrapped in one or more defilements, and they exist on levels below the *śuddha vidyā tattva*.

Abhinavagupta has described the defilements (*malas*) from the point of view of the supreme Lord as clever devices for self-concealment in his cosmic play, and from the point of view of the bound soul as ignorance about one's divine nature and thus the cause of bondage.

Monistic Śaivism of Kashmir asserts three kinds of defilements: the *āṇava*, the *māyīya*, and the *kārma*. These are briefly discussed by Abhinavagupta in verses 24 and 57 of the *Paramārthasāra*.

When the supreme Lord, who is all-pervasive pure consciousness, out of his own free will limits himself and assumes the form of a limited separate being, then his divine nature is concealed and he no longer has the self-experience that his nature is absolute, that he is full-in-himself, that he is one-without-a-second, that he has all divine powers, or that he has complete free will. This self-created limitation is the *āṇava mala*, the fundamental defilement on which the other



two defilements rest. When the supreme Lord is covered by this self-imposed limitation, he manifests himself as all the different subjects, infinite in number, each different from the other. This defilement covers all three kinds of bound subjects (*paśus*): the Vijñānākalas, Pralayākalas, and Sakalas.

In one of the foundation texts of monistic Śaivism, the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā*, Utpaladevā speaks about two distinct forms of the *āṇava* defilement: one form eclipsing only the freedom aspect of the supreme Lord's nature, and the other form covering his self-awareness aspect. The Vijñānākala subjects are said to be covered by the first kind of *āṇava* defilement, and therefore they are always conscious of their divine nature but are devoid of any freedom of action. Since they are permanently unembodied they cannot perform any action. Since they are not able to perform any actions, good or otherwise, they can neither evolve nor descend to the lower levels of creation. Therefore it is said that they lie immersed in the consciousness-nature of separateness, aware of their divine essence but incapable of doing anything.

The Pralayākalas are covered by the second kind of *āṇava mala*, which conceals the awareness that they are the supreme Lord. But since the unrestricted freedom aspect of their nature is unaffected by this type of *āṇava* defilement, they have the potential to rise through the different levels of creation. They are disembodied for a limited period of time and as long as they remain without a body, they are forced to remain immobile. But as soon as they are equipped with a physical body following their being covered by the *kārma* defilement, they become an embodied being or *Sakala*.

The *māyīya mala* defilement is the *māyā tattva* and her five children the covering envelopes. These are known together as the six *kañcukas*. By means of the *māyā śakti* they veil and conceal the divine nature of the individual. The five

covering envelopes are *kalā*, *vidyā*, *kāla*, *rāga*, and *niyati*. The *kalā kañcuka* veils his omnipotence, making him appear to have only limited power of authorship. The *vidyā kañcuka* veils his omniscience, making him appear to have only limited power of knowledge. The *rāga kañcuka* veils his fullness-nature and replaces the feeling of self-contentment with the desire for external objects. The *kāla kañcuka* veils his eternal, immortal, and immutable nature, making him appear to be subject to time and change. The *niyati kañcuka* veils his nature of omnipresence and makes him appear to be restricted to a particular place. In this way, the six *kañcukas* veil the supreme Lord's infinite innate powers, making them appear to be limited powers which act as fetters, and making him appear to be a limited transmigratory being.

The *kārma mala* is the result of accumulated residual impressions of deeds performed by embodied beings during the preceding cycle of creation. These impressions cling to the descending souls that develop within themselves the inclination towards action, and as a result they are equipped with physical bodies to enable them to fulfill the desire to act. These physical bodies themselves are fetters that further ensnare the self-contracted souls, causing them to migrate, lifetime after lifetime, in conformity with the deeds they perform. The *kārma mala* not only provides the individual with a physical body, it also provides all the external objects that make up the physical body's environment, and it provides the physical body with the means of sensing and interacting with that external environment.

Monistic Śaivism of Kashmir says that when the Lord manifests himself as an individual soul, he does so with two bodies: the subtle and the gross. The subtle body is made up of eight constituents, which are the five vital breaths (*prāṇas*), the organs of knowledge, the organs of action, and the intellect.

The gross physical body is temporary and it is destroyed at death. It is made from the five gross elements (*bhūtas*): ether, wind, fire, water, and earth. The subtle body is permanent, tied to the spiritual monad since the beginning of creation and lasting until the cosmic dissolution. It is the vehicle that permits the transmigration of the spiritual monad from one gross physical body to another.

Almost all schools of Indian philosophical thought, such as the Sāṅkhya, the Yoga, the Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika, and the Vedānta schools, declare ignorance about one's true essence to be the root cause of bondage. But all of these schools conceive of ignorance differently in conformity with their world view. Monistic Śaivism of Kashmir conceives ignorance to be the result of the freely willed self-contraction of the supreme Lord, a necessary part of his divine play.

### *Liberation*

All schools of Indian religious thought consider liberation to be the purpose and the ultimate destiny of all human existence. Each school frames its philosophical views with this in mind and approaches liberation from either a positive or a negative perspective. The negative perspective is that liberation is the negation or destruction of the cause or causes of bondage. The schools approaching liberation from this perspective consider ignorance to be the cause of bondage, and its negation by the knowledge of the true nature of the Self to be liberation. The Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya Vaiśeṣika, Pūrva Mimāṃsā, and the Advaita Vedānta schools hold this view of liberation.

However there are schools of Indian philosophy, mainly the Vaiṣṇavite and the Śaivite schools, that approach liberation from a positive perspective. They teach that



liberation is not the withdrawal from a seemingly separate universe, rather it is the realization that the universe and oneself are an inseparable and integral whole.

In the *Paramārthasāra*, Abhinavagupta explains from verse 51 onwards the monistic Śaivite view on liberation. He teaches that liberation is a result of the infusion of divine grace. An individual receives only the amount of divine grace that he is capable of holding and therefore may not reach the goal immediately. Those spiritual adepts who are infused with divine grace in its milder form first have to take refuge in the divine Śakti and experience union with her. Through union with the divine Śakti, they then experience union with the supreme Lord. Abhinavagupta names this union with the Śakti as *śākta samāveśa*.

He then elucidates how this union with the Śakti takes place. *icchā śakti*, *jñāna śakti*, and *kriyā śakti* (the divine power expressing itself as volition, knowledge, and action) are the three most important aspects of Śakti directly involved in the Lord's self-manifestation as the universe. These three aspects or modes of the ever-vibrating Śakti are collectively symbolised by the trident that Śiva holds in his hand. By contemplating the significance of this symbol, a spiritual adept experiences that the universal manifestation is the product of these three modes of the divine Śakti. When he understands this truth he is then elevated to a higher spiritual level from which he is able to visualise the great illumination (*mahā-prakāśa*) brought about by the perfect equilibrium of these three modes of Śakti. When he has obtained a direct experience of the great illumination, he has ascended to the level of *Parāśakti* (supreme Śakti), which is an integral part of the supreme Lord, always vibrating and manifesting his divine glory. This causes a complete transformation of the spiritual adept's perception and he sees



the play of Śakti everywhere. This transformation paves the way for the elevation to the supreme level of Śiva.

To reach union with supreme Śiva, the spiritual adept must withdraw his gaze from this external display of the divine Śakti, thus temporarily negating the universe, dissolving it into its seed form. This is technically called *śāmbhava samāveśa* or union with the divine Śambhu, or Śiva, and automatically brings about the highest level of union with the supreme Lord. Then by turning his gaze outwards towards the universal manifestation, he realises his oneness with it and has the experience that it represents only his own extension in the form of the Śakti. He is able to visualise the different steps of the supreme Lord's descent through the *tattvas* into manifestation of the universe as the play of the divine Śakti.

Abhinavagupta summarises the experience of realisation in verses 48 and 49 as follows:

*It is in Me that the universe reveals itself as [inanimate objects like] jars as in a mirror. From Me the universe emanates like the varied forms of dreams from sleep.*

*It is the supreme I (aham) alone who takes the form of the universe, like a body composed of hands, feet, etc. In all, it is the I (aham) alone who is manifest as illumination in all of its modes.*

This description of the experience of liberation by the monistic Śaivites is very different from that of the Advaita Vedāntins. Their view is that the world is an illusion (*māyā*), and that with liberation the experience of the world ceases. But the monistic Śaivites hold the view that the experience of the universe by the individual does not cease when he realises his divine essence as Śiva, instead the liberated

individual then experiences the universe as his self-extended form and experiences waves of bliss.

Kashmir Śaivism, like Advaita Vedānta and Sāṅkhya Yoga, conceives of liberation as two different kinds, either *jīvan mukti*, the experience of liberation while in the body, or *videha mukta*, the experience of liberation after the individual's physical death. The *Paramārthasāra* describes how these two types of liberation are related to the two different kinds of ignorance.

According to the Advaita Śaiva writers in general and Abhinavagupta in particular, ignorance is of two kinds. The first kind is spiritual ignorance, (*pauruṣa ajñāna*), which is caused by the voluntary self-contraction (*saṅkoca*) of Śiva. When the supreme Lord by his own free will imposes limitations on himself in order to manifest as many, he is covered by the *āṇava* defilement, becoming the individual. His divine powers are curtailed and he feels himself bereft of his divinity. This self-experience by the spiritual monad is called *pauruṣa ajñāna* (spiritual ignorance). It is a false notion or ignorance about one's true nature. It is beginningless, as its origin lies in the supreme Lord's will to manifest himself as many, but it ends when by the descent of divine grace the supreme Lord puts an end to his voluntary self-contraction and restores himself to his original form.

This divine grace descends on an individual only with the intensity that a person is capable of holding. Thus different individuals will receive different intensities of it, and in those individuals who receive a less intense infusion of grace spiritual ignorance will not be fully eradicated. If residual impressions of spiritual ignorance remain after the individual glimpses his real Self then he will continue living in his body. This is different from the view of the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta schools, according to whom the karmic

seeds pertaining to future life, technically called *sañcīyamāna karma*, are burnt up by the knowledge of the real Self, but the karmic seeds relating to the present life, *prārabdha karma*, must be exhausted through the enjoyment of their fruits by living out this life. These schools of Indian philosophy consider absolute liberation to occur after death, when the *prārabdha karma* is exhausted.

The second kind of ignorance, *bauddha ajñāna*, is caused by the *māyīya* defilement. It is the false idea that the physical body, the mind, the *prāṇa*, or any of their components is the Self. After the infusion of divine grace in an individual, he has a glimpse of his real Self, and his intellectual ignorance (*bauddha ajñāna*) is removed by constant contemplation on his real essence. Intense personal endeavour is required to destroy and replace the false ego-experience by the experience of one's self as the real Self (*ātmāni ātma-bodha*).

Abhinavagupta describes the nature of liberation in general in verses 52, 57, and 60, and the experience of liberation in the embodied condition in verses 61 through 71 of the *Paramārthasāra*. After the infusion of divine grace, when a spiritual adept realises the presence of Śiva in all objects of the world, he ceases to be affected by grief or attachment. He sees the thread of unity or the pure consciousness underlying all objects on the different levels of creation. He is indifferent to all worldly desires and always aware of his fullness-nature, feeling "It is in me that the universe reveals itself as in a mirror; from me the universe emanates as the varied forms of dreams from sleep".

When liberation comes the spiritual adept becomes Śiva, with all the freedom to do anything he likes despite his staying embodied. He enjoys eternal bliss even in this condition because he is always aware of his essence and the truth behind the world. When he forsakes his gross physical



body in the course of time, he continues to experience waves of bliss as a consequence of the perennially operating divine Śakti which continues to pulsate, bringing out his glory as the supreme Lord. According to Abhinavagupta, individual beings, as a rule, do not experience liberation while staying embodied. Only those who are recipients of divine grace in a mild form and therefore continue to have residual impressions of *pauruṣa ajñāna* (spiritual ignorance) have to pass through this stage. The spiritual adepts receiving grace in intense form, however, are said to attain absolute liberation at once. According to Sāṅkhya Yoga and Advaita Vedānta, the attainment of *jīvan mukti*, i.e., liberation while remaining embodied for a lifetime, is the necessary step preceding the achievement of complete liberation.

### *Symbolism in the Text*

The Śaiva Tantras contain subtle and profound philosophical thought, rich and profound symbolism, and intense and deeply felt religious worship of the Lord.

Abhinavagupta includes all these elements but raises them to the highest perspective of non-dual Śaivism. He includes deity worship but explains that because Śiva is everywhere, contemplation and concentration on the form of the deity is contemplation of Śiva, who is one's own Self and resides in one's body. He tells the spiritual seeker to perform the sacrifices prescribed by the scriptures but to perform them in a symbolic manner, sacrificing the experience of duality to the fire of consciousness. Abhinavagupta tells the seeker to perform austerities (*tapas*) but the austerity he says to perform is the affirmation through reasoning, scriptural authority, and personal experience that "I alone am manifest in all different forms". He also describes the Kaula rituals but explains their symbolic meaning from the perspective of non-dual Śaivism.





TEXT AND COMMENTARY  
OF THE PARAMĀRTHASĀRA



## Paramārthasāra

*Yogarāja's introductory verse to the Paramārthasāra.*

May the supreme Lord always be victorious. He is never born [but is eternally existent]. He is well-versed in the art of self-concealment, and despite his being of the nature of massive consciousness, he assumes the form of the world.<sup>1</sup>

On being requested by learned persons, I, Yogarāja, am writing this explanatory commentary on *The Essence of the Supreme Truth (Paramārthasāra)* written by my teacher [Abhinavagupta], adding logical arguments. Considering the purpose of the scriptures to be the achievement of the destruction of the sea of impediments, which are due to the dominance of the [false] identification of the Self with the physical body, and which causes doubts and uncertainties, the author [Abhinavagupta] expresses, at the very outset [of this text], his yearning for the supreme Lord by giving up his worldly form, that of a limited experiencer, and securing his union with his divine essence that is of the nature of pure consciousness and bliss. This is the essence of all scriptures.



## Verse 1

परं परस्थं गहनादनादिम्  
 एकं निविष्टं बहुधा गुहासु ।  
 सर्वालयं सर्वचराचरस्थं  
 त्वामेव शंभुं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १ ॥

*param parasthaṃ gahanād anādim  
 ekaṃ nivīṣṭaṃ bahudhā guhāsu ।  
 sarvālayaṃ sarva-carācara-sthaṃ  
 tvām eva śambhuṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye ॥ 1 ॥*

I take refuge in you alone, Śambhu, who are beyond *māyā*, transcendent, without beginning, one, existent in all beings in myriad forms, refuge of all, and immanent in all animate and inanimate creation.<sup>2</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 1*

[The author begins by stating:] In order to achieve union with you Śambhu the saviour, I take refuge in you. You are not only identical with my divine essence, which is the essence of all experiencers [limited as well as supreme], but you are also of the nature of the transcendent absolute and of all being. By [referring in the above verse to] Śambhu "alone", who is not different from his divine essence, [and to whom he says] "I take refuge", the author makes clear that he is not invoking any lesser deity dwelling within the realm of *māyā*.

[It may be asked] what is Śambhu's nature? The reply given is that he is transcendent, of the nature of the transcendent absolute, full-in-himself, and endowed with the powers of consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*). Similarly, he exists in

his [divine] nature, full-in-himself, on the level of the pure realm (*śuddha adhvan*), extending from the level of *śiva tattva* down to the *śuddha vidyā tattva* that lies above the level of *māyā*.<sup>3</sup> Although he manifests himself in diverse forms [such as the *sadāśiva*, the *īśvara*, and the *śuddha vidyā tattvas*], he does not deviate in the least from his absolute and integral nature. As has been stated in *Spanda Kārikā* 1.3:

*Even in the division [inherent in the states] of waking, etc., he extends in his unity, not ceasing from his own nature as the perceiver.*

The phrase "without beginning" [in verse 1] refers to that which is primordial, the locus of all experiences, the first and foremost experiencer, and the one who is unique without a second. Everything [on this level] is manifested as identified with pure consciousness, and hence there is no scope here for the manifestation of multiplicity. Although he is of this nature [of the transcendent absolute described above], he also exists, in the exercise of his divine freedom, in infinite forms in the innermost beings of *rudras* [the governing deities of different *bhuvanas*, or regions in creation], as well as in limited experiencers.<sup>4</sup> In other words, although he is of the nature of pure consciousness, he exists, after manifesting the world comprised of animate and inanimate creation, like an actor assuming different roles, as the infinite variety of experiencers. Therefore [the supreme Lord is described in the verse as] "the refuge of all." He is the refuge of the entire universe, consisting of experiencers like Rudra, limited experiencers, and the respective objects of their experience. The entire universe exists in the supreme experiencer, but pairs of subjects and objects appear to have emerged divided and manifest in many forms.<sup>5</sup> These could not have any

existence apart from pure illumination (*prakāśa*) [whose nature is that of pure consciousness].<sup>6</sup>

What, then, of this world? If it is held [by an opponent] that the variety [of the world] is not cognised but lies latent in the supreme experiencer, then [the reply would be that] in such a case these [the variety of objects of the world] would have no existence at all [since their existence depends on their cognition], and this doesn't indicate the supreme Lord's transcendent nature. [When in the above verse Abhinavagupta refers to] "the existence of all animate and inanimate objects" [what he means] is that everything, i.e. the world, which is animate and inanimate, exists as his [the supreme Lord's] own form. According to the [following] popular saying, whatever is different from him is unmanifest and is therefore non-existent:

*As You yourself are the creator of all, You are therefore immanent in all.*

[It has also been said in] *Spanda Kārikā* [III.]:

*The enjoyer is always present everywhere as the object of enjoyment.*

[As these sayings indicate], the Lord exists in many forms. Thus [Abhinavagupta says], "I take refuge in you alone, Śambhu," [and indicates that] Śambhu is the most supreme [as well as] the innermost divine Self of all, and has assumed infinite forms, despite his being of the nature of the supreme Self. Notwithstanding his self-manifestation as all, his nature is that of supreme consciousness characterised by his own absolute undivided freedom shining as the highest non-dual illumination.<sup>7</sup> In other words [Abhinavagupta is saying] "May I achieve union with you who are of the nature

described above." After sublimating the false ego that arises from association with the body, etc., [it becomes clear that] my own divine essence is not different from you.<sup>8</sup> [When Abhinavagupta uses the expression in the above verse] "I take [refuge]" he is putting in a nutshell the meaning of the entire text, which teaches the means to achieve the divine union [of the individual self with the supreme Self], which is its true nature and which is the highest good. [The discussion of which practices] are acceptable and which are to be avoided [in seeking to attain this goal] will be discussed later [in the text].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 2-3*

By means of his introductory prayer, the author declares that the main purpose of this *prakaraṇa*<sup>1</sup> text is to establish the non-dual nature of the supreme Being. He [Abhinavagupta] points out the relation between the subject matter of this *śāstra* and the present work,<sup>2</sup> speaking about it in two verses written in *āryā* metre.



## Verses 2-3

गर्भाधिवासपूर्वक-

मरणान्तकदुःखचक्रविभ्रान्तः ।

आधारं भगवन्तं

शिष्यः पप्रच्छ परमार्थम् ॥ २ ॥

आधारकारिकाभिस्

तं गुरुरभिभाषते स्म तत्सारम् ।

कथयत्यभिनवगुप्तः

शिवशासनदृष्टियोगेन ॥ ३ ॥

*garbhādhivāsa-pūrvaka*

*-maraṇāntaka-duḥkha-cakra-vibhrāntaḥ |*

*ādhāraṃ bhagavantaṃ*

*śiṣyaḥ papraccha paramārtham || 2 ||*

*ādhāra-kārikābhis*

*taṃ gurur abhibhāṣate sma tat-sāraṃ |*

*kathayaty abhinavaguptaḥ*

*śiva-śāsana-dṛṣṭi-yogena || 3 ||*

Overwhelmed by the chain of misery that begins with his birth in the womb and terminates with his physical death, a disciple asked Lord Ādhāra about supreme wisdom. The teacher [Ādhāra] instructed him on the essence of the supreme wisdom by means of the *Ādhāra Kārikās*<sup>3</sup>, which Abhinavagupta recasts, modifying them from the point of view of the Śaiva tradition.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 2-3*

One who had developed the feeling of non-attachment due to the grace of the Lord, having thereby grown averse to worldly life, felt the need for instructions by a spiritual teacher. He [therefore] approached Lord Ādhāra, also known as the sage Śeṣa. Propitiating him, [the disciple] asked about the supreme spiritual truth. Then, after examining the extent of the disciple's fitness and finding that his mind had been [fully] cleansed, Lord Ānanta, who was well versed in all scriptures, spoke to the disciple in the form of the text the *Paramārthasāra*, also known as the *Ādhāra Kārikās*, which teaches [the seeker] how to realise supreme Brahman by following the path of knowledge that discriminates between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* [which is taught by the Sāṅkhya school of thought]. Believing that the same instruction about the nature of Brahman, if expounded from the point of view of non-dual supreme reality whose nature is that of freedom would be more rational and convincing, Guru Abhinavagupta [in adapting the text] explains the nature of that reality, the supreme consciousness, which delights in its mysterious and hidden ways. In order to shower grace on all, he gives the epitome of the instructions about the supreme spiritual truth [which was uttered earlier by Lord Ādhāra] in a text whose very title is composed of a sacred collection of letters. The essence of this instruction, like the essence of butter derived from curd, is delicious. Thus both the aim of the *śāstra* and its subject matter etc., have been indicated [in the above verse], in a brief manner.

What kind of a disciple [is qualified to study this *śāstra*]? The reply given by the author begins with the phrase "living in the womb" [conveying the misery of being limited to an embodied state]. [A qualified disciple is] one who is subject to

the six states of existence that begin with life in the womb and continue with existence, growth, development, decay, and death, collectively called the *sad-bhāva-vikāra*.

Such a disciple is chained by a wheel made of the succession of births and deaths. The possibility of a disciple remembering his past lives, which paves the way for the dawn of wisdom in him, is implied, because [without such a memory] how else can one explain the awakening of the keen spirit of enquiry in him. Thus the particular individual who has developed within himself the feeling of intense non-attachment and who has received divine grace from the supreme Lord as a result of which true spiritual knowledge has been awakened becomes fit to receive instructions from the teacher. Such a person approaches the true teacher, who is none other than the supreme Lord himself [appearing on a lower plane], and expresses his desire to receive knowledge about the non-dual reality. Such a person alone is fit to receive instruction from the spiritual teacher, as stated [in an unnamed text]:

*O Goddess, [a disciple] is led to the true spiritual master by the descent of divine grace.*

and

*The supreme knowledge is given [to the disciple] in whom the bonds of karma have been destroyed upon initiation by the spiritual master.*

All these points will be discussed later.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 4*

After these introductory remarks about the nature of creation and the statement that the freedom of the supreme Lord, which is unique to him, is the root cause of the creation and dissolution of the infinite variety of the world, the author [Abhinavagupta] describes the world's self-expansion of the supreme Lord, which is accomplished by his divine Śakti. To introduce the subject matter of the text, he describes [the totality of creation] in terms of the manifestation of four eggs (*aṇḍas*).

## Verse 4

निजशक्तिवैभवभराद्  
अण्डचतुष्टयमिदं विभागेन ।  
शक्तिर्माया प्रकृतिः  
पृथ्वी चेति प्रभावितं प्रभुणा ॥ ४ ॥

*nija-śakti-vaibhava-bharād*  
*aṇḍa-catuṣṭayam idaṃ vibhāgena |*  
*śaktir māyā prakṛtiḥ*  
*pṛthvī ceti prabhāvitam prabhuṇā || 4 ||*

The supreme Lord creates this universe consisting of four eggs (*aṇḍa*), the *śakti* egg, the *māyā* egg, the *prakṛti* egg, and the *pṛthvī* egg, out of the glory of his own divine Śakti.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 4*

The supreme Lord, who is free and whose nature is that of massive consciousness and bliss, manifests this massive object [the universe], composed of four eggs, [so named] because they are like shells [hiding his true nature]. As already stated, the mass of objects [comprising the universe] is technically



called an egg. Out of what [and from where] does the supreme Lord manifest the universe? The reply given is "... out of the glory of his own divine Śakti," which refers to the group of his extraordinary divine powers, beginning with the power of will (*icchā*), etc.<sup>2</sup> When expanded, these powers reveal themselves in an extraordinary way and thus become prominent. The creation of the universe by the supreme Lord is thus only his own self-expansion in the aspect of his Śakti. As has been stated in the *Sarvamaṅgala Tantra*:

*Śakti and the possessor of Śakti [though essentially one] are referred to as two distinct categories. The supreme Lord's Śaktis constitute the universe, while the supreme Lord is the possessor of Śakti.*

What is the nature of the four eggs? The author [Abhinavagupta] explains in the text that the four eggs are the *śakti* egg, the *māyā* egg, the *prakṛti* egg, and the *prthvī* egg. The divine Śakti of the supreme Lord, which negates his transcendent nature and is therefore named *akhyāti* (self-negating), and which underlies the universe composed of an infinite number of subjects and objects of experience, all having *ahaṁtā* ("I"-nature) as their essence, is called the *śakti* egg, as it veils the transcendent nature of the supreme Lord, thereby binding him.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining three eggs, which will be explained later, remain in the womb of the first one, the *śakti* egg, which is comprised of the *sadāśiva tattva*, the *īśvara tattva*, and the *śuddha vidyā tattva*. It is given the name *śakti* egg on account of its nature as a veil [or shell-like covering]. Both *Sadāśiva* and *Īśvara* are said to be its presiding deities.<sup>4</sup> The [subsequent] egg, called *māyā*, is characterised by the three defilements (*malas*), and is of the nature of delusion. It lies at

the root of discreteness and differentiation, and causes bondage in all. It extends [from the level of the *māyā tattva* down] to that of the *puruṣa tattva*. The [remaining] two eggs, which will be described later, lie in its womb. The presiding deity of this egg is a *rudra* named Gahana. [The subsequent egg] the *prakṛti*, having *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* as its nature, and evolving into products and the sense organs required to grasp them, thus giving the fettered being an opportunity for the enjoyment of objects, is called the *prakṛti* egg since it also causes bondage. The great and glorious Viṣṇu, who is associated with discreteness, is the lord of the egg on this [*prakṛti*] level. [Finally], the egg which is characterised by the assumption of different forms such as that of man, animals, birds, reptiles, etc., and which causes bondage in the form of *kañcukas*<sup>5</sup> to limited subjects (*paśus*)<sup>6</sup> is called the *prthvī aṇḍa*. The *prthvī aṇḍa* (earth egg)<sup>7</sup> includes the fourteen kinds of gross material creation. Its chief presiding deity is Brahmā.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 5*

Thus after having described the four kinds of eggs, the author [Abhinavagupta] states in this verse the nature of the world in terms of its being composed of an object of enjoyment and the enjoyer.

## Verse 5

तत्रान्तर्विश्वमिदं  
विचित्रतनुकरणभुवनसंतानम् ।  
भोक्ता च तत्र देही  
शिव एव गृहीतपशुभावः ॥ ५ ॥

*tatrāntar viśvam idaṃ  
vicitra-tanu-karaṇa-bhuvana-saṃtānam ।  
bhoktā ca tatra dehī  
śiva eva grhīta-paśu-bhāvaḥ ॥ 5 ॥*

This world, with infinite kinds of *bhuvanas* (regions in creation), with its infinite variety of physical bodies and sense organs, exists within [the four eggs]. Having assumed the form of a fettered being (*paśu*), Śiva alone is the embodied enjoyer of all this [the created world] in them [the eggs].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 5*

That this world is contained within four eggs is well known in the Āgamas. [It may be asked] "What is the nature [of the world]?" The reply given is, "It is of infinite variety." The world is comprised of differentiated kinds of subjects [such as presiding deities] like Rudra, and of embodied limited subjects possessing different kinds of physical bodies

consisting of legs, hands, mouths, etc., of various shapes and sizes. Similarly the sense organs, such as the eyes, possessed by them are also different and have varying capacities. For example, subjects like Rudra are endowed with unsurpassable powers such as omniscience and omnipotence and are capable of knowing all things simultaneously in a moment. They are also capable of accomplishing tasks all at once.<sup>1</sup>

The sense organs in limited embodied subjects, though in some ways similar to those in superior subjects, are really controlled by the *niyati śakti*<sup>2</sup> of the supreme Lord. Hence they possess the capacity for knowing some objects such as a pot and so on, but they are incapable of knowing all or accomplishing all. Nonetheless, superior subjects, such as practitioners of Yoga are equipped with superior sense organs which enable them to overcome the limitation imposed by the *niyati śakti*. They therefore succeed in knowing through their sense organs objects lying at a great distance or hidden behind some obstruction, as well as objects at close proximity in time and space, and they also experience joy and sorrow arising in other subjects.

Similarly, the sense organs in the subhuman animals, though contracted and controlled by the *niyati śakti*, are superior to those of human beings. For example, cows are able to see their sheds even when their vision is obstructed; horses are capable of seeing the road even at night; kites are able to see meat even when it is at a distance of a hundred *yojanas*; birds, flies, and even mosquitoes are capable of flying; snakes can glide their way on their chests, and hear sounds with their eyes; camels attract snakes out of their holes from a distance with their breath; and so on. The varying capacity of sense organs is evident from all these examples. [Just as the nature and capacities of limited subjects are multifarious] so are the



regions or *bhuvanas* [in which they dwell]. They are of varying sizes and assume various shapes, such as circular, triangular, rectangular, semicircular, and conical, as described in the Āgamas. In this way, the universe itself is also characterised by an unending series of bodies, sense organs, and regions of infinite variety, shapes, and sizes, each surpassing the other.

Since the nature of the universe is that of the object of enjoyment, it presupposes the existence of an enjoyer (*bhokta*). Who is the enjoyer of the universe? The reply given is that the enjoyer is the embodied being. The spiritual monad (*cidaṇu*), when covered by three kinds of defilement [the *āṇava*, the *māyīya*, and the *kārma*], is equipped with a physical body that serves as the instrument for enjoyment. Such an embodied spiritual monad experiences happiness or pain; hence he is called the enjoyer or the experiencer of happiness and sorrow. He is given the name *paśu prameta* (fettered subject).

[The opponent might ask] if there is not even an iota of difference between the limited embodied subject and the supreme subject, the supreme Lord, then why is the limited subject given a different name from that given to the Lord? As has been said elsewhere:

*Even a portion of Brahman is omnipresent; nothing exists outside him; he is beyond conceptualisation.*

Also:

*In every tattva all the thirty-six tattvas are present.*

Thus the supreme Lord, who is of the nature of great illumination and is endowed with Śakti, manifests himself as

identical to all. Any object different from him, even if the existence of such an object might be hypothesised, would not be perceivable or knowable because it would not be manifest. Again, whatever is manifest appears because of its identity with his illumination nature. The distinction between the enjoyer and the enjoyed is only valid from that perspective.

The author [Abhinavagupta] has replied [to the opponent's view] that Śiva himself voluntarily assumes the form of fettered beings. Thus Lord Śiva, who is of the nature of massive pure consciousness, bliss, and divine freedom as will be described later, assumes the form of an embodied enjoyer out of his own free will. He is like an actor veiling his divine transcendent nature and is then called *dehin* (possessor of a body); *bhokta* (the enjoyer) of self-created objects of enjoyment who has happiness, pain, etc., as his nature; and *paśu* (ensnared being), whose nature is to be fettered.

There is, however, nothing that exists apart from him [the Lord]. Thus Lord Śiva manifests the pair of the experiencer and the experienced in the form of the subject and the object, respectively, like toys [to be played with], out of his own free will, and it is from this perspective [of the Lord's freedom] that the concept of duality has relevance in the world.

It is therefore said that without abjuring his fullness, the unrestricted, unsurpassable, divine freedom of the supreme Lord is responsible for assuming the twin forms of the enjoyer and the enjoyed, and that he thereby fetters himself by [his own] bonds, while always, nevertheless, remaining the ever-massive pure consciousness and bliss, manifesting himself as the supreme experience in all experiencers. [It has been said] that the experiencer is one and is of the nature of pure consciousness.

## Yogarāja's introduction to verse 6

[An opponent might ask:] If he is said to be many [on the mundane level] due to being differentiated under the influence of *māyā* into an infinite number of experiencers and [objects] experienced, how can he be described as one, which is the diametrical opposite of many? Likewise, if he is regarded as one, he cannot be many because that would be a contradiction, like [saying] that a shadow contains sunlight.

One possible explanation [that might be given by an opponent attempting to resolve this inherent contradiction] would be [to postulate] the super-imposition of the many, with its mutually contradictory qualities, upon the one. [According to such an argument] one object cannot reveal itself in many forms. As has been said:

*The appearance of difference in a substance is caused by difference in the substance itself, or by super-imposition of contradictory qualities on the substance.*

These questions are resolved by the author by citing analogous examples from experience in daily life.

## Verse 6

नानाविधवर्णानां

रूपं धत्ते यथाऽमलः स्फटिकः ।

सुरमानुषपशुपादप-

रूपत्वं तद्वदीशोऽपि ॥ ६ ॥

*nānā-vidha-varṇānām*

*rūpaṃ dhatte yathā'malaḥ sphaṭikaḥ ।*

*sura-mānuṣa-paśu-pādapa*

*-rūpatvaṃ tad-vad īśo'pi ।। 6 ।।*



As a pure crystal assumes hues of different kinds, in the same way the supreme Lord also assumes the forms of gods, men, animals, and trees.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 6*

Just as a crystal, which always remains in one and the same form yet takes upon itself different hues and appearances due to its proximity to various qualifying conditions (*upādhis*) such as red and blue and so on, remains as a crystal unchanged [so supreme consciousness may appear to assume different qualities, but remains essentially unchanged]. It is the unique nature of crystals that even though they might assume different qualities [and appear in different hues], they continue to be crystals and are recognised as such by intelligent people.<sup>1</sup>

Here the designation [of the crystal as] "red, etc.," is only a conventional usage based on a colour being visible in the crystal. The qualifying property of colour [in the crystal], however, is incapable of completely changing the nature of the crystal, unlike the case of a piece of cloth [saturated with red dye]. Hence [it must be admitted that] there is a unique quality of purity in the crystal that lets it assume the form and colour of the qualifying condition [of colour] completely and at the same time manifest itself as crystal as before.

In the same way, the supreme Lord, who is free and is of the nature of massive consciousness, holds within himself, like a clear mirror, gods, man, animals, and birds. He causes the infinite variety already existing within himself to emanate and he assumes different forms during the time of creation, all the while remaining the same one transcendental Being, the supreme subject, experiencing himself in that form. Thus there is no time or space different from him that could destroy



or affect his unity, and thus the theory of superimposition of contradictory qualities is refuted.

Other philosophers [such as the Buddhists] admit direct perception of a painting [which is composed of a variety of objects] as one single object of cognition. This is stated in the *Pramāṇa-varttika*<sup>2</sup> as follows:

*In the cognition of a painting, the knowledge of the colour blue and so on is only a qualifying adjunct (upādhi) and is not different from it [the cognition of the painting as a whole]. The perception of the colour apart from the cognition [of the painting] is impossible. Even the cogniser who differentiates one colour from the other is included in the content of the cognition.*

How can space and time be held responsible for the appearance of differentiation in form and action and thereby as limiting qualities affect the supreme Lord who is absolutely full-in-himself and whose nature is that of pure consciousness and freedom? If space and time existed apart and independent of him, then there would be a possibility of the superimposition of the opposite quality of multiplicity. But since their very existence depends on pure consciousness revealing them, it must be admitted that the supreme Lord is one, the embodiment of pure consciousness, despite his manifesting as many [out of his own free will]. If the differentiating qualities were regarded as [independently] real, then there would be no escape from the false position of the superimposition of qualities.

[The opponent might argue that if] it is admitted that there is only one subject who is of the nature of pure consciousness, but that he becomes many on being associated with many different physical bodies, sense organs, etc. then a doubt

arises: When the physical body is destroyed, the subject is also destroyed along with it. When the body is created, the subject either is or is not created along with it. In either case, every subject associated with the physical body, etc., would individually be born, exist, and so on; would be subject to the six kinds of modifications; and would individually enjoy heaven and hell due to his varying *karma*, meritorious or otherwise. Then how could it be maintained that every individual subject is Śiva himself [without jeopardizing the theory of non-dualism]?

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 7*

This argument has been answered by the author in the following verse, on the basis of an analogy from a daily experience.

## Verse 7

गच्छति गच्छति जल इव  
हिमकरबिम्बं स्थिते स्थितिं याति ।  
तनुकरणभुवनवर्गे  
तथाऽयमात्मा महेशानः ॥ ७ ॥

*gacchati gacchati jala iva  
hima-kara-bimbaṃ sthite sthitiṃ yāti ।  
tanu-karaṇa-bhuvana-varge  
tathā'yam ātmā maheśānaḥ ॥ 7 ॥*

Just as the reflection of the moon appears to be moving in flowing water and to be unmoving in still water, in the same way the Self, who is the same as the supreme Lord, appears to exist as embodied beings [equipped] with sense organs in different *bhuvanas* (regions in creation).

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 7*

The face of the moon, while remaining motionless in the sky, appears as moving when reflected in flowing water, and as unmoving when reflected in the still water of a pond; thus the twofold state of the appearance of the moon is cognised by all subjects. But of course the moon is neither moving nor is it motionless.

[The same is the case with the Self, which is neither born nor destroyed.] Neither space nor time, which condition the

water and cause this differentiation in appearance, are really capable of affecting the true nature of the moon existing in the sky. It is water [the reflecting medium] that is mobile or motionless. There is thus no change in the actual nature of the moon, which may be reflected in the pure and clear water of the Ganges or in the dirty, muddy water of a pond.

Similarly, the day-to-day common experience of the Self, which is pure consciousness in essence, as born or destroyed on the birth or destruction of the self-created physical body, etc., is merely a usage on the phenomenal level caused by the delusive *māyā śakti*. The Self, as a matter of fact, is neither born nor dies. As has been beautifully expressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* [II.20]:

*He is not born nor does he die; nor having been, does he cease anymore to be. Unborn, perpetual, eternal, and ancient, he is not slain when the body is.*

The Self is the supreme Lord himself who is ever free and who experiences all in himself. This is his nature. [At the same time] he is present in all subjects as the experiencer. Because of all this, his nature remains ever the same even in the states of birth and death. He has the capacity to accomplish the most difficult tasks, remaining always the same supreme consciousness even while at the same time experiencing heaven or hell as a limited subject. His form as a fettered being (*paśu*), which is conditioned by such factors as merit, demerit, heaven, hell, hunger, and thirst, etc., is only possible because the supreme Lord manifests them by his own light and experiences them in himself. They only come into being through him and can have no existence apart from him. [Under such circumstances] how can these be regarded as factors negating his nature as the supreme Lord?



[When] an object such as the physical body is created, it is subject to destruction. But there can be neither birth nor destruction of the pure consciousness that exists eternally. We may therefore conclude that the supreme Self is one who, while becoming many in the form of countless numbers of subjects and objects, manifests himself also as the one supreme experiencer, and thus the doctrine of non-dualism advocated by us remains unrefuted.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 8*

It may be asked: If it is established on logical grounds as well as on the basis of Āgamic texts that the Self inherent in all is universal in nature, and that pure consciousness constitutes the core of its being and the substratum of all manifestations on account of its omnipresence, then why is a lump of clay, which is held to be non-different from the Self, not experienced as the Self? If a lump of clay is also admitted to be of the nature of the Self [on account of the Self's omnipresence and inherence in all], then the distinction between animate and inanimate is eradicated. How can day-to-day mundane life, which is based on the difference between animate and inanimate life, exist [in the absence of such a distinction]? The author [Abhinavagupta] gives the following reply:

Verse 8

राहुरदृश्योऽपि यथा  
 शशिविम्बस्थः प्रकाशते तद्वत् ।  
 सर्वगतोऽप्ययमात्मा  
 विषयाश्रयणेन धीमुकुरे ॥ ८ ॥

*rāhur adṛśyo'pi yathā  
 śaśi-bimba-sthaḥ prakāśate tad-vat |  
 sarva-gato'py ayam ātmā  
 viśayāśrayaṇena dhī-mukure || 8 ||*

Just as the invisible Rāhu (the shadow of the earth), when appearing on the disc of the moon [at the time of a lunar eclipse] becomes visible, in the same way, the Self though present everywhere becomes perceptible in the mirror of the intellect (*buddhi*) by [the perception of] sense objects.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 8*

Although Rāhu remains constantly moving about in the sky and is not ordinarily visible, when it happens to settle down on the disc of the moon at the time of a lunar eclipse, it is seen and recognised as "this is Rāhu." When [at other times Rāhu is not seen] despite its existence amidst other heavenly bodies, it is taken to be non-existent. In the same way, although the Self exists in all, constituting the innermost being [of all things], and is also cognised through all self-experiences, it is not perceived by all as "this is the Self." But when an object of cognition is revealed by being reflected in the intellect-mirror or in the mirror of *pratibhā* [the conscious mirror of the Self] of embodied beings, the Self becomes an object of cognition [along with the object], as in the cognition of sound in the form of "I hear the sound." During such cognitions, the Self [i.e. consciousness as the Self] existing in [insentient matter like] a lump of clay, etc., is revealed in the intellect on account of its association with the cogniser Self. [Both the consciousness underlying the lump of clay and the cogniser Self are revealed together simultaneously in one cognition "I perceive the lump of clay."] All are then able to

cognise the Self as reflected in the mirror of the intellect.<sup>1</sup> However the Self, though existent in a lump of clay, appears as non-existent to the cognisor on account of its being covered by a thick veil of *tamas* (darkness), like Rāhu in the sky [when not appearing on the disc of the moon].

The supreme Lord, exercising his divine powers, creates objects such as the physical body, etc., from that which is essentially of the nature of Self or consciousness, and makes them the cognisors or subjects, infusing in them ego consciousness (*ahaṃtā*) while simultaneously creating another set of objects as the objects of cognition. This constitutes the basis and rationale of the distinction made in the world between animate [subjects] and inanimate [objects of cognition]. For this reason, on the mundane level the lump of clay is considered to be an inanimate object of knowledge, and the cognisor associated with the physical body as an animate subject. But from the point of view of the supreme Lord, the distinction between the inanimate and the animate does not exist, and the world's conventional understanding of their difference has no significance.

#### *Yogarāja's introduction to verse 9*

[An opponent might ask:] If the Self is automatically revealed without any exception in the intellect during the cognitive process, then why do all persons not become the knowers of their real Self, as no distinction could then possibly be made among them as knowers of the Self? And yet some individual beings are liberated while remaining in the embodied condition as a result of obtaining knowledge of their real Self, becoming omniscient and omnipotent, while others only aspire to climb the ladder of spiritual wisdom after having made themselves fit to receive the knowledge of



the Self. Still others, devoid of the knowledge of their real Self, remain as worldly creatures fettered by their deeds, meritorious or otherwise, due to *dharma* or *adharma*. To what extent can these differentiations among individuals be explained by reason?

Keeping all these objections by the opponent in view, the author of the verses, Abhinavagupta, replies, saying that the descent of the divine grace of the Lord upon individual beings is unconditional.

### Verse 9

आदर्शे मलरहिते  
यद्वद् वदनं विभाति तद्वद् अयम् ।  
शिवशक्तिपातविमले  
धीतत्त्वे भाति भारूपः ॥ ९ ॥

*ādarśe mala-rahite*

*yad-vad vadanam vibhāti tad-vad ayam ।*

*śiva-śakti-pāta-vimale*

*dhī-tattve bhāti bhā-rūpaḥ ॥ 9 ॥*

As a face shines forth in a spotlessly clean mirror, in the same way the supreme Lord who is of the nature of illumination shines forth in the *buddhi* (intellect) *tattva* that has been purified following the descent of divine grace by the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 9*

The face of an individual with its features, upon being reflected in a spotlessly clean mirror, shines in such a way that no feature is unrevealed. If, however, the mirror is not fully clean, then however beautiful the face of an individual is in



comparison to others, it appears as the opposite, ugly, because of a defect in the reflecting medium, the mirror. A dirty mirror is incapable of revealing all the beautiful qualities of the face. In fact, a person on finding his face distorted when reflected in an unclean mirror feels embarrassed and exclaims, "my face is distorted."

In the same way, when a ray of Śiva's own Śakti, called *anugraha śakti* (the power of grace), falls on the fettered individual, it causes the removal of the residual impressions of the *āṇava mala*, the *māyīya mala*, and the *kārma mala* [the three kinds of defilements enveloping all embodied individuals], as a result of which the mirrorlike intellect is purged of all impurities. In the case of some fortunate individuals, the Self, who is of the nature of illumination and is endowed with intrinsic qualities like omniscience and omnipotence, is then revealed automatically. Such individuals, following the revelation of their essence in their mirrorlike intellect, exist in this world as liberated persons free from all kinds of bonds, and are endowed with qualities indicating their essential divinity.

In the case of the majority of subjects, however, their intellect remains clouded by the three defilements, the *āṇava*, the *māyīya*, and the *kārma malas*, which veil them by the *tirodhāna śakti* (power of self-concealment) of the supreme Lord. As a result the real Self reflected in their intellects remains obscured. Such individuals are called transmigratory fettered beings (*paśu*) because of the presence of this deficiency in them.

There are others who develop within themselves a longing to embark on the path of self-realisation. In such subjects, both the *śaktis* of the supreme Lord, the power of grace (*anugraha śakti*) and the power of concealment (*tirodhāna śakti*), operate unconditionally. Thus in these cases the descent of

divine grace taking place [in three different forms], the most intense, the intense, and the mild is implied. According to this school [of non-dual Śaivism of Kashmir] the performance of *aśvamedha* sacrifice (the horse sacrifice), etc., or the repetition of the name or sacred word (*mantra*), or meditation, or the performance of actions, all coming within the domain of the operation of *māyā* and, as such, controlled by the *niyati śakti*, are considered incapable of securing one's liberation. The pure Self lies above *māyā*; hence any means (spiritual practices) involving duality and differentiation are said to be incapable of serving as the instrument for securing liberation. It has been said:

*I [the Self] cannot be seen either by taking recourse to the Vedas, or by performance of tapas (austerity), or by giving alms, or by performing sacrifices.*  
[Bhagavad Gītā XI.53]

Therefore the grace of the supreme Lord alone is capable of achieving the liberation of enlightened souls. It has been stated elsewhere:

*With respect to the descent of grace of the Lord, it is the intellect which makes his divine freedom manifest and as such is related to his agency as the supreme Lord. There is no cause governing its operation.*

The *tirodhāna śakti* (power of concealment) of the supreme Lord is responsible for the transmigration of fettered subjects, due to which they are oblivious of their true divine nature; engage themselves in the performance of deeds, meritorious or otherwise; are subject to happiness or sorrow, respectively; and undergo repeated transmigrations. Though the Self is one in all limited beings, the two [opposite] *śaktis*, *anugraha* (power

of grace) and *tirodhāna* (power of concealment)<sup>2</sup>, which are of the nature of *prakaśa* (illumination, connoting knowledge) and *aprakaśa* (darkness, connoting ignorance), are responsible for the achievement of liberation or bondage. This has been stated by Avadhūta Siddhapāda:

*One śakti from the supreme or infinite śakti ensnares the limited being in worldly bondage, while the other śakti, wielding the sword of knowledge, secures the individuals by cutting asunder all the bonds.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 10-11*

Having relied on the Āgamas, personal experience, and logic to explain [the foregoing], the nature of Paramaśiva, the supreme cause of the world which is composed of the thirty-six *tattvas*, which manifests as connected to him in a cause-and-effect relation, and which is contained in the four eggs beginning with the *śakti*, etc., already mentioned, is revealed in the following two verses:

### Verses 10-11

भारूपं परिपूर्णं  
 स्वात्मनि विश्रान्तितो महानन्दम् ।  
 इच्छासंवित्करणैर्  
 निर्भरितम् अनन्तशक्तिपरिपूर्णम् ॥ १० ॥  
 सर्वविकल्पविहीनं  
 शुद्धं शान्तं लयोदयविहीनम् ।  
 यत् परतत्त्वं तस्मिन्  
 विभाति षट्त्रिंशदात्म जगत् ॥ ११ ॥



*bhā-rūpaṃ paripūrṇaṃ*  
*svātmani viśrāntito mahānandam |*  
*icchā-saṃvit-karaṇair*  
*nirbharitam ananta-śakti-paripūrṇam || 10 ||*  
*sarva-vikalpa-vihīnaṃ*  
*śuddhaṃ śāntaṃ layodaya-vihīnam*  
*yaṭ paratattvaṃ tasmin*  
*vibhāti ṣaṭ-triṃśad-ātma jagat || 11 ||*

The universe, composed of the thirty-six *tattvas*, manifests itself in the highest *tattva* [Paramaśiva], which is of the nature of illumination, full-in-itself, endowed with infinite [modes] of *śakti*, [including the powers of] will, knowledge, and action, which is free from thought constructs, pure, ever at rest, and which is devoid of origination and dissolution.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 10–11*

The *śiva tattva* is full-in-itself. The entire universe, which is composed of the *tattvas* beginning with the *śiva tattva* and ending in the *prthvī tattva*, is manifest in it. In other words, the entire universe is manifested as identified with it.

[An opponent might object:] *Tattva* is [defined as] that which is extended, such as the body, etc., or alternatively as that which lasts until dissolution. Etymologically, the Sanskrit word *tattva* denotes an insentient object, in which case how can Paramaśiva, who is of the nature of consciousness, be associated with the term *tattva*?

[The commentator, agreeing partially with this objection raised by an opponent, concedes that] the author, Abhinavagupta, has here used the term *tattva* in order to instruct persons who are ignorant of these niceties of



the Sanskrit language.<sup>1</sup> [Paramaśiva, occupying the supreme position at the apex of the hierarchy of *tattvas* and constituting the universe is, as a matter of fact, called *tattva-añita*, i.e. beyond the *tattvas* of creation.]

What is the nature of the supreme *tattva*, Paramaśiva? The reply given by the author Abhinavagupta in these verses is that he is of the nature of *prākaśa*, the self-shining illumination that constitutes his very essence. He is full-in-himself, not dependent on anything else [for existence or for revelation]. One might say that physical objects like crystal also do not depend on anything for their existence or revelation. The author replies that this analogy is not valid here because objects like crystal are inert substances. The supreme *tattva* is of the nature of self-shining illumination and great bliss because of his always existing in himself [remaining immersed in his nature]. Not only great bliss but also infinite unrestricted creativity (*sphurattā*) is his essence, and it is this which distinguishes him from inert crystal, as well as from any other object of manifestation. Therefore unlike the Brahman postulated by the Śānta-brahma-vādins or the Advaita Vedāntins of Śāṅkarācārya's school, the supreme *tattva*, Paramaśiva, is said to be full and independent on account of being endowed with infinite powers of will, knowledge, and action.

The Advaita Vedāntins describe Brahman the supreme *tattva* as devoid of *śakti* and therefore as a virtually inert substance<sup>2</sup>, but Paramaśiva is said to be endowed with infinite kinds of *śaktis*. All worldly objects are concretised and materialised forms of his infinite Śakti. His infinite Śakti is regarded as *Parāvāk*<sup>3</sup> the eternal and transcendent word and as such is held to be identical with his divine freedom.

The entire world, consisting of an infinite variety of objects, each one denoted by a word, emerges from *Parāvāk*.

These objects exist in *Parāvāk* in seminal form, manifest as the universe, and ultimately dissolve back into *Parāvāk*. *Parāvāk* can thus be described as the repository of all words denotative of all worldly objects as well as the source of the objects themselves, for the divine Śakti is regarded as the mother repository of all worldly objects.

The non-dual Śaivites, like the Sanskrit grammarians, hold the relation between the word and the objects denoted by it to be one of identity. The supreme *tattva* is of the nature of *vāk* (the word), which is held to be identical with his Śakti, which constitutes his essence; thus it might seem that the supreme *tattva* must be conceptual in nature, capable of being grasped by the finite mind and denoted by the word.

However as has already been stated in the foregoing paragraphs, the supreme *tattva*, or Paramaśiva, is, by his very nature, beyond thought construct (*nirvikalpaka*),<sup>4</sup> beyond the grasp of the mind and therefore incapable of being described in words. The function of conceptual thought is to differentiate one thing from another. For example, the intellect determines that a jar is different from a non-jar. But pure illumination, which has the supreme *ahantā* as its essence, cannot have non-manifestedness as its opposite since non-manifestedness does not exist in any way that might be distinguished from illumination, and therefore could not be a thought construct.

[An opponent might ask:] If the differentiated object is held to be manifested as differentiated from illumination, with illumination as the basis [of all that exists], then how can the differentiated object, being differentiated from illumination, be identical with illumination in accordance with the dictum:

*. . . Everything known must be identical with illumination. . . . (Spanda Kārikās 3.28)*

and yet, at the same time, be differentiated from illumination, and thus become a thought construct?

The reply is that an object that is differentiated from illumination and therefore not-manifest cannot be known as different from illumination, since it is both unmanifest and unknowable. Therefore it must be admitted that such an object is non-existent (*avastu*). Thus the supreme *tattva* must be admitted to be free from any kind of differentiation and conceptualisation and to be of unlimited nature. It [the supreme *tattva*] is therefore called "pure" or free from impurity because there is total absence of conceptualisation and consequent impurity in it. Similarly it is quiet. In the absence of any disturbance arising from the manifestation of the duality of the experiencer and the experienced, there is a perfect equilibrium of *śakti* in it. Consequently it remains existent in its true nature, but at the same time it is not inert like a piece of stone. Again, it is free from birth and dissolution. *Śruti* says:

*The Self is always self-manifest.*

And therefore it is eternal also. Time in the form of the past, the present, and the future does not affect it. This is because time is admitted to be manifested within it, while it itself is beyond birth and death. Indeed the universeness of the universe becomes logically tenable only because of the supreme *tattva* remaining above time.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 12–13*

[An opponent might raise the objection:] You have established your position that the universe manifests as

existing in the supreme *tattva*, but how is this possible unless you admit that there is nothing that can be manifest as different from the supreme *tattva*? If you say that the universe is manifested as different from and existing apart from the supreme *tattva*, then a contradiction would arise to the purely non-dualist approach of the system. If, on the other hand, you propose that the universe is manifested as non-different from the supreme *tattva*, this statement is untenable.

[In order to clarify the non-dual Śaivite position and support its doctrine of pure monism] a concrete example from our daily life is given, stating that the relationship between the supreme *tattva* and the universe is one of duality in unity. He says:



## Verses 12-13

दर्पणबिम्बे यद्वन्  
 नगरग्रामादि चित्रमविभागी ।  
 भाति विभागेनैव च  
 परस्परं दर्पणादपि च ॥ १२ ॥  
 विमलतमपरमभैरव-  
 बोधात् तद्वद् विभागशून्यमपि ।  
 अन्योन्यं च ततोऽपि च  
 विभक्तमाभाति जगदेतत् ॥ १३ ॥

*darpaṇa-bimbe yad-van*  
*nagara-grāmādi citram avibhāgi ।*  
*bhāti vibhāgenaiva ca*  
*paras-param darpaṇād api ca ।। 12 ।।*  
*vimalatama-paramabhairava*  
*-bodhāt tadvad vibhāga-śūnyam api ।*  
*anyonyam ca tato'pi ca*  
*vibhaktam ābhāti jagad etat ।। 13 ।।*

Just as variety in the form of a city, village, etc., when seen in a mirror is not separate [from the mirror], yet it [the variety of objects] appears differentiated [in the mirror] as a city, village, etc., and also as different from the mirror. Similarly the universe, though not existing as different from the pure self-experience of the highest Bhairava, appears as the world, differentiated and different from [Bhairava], the supreme *tattva*.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 12-13*

When reflected with all their distinct traits and individual features in a clear mirror, a city, a village, hamlets, the walls surrounding them, buildings, fields, big rivers, rivulets, fire, trees, mountains, animals, birds, men, women, etc., all appear to relinquish their separate existence and give up their traits. But even while manifesting themselves as non-different from the mirror, they retain their individual existence and are manifested individually with their characteristic traits. A jar is manifest [in the mirror] differentiated from cloth, and vice versa. All the objects reflected in the mirror are perceived there, differentiated from each other. Nothing is perceived in the mirror as existing apart from it, the reflecting medium.<sup>1</sup>

[In our ordinary experience] the world of objects [whose reflections are] perceived as existing identified with the mirror are also perceived as different from the mirror. Does the mirror then disappear while reflecting an object like a jar? The reply given is: No, this is not the case, because the objects reflected in the mirror are manifested not only as having a dependent existence but they also exist apart from and independent of the mirror.

Likewise the mirror, despite holding reflections within itself, actually exists as distinct from and independent of its reflections, and is cognised as such. The mirror, in becoming identified with the reflection of objects, does not thereby lose its independent existence, which would render it unperceivable. Despite persons having the experience of objects in a mirror, the knowledge that "this is a mirror" remains an uncontradicted experience.

Objects like a pot [though appearing in the mirror] do not characterise the mirror [or change its essential nature], causing us to have the experience "this is a pot-mirror" or

"this is a cloth-mirror," thus obliterating the very existence of the mirror as a reflecting medium.<sup>2</sup> Neither do the differences caused by space or time in such cases result in the obliteration of the mirror's independent existence. Therefore it must be recognised that the mirror, possessing the capacity for reflecting different objects, remains always a mirror, and thus no damage is done to the theory of reflection.

If it is argued that when an elephant is perceived as existing in a mirror it is only a case of delusion because no object can really exist in a mirror, the author replies that, undoubtedly, this is a case of delusion. But this example only proves the veracity of the theory of reflection. As for the nature of this delusion, it will be discussed later.

As in the example of a city reflected in a mirror described above, after the dissolution of all impurity [from one's vision], the universe is experienced as non-different from [that which illumines and reveals it]: the illumination-nature of the highest Bhairava, which is the absolutely pure light of consciousness of the supreme Lord Śiva, accompanied by the highest bliss.

The universe thus revealed is composed of experiencers and the experienced [subjects and objects], which are distinct from each other and are of infinite variety. However, the universe, despite its being completely identified with the experience of the supreme Lord at this stage, is also distinct from the [supreme Lord's] experience of it, just as the reflections in a mirror are different from the mirror itself.

Similarly, the illumination nature [of the Lord], which holds reflected within its bosom the entire universe, shines [independently], thereby transcending the universal manifestation as the experiencer of all. As in the mirror, the differentiation caused by space and time really does exist in the external world and is manifested there as such, but this



does not affect the true nature of illumination [just as a mirror exists unaffected by the reflection of diversity]. Thus the experience, which is in the form of unity-cum-diversity, remains essentially one unified experience like the reflection in the mirror.

[The analogy discussed above has its limitations.] The distinction between the manifestation of objects through their reflection in a mirror and the manifestation of the universe by the light of consciousness which is endowed with Śakti lies in the fact that the objects like the city and so on are external to the mirror when these are reflected in its clear surface. Moreover these objects are not created by the mirror during the process of reflection. Therefore, the perception in the mirror that "this is an elephant" is undoubtedly a delusion.

The divine illumination, which is endowed with the [creative] Śakti, experiencing the universe [projected upon] its own Self as the canvas [or reflecting surface] out of its own free will, has consciousness as the material cause. [It is the consciousness of the supreme Lord which transforms itself into the universe out of his own free will and projects the universe on the canvas formed by the divine illumination.] The self-manifestation by the supreme Lord as the universe is what constitutes the creative power in the supreme Lord. This self-knowledge is the distinguishing feature of the divine Illumination, differentiating it from the inert reflecting power of the mirror. This has been explained by the author Abhinavagupta in his *Vivṛti-vimarśinī* [commentary on Utpaladeva's *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikā*] in the following way:



*Just as the diversity of the universe is reflected in a mirror, in the same way the entire universe is manifested in the pure Self. The pure illumination is able to cognise [this diversity] with the help of vimarśa[-śakti], his inherent creative power and the power of awareness, but a mirror is not able to experience the diversity.*

Thus there is no room left for differentiation [of the real from the unreal] or delusion on the part of the supreme Lord in his experience of existent objects which are actually his own creations.

But the experience of distinction [between the real and the unreal] by limited experiencers indicates the negation of their absolute nature, and this constitutes delusion. [Delusion exists for limited experiencers who are devoid of creative Śakti, but it has no existence for the supreme Lord, who is endowed with Śakti by virtue of which he creates the universe.] The fullness that is non-dual by its very nature, when negated [as is the case with limited subjects] is called *akhyāti* (literally, non-knowledge or imperfect knowledge). When fullness is absent, the duality that is only the negation of fullness is manifested. Only then is there the cognition of duality and discreteness. Thus the theory of reflection does not suffer from any kind of blemish.

#### *Yogarāja's introduction to verse 14*

After discussing the nature of supreme reality and stating the status of the universe composed of thirty-six *tattvas* identified with the illumination, the author examines the nature of each *tattva* arranged in the order of creation or emanation in the following verses:

## Verse 14

शिवशक्तिसदाशिवताम्  
 ईश्वरविद्यामयीं च तत्त्वदशाम् ।  
 शक्तीनां पञ्चानां  
 विभक्तभावेन भासयति ॥ १४ ॥

*śiva-śakti-sadāśivatām*  
*īśvara-vidyā-mayīṇi ca tattva-daśām |*  
*śaktīnāṇi pañcānām*  
*vibhakta-bhāvena bhāsayati || 14 ||*

Dividing the five *śaktis* [one on each level of the five *tattvas*,] Paramaśiva manifests [himself] as the five *tattvas*, namely, *śiva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, and *vidyā*.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 14*

The nature of Paramaśiva has already been described while discussing the nature of supreme reality. His five *śaktis*—*cit* (the power of consciousness); *ānanda* (the power of bliss); *icchā* (the power of will); *jñāna* (the power of knowledge); and *kriyā* (the power of action)—are at the root of a group of an infinite number of *śaktis* that constitute his very nature. He [Paramaśiva] manifests his five *śaktis* separately by *atad-vyāvṛti* [which means in the form of five *tattvas* that are formed by the five *śaktis*, but which differ from each other due to the dominance in each *tattva* of a different one of the *śaktis*]. The five *tattvas* are *śiva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, and *vidyā*.

In what follows, the nature of each *tattva* is described. The pure consciousness that exists in all subjects as *pūrṇāhaṁtā* (absolute "I am"-ness)<sup>1</sup> and is above all other *tattvas*, the embodiment of great illumination, is called the *śiva tattva*.

This *tattva* is now being described in the context of the person instructed. The supreme Lord, who is of the nature of pure consciousness and who as such underlies the universe, has the self-experience in the form of "I become the universe." Subsequently he negates [his absolute nature] and thereby creates a void in himself. This void, created by following the negation of his absolute nature, is the foundation of all existence, the world, to be manifested subsequently, and the blissful state in which this occurs is called the *śakti tattva*.<sup>2</sup> This level of the supreme Lord's involution, which is one of both negation and fullness, on account of the dissolution and the creation of the universe, has been designated as *śakti* in all secret doctrines, [i.e. the Āgamas].<sup>3</sup>

Also in this state of great void which constitutes the seed or foundation of the universal manifestation, the supreme Lord's self-experience takes the form of "*aham idam*" ("I am This") unseparated from his [experience of] "*pūrṇāhaṁtā*." This level of the supreme Lord's involution is called *sadāśiva*, which is characterised by the dominance of *jñāna śakti* (knowledge power) [the dominance of the "I" in "I am This"]. The *kriyā śakti* (power of action) then lies merged in the *ahaṁtā*. The *mantra-maheśvara* experiencers are said to exist on this level.

The [subsequent] level—in which the supreme Lord's self-experience as "I am This" has two poles or components, "I" and "This," which are identical in essence, held in perfect equilibrium like two pans in a scale—is called the *īśvara tattva*. The *mantrēśvaras* are the experiencers on this level.

The [next] level, in which the self-experience by the Lord takes the form of "I am I" and "This is This," but with the "This" (*idam*) pole predominant, the "I" (*ahaṁtā*) being dominated and subdued by the former, is called the *śuddha vidyā* level. On this level the self-experience by the supreme



Lord is likened to that of a new-born baby who points towards his head with his finger [oblivious of himself but conscious of worldly objects], and is said to have knowledge (*bodha*) as its dominant element. It is said that seven types of *vācaka mantra pramātās* [a kind of pure subject] inclusive of the *vidyeśvara* subjects exist on this level. These subjects reside on this level for *vācya mantra-maheśvara* and *mantreśvara* subjects, their main function, as embodiments of divine grace, being to liberate fettered beings. [The divine grace flows to some fettered beings through them.] The *vidyeśvara* subjects are not conscious of their difference on the level of *śuddha vidyā tattva* insofar as their self-experience is concerned. But they do experience some kind of differentiation on account of their being enveloped by [*mahā-*]*māyā-śakti*.

It has been said in the Āgamas:

*The mahā-māyā exists above māyā. . . .*

[The *vidyeśvara* subjects] are said to be monadic (*aṇu*) in nature owing to their being enveloped in *mahā-māyā*. The *vijñāna-kala* subjects also are said to exist above the level of *māyā* but below the *śuddha-vidyā* level, and are also covered by the *āṇava mala* defilement.

Thus the one Śiva, who is transcendent in being, is held to be five-fold in the form of the five *tattvas* [mentioned above]. He manifests himself as the absolutely free agent [on the transcendent level], and subsequently in the form of "*aham*" and "*idam*" [pure subject and object] on the levels of the *sadāśiva* and *īśvara tattvas*, he is designated as the cause in the form of pure knowledge. In his self-manifestation as the *tattvas* beginning with *māyā* and ending in *prthvī*, he is



designated as the effect (*karya*). In this way, the one supreme subject manifests himself as the agent [on the transcendent level] and cause and effect [on the immanent levels].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 15*

The nature of *māyā tattva* is described [below]:

### Verse 15

परमं यत् स्वातन्त्र्यं  
 दुर्घटसंपादनं महेशस्य ।  
 देवी मायाशक्तिः  
 स्वात्मावरणं शिवस्यैतत् ॥ १५ ॥

*paramaṃ yat svātantryaṃ  
 durghaṭa-sampādanaṃ mahēśasya ।  
 devī māyā-śaktiḥ  
 svātmā-varaṇaṃ śivas्यaitat ॥ 15 ॥*

The supreme Lord's great freedom, which is capable of accomplishing the most difficult task, is the self-concealing power of Śiva, which is called the Goddess Māyā-śakti.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 15*

The supreme Lord's freedom, consisting in his ability to create the universe without depending on anything outside himself, is called the *māyā śakti* of the Lord. *Māyā śakti* [in the above verse] means that power by which the entire world of subjects and objects is limited. It is that power which deludes the entire universe.<sup>1</sup> This Śakti is called Devi, or Goddess, as she is related to the playful supreme Lord. As such, this Śakti is not different from him, unlike the *māyā śakti* postulated by the Brahmovādins.

It may be asked: What is the nature of freedom? The reply given is that it is the capacity to accomplish the most difficult task. The most difficult task is the manifestation of the

universe composed of subjects and objects, which is accomplished by the power called "freedom." *Māyā śakti* is also the self-concealing veil of Śiva, who himself assumes the form of fettered beings (*paśus*) out of his own free will. It is the power of self-concealment of his divine nature and is composed of three kinds of defilements, beginning with *āṇava mala*.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 16*

The objects of enjoyment, which are of the nature of pleasure, etc., are different from the enjoyer, emanating as they do from *prakṛti*, which will be described later along with *puruṣa* the enjoyer whose nature is described below:

### Verse 16

मायापरिग्रहवशाद्  
 बोधो मलिनः पुमान् पशुर्भवति ।  
 कालकलानियतिवशाद्  
 रागाविद्यावशेन संबद्धः ॥ १६ ॥

*māyā-parigraha-vaśād*  
*bodho malinaḥ pumān paśur bhavati |*  
*kāla-kalā-niyati-vaśād*  
*rāgāvidyā-vaśena sambaddhaḥ || 16 ||*

Enveloped by *māyā śakti*, the *bodha* (Śiva's self-aware, pure consciousness) becomes defiled and accepts the condition of *puruṣa*, a fettered being, upon being fully bound by *kāla* (limitation with respect to time), *kalā* (limited agency), *niyati* (limitation with respect to causation), *rāga* (limited desire), and *avidyā* (limitation due to ignorance) *kañcukas*.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 16*

Enveloped by *māyā*, the *bodha*, omniscient and omnipotent by nature, becomes dependent and is covered by the *āṇava mala*, which negates his divine essence of omniscience and omnipotence, etc., and reduces him to a limited being, just as the all-pervasive ether becomes limited on being delimited by a pot. Such a limited being is given the name of *puruṣa tattva*. One who is ensnared by *māyā* is called *paśu*. The snares are the three defilements: *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma malas*.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 17*

Also *puruṣa tattva* denotes one who is fettered fully on all sides by *kāla*, etc. Its nature will be described later. Thus *puruṣa* is one fettered by a group of six *tattvas*.

### Verse 17

अधुनैव किञ्चिदेवे-  
दमेव सर्वात्मनैव जानामि ।  
मायासहितं कञ्चुक-  
षट्कमणोरन्तरङ्गमिदमुक्तम् ॥ १७ ॥

*adhunaiva kiñcid evedam*

*eva sarvātmanaiva jānāmi |*

*māyā-sahitaṁ kañcuka*

*-ṣaṭkaṁ aṇor antar-aṅgaṁ idam uktam || 17 ||*

[The limiting concepts expressed by thoughts like:] "Now," "something," "this," "completely," "I know," together with *māyā* are said to be the six internal sheaths (*kañcukas*).



*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 17*

The *bodha* (the self-aware pure consciousness or Śiva), assumes monadic form under the influence of *māyā*. His two powers, knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), upon becoming contracted [under the influence of *māyā*], assume the forms called *vidyā* (limited knowledge) and *kalā* (limited agency), respectively, [sheathing] the self-limited fettered being. Just as a king, after taking away everything [from his subjects], gives them some money out of his kindness so that they might survive, so the *bodha*, after having assumed monadic form and becoming deprived of his omniscience, is then given the powers of limited knowledge and limited agency.

In this verse the connection of *kālā* (time) with knowledge is shown due to the importance of knowledge to monadic beings. These six sheaths (*kañcukas*) including the *māyā*, referred to above, are the sheaths that veil the monadic *puruṣa*, who is deprived of the [divine] powers such as omniscience, etc., by the *āṇava mala*, which is regarded as the innermost defilement, like an impurity in gold.

It may be asked what is the nature [of the five sheaths]? The reply is [given in the above by the phrase] "Now I know" by which thought the monadic subject experiences present time; with the thoughts "I knew it before" and "I shall know this in the future" the monadic subject relates all his knowledge to *kālā* (time) in the form of present, past, and future. With respect to action with [the thoughts] "I do," "I did it before," "I shall do this in the future," he also relates his action to *kālā* (time). This is called the *kālā kañcuka* (sheath in the form of time).

Similarly upon being veiled by the sheath of limited agency he is capable of doing [not everything but] only

"something." For example, while the monadic being is incapable of doing everything, he may be capable of making a pot, but not cloth, etc. This sheath is called *kalā kañcuka*.

The expression "only this" [used in the verse] means that from a specific cause he [the monadic *puruṣa*] obtains only a specific effect. For example, he obtains smoke from fire and heaven from the performance of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, etc. He does not obtain a specific effect from any or all causes. Thus the monadic being is restricted as a rule by the merit or demerit which is the result of deeds performed by him of his own volition. This is called *niyati kañcuka* (the sheath of limited causality).

In the same way, the expression "fully" [occurring in the verse] signifies the experience of incompleteness [causing the experience of attachment] in the monadic *puruṣa*<sup>1</sup> in the form of such notions as "all this is for my use," "I may become all this," and "I was never all this." [This experience of attachment] is what constitutes the *rāga* sheath. However, the feeling of attachment towards an object, such as towards a woman after dismissing the claims of others towards her, is a quality of the *buddhi* (intellect) and is not *rāga kañcuka*. This is because the *rāga tattva* stands for the desire for possessing all, and not a particular object, as is the case with the woman in our example.

The expression "I know" in the verse means the knowing by the monadic *puruṣa* of some object, like a jar, etc., that exists before him, and not some object that lies at some distance or hidden behind something. This is called *vidyā kañcuka*. It is mentioned as *avidyā* in the verses to distinguish it [limited knowledge] from the *śuddha vidyā*, and not to indicate the absence of the knowledge element in it.

These five *kañcukas*<sup>2</sup> that along with *māyā*, cover fettered beings cause the perception of differentiation.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 18*

It may be asked why the group of six *kañcukas* are regarded as internal. The reply given by the author is as follows:

### Verse 18

कम्बुकमिव तण्डुलकण-  
 विनिविष्टं भिन्नमप्यभिदा ।  
 भजते तत्तु विशुद्धिं  
 शिवमार्गौन्मुख्ययोगेन ॥ १८ ॥

*kambukam iva taṇḍula-kaṇa*  
*-viniviṣṭaṃ bhinnam apy abhidā*  
*bhajate tat tu viśuddhiṃ*  
*śiva-mārgaunmukhya-yogena || 18 ||*

The husk existing on a grain of rice, though existing separately, appears inseparable from the grain. But [the fettered being, who similarly seems attached to his fetters] attains purity by turning towards Śiva through Yoga and treading on his path.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 18*

The husk, though in reality separate from the grain of rice, is seen as inseparable from it. It appears on a grain of rice in such a way that it does not separate from it even after the rice is pounded by a skilled person. On the other hand, the *kañcukas* (sheaths) such as *māyā*, etc., existing in and covering the spiritual monad in the same intimate way as [the husk] on the grain of rice, are inseparably mixed with supreme consciousness, despite their being also different from it, like the husk covering [the rice]. This [explanation] is to be appended [to the above verse].



A question arises: how is this covering, which is extremely difficult to remove, to be separated? It may be stated here in reply that the word "but" in the [above] verse has been used to show that a special way exists of separating [the *kañcukas* (veils) covering the true nature of the Self], but no ordinary way exists for accomplishing this. The path of Śiva, who is non-different from the Self, lies in the self-experience as the divine Being, which takes the form "I am the supreme non-dual massive consciousness and bliss; the entire universe around me is only a display of my own divine power."

When the limited individual being becomes firmly devoted to following this path which is given the name *Yoga*. The practice of which, on becoming fully developed, enables him to establish contact with his divine essence. At that time the *kañcukas* are fully dissolved.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 19*

The spiritual monad in the form of an enjoyer presupposes the existence of an enjoyed object; hence the emergence of the *tattvas* from the *prakṛti* is described in the following verse:

Verse 19

सुखदुःखमोहमात्रं

निश्चयसंकल्पनाभिमानाच्च ।

प्रकृतिरथान्तःकरणं

बुद्धिमनोऽहंकृति क्रमशः ॥ १९ ॥



*sukha-duḥkha-moha-mātraṃ*  
*niścaya-saṃkalpanābhimānāc ca |*  
*prakṛtir athāntaḥ-karaṇaṃ*  
*buddhi-mano'haṃ-kṛti kramaśaḥ || 19 ||*

*Prakṛti* is of the nature of happiness, sorrow, and delusion and [from it emerge] the internal sense organs, the intellect (*buddhi*), the mind (*manas*), and the ego (*ahaṃkāra*), which are the instruments for determinate cognition (*niścaya*), volition (*saṃkalpa*), and false conception of one's Self (*abhimāna*), respectively.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 19*

*Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, which are happiness, sorrow, and delusion, when in a state of perfect equilibrium are called the primordial cause, *prakṛti*. After describing *prakṛti*, the internal sense organs are described in the verse as the products [of *prakṛti*]. Determinate cognition (*niścaya*) [which is the function of the intellect (*buddhi*)] is the experience of "this is like this"; *saṃkalpa* (volition) [which is the function of the mind (*manas*)] is thinking; and the false conception of one's Self (*abhimāna*) [which is the function of the ego (*ahaṃkāra*)] is the experience of "mineness." All these are called the intellect, the mind, and egoism respectively. These, the triad of the internal senses, are the products of the *guṇas* when held in the relationship of predominance and subordination. They are the causes of the physical elements (*bhūtas*) and external sense organs.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 20*

The external sense organs are described [in the the following verse]:

### Verse 20

श्रोत्रं त्वगक्षि रसना  
घ्राणं बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि शब्दादौ ।  
वाक्पाणिपादपायू-  
पस्थं कर्मेन्द्रियाणि पुनः ॥ २० ॥

*śrotraṃ tvag-akṣi rasanā  
ghrāṇaṃ buddhīndriyāṇi śabdādau ।  
vāk-pāṇi-pāda-pāyūpasthaṃ  
karmendriyāṇi punaḥ ॥ 20 ॥*

The sense organs, having sound and so on as their object of knowledge, are hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The organs of action are the organs of speech, grasping, locomotion, excretion, and procreation.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 20*

The five sense organs beginning with the sense of hearing, etc., are the instruments of knowledge with respect to objects like sound, etc. Their nature will be described later. The five organs of action [described above], beginning with the organ of speech, are mainly the instruments of action, whose fields of activity are speech, seizing, movement, excretion, and pleasure, respectively. All these activities are intimately related to the *ahaṁkāra* (ego). This is obvious from such statements as "I hear," "I speak," etc., and therefore they are held to be its products.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 21*

The nature of the objects experienced by these sense organs, sound, and so on, is described [in the following verse]:

### Verse 21

एषां ग्राह्यो विषयः

सूक्ष्मः प्रविभागवर्जितो यः स्यात् ।

तन्मात्रपञ्चकं तत्

शब्दः स्पर्शो महो रसो गन्धः ॥ २१ ॥

*eṣāṃ grāhyo viṣayaḥ*

*sūkṣmaḥ pravibhāga-varjito yaḥ syāt |*

*tanmātra-pañcakaṃ tat*

*śabdaḥ sparśo maho raso gandhaḥ || 21 ||*

The subtle objects [experienced by the sense organs] are devoid of differentiation. These are the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*): sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparśa*), form (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), and smell (*gandha*).

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 21*

Whatever is recognised as an object of cognition is one of the objects grasped by the sense organs. What is their nature? They are devoid of specific characteristics. [Their distinctions are not perceptible.] They are of general or subtle nature. For example, sound is *śabda tanmātra* [subtle sound, pure and non-specific], etc. Other subtle elements should be understood in the same manner. Since the object [i.e., the subtle elements] and the subject are interdependent, the sense organs and the five subtle elements [sound, etc.] are the products of *ahaṅkāra* (ego).

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 22*

From the intermixing of the [subtle] objects [like sound and so on] are born [gross] products like earth, etc. This is described [in the following verse].

### Verse 22

एतत्संसर्गविशात्  
स्थूलो विषयस्तु भूतपञ्चकताम् ।  
अभ्येति नभः पवनस्  
तेजः सलिलं च पृथ्वी च ॥ २२ ॥

*etat-saṁsarga-vaśāt*

*sthūlo viṣayas tu bhūta-pañcakatām*

*abhyeti nabhaḥ pavanas*

*tejaḥ salilaṁ ca pṛthvī ca || 22 ||*

From the intermixing of these [subtle elements] are born the gross objects, the five gross elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water, and earth.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 22*

The individual [perceptible] gross elements (*bhūtas*) are born from the intermixing of the [five subtle elements]. For example, from *śabda tanmātra* (the subtle element of sound), the *ākāśa* (the gross element of ether), possessing the specific attribute of sound is born. From [the combination of] *śabda* (the subtle element of sound) and *śparsa* (the subtle element of touch), *vāyu* (the gross element of air) [having sound and touch as its attributes] is born. From the two subtle elements [*śabda* and *śparsa*] combined with *rūpa* (the subtle element of form), *tejas* (the gross element of fire) is born. From these three, [*śabda*, *śparsa*, and *tejas*] combined with *rasa* (the



subtle element of taste), *jala* (the gross element of water) is born; and from these four [*śabda*, *śparsa*, *tejas*, and *jala*] combined with *gandha tanmātra* (the subtle element of smell), *pṛthvī* (the gross element of earth) is born. Thus the five *bhūtas* (gross elements) are produced. Since the products [of these combinations, which are the gross elements] possess the same attributes as their causes [which are the subtle elements], there is an increase of one attribute in each gross element produced. Thus *prakṛti* in the form of various products [twenty-three in number], each one produced from a cause-and-effect relationship [between *prakṛti* and her productions], serves *puruṣa*, by the will of the supreme Lord, as the object of enjoyment. In this way, the universe composed of thirty-six *tattvas* has been analysed and described *tattva* by *tattva*.

Yogarāja's introduction to verse 23

*Prakṛti*, like *māyā kañcuka*, serves as a covering veil of *puruṣa*. This is stated [in the following verse]:

### Verse 23

तुष इव तण्डुलकणिकाम्  
 आवृणुते प्रकृतिपूर्वकः सर्गः ।  
 पृथ्वीपर्यन्तोऽयं  
 चैतन्यं देहभावेन ॥ २३ ॥

*tuṣa iva taṇḍula-kaṇikām*  
*āvṛṇute prakṛti-pūrvakaḥ sargaḥ |*  
*prṛthvī-paryanto'yaṁ*  
*caitanyaṁ deha-bhāvena || 23 ||*

Creation, extending from *prakṛti* down to *prṛthvī* (earth), covers pure consciousness by providing a physical body in the same way a husk covers a grain of rice.

Yogarāja's commentary on verse 23

This creation, extending from *prakṛti* down to *prṛthvī* (earth), serves as the outermost cover to pure consciousness, like the husk covering a grain of rice. Pure consciousness is already covered by the veil of *māyā*, acting as a sheath (*kañcuka*). It is again covered by the veil [provided by *prakṛti*] in the form of a physical body, which serves as its outermost cover, like the husk of a grain of rice, providing a wall-like covering to each individual being (spiritual monad).

These individual subjects, endowed with the *tattvas*, extending from the *indriyas* (sense organs), also called the *kalās*, to the specific gross physical elements constituting

the physical body, are technically called *sakalas* (embodied beings). [There are also subjects who are] devoid of specific gross physical elements, and are therefore disembodied. These are called the *pralayākālas*. Thus, the entire creation is comprised of seven kinds of subjects beginning with Śiva and ending with the *sakalas*, and is presided over by both Rudra and *kṣetrajñas* (embodied beings).<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 24*

The sheaths (*kañcukas*) are of three kinds, the most subtle, the subtle, and the gross, as is stated [in the following verse]:

### Verse 24

परमावरणं मल इह  
 सूक्ष्मं मायादि कञ्चुकं स्थूलम् ।  
 बाह्यं विग्रहरूपं  
 कोशत्रयवेष्टितो ह्यात्मा ॥ २४ ॥

*paramāvaraṇaṁ mala iha  
 sūkṣmaṁ māyādi-kañcukaṁ sthūlaṁ |  
 bāhyaṁ vighraha-rūpaṁ  
 kośa-traya-veṣṭito hy ātmā || 24 ||*

Among the sheaths, the innermost [subtlest one] is the [*āṇava*] *mala*. The six kinds of sheaths (*kañcukas*) made from *māyā*, etc., form the subtle sheath. The outermost and gross covering is the physical body. The Self (*ātman*) is covered by these three kinds of sheaths.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 24*

The negation of the divine nature of pure consciousness [through self-contraction] is called the *āṇava mala*. This is the innermost sheath, like an alloy in gold, because it exists as identified with the very being of the Self. The group of six sheaths (*kañcukas*) constituted by the *tattvas*, beginning with *māyā* and ending with *vidyā*, is the subtle veil of the Self, like the integument in a grain of rice. It gives rise to the experience of knowership and doership, which is rooted in duality. This [group is collectively] known as the *māyīya mala*. The outermost covering, which is similar to the outermost husk in a grain of rice, is constituted by the physical body, made up of gross substances of skin and flesh and so on. This constitutes *kārma mala*, the third *mala*.

Equipped with the physical body, he [the spiritual monad] becomes subject to the accumulation of [the residual impressions of] meritorious and demeritorious deeds. In this way, the Self, infinite by nature, becomes covered by the three kinds of sheaths—the subtlest, the subtle, and the gross—and becomes contracted like ether in a jar; he is thus given the name of *paśu* (fettered being).

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 25*

Being subjected to these [three kinds of *malas* or defilements mentioned above], the subject [i.e. the Self] appears limited. This is stated in the following verse:



## Verse 25

अज्ञानतिमिरयोगाद्  
 एकमपि स्वं स्वभावमात्मानम् ।  
 ग्राह्यग्राहकनाना-  
 वैचित्र्येणावबुध्येत ॥ २५ ॥

*ajñāna-timira-yogād  
 ekam api svaṃ svabhāvam ātmānam |  
 grāhya-grāhaka-nānā  
 -vaicitryeṇāvabudhyeta || 25 ||*

On being subjected to the darkness of ignorance, he [the Self], though one by his very nature, knows himself as many in the form of the infinite variety of limited subjects and objects.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 25*

The Self, though non-dual by his very nature, creates the multiplicity of subjects, objects, and means of cognition, etc., when he is covered by the three kinds of sheaths. This experience of multiplicity, which is contrary to the experience of unity, occurs due to the negation of his divine nature by himself and not by another, thus giving rise to the darkness of ignorance. Just as a person suffering from an eye disease called *timira* [a kind of partial blindness] sees two moons instead of one in the sky and exclaims, pointing to one moon, "Look, there are two moons in the sky", so the individual covered by the darkness of ignorance mistakenly experiences multiplicity in place of the unity of the Self, though in reality there is only one moon shining in the sky. In the same way the individual, when his real nature is covered by the darkness of ignorance resulting in the experience of

multiplicity and discreteness [in the world], deals with or responds to everything as if it were different from himself, and desires the fruits [of his interactions with worldly objects] despite the fact that they are essentially non-different from him. As a consequence, he is repeatedly subjected to the enjoyment of hell or heaven, etc. [in accordance with his deeds]. Therefore, the author [employing the metaphor of eye disease] refers to the darkness of ignorance, as in both these cases they result in distorted vision.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 26*

The author [Abhinavagupta] illustrates the non-difference between the individual Self and the supreme Self, citing an example [from worldly life].

### Verse 26

रसफाणितशर्करिका-

गुडखण्डाद्या यथेक्षुरस एव ।

तद्वदावस्थाभेदाः

सर्वे परमात्मनः शम्भोः ॥ २६ ॥

*rasa-phāṇita-śarkarikā*

*-guḍa-khaṇḍādyā yathekṣu-rasa eva ।*

*tadvad avasthābhedaḥ*

*sarve paramātmāṇi śambhoḥ । । 26 । ।*

Just as [sugar cane] juice, jaggery, sugar, and gur, etc. are only [different forms or states of the same thing] sugar cane juice, so all beings abide in the supreme Lord Śambhu in different states or forms.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 26*

In the same way that these, the juice [and its products], are one and the same as the juice of the sugar cane because of the presence of sweetness in all of them, so all things, such as the subjects and objects existing in the different states of waking, dreaming, etc., are only the different forms [of the self-manifestation of] the supreme Lord, the ever self-same pure consciousness, or Śiva. This is because the supreme Lord is the innermost Self of all. And it is he who, assuming different roles out of his own free will, manifests himself as the different subjects and objects. This manifestation in different forms represents different states of his own self-manifestation, like the juice of the sugar cane [and its products]. There is nothing in this universe which is different from him. He is One because, as pure consciousness, he permeates all forms of his self-manifestation. Thus the supreme subject is the seer of all and therefore he experiences uniformity in all. As Śambhu-bhaṭṭaraka states:

*One existence or reality is the nature of all objects; [conversely] all objects are of the nature of one existence. One who has succeeded in seeing the one existence is able to see all objects.*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* [XVIII.20] also states:

*One who sees the one immutable reality in different objects considers his knowledge to be the sattvika (pure) one.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 27*

The different conceptions of the various [philosophical] schools of thought about the nature of the supreme reality are admitted for the sake of their conventional validity [on the empirical plane,] and as such they do not in fact hold good on the highest plane. This has been stated by the author [in the following verse]:

## Verse 27

विज्ञानान्तर्यामि-  
 प्राणविराड्देहजातिपिण्डान्ताः ।  
 व्यवहारमात्रमेतत्  
 परमार्थेन तु न सन्त्येव ॥ २७ ॥

*vijñānāntaryāmi*  
*-prāṇa-virāḍ-deha-jāti-piṇḍāntāḥ |*  
*vyavahāra-mātram etat*  
*paramārthena tu na santyeva || 27 ||*

[Notions like] "stream of pure awareness," "the witness," "the vital breath," "the all-pervasive body," "the Universal," and "the individual" are only conventionally true on the empirical plane. They have no actual existence.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 27*

*Vijñāna*, or pure awareness, though free from limitations, name and form, is manifested in the different properties of external objects such as blue, happiness, etc., due to the power of residual impressions (*vāsanās*) stored in it from time immemorial, serving as the impelling force for the awakening of the multiplicity [lying latent in it]. This is [the view] of the *Vijñānavādins*.



The view of the adherents of Brahman (the Advaita Vedāntins) is that the supreme Brahman, who exists as the innermost being in all, manifests itself as multiplicity due to beginningless ignorance. They base this view on scriptural statements [such as] "Puruṣa is all" and "there is no multiplicity".

In neither of these views has divine freedom been mentioned as inherent in pure consciousness, which is the root cause as well as the essence of the world manifestation. Others speak of prāṇa as Brahman. Thus they hold that the self-aware śabda-brahman (the eternal word) is the supreme reality because the cosmic prāṇa pervades the entire cosmos and nothing exists apart from the prāṇa. Hence the cosmic prāṇa should be regarded as the supreme reality. Others hold that the all-inclusive universal body of the Brahman is the all-pervasive reality. As has been said:

*Salutations to the universal being who has fire as his mouth, heaven as his head, the sky as his navel, the earth as his legs, the sun as his eye, and different directions as his ears. . . .*

The Vaiśeṣikas call ultimate reality "the universal" and consider it to be of the nature of all-pervasive existence, the substratum of all substances and attributes in all existent substances. Some others consider the embodied individual (piṇḍa) as the ultimate reality. They accept no such thing as a universal which is said to be the substratum of all attributes, hence it is logical for them to postulate the embodied individual as the ultimate reality. All our activities center around our individual being; hence why should a universal be admitted at all? In this way, disputing the very existence of such arguments alleging a universal, and not

finding any other all-pervasive category which could serve as the root cause for individual beings to emerge, they do not admit a universal as the ultimate reality. Thus the different views about the nature of ultimate reality [stated in the foregoing paragraphs], beginning with *vijñāna* (the stream of consciousness) and ending with *piṇḍa* (the individual being), are only apparent, not real or factually correct. According to the proponents of the doctrine of divine freedom [the non-dual Śaivites], reality is of the nature of self-effulgent illumination, and as such it cannot be extinguished or obliterated. The different views about the nature of ultimate reality refer only to an apparent reality, and as such have no credence. These views are untrue, not corresponding to reality. As a matter of fact, they have been imagined by other dualistic schools of thought, and only exist as such. Therefore there is only one ultimate reality, the supreme illumination, which is the same as the ever-free pure consciousness, the supreme Lord, who manifests himself in different forms [out of his own free will] in the absence of any reality different from himself. Anything different from him, the pure self-effulgent illumination, would necessarily be unmanifest, and therefore would always be unknowable and unknown. As has been said:

*Whatever reality is designated as the ultimate reality, based on the concepts arising from the mental effort of those who indulge in philosophising, is in fact your [the supreme Lord's] own form, and nothing else. The rest is only a difference in opinion over the designation [name of the ultimate reality] among the [so-called] learned.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 28*

Now an instance is cited to prove the falsity of delusion.

### Verse 28

रज्ज्वां नास्ति भुजङ्गस्  
 त्रासं कुरुते च मृत्युपर्यन्तम् ।  
 भ्रान्तेर्महती शक्तिर्  
 न विवेक्तुं शक्यते नाम ॥ २८ ॥

*rajjvāṃ nāsti bhujaṅgas  
 trāsaṃ kurute ca mṛtyu-paryantam |  
 bhrānter mahatī śaktir  
 na vivektuṃ śakyate nāma || 28 ||*

A snake does not exist in a rope, yet it can frighten someone to death. The power of delusion is so great that it is not possible to know its true nature.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 28*

Non-cognition of one's true nature as fullness is delusion. Its great power, expressed in the manifestation of an [apparent] form [completely] different from its true nature, cannot even be imagined by anyone. [To illustrate], a piece of rope, though existing as a real rope, appears erroneously as a snake on account of its length and coiled form. This perception of a rope as a snake is the perception of a non-existent thing by the perceiver. Thus, a delusion which is taken as a real cognition is what really causes fear, lasting till death. Again it is a common experience that one sometimes sees the stump of a tree as a demon, superimposing a terrible fiendish look on the tree, which [in some cases might result] in the heartbeat stopping and death. The root cause of delusion is an imperfect projection.

Yogarāja's introduction to verse 29

This concept is discussed [in the following verse]:

### Verse 29

तद्वद् धर्माधर्म  
स्वर्निरयोत्पत्तिमरणसुखदुःखम् ।  
वर्णाश्रमादि चात्म-  
न्यसदपि विभ्रमबलाद्भवति ॥ २९ ॥

*tadvad dharmādharma*

*svar-nirayotpatti-marana-sukha-duḥkham ।*

*varṇāśramādi cātmany asad api*

*vibhrama-balād bhavati ॥ 29 ॥*

Similarly, merit and demerit, heaven and hell, birth and death, joy and sorrow, *varṇa* (caste), and *āśrama* (stages of life), etc., though non-existent in the pure Self, arise by the strength of delusion.

Yogarāja's commentary on verse 29

Just as a piece of rope, though only a rope, is perceived as a snake due to delusion, and thus causes a corresponding response [to that delusion], so merit, etc., though non-existent in reality [in the pure Self], are falsely cognised as existent [in the Self] due to *māyā's* power of delusion. Meritorious acts such as the performance of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice; demeritorious acts such as the killing of a brahmin, etc.; the enjoyment of the unsurpassable happiness of heaven; the terrible suffering of hell; birth, and death which is the end of birth and life; happiness and sorrow—all are products of *rajas*.



"*Varṇa*" [in the above verse] refers to the feeling "I am a brahmin" [etc.]; and "*āśrama*" means [the stages of life such as] *brahmacarya*. "Etc." [in the above verse] refers to *tapas* (austerities) and *vrata* (religious vows), etc. All these are mental creations produced by the power of delusion of *māyā śakti*, and are falsely experienced in the Self identified with the body. They arise from the power of delusion which causes limited beings to be continually subject to birth and death and the enjoyment of heaven and hell. But in reality merit and demerit exist apart from the pure Self, which is of the nature of pure consciousness and massive bliss.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 30*

Having described the power of delusion in manifesting the non-existent, [the author] now indicates the origin [of this power of delusion] in the following verse:

### Verse 30

एतत् तद् अन्धकारं  
यद् भावेषु प्रकाशमानतया ।  
आत्मानतिरिक्तेष्वपि  
भवत्यनात्माभिमानोऽयम् ॥ ३० ॥

*etat tad andhakāraṃ  
yad bhāveṣu prakāśa-mānatayā ।  
ātmanatirikṭeṣv api  
bhavaty anātmābhimāno'yam ॥ 30 ॥*

This darkness [of delusion], which is manifested through [apparently] existing objects, makes one experience the non-self in things which in fact are identical with the Self.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 30*

As has already been stated, it is universal delusion which, being of the nature of non-cognition (*akhyāeti*) of his fullness, is manifested in all perceivers and perceived objects existing on the different levels of creation.<sup>1</sup> It has been stated [in an unnamed text]:

*That which is really unmanifest cannot be manifested.*

Despite the fact that manifestation cannot be logically explained [except as supreme consciousness], and despite everything being essentially non-different from the supreme consciousness that is manifested through the medium of the physical body, objects appear as different from the Self in the form of objects of cognition, and also as external to and different from the cognisor or subject. [Nonetheless, they are essentially one and identical with supreme consciousness.] The experience of the Self in the not-self [such as the physical body experienced by the embodied being] is nothing but the experience of matter, which is unreal and as such occurs through the negation of consciousness. In other words, the manifestation of objects that are really non-manifest, caused by external residual impressions (*vāsanās*), is never seen. But the Self, being of the nature of self-luminous light, is free in manifesting itself as an object in the form of [the properties of] blue, happiness, etc. Therefore [it is held that] the real [monistic] nature [of the Self], which is constituted by the experience of the pure *aham* (self-experience in the form of Self), expressed in the form of a subject-object relationship, is not manifested; only the unreal distinction between subject and object is manifested [during everyday worldly experience]. It is for this reason that delusion has been compared to darkness that is due to the absence of the manifestation of the true nature [of the Self].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 31*

While maintaining that the experience of the Self in the not-self is preceded by the experience of the not-self in the real Self, the totally delusive nature of ignorance is now described.

### Verse 31

तिमिरादपि तिमिरमिदं  
गण्डस्योपरि महानयं स्फोटः ।  
यदनात्मन्यपि देह-  
प्राणादावात्ममानित्वम् ॥ ३१ ॥

*timirād api timiram idaṃ  
gaṇḍasyopari mahānayaṃ sphoṭaḥ ।  
yad anātmany api deha  
-prāṇādāva ātma-mānitvam ॥ 31 ॥*

The experience of the Self in the not-self, such as the physical body or the vital air, is like darkness superimposed on darkness. It can be likened to a boil formed on the burned [part of the body].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 31*

In the beginning, the manifestation of grossness characterised by differentiation is caused by darkness in the form of delusion in the self-existent pure being-consciousness, due to which existent objects which are really non-different from the Self are experienced as different from the Self. It is therefore said that delusion is like darkness superimposed upon darkness. Just as one moon is seen doubly as two moons due to the presence of darkness in a diseased eye, so all objects, despite their being of the nature of the Self [pure



consciousness], appear as different [from the Self] in the form of the not-self, and also as differentiated from each other. In this way, another veil of darkness [the *bauddha ajñāna*, or intellectual ignorance] appears to have fallen on the darkness [arising from self-contraction or *pauruṣa ajñāna*], and is another delusion arising from the fundamental delusion, here likened to the development of a boil on scalded skin.<sup>1</sup>

One experiences the Self [in the not-self] in all objects of experience, such as the physical body, the vital air, etc. [due to false identification caused by ignorance]. They [the objects of experience] appear as gross due to the negation of their nature as consciousness in the form of "I am lean," "I am fat," "I am hungry," "I am happy," "I have nothing," and so on. Such experiences of the Self in the not-self are obviously due to false identification of the Self with the not-self [due to the absence of the knowledge of the real nature of the Self caused by its self-contraction] and as such are very disturbing in the same way [that this identification of the Self as the not-self is disturbing due to the absence of knowledge of the Self in the real Self.] The same is true when [properties like] "blue," "happiness," etc., are perceived as different from the Self.

This too is possible in the case of any object. But it is true in the case of some objects, like the physical body, etc., that even though they are insentient in nature, there is some "sprinkling of the nectar" of the Self in the living body due to the presence of consciousness in them. On the other hand, some objects [or properties] like blue, happiness, etc., are experienced as objects (*idam*) devoid of sentience.

These two divergent experiences of objects, or the not-self, arising from the superimposition of the Self on the not-self [in one case] and the superimposition of the not-self on the Self or pure consciousness [in the other] are a deplorable state of affairs in the world and are responsible for causing bondage



to individuals and afflicting them with pain. All this has been stated by the female ascetic Madālasā in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*:

*A chariot stands on the earth; a physical body sits on the chariot; a person lives in the body; even then the person does not feel any of the attachment towards the earth that he feels for his body—this is the height of his foolishness.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 32*

Thus he binds himself through false self-experiences arising from his ignorance about his true nature, as stated in the following verse:

### Verse 32

देहप्राणविमर्शन-  
धीज्ञाननभःप्रपञ्चयोगेन ।  
आत्मानं वेष्टयते  
चित्रं जालेन जालकार इव ॥ ३२ ॥

*deha-prāṇa-vimarśana*  
*-dhījñāna-nabhaḥ-prapañca-yogena ।*  
*ātmānaṁ veṣṭayate*  
*citraṁ jālena jāla-kāra iva ॥ 32 ॥*

Just as a spider [ensnares himself] in his web, so he [the embodied man in the world] binds himself by experiencing worldly objects like the physical body, the vital breath, intellectual knowledge, and the expanse of sky.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 32*

All subjects who experience pure consciousness veiled by ignorance bind themselves by the bonds of a self-generated conceptual knowledge [of the Self in the not-self]. In what way?

The reply is: With the help of the physical body. One creates the conceptual knowledge of the Self in the not-self with the help of the experience of the Self identified with the physical body, or identified with the vital breath, or with intellectual knowledge, or with the expanse of sky, etc. Just as

ignorant women or ill-educated farmers consider their physical bodies as the Self and as a consequence have the experience "I am lean," "I am fat," "I am beautiful," or "I am a scholar," and so on, so persons with limited vision wrongly consider all such experiences as the experience of their Self.

The physical body is dissolved here in this world [after death]; how then can it be regarded as the real Self? In the same way, those who regard the vital air to be their real Self on the basis of experiencing that they are hungry, thirsty, etc. [are also mistaken], though they consider themselves wiser than the former. Since the physical body and the vital airs are also material in nature like a lump of earth, how can these be regarded as the Self? Likewise, there are those who experience pleasure or pain articulated by them in expressions such as "I am happy" or "I am unhappy," and who consider embodied consciousness to be their Self. Such persons, for example the Mīmāṃsakas, consider themselves wiser than those who regard the vital air to be the Self. But since the experiences of pleasure or pain are the characteristics or the traits of the intellect (*buddhi*) [comprised of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*], how can the intellect, possessing such characteristics, be regarded as the Self?

Therefore, the Śūnyavādins hold the Self to be that in which there is a total absence of any such conceptual knowledge as the experience of the Self identified with the physical body, vital airs, intellect, etc. They therefore argue that whatever thing is experienced as "this" cannot be regarded as the Self. The Self is unknowable and as such is indescribable [*śūnya* or void]. In other words, it intrinsically has the nature of negation. This [void] is what is indicated in the verse by the word "sky."

During the state of trance, the spiritual adept cognises negation or the void as the object of his knowledge. [But since the cognisor's Self cannot be an object of knowledge] the spiritual adept [on reflection] has the experience "I am not even this negation or void." In this way, another kind of void has to be admitted as the Self. Therefore [the Brahmvādins] regard the void as the Self only after giving up any particular kind of void in their descriptions of the real Self, using such expressions as "not this, not this." The author has tried to convey this in the verse by using the phrase "expanse of the sky."

Yogins, not being able to grasp the real Self's nature as pure consciousness, remain immersed, as it were, in the cave of dreamless sleep, regarding the Self's nature to be the void. They thereby bind their Self, whose nature is pure consciousness, by a web of insensibility, deluded by the identification of the Self with something dumb.

[One would think such delusion should be the cause] for surprise or distress, which no individual could possibly wish to cause to himself. Citing an example from everyday experience, the author says that just as a spider binds its omnipresent Self in the form of a body with the cobwebs made by itself out of its guts and subsequently perishes therein, so the individual being, regarding his body to be his Self, binds himself by imaginary concepts (*vikalpa*) in the form of "I" and "mine." <sup>1</sup>



This has been beautifully expressed by the Buddhists thus:

*When one looks upon himself as the Self, he regards himself as a unique being due to the distinction between the Self and another being [i.e. the not-self]; this causes bondage and hostility [between the Self and the not-self]. All evils ensue from the assumption of such bondage.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 33*

How can this great delusion arising from the experience of the Self in the not-self, such as the physical body, which is difficult to eradicate, be destroyed? [Abhinavagupta's reply] is that only the divine freedom of the supreme Lord is capable of eradicating all such delusion, as he states:

### Verse 33

स्वज्ञानविभवभासन-  
योगेनोद्वेष्टयेन्निजात्मानम् ।  
इति बन्धमोक्षचित्रां  
क्रीडां प्रतनोति परमशिवः ॥ ३३ ॥

*sva-jñāna-vibhava-bhāsana*  
*-yogenodveṣṭayen nijātmānam ।*  
*iti bandha-mokṣa-citrāṃ*  
*krīḍāṃ pratanoti paramaśivaḥ । 33 ।*

Lord Paramaśiva liberates himself from bondage by loosening its grip through the glory of knowledge of the Self. Thus bondage and liberation are his divine play.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 33*

The supreme Lord liberates himself [from his self-imposed bondage] by experiencing himself as pure consciousness. This self-experience implies the knowledge of his innate divine freedom, the glory of which causes the dissolution of the [false] identification of the Self with the physical body, etc. This results in the experience of the supreme "I" (*pūrṇāhaṁitā*) which signifies the expansion of his freedom. He then has the experience "I am pure consciousness, massive bliss, and absolute freedom," thereby realizing his true nature as the supreme Lord.

This self-experience by the supreme Lord of his nature as pure knowledge and freedom takes the form of "All this world-object is my own glory." In this manner, he experiences the entire externally existing world-object as existing within himself. His constant meditation on this [experience] culminates in its strengthening.

The supreme Lord then liberates the individual being, who being of the nature of pure consciousness, is none other than himself, by means of the illuminating knowledge of his real divine Self in the form of his experience "I am pure consciousness and absolute freedom." The supreme Lord has shackled himself out of his own free will by fetters in the form of the experience of his Self in a physical body or vital air or subtle body or void [all of them belonging to the category of not-self], and it is he who unshackles himself out of his own free will. In this manner, that which veils the real Self, arising from the identification of the Self with the physical body, etc., due to the non-cognition of one's real spiritual essence, is fully removed by the illuminating light of real knowledge.

Bondage is thus only imaginary, created by one's own thought constructs. This has been stated by the author [Abhinavagupta] himself in his book, *Tantrasāra*:

*The fettered being (paśu) imagines that he is material by nature, bound by his actions, affected by the defilements [the āṇava, the māyīya, and the kārma malas] and motivated by others. This kind of false self-experience is eradicated completely by another kind of [true] self-experience, culminating in his immediately becoming the all-pervasive supreme Lord.*

It may be asked why the supreme Lord first fetters himself and then liberates himself. The reply given by the author [Abhinavagupta] by the phrase in the above verse beginning with "thus bondage" signifies that the supreme Lord, Paramaśiva, who is absolutely free and is of the nature of the absolute and massive consciousness and massive bliss, assumes bondage by identifying himself with the physical body, etc., after negating his divine essence, owing to the sportive nature of his self-concealment. Again he casts aside his self-imposed bondage out of his free will by the illuminating light of the true knowledge of his essence. The supreme Lord thus frees himself [i.e. the fettered individual] who is really none other than himself [the supreme Lord].

In this way, he reveals his divine sport,<sup>1</sup> consisting of his self-created bondage and subsequent liberation, a sport which he could not experience and enjoy were he alone. It is the very nature of Śiva that he, remaining always the supreme Lord, manifests himself in different roles in the world as [various] subjects. This is the essence of his unrestricted divine freedom.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 34*

Besides this, there are other states that are manifested, resting in the highest state of the supreme Lord's essence. All this is explained [in the following verse]:

### Verse 34

सृष्टिस्थितिसंहारा

जाग्रत्स्वप्नौ सुषुप्तमिति तस्मिन् ।

भान्ति तुरीये धामनि

तथापि तैर्नावृतं भाति ॥ ३४ ॥

*sṛṣṭi-sthiti-saṁhārā*

*jāgrat-svapnau suṣuptam iti tasmin |*

*bhānti turīye dhāmani*

*tathāpi tair nāvṛtaṁ bhāti || 34 ||*

Creation, maintenance, and dissolution [and the states of] waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep, appear in him [the supreme Lord] in the fourth state, but even in that state he reveals himself as not covered [i.e., not affected] by them.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 34*

Looking respectively from the cosmic and the individual subject's point of view, both the states of creation, etc., and the states of waking, etc., are revealed as existing in the fourth abode of the supreme Lord, whose nature is massive bliss and absolute supreme "I" (*pūrṇāhaṁtā*). All these [states] owe their existence to their resting in the fourth abode [of the supreme Lord], though they appear as existing outside the imagined subject.



Whatever is not manifested as part of the supreme Lord's being cannot manifest externally. Therefore the fourth state permeates all the states of being. This has also been stated in *Śiva Sūtra* [III.20]:

*The fourth abode permeates the three states like oil.*

This is the intended meaning [of the above verse].

[It may be asked] whether his being is veiled by the three states. The reply given is that his nature cannot be veiled by the three states. Thus the fourth abode appears always as manifested [to all subjects] on account of its transcendence and its permeating all the other states. The nature of the fourth state is not affected by the fact that its presence permeates all the three states. Thus the fourth state always remains full-in-itself [unaffected by its presence in all the three preceding states].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 35*

The author [Abhinavagupta] describes the three states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep in terms given in the Upaniṣads, mentioning that the fourth state is beyond the three states, notwithstanding the fact that it permeates them. He indicates [this in the following verse]:

### Verse 35

जाग्रद्विश्वं भेदात्  
स्वप्नस्तेजः प्रकाशमाहात्म्यात् ।  
प्राज्ञः सुप्तावस्था  
ज्ञानघनत्वात्ततः परं तुर्यम् ॥ ३५ ॥

*jāgrad viśvaṃ bhedāt  
svapnas tejah prakāśa-māhātmyāt ।  
prājñāḥ suptāvasthā  
jñāna-ghanatvāt tataḥ paraṃ turyam ।। 35 ।।*

The waking state corresponds to the universe (*viśva*) because of differentiation. The dreaming state corresponds to illumination (*tejas*) on account of the dominance of light. The state of dreamless slumber corresponds to understanding (*prājñā*), as this state is characterised by massive knowledge, and the fourth (*turya*) state is beyond all these.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 35*

The waking state is the universe, corresponding to the *virāj* (all-encompassing) state of Brahman. Why so? Because of the prevalence of differentiation [which characterises the universe]. The supreme Lord has created diverse objects like

sound etc., which the various sense-organs perceive. In this manner, through Brahman's power of cognition, variety occurs. [This variety] emanates from contact [between sense organ and] sense object existing externally as subject and object. Therefore it has been stated in the *Śiva Sūtras*:

*Knowledge is the waking state. (Śiva Sūtra 1.5)*

This [the waking state] is regarded as the *virāj* (the all encompassing) state of Brahman. As has been mentioned in the scriptural text:

*He who has eyes on all sides, mouths on all sides, arms on all sides, and legs on all sides. Creating heaven and earth, alone forges all the creatures with two hands and two wings.*  
[Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad III.3]

The dream state is the state of illumination (*tejas*). Why so? On account of the dominance of light in this state. In the dream state, the external sense organs do not function with respect to [sense] objects such as sound and so on, nor do [sense] objects like sounds, etc., really exist [for apprehension by sense organs in this state]. There is no other cause [than the illumination cited above] for the determinate knowledge of objects to arise in that state. Nevertheless, objects do appear before the mind in the dream state. Therefore, the logical presumption is that it is the supreme Lord's nature to assume the role of a subject and then to manifest himself in a variety of objects, such as a house, city, walls, etc., in dreams [experienced] individually by different subjects, in the exercise of his divine freedom. In this way, he manifests the variety of the world to different subjects in different forms in the dream state.

The proponents of the theory of Brahman have admitted the existence of the freedom of Brahman in the dream state. The Vedānta [in an unspecified text] says:

*Differentiating himself from himself and creating the different kinds of objects, the omnipresent one, the supreme Lord, appears as the enjoyer in the dream state.*

Illumination (*tejas*) is at the root of such creation; therefore the dream state is the illuminating state of Brahman.

Similarly, *prājña* is Brahman's state of [dreamless] sleep. That which is the state of [dreamless] sleep for all subjects in creation is the dreamless state of Brahman, the state of *prājña*. Since the subject-object relationship is dissolved in the dreamless state, it is the void in all subjects. The residual impressions of objects remain after their dissolution. Therefore the seeds of future creations remain in the dreamless state. This is the *prājña* state of Brahman, where Brahman alone exists in the form of the universal subject.

Since the infinite variety of the world manifested in the form of blue, happiness, etc., is experienced by all subjects [on the empirical level], and then [in the dreamless state] they exist only as residual impressions, this state is undoubtedly one of dreamlessness on the part of Brahman the universal subject. On awakening, he the universal subject experiences all [the totality of objects] as if they had been experienced by him before. If Brahman does not hold the [residual impressions] of the totality of objects in his bosom, then the memory of objects experienced before in the form of "these are similar to what I have known before" could not arise in him, Brahman the universal subject [when he awakes]. The subsequent knowledge in the form of "I slept well," "I had a painful experience in sleep," or "I lost all consciousness in



sleep" could not otherwise have arisen in him as the subject. Divākara Vatsa has rightly observed:

*If all the objects experienced by you do not remain stored in you fully identified with yourself, then how could their memory arise at all, erasing their first experience?*

In this manner, the state of deep sleep is the state of awareness of Brahman in which consciousness persists [in latent form].

Why so? Because it is a state of massive knowledge. The state of massive knowledge is the distinguishing feature of deep sleep and the fourth state. This is confirmed in [the above verse]. The state of deep sleep, whose nature is pure illumination, is characterised by massive knowledge, but since the world of objects in this state remains fully dissolved, existing only in the form of residual impressions, it is not wholly of the nature of consciousness, hence the cognition of the object remains hazy. As has been said in the *Spanda Kārikās* [I.18]:

*The omnipresent Being [i.e. Paramaśiva] who is endowed with the supreme Śakti in the form of the knowledge of worldly objects is manifested in the two states, waking and dreaming [in the mundane world]; he is manifested in other states, i.e. the deep sleep state and the fourth [turiya] state only as pure consciousness.*

Higher than this [the state of deep sleep] is the fourth state, and this state of Brahman is one of fullness and bliss in the true sense of the term, as it is absolutely free from even the residual impressions of objects. No other description is appropriate because this state is the resting place [the locus] of the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. As such

it permeates all these three states. Therefore the phrase "characterised by massive knowledge" appears in the verse.

Since the states of waking, sleep, and deep sleep in subjects are dominated by ignorance, these are characterised by differentiation. The fourth state, on the other hand, embodies massive knowledge, illumination, and bliss because of the dissolution of subject-object differentiation [including their] residual impressions. Therefore, the fourth state (*turya*), whose nature is pure consciousness, is different from the others, though it is present in the three states of waking etc., while at the same time existing above them. In this way Brahman, who is the supreme, non-dual Being and is absolutely free and full-in-himself, manifests in and through the three states.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 36*

It may be asked: Given that he [the Self] is held to permeate all subjects, is the pure supreme Self subject to the ignorance that is found in the different limited subjects on the empirical plane? The reply is no, and is indicated with the help of an illustration [in the following verse]:

Verse 36

जलधरधूमरजोभिर्  
मलिनीक्रियते यथा न गगनतलम् ।  
तद्वन्मायाविकृतिभिर्  
अपरामृष्टः परः पुरुषः ॥ ३६ ॥

jala-dhara-dhūma-rajobhir  
 malinī-kriyate yathā na gagana-talam |  
 tadvan māyā-vikṛtibhir  
 aparāmṛṣṭaḥ paraḥ puruṣaḥ || 36 ||

Just as the vast expanse of sky is not defiled by clouds nor smoke nor dust, so the supreme Being is not affected by the changes of *māyā*.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 36*

Just as the surface of the sky is intrinsically pure and is not defiled by clouds, smoke, or dust floating on the horizon, nor is its permanence and wide expanse affected by them, and just as it [the Self] also remains undefiled under all different situations, like the sky reflected in a clear mirror, and is always recognised as such, so it [the Self] never loses its essence in different situations and conditions like the birth, death, etc., of limited subjects which are emanated from ignorance caused by the changes in *māyā*.

The supreme Being is both the source of the emanation and the resting place of all living beings. That he always manifests himself as all [limited] beings is pointed out by using the word "supreme" [in the expression "supreme Being" in the above verse]. Hence the Lord is like a magician [untouched by the exercise of his magical powers] who is unblemished by the modifications of the self-born *māyā*. This has been stated by my great great grand teacher [Utpaladeva] in his work *Ajaḍa-pramāṭṛ-siddhi*:

*Although the manifestation of the ultimate Being is restricted in limited beings by the vital breath and the physical body, it remains unaffected in the supreme Being. The vital breath is also his form; how then can he be affected by it?*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 37*

Since the real essence of all limited beings is pure consciousness, how can they be conditioned by different situations such as birth, death, delusion, suffering, happiness, etc? The answer is given [in the following verse] citing a suitable example:

## Verse 37

एकस्मिन् घटगगने  
 रजसा व्याप्ते भवन्ति नान्यानि ।  
 मलिनानि तद्वदेते  
 जीवाः सुखदुःखभेदजुषः ॥ ३७ ॥

*ekasmin ghaṭa-gagane  
 rajasā vyāpte bhavanti nānyāni ।  
 malināni tad vadete  
 jīvāḥ sukha-duḥkha-bheda-juṣaḥ ॥ 37 ॥*

When the ether in one jar is filled with dust, the ether in other jars is not then defiled. This is also true for those souls that undergo differentiation with respect to joy and sorrow.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 37*

Just as the ether in a jar is not contaminated from the dust particles in the ether in another jar, despite the fact that the ether in all of them is common, similarly the numerous limited beings remain essentially the same despite their mutual differentiations.

Although ether is intrinsically free from contamination and is extensive and eternal, it becomes contracted on account of being limited by a jar. The contraction of ether [in spatial



terms] arises from its limiting property, a particular jar. The nature of ether, [for example] one surrounded by a jar, the other by a piece of cloth, etc., which has been made fragrant by the use of sandalwood or musk or some other substance, is not changed since its essence remains ether. In other words, ether surrounded by different objects does not undergo differentiation caused by the limiting property [of the surrounding object]. On the contrary, ether, being one and the same in essence, appears in a variety of forms only upon being surrounded by varying limiting properties. Thus ether remains ether, despite contraction caused by a jar, etc., because its ability to perform the actions [of ether] persists also in that form [when surrounded by a jar]. The defilement of ether due to its association with limited properties like a jar, etc., cannot hide its essential nature nor can they [the limiting properties] cause any differentiation [in the ether itself].

In the same way, *puruṣas*, or limited beings, who are pure consciousness in essence, and who are covered by the three veils or defilements, *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma* caused by the functioning of the *māyā śakti* of the supreme Lord, appear to be deprived of their absolute extensive consciousness and blissful essence. As a consequence, they become distinct from one another or discrete, owing to differentiations caused by the presence of the three coverings in them, as in the case of ether surrounded by limiting properties such as a jar, a [piece of] cloth, etc. Thus the differentiation caused by the coverings of *māyā* [in pure consciousness] is given the name of *jīva* (limited being).

As a matter of fact [from the highest perspective], the use of terms such as *jīvas* (souls), *puruṣas* (persons), *ātmans* (selves), *aṇu* (atom), as used in the texts of certain schools of philosophical thought to refer to [the self-contractual form of] the supreme Lord whose nature is unlimited pure

consciousness and bliss, is not proper. Limited beings covered by the veils of *āṇava*, etc., and endowed with different physical bodies caused by the beginningless *kārma mala* are of infinite variety, and the residual impressions caused by them [the veils] are incapable of effecting the experience of unity. Just as the ether surrounded by a jar, etc., or a cloth perfumed by different kinds of scents do not produce the experience of unity [since they appear as different on account of the differentiation caused by various limiting properties], so limited beings seem different from one another despite their being of the nature of pure consciousness in essence.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 38*

Thus the different conditions in which the limited beings exist [on the worldly plane] are attributed to the supreme Lord [being the sole reality]. But as a matter of fact they do not apply [to the Lord]. This has been explained in the following verse:

## Verse 38

शान्ते शान्त इवायं  
 हृष्टे हृष्टो विमोहवति मूढः ।  
 तत्त्वगणे सति भगवान्  
 न पुनः परमार्थतः स तथा ॥ ३८ ॥

*śānte śānta ivāyaṃ  
 hr̥ṣṭe hr̥ṣṭo vimohavati mūḍhaḥ ।  
 tattva-gaṇe sati bhagavān  
 na punaḥ paramārthataḥ sa tathā || 38 ||*

The supreme Lord seems still when the various elements are still; glad when they are glad; gloomy when they are gloomy; but truly he is not so.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 38*

When the *tattvas* (elements) or the senses are stilled or withdrawn, the Lord residing in them [as the underlying reality] is regarded as still; in the same way, when they are joyous, the Lord is considered so; similarly, when they are deluded, the Lord also appears to be so, covered by *tamas* like immovable and unconscious objects such as trees, etc. But the supreme Lord is really not so [affected]. All inanimate creation is created and destroyed, but in the supreme Lord, who is eternal, there is really no creation or destruction, despite his being covered by *māyā*, etc. In other words the supreme Lord always remains as he is, ever unchanged.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 39*

The delusion which has come into existence ever since the first creation is completely annihilated by pure knowledge, and the divine freedom of the pure Self is the root cause of this, as has been indicated in the following verse:

## Verse 39

यदनात्मन्यपि तद्रूपाव-  
 अभासनं तत् पुरा निराकृत्य ।  
 आत्मन्यनात्मरूपां  
 भ्रान्तिं विदलयति परमात्मा ॥ ३९ ॥

*yad-anātmany api tad-rūpāvabhāsanam*  
*tat purā nirākṛtya*  
*ātmany anātma-rūpām*  
*bhrāntiṃ vidalayati paramātmā || 39 ||*

Having first annihilated the semblance of the Self in the not-self, the supreme Lord shatters the delusion that causes the experience of the not-self in the Self.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 39*

[The manifestation of the semblance of Self in] the not-self taking the form of the insentient body, etc., which gives rise to such self-experiences as "I am thin," "I am fat," etc., is what is known as the experience of Self in the not-self [called intellectual ignorance, *bauddha ajñāna*]. The first step towards the removal of delusion about one's real nature is the self-experience "I am massive consciousness and bliss, unlimited and free in nature," which occurs by removing the false experience of the Self in not-self (*anātmani ātma-bodha*).



When the individual being is freed from the bondage caused by the false identification of the physical body with the Self, he becomes the divine Self. The delusion which causes the cognition of diversity is destroyed by the knowledge of the real Self in the form of "I am of the nature of the universe [self-luminous illumination, universal in nature, in which everything in creation exists]."

The gist of what is being expressed here is that so long as the [false] experience of the Self in the not-self, such as the physical body, etc., is not ended, the false experience of duality and diversity in the world will not disappear, despite his [the individual's] possession of a universal nature. Therefore it is held that the false experience of the not-self in the Self (*pauruṣa ajñāna*) is destroyed by the supreme Lord himself [by infusing the fettered individual with his grace] after annihilating the experience of Self [i.e., the semblance of the Self]. None other [than the supreme Lord] has the power to achieve this.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 40*

Thus, the spiritual adept who has become a divine being following the destruction of the two kinds of illusions—[spiritual ignorance and intellectual ignorance]—has nothing more to achieve, as has been stated in the following verse:

## Verse 40

इत्थं विभ्रमयुगलक-  
 समूलविच्छेदने कृतार्थस्य ।  
 कर्तव्यान्तरकलना  
 न जातु परयोगिनो भवति ॥ ४० ॥

*itthaṃ vibhrama-yugalaka*  
*-samūla-vicchedane kṛtārthasya ।*  
*kartavyāntara-kalanā*  
*na jātu parayogino bhavati ।। 40 ।।*

When in this way the two illusions are successfully rooted out completely, the exalted adepts have fulfilled their aim, and there cannot be any duty left for them to accomplish.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 40*

Thus as has been established in the foregoing verse, when the spiritual adept achieves the goal after nipping in the bud the two kinds of illusions [*pauruṣa ajñāna*, i.e., the experience of not-self in the Self and *bauddha ajñāna*, i.e., the experience of the Self in the not-self], and after attaining the experience of divine freedom [which is the distinguishing characteristic of one's divine essence], thereby putting an end to self-imposed limitation, then such individuals, endowed with the best kind of Yoga, do not have to do anything or perform any duty such

as undertaking pilgrimage to holy places, taking up residence there, undergoing initiation, repeating the name of God, listening to spiritual discourses, and so on.<sup>1</sup> [It is said in an unspecified text:]

*Experience of the Self through yoga (spiritual discipline) is the highest duty (dharma).*

In this way the importance of the Yoga of the Self has been asserted. Once the exalted adept (*yogin*) has achieved this [experience of the Self], he does not have to exert himself in any other way. This has also been stated by Lord Krishna:

*When your intellect crosses the marsh of delusion, then you will attain the feeling of non-attachment [of the highest kind], which is worth knowing and is also well-known. [Bhagavad Gītā II.52]*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 41*

Now [when the highest Yoga is attained] the universe comprised of the levels beginning with *pṛthvī* (gross earth) up to *māyā*, characterised by the knowledge of discreteness, is integrated in experience with the universe which exists on the level of Śakti and is characterised by the experience of duality-in-nonduality, and is experienced [by the adept] such that he recognises his own universal nature which is expressive of his divine Self, thus paving the way for his attaining union with the *śāmbhava* level, which is of the nature of infinite illumination and massive bliss. Thus the experience of discreteness and differentiation melts and is transformed into one of unity.<sup>1</sup> The level of Śambhu is like an ocean of nectar, full of infinite bliss, from which surge the massive currents of the play of Śakti, assuming the form of the waves of differences and shapes, thereby revealing the supreme consciousness in gradual steps as the equilibrium of *nara* (the individual), Śakti and Śiva.

This is the essence of the power of the great *mantra* which is experienced by the spiritual adept, and which after his direct vision of the great unity, has the potential of obliterating the experience of all diversity. The nature of this unity has been conveyed, taking inspiration from the Āgamas, [in the following verse] through the explication of the unity of the three eggs [symbolising the three levels in creation, which are the gross physical level, the subtle level of *prakṛti*, and the most subtle level of *māyā*].



## Verse 41

पृथिवी प्रकृतिर्माया  
 त्रितयमिदं वेद्यरूपतापतितम् ।  
 अद्वैतभावनबलाद्  
 भवति हि सन्मात्रपरिशेषम् ॥ ४१ ॥

*pr̥thivī prakṛtir māyā*  
*tri-tayam idaṁ vedyā-rūpatā-patitam |*  
*advaita-bhāvana-balād*  
*bhavati hi san mātra-pariśeṣam || 41 ||*

Thus by the power of meditation on unity, the trinity of *pr̥thivī* (earth), *prakṛti* and *māyā* that had revealed itself in objective form, becomes reduced to simple being.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 41*

The universe comprised of the three eggs, *pr̥thivī*, *prakṛti* and *māyā*, symbolises the object (*idaṁ*) manifested in three forms, i.e. the gross, the subtle, and the most subtle. As said in the *Śrīkalikākrama Tantra*:

*Knowledge is manifested in different forms, internally as well as externally. There is no existence [of the objective world] apart from knowledge, therefore the universe is of the nature of knowledge. Nothing different from knowledge can be the object of knowledge, hence one may draw the conclusion that it is knowledge which really becomes the object of knowledge.*

According to this extract from the Āgamas, deep meditation on unity culminates in the experience of the illumination in the form of pure being.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 42*

The manifestation of discreteness and differentiation is false, as has been indicated in the following verse:

### Verse 42

रशनाकुण्डलकटकं  
भेदत्यागेन दृश्यते यथा हेम ।  
तद्वद्भेदत्यागे  
सन्मात्रं सर्वमाभाति ॥ ४२ ॥

*raśanā-kuṇḍala-kaṭakaṃ*

*bheda-tyāgena dṛśyate yathā hema ।*

*tadvad bheda-tyāge*

*san-mātraṃ sarvam ābhāti ।। 42 ।।*

Just as a belt, a ring, or a bracelet, irrespective of their differentiation, appear simply as gold, so the universe, irrespective of its differentiation, appears as simple being.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 42*

Just as a golden belt, etc., appears simply as gold to one who desires gold, irrespective of its shape as a belt, etc., and as gold, silver, copper, zinc, etc., appear simply as metal to one who desires metal, similarly everything in this world appears as simple beingness to the spiritual adept who is established firmly in his pure illumination-nature which, after the removal of all taints, is devoid of thought constructs. This has been aptly stated by Bhaṭṭa Kallata thus:

*This [true illumination-nature] is experienced by the spiritual adept on undergoing complete transformation [of his vision].*

Thereafter the entire universe is experienced as pure being.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 43*

Thus [in the following verse] the author [Abhinavagupta] indirectly refers to the prevailing tradition of *mantra* worshippers who following the Āgamas subscribe to the theory of attaining their *śakta* nature after giving up their limitation:

### Verse 43

तद्ब्रह्म परं शुद्धं  
 शान्तमभेदात्मकं समं सकलम् ।  
 अमृतं सत्यं शक्तौ  
 विश्राम्यति भास्वरूपायाम् ॥ ४३ ॥

*tad brahma paraṃ śuddhaṃ  
 śāntam abhedātmakaṃ samaṃ sakalam  
 amṛtaṃ satyaṃ śaktau  
 viśrāmyati bhā-svarūpāyām || 43 ||*

This is the Brahman (supreme being), supreme, pure, still, undifferentiated, equable, complete, deathless, real, that rests in the Śakti who is of the nature of illumination.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 43*

That which is of the nature of pure being is called Brahman on account of its all-pervasiveness. As has been stated by the knowers of the Upaniṣads:

*Prior to creation, this universe was pure being.*

This [Brahman] is "supreme" because of its nature as being full, or complete-in-itself. It is regarded as "pure" in nature due to the absence of the sense of acceptance and rejection in it. It is called "still" because it is free from differentiation, and therefore it is said to be of the nature of non-difference. It is "equable" due to the absence of superiority and inferiority in it.

*Even a mere atom of Brahman has the nature of all, free from thought constructs and unsurpassed.*

Such is the nature of Brahman, it is immortal and deathless.

*In all beings there exist two aspects or modes, the true and the false. The true aspect or mode is the species, while the false aspects or modes are the individual.*

*Whatever exists at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end [i.e. at the time of creation, maintenance, and dissolution] is true.*



This is the way the revered Bhartṛhari described the truth which is of the nature of "being" only:

*All these rest in the truth, the supreme Śakti that is in equipoise of will, knowledge, action, and illumination.*

*All objects exist in the Saṁvid (the supreme experiencing principle) and the Saṁvid is one with the Śakti.*

Moreover according to *mantra* tradition, [the letter "na"] coming after the syllable "śa" in the word *śānta* symbolises Brahman which is deathless, or it embodies the immortal seed [of the supreme Being] in its bosom. Brahman, whose nature is that of being, is pure due to the presence of *sadāśiva* in it [meaning that Brahman is equivalent to *sadāśiva*]. Thus, Brahman is *sama* (equable), the perfect equilibrium of all in the form of the self-experience "I am all this." [When this self-experience arises] then the delusion [with respect to the variety in the universe which is experienced as different from oneself] is dissolved, hence [Brahman] is spoken of as true. As has been stated in the *Triṁśikā* [i.e., in the *Parātriṁśikā*] by God himself:

*O lady with the beautiful hips, the third Brahman . . .*<sup>1</sup>

Brahman, which is universal in nature on the level of *sadāśiva* and is characterised by immortality, rests in the Śakti as described above.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 44*

That which does not rest in the supreme Śakti through the powers of will, knowledge, and action does not really exist as has been stated in the following verse:

### Verse 44

इष्यत इति वेद्यत इति  
संपाद्यत इति च भास्वरूपेण ।  
अपरामृष्टं यदपि तु  
नभःप्रसूनत्वमभ्येति ॥ ४४ ॥

*iṣyata iti vedyata iti  
saṁpādyata iti ca bhā-svarūpeṇa  
aparāmṛṣṭaṁ yad api tu  
nabhaḥ-prasūnatvam abhyeti || 44 ||*

On the other hand, anything untouched by illumination (*bhā*) expressed as the powers of will, knowledge, and action is like a flower-in-the sky; it does not exist. [Illumination consists of the powers of will, knowledge, and action held in perfect equilibrium].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 44*

An actual object existing externally [in the world], if it were "untouched" by, or not related to the *saṁvid* (consciousness) manifested by supreme Śakti, who is comprised of a perfect equilibrium of three aspects or modes, namely the powers of will, knowledge, and action, functioning in and through pure illumination, would be like a flower-in-the-sky [which has no existence at all]. The threefold powers mentioned above constitute the trident [of the supreme being, Śiva], which is conceived of as being intrinsic in the nature of Śiva, as described above.

creation is resolved into Paramaśiva alone, who is the lord of all the gods beginning with Brahmā up to *sadāśiva*, and who is also the lord of the senses responsible for the manifestation of all.

According to this school [Śaivism], the agency of none other [than Paramaśiva] is admitted. There is no subject other than he. Assuming different roles like *Rudra*, and *kṣetrajñas* (a type of subject), etc., everything in this world is his own self-manifestation, hence his description as Lord of Lords is quite appropriate. In this manner the act of creation by the supreme Lord has been described.

#### *Yogarāja's introduction to verse 46*

Thus far, the [arising of the] universe characterised by discreteness and limitation in the form of limited subjects through the ascendance of Śakti, i.e. non-duality in duality, which is essentially non-different from Śiva, who is of the nature of consciousness, has been conclusively demonstrated.

Now in the following verse it is shown that Śiva, whose nature is massive consciousness and bliss, manifests himself as the universe, with its infinite variety of limited subjects and objects, by displaying his nature as the Śakti. Śakti and the limited subjects and objects have in fact no existence apart from Śiva. That it is Śiva who creates due to his *rasa* (nectar of bliss) is established in the following verses, which are the expansion of *mantras*.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 45*

After describing Brahman's identity with the supreme Śakti on the level of the Śakti, now, in the following verse, [the author refers to the] complete identification of Brahman with the Śakti on the level of Śambhu [i.e. the supreme Paramaśiva level] in trance.

### Verse 45

शक्तित्रिशूलपरिगम-  
योगेन समस्तमपि परमेशे ।  
शिवनामनि परमार्थे  
विसृज्यते देवदेवेन ॥ ४५ ॥

*śakti-triśūla-parigama*  
*-yogena samastam api parameśe |*  
*śiva-nāmani paramārthe*  
*visrjyate deva-devena || 45 ||*

Everything in its entirety is resolved by the God of Gods into the supreme Lord, Śiva, through his attaining the trident of [the divine] Śakti.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 45*

In this way, all this [the universe] is truly Brahman on account of its being of the nature of being as stated above. When Brahman is inseparably fused with the trident of *śaktis* in the manner described above, this culminates in his resolution into the supreme Lord, Śiva united with the supreme Śakti-Śiva who is unlimited consciousness and bliss. In other words, the supreme Lord attains the state of absolute absorption following union by the strengthening of his self-experience by his self-withdrawal [from the external world]. The entire



## Verse 46

पुनरपि च पञ्चशक्ति-

प्रसरणक्रमेण बहिरपि तत् ।

अण्डत्रयं विचित्रं

सृष्टं बहिरात्मलाभेन ॥ ४६ ॥

*punar api ca pañca-śakti*

*-prasaraṇa-krameṇa bahir api tat*

*aṇḍa-trayaṃ vicitraṃ*

*sr̥ṣṭaṃ bahir-ātma-lābhena || 46 ||*

And again, he [Parāmaśiva] accomplishes the task of the external creation of the three eggs with their infinite variety in order to find himself in the external world [as innumerable subjects and objects] through the process of expansion of his five Śaktis.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 46*

The equilibrium of the five śaktis—cit (the power of consciousness), ānanda (the power of bliss), icchā (the power of will), jñāna (the power of knowledge), kriyā (the power of action)—is the nature of Paramaśiva. He unfolds himself [during the process of manifestation] in five forms, which are Śiva, Śakti, sadāśiva, īśvara, and śuddha-vidyā, each one characterised by the dominance of one of the śaktis, respectively. He has also manifested the three eggs [of Śakti, māyā, and prakṛti], comprised of different bhuvanas (worlds) in order to manifest himself externally as the universe.<sup>1</sup> Also Paramaśiva is ever free, and as such he always manifests his play, consisting of the process of creation and absorption of the universe with himself as the background. The universe is

essentially non-different from him, though he causes it to appear as different from himself. In short, there is nothing in creation that is different from him.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 47-50*

In this way, the supreme Lord, always engaged in projecting and then absorbing the universe, is called Śiva. The questions arise: Who is he, where does he exist, and how can he be known? The replies given are that firstly Śiva is the soul of all, and secondly that he manifests himself everywhere from the beginning and carries out the functions of creation, maintenance, and absorption, and so on. The [personal pronoun] words like "I" [or "me" etc. in the following verses 47 through 50] refer to this [Śiva-nature].

Verses 47-50

इति शक्तिचक्रयन्त्रं

क्रीडायोगेन वाहयन्देवः ।

अहमेव शुद्धरूपः

शक्तिमहाचक्रनायकपदस्थः ॥ ४७ ॥

मय्येव भाति विश्वं

दर्पण इव निर्मले घटादीनि ।

मत्तः प्रसरति सर्वं

स्वप्नविचित्रत्वमिव सुप्तात् ॥ ४८ ॥

अहमेव विश्वरूपः

करचरणादिस्वभाव इव देहः ।

सर्वस्मिन्नहमेव

स्फुरामि भावेषु भास्वरूपमिव ॥ ४९ ॥

द्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता

देहेन्द्रियवर्जितोऽप्यकर्तापि ।

सिद्धान्तागमतर्काश्च

चित्रानहमेव रचयामि ॥ ५० ॥

*iti śakti-cakra-yantraṃ*

*krīḍā-yogena vāhayan devaḥ ।*

*aham eva śuddha-rūpaḥ*

*śakti-mahā-cakra-nāyaka-pada-sthaḥ ।। 47 ।।*

*mayy eva bhāti viśvaṃ*

*darpaṇa iva nirmale ghaṭādīni ।*

*mattaḥ prasarati sarvaṃ*

*svapna-vicitratvam iva suptāt ।। 48 ।।*

*aham eva viśva-rūpaḥ*

*kara-caraṇādi-sva-bhāva iva dehaḥ ।*

*sarvasminn aham eva*

*sphurāmi bhāveṣu bhā-svarūpam iva ।। 49 ।।*

*draṣṭā śrotā ghrātā*

*dehendriya-varjito 'py akartāpi ।*

*siddhāntāgama-tarkāṃś*

*citrān aham eva racayāmi ।। 50 ।।*

Thus the Lord makes the wheel of Śakti in "I am"-ness (*ahaṃtā* the supreme "I") revolve by the power of his own sport. Pure in nature, he is present as the leader of the great circle of *śaktis*.

It is in "me" that the universe reveals itself as [inanimate objects like] jars as in a mirror. From "me" the universe emanates like the varied forms of dreams from sleep.

It is the supreme “I” (*aḥam*) alone who takes the form of the universe like a body composed of hands, feet, etc. In all, it is the “I” (*aḥam*) alone who is manifest as illumination in all of its modes.

Though without the body or senses, the “I” (*aḥam*) sees, hears, and smells. Though not an agent [in the worldly sense], the “I” alone creates the different doctrines, the Siddhānta Āgama texts, and logical reasoning.

*Yogarāja’s commentary on verses 47–50*

As has been explained, the infinite modes of the Śakti, beginning with the group of five [principal] *śaktis*—*cit* (the power of consciousness), *ānanda* (the power of bliss), and so on—constitute the wheel which is revolved by the Lord by way of his sport, resulting in the functions of creation and dissolution alternating and moving up and down like a Persian wheel. The Lord who operates this wheel as his sport manifests himself as the eternally sportive Lord, who is the “I” (*aḥam*) in all living creatures, the *anāhata nada* (primordial sound), which is in fact only a kind of self-experience [on the part of the Lord] in the form of the supreme “I” (*pūrṇāḥamitā*), never negated and always experienced as the supreme Self.

This indicates that the *pūrṇāḥamitā* (the resting place for his Self) is Śiva, who is pure and therefore beyond conceptualisation. Moreover, he abides as the leader of the great wheel [of *śaktis*] and bestows freedom to the *śaktis*, the presiding deities of the senses, controlling their activities such as grasping or relinquishing their objects of enjoyment, etc. Since the senses cannot exist in the absence of their resting place in consciousness [from which they derive operative power], they necessarily always serve consciousness, the



reservoir of power essential to their functioning. Hence we reject the view that God [other than the real Self] exists in the hearts of all subjects, and that he is the controller of all the activities in the world. Thus all that is experienced as the universe [with its infinite variety] manifests in "me" like the reflection in a mirror; this is exactly what has been conveyed in the verse by the statement that all is manifested as resting in the "I." In other words, the "I" is the soul of all that is manifested as the universe. From "me", i.e. the pure Self (*pūrṇāhaṁtā*), the entire universe with its infinite variety of subjects and objects emanates, i.e. manifests as somewhat different from the experiencing subject.

"In what way?" The reply is given [in verse 48 in the phrase] "like the varied forms of dreams from sleep." Just as a variety of wonderful objects like a city's boundary walls, temples, etc., emanate in the state of dream from the consciousness of the sleeping subject in the absence of any other material cause like ignorance, etc., despite their being externally non-existent, so in the absence of any other plausible cause suggested by other schools of philosophical thought, the universe must be admitted to have emanated from the "I" (*aham*), whose nature is pure consciousness and massive bliss, and which is beyond limitation. Therefore, the conclusion in the verse is "In all, it is the I (*aham*) who is manifest." "I" (*aham*) here means the absolute self-experience by the supreme Lord and the pure consciousness who alone is of the nature of the universe because of assuming the forms of the infinite numbers of limited subjects, their bodies, etc. It is the supreme Lord who is referred to in verse [49] in the phrase "[The entire universe is only my] illumination in all its modes". This is because the thread of unity underlying all, [such as a] cowherd, children, women, etc., is always manifest [to the knower of his real nature] despite the appearance of externally visible variety.

How is this possible? The reply is given in the verse in the phrase "like a body composed of hands, feet, etc." Just as all physical bodies equipped with hands, feet, and so on are one body common to all [from the perspective of the supreme Being] but many bodies from the perspective of the individual being, so pure consciousness, though really one, is of the nature of the universe characterised by infinite variety because of its underlying or pervading all like a unifying thread. In the same way, the expression "in all" occurring in the verse [in the phrase "In all, it is the I who is revealed . . ."] signifies the totality of the universe manifested as subjects, objects, and the means of cognition. "In all, I (*aham*) alone am manifest." This is justified on account of the fact that one's self (*aham*) alone is manifested in [all cognitions of] the experiencing subject [and as such it permeates all].

One might ask: "How is this possible?" The reply given by the author is "like illumination in all its modes." The *aham* ("I am"), who is of the nature of pure consciousness alone, shines in the material world and reveals all objects [animate as well as inanimate. Material objects are incapable of revealing themselves; they are revealed when these come in contact with the illumination nature of the Self during the process of cognition].

["The I (*aham*) sees, hears and smells."] means that the *ahamntā*, being of the nature of pure consciousness, alone "sees," "hears," "smells," "tastes," and "touches," even on being devoid of the body, the senses, etc. [The physical body is not a permanent appendage of the Self; but the Self always remains as the seer which is its essential nature]. Thus it can be said that everything in this world rests in the absolute *ahamntā* ("I am"-ness), which is the highest cause of all its effects. It is generally thought that the aggregate of body senses, etc., in an embodied being "sees," but this is not true

because in the states like dreaming etc. there is a total absence of the seer [when one is not even aware of one's embodied condition]. "I" [and "me" etc. in verses 47 through 50] refer to the supreme Puruṣa (the conscious Self), one who manifests as the body and the senses etc., whose essential nature is that of pure consciousness and massive bliss when devoid of the body and the senses etc. He is the enjoyer of all objects, and lives as he does in the hearts of all beings. As has also been said in Śruti (the revealed texts):

*That Puruṣa has been described as the first one and the great [one] who moves with speed and grasps [all objects] despite his being devoid of feet and hands, who sees in the absence of eyes, listens in the absence of ears, and knows objects without his being known by any one else. [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad III.19]*

The meaning of the statement occurring in the verse that "though not an agent, the "I" alone creates the different doctrines, the Siddhānta Āgama texts" is that although he [the supreme Lord] is not a direct agent, his presence in the minds of gods, seers, and men as their illuminating wisdom is what is meant by the statement:

*Aham ("I am"-ness) alone creates the different doctrines, the Siddhānta Āgama texts.*

Since the material body, senses, etc. are like lumps of clay, they are therefore incapable of creating them [the Āgamas]. The *aham* ("I am"-ness) is the creator of all scriptures which he accomplishes through a variety of means. Thus it is clear that there is neither any use nor any scope for establishing the existence of the supreme Lord, who is of the nature of the absolute *aham*. [His existence is self-evident, an established fact]. Such an absolute *aham* is incapable of being concealed or



denied as he is present everywhere, in all subjects, in the form of Śiva. He is the premier *siddha*, the source of all the means of valid cognitions.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 51*

Thus the experience [of the supreme Lord that] "All this is my glory" has been firmly established through these explanations. One [belonging to the mundane level] who succeeds in having such a self-experience becomes a perfect spiritual adept (*yogi*), well established in his real nature as the supreme Brahman. This has been stated in the following verse:

### Verse 51

इत्थं द्वैतविकल्पे

गलिते प्रविलङ्घ्य मोहनीं मायाम् ।

सलिले सलिलं क्षीरे

क्षीरमिव ब्रह्मणि लयी स्यात् ॥ ५१ ॥

*itthaṃ dvaita-vikalpe*

*galite pravilaṅghya mohanīṃ māyām ।*

*salile salilaṃ kṣīre*

*kṣīram iva brahmaṇi layī syāt ॥ 51 ॥*

When the conceptual knowledge of duality disappears from the mind of a spiritual adept [after he establishes himself in his divine essence], and thus when he has succeeded in crossing over the delusion of *māyā*, such an adept is merged in Brahman like water in water, and milk in milk.



*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 51*

Thus following the experience of "All this is *aham* (the pure I)" the [spiritual adept's] conceptual knowledge of duality melts away, and the experience of diversity vanishes altogether. He passes beyond deluding *māyā*. Consequently, the ignorance arising from the experience of the Self in the not-self, which is responsible for the knowledge of diversity, disappears. Such a spiritual adept then gives up the [self-imposed] contraction by coming to feel that "*aham* ('I am') is the Self of the universe." He then merges in the all-pervasive Brahman, the pure [supreme] Self, which is of the nature of pure consciousness and massive bliss. The phrase [in the verse] "is merged [in the Brahman]" signifies that he becomes identified with Brahman after giving up his [self-imposed] contraction.

It may be asked: how [is this accomplished]? The reply given in the verse is that just as the water taken out [from a well or pond] by means of jars etc., or the milk collected from thousands of different kinds of cows, such as spotted or coloured, or some yielding more milk than others, and so on, becomes one on being mixed, thereby losing the distinction that arises from differentiation due to contraction,<sup>1</sup> similarly only Brahman remains after the cessation of the experience of such limiting conditions as the gross physical body, the vital breath, the subtle body, and the void.

Bhaṭṭa Divakāra Vatsa has said in his work *Kakṣyāstotra*:

*After the island in the form of the concept of the body is broken, and the ocean of pure knowledge becomes one, all-pervasive that is, then you always shine as one universal Self, after diverting all the senses from going outside to going inside.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 52*

To a perfect spiritual adept who has firmly established himself in Brahman, even the disappearance of the knowledge of the diversity of the world is also of the nature of Brahman, hence there is no addition to his nature. This is described in the following verse:

### Verse 52

इत्थं तत्त्वसमूहे  
भावनया शिवमयत्वमभियाते ।  
कः शोकः को मोहः  
सर्वं ब्रह्मावलोकयतः ॥ ५२ ॥

*itthaṃ tattva-samūhe  
bhāva-nayā śiva-mayatvam abhiyāte  
kaḥ śokaḥ ko mohah  
sarvaṃ brahmāvalokayataḥ || 52 ||*

Thus when the group of *tattvas* has been transformed into the substance of Śiva through contemplation, what grief, what delusion can befall him who surveys the universe as being of the nature of the Brahman.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 52*

Spiritual adepts who have secured freedom from the bondage which arises from self-imposed limitation by following the path described above begin experiencing the group of *tattvas*, i.e., physical elements, objects, senses, etc., as a unity, through contemplation of their essence, which is of the nature of consciousness. This results in their transformation into the substance of Śiva, the supreme unity, upon the dissolution of

all opposites like grief and delusion. Upon becoming identified with the nature of Brahman, whereupon the group of *tattvas* lose their significance, they are no longer in a position to cause any grief to such perfect spiritual adepts who have lost their identity in Brahman.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 53*

One may ask: Since the physical body of the individual who has realised Brahman, the supreme principle of unity, persists, then why don't the fruits of his actions, pious or evil, accrue to him? This is answered [in the following verse]:

### Verse 53

कर्मफलं शुभमशुभं  
मिथ्याज्ञानेन संगमादेव ।  
विषमो हि सङ्गदोषस्-  
तस्करयोगोऽप्यतस्करस्येव ॥ ५३ ॥

*karma-phalaṃ śubham aśubham  
mithyājñānena saṅgamād eva ।  
viṣamo hi saṅga-doṣas  
taskara-yogo'py ataskarasyeva ॥ 53 ॥*

The fruits of deeds, whether pious or otherwise, arise from the attachment to false knowledge, for harmful is the defilement of association, like the association of a thief with one who is not a thief.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 53*

The fruits of pious and impious deeds, like the performance of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice or the killing of a brahmin, cling to the individual being due to his attachment to false

concepts such as "I am equipped with a physical body," or "the performance of sacrifices such as the *aśvamedha* is my means to attain good results." Thus the attachment to the false knowledge of the not-self as the Self [called spiritual ignorance] is preceeded by the knowledge of the Self in the not-self [called intellectual ignorance], and causes the accumulation of the fruits of deeds, pious and otherwise, in the fettered individual. Such an individual being is subject to worldly misery because of his constant association [with false knowledge.]<sup>1</sup>

It might also be asked how can the individual being, who is essentially of the nature of Brahman, become a fettered being? The reply has been indicated in the verse by the words beginning with "harmful" [that occur in the phrase "harmful is the defilement of association"]. The consequences of harmful association are always intolerable. Just as the association of absolutely pious persons with evil persons generates ill effects by transferring the evil influence of the latter to the former, so the association of really pure beings with delusion caused by ignorance converts them into fettered beings and then subjects them to the consequences of good and evil deeds.



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 54*

Perfect spiritual adepts who have attained oneness with Brahman are not subject to birth and death, but individuals associated with *māyā* are. This has been explained [in the following verse]:

### Verse 54

लोकव्यवहारकृतां

य इहाविद्यामुपासते मूढाः ।

ते यान्ति जन्ममृत्यू

धर्माधर्मार्गलाबद्धाः ॥ ५४ ॥

*loka-vyavahāra-kṛtām*

*ya ihāvidyām upāsate mūḍhāḥ ।*

*te yānti janma-mṛtyū*

*dharmādharmārgalā-baddhāḥ ।। 54 ।।*

The deluded individual who worships the ignorance formed of worldly concepts passes on to birth and death, bound by fetters of merit and demerit.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 54*

Those beings who look upon their physical bodies as the Self are defiled by the desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of their deeds, and as such they always serve the ignorance of *māyā*, which is responsible for the experience of duality in this world and which causes one to obtain the fruits [of one's actions], like the achievement of heaven or hell. Their ignorance entails [the bonds of] merit and demerit, and is also responsible for worldly transactions. Such persons are deluded beings, ignorant and fettered by the bonds of merit and demerit. They

therefore take birth and die repeatedly in order to enjoy the fruits of their own deeds. Thus they are constantly subjected to worldly misery. But a spiritual adept in whom the veil of ignorance has been destroyed has been freed from the bonds of merit and demerit, and has secured identification with Brahman. Such a person is never born and never dies.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 55*

Thus the actions arising out of ignorance are destroyed on the advent of knowledge and not otherwise, as has been stated in the following verse:

### Verse 55

अज्ञानकालनिचितं  
धर्माधर्मात्मकं तु कर्मापि ।  
चिरसंचितमिव तूलं  
नश्यति विज्ञानदीप्तिवशात् ॥ ५५ ॥

*ajñāna-kāla-nicitam  
dharmādharmātmakam tu karmāpi ।  
cira-saṁcitam iva tūlam  
naśyati vijñāna-dīpti-vaśāt ॥ 55 ॥*

The [residual impressions of] meritorious and ignoble deeds, accumulated [in the intellect]<sup>1</sup> during the time of ignorance, vanish due to the illumination-power of knowledge like an accumulated heap of cotton [is incinerated by the power of fire].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 55*

During the time of ignorance, the period of the experience of false subjectivity [consisting of the experience of the Self in the not-self], the fruits of meritorious and ignoble deeds caused by the desire for their enjoyment are destroyed by the illumination of the true knowledge of the real Self [in the form of the experience] "I am the supreme Brahman." Knowledge of this kind is capable of destroying the experience of false subjectivity. When such knowledge is experienced by the individual aspirant again and again, the power of this knowledge vanquishes ignorance in the intellect once and for all.

In what way? Just as "heaps of cotton gathered" long ago instantly incinerate upon coming in contact with fire, so the accumulated [impressions of the] fruits [of actions performed in the past] are destroyed in a moment due to the incinerating power of the fire of true knowledge. This has been described in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*O Arjuna, just as the burning power of fire reduces wood to ashes, so the fire of knowledge incinerates [the accumulated] karma (action). [Bhagavad Gītā IV.37]*

Not only are actions already performed [by the individual] destroyed by the fire of true knowledge [arising in the spiritual adept], but even the actions performed in the present are unable to produce any fruits upon being consumed by that fire.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 56*

All this has been stated [in the following verse]:

### Verse 56

ज्ञानप्राप्तौ कृतमपि ।

न फलाय ततोऽस्य जन्म कथम् ।

गतजन्मबन्धयोगो

भाति शिवार्कः स्वदीधितिभिः ॥ ५६ ॥

*jñāna-prāptau kṛtam api*

*na phalāya tato'sya janma katham ।*

*gata-janma-bandha-yogo*

*bhāti śivārkaḥ sva-dīdhitibhiḥ । 56 ।*

After one attains true knowledge, [the actions performed by him] cannot bear fruit. How can he then be reborn? His connection with the bond of birth is ended, and he is revealed in the lustre of the Self, a sun consisting of Śiva.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 56*

When one is firmly established in the self-experience of being Śiva, when there is no notion of false agency, and when actions performed, meritorious or otherwise, do not produce results, then how can one be born? Clearly, one cannot then be reborn.

It may be asked: If the spiritual adept is not reborn after the destruction of his physical body, what happens to him afterwards? The author's reply is that the individual spiritual adept, in whom the association with the bond of birth is destroyed, and in whom the veil of delusion vanishes, becomes illuminated by the light of Śiva in the form of the



sun, by which is meant the light of his consciousness. Such a spiritual adept does not obtain liberation of the kind conceived in other schools, such as an ascent to another abode like heaven. He is restored to all his powers in their full form after the destruction of his contraction due to *māyā*.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 57*

This is explained with the help of an analogy:

### Verse 57

तुषकम्बुककिंशारुक-

मुक्तं बीजं यथाङ्कुरं कुरुते ।

नैव तथाणवमाया-

कर्मविमुक्तो भवाङ्कुरं ह्यात्मा ॥ ५७ ॥

*tuṣa-kambuka-kiṃśāruka*

*-muktaṃ bījaṃ yathāṅkuraṃ kurute ।*

*naiva tathāṇava-māyā*

*-karma-vimukto bhavāṅkuraṃ hy ātmā ॥ 57 ॥*

As the seed stripped of covering, husk, and bran, puts forth no sprout, so the Self, stripped of the *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *karma* defilements, puts forth no sprout of physical life.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 57*

Just as a seed when stripped of its outer cover, husk, and bran, cannot sprout even when in contact with soil, water, and sunlight, the Self separated from the *āṇava mala*, the *māyīya mala*, and the *kārma mala* does not sprout in the physical world. An individual whose nature is pure consciousness becomes Śiva by experiencing the infinite variety of objects of the world emanating from and dissolving back into himself.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 58*

A spiritual adept, in whom the seeds of his *kañcukas* (sheaths) have been burnt away by the fire of true knowledge has nothing to fear nor has he anything to acquire or give up. This has been stated [in the following verse]:

## Verse 58

आत्मज्ञो न कुतश्चन  
 बिभेति सर्वं हि तस्य निजरूपम् ।  
 नैव च शोचति यस्मात्  
 परमार्थे नाशिता नास्ति ॥ ५८ ॥

*ātma-jñō na kutaścana  
 bibheti sarvaṃ hi tasya nija-rūpam ।  
 naiva ca śocati yasmāt  
 paramārthe nāśitā nāsti || 58 ||*

Since everything is his own form, he who knows the Self knows not fear; nor does he grieve, for in the supreme nothing perishes.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 58*

One who knows his Self, his divine Śiva-nature which is endowed with divine freedom, does not fear anyone, be it a king, an enemy, or any other creature. Why? The reply given by the author is that "everything is his own form." When [the spiritual adept] realises that he is of the nature of unity, the divine Śiva, then all objects that constitute the universe appear to him as his own body. This is because illumination is omnipresent. It is the great illumination which shines in the exercise of its divine freedom in the forms of both Selfs and not-selves.

Therefore whatever would appear in this world as fearsome is recognised as an integral part of his own Self.<sup>2</sup> How can it then be the source of fear? An object appearing as different from one's real Self can cause fear. But what object [of fear], such as Yama (death), is different from all-inclusive Śiva, and which the individual equipped with the highest knowledge and free from the experience of the Self as the physical body should fear? Thus realising his real Self, following the dissolution of the distinction between himself and everything else, he moves about alone without fear while living in this world. As said by the revered teacher Utpalācārya [i.e. Utpaladeva] in the *Śivastotrāvali* [XIII.16]:

*O Lord, for one who looks upon the entire objective world as your own body, who is devoid of thought constructs, who always rests in the world full-in-himself [the universe being only his self-extension] and who is always blissful can have no fear.*

The author [Abhinavagupta] also says:

*A person experiences grief and fear of the cruelty in this world when he feels "I am alone" [separate from the world]. But when he recognises that he is truly alone [one without a second, the world being one with himself], that there is none besides him, then fear disappears and he experiences equipoise.*

Moreover, the meaning of the phrase in the above verse beginning "nor does he grieve . . ." is that the realised being is not afflicted by such thoughts as "all my wealth", "my wife has perished", "I have become a pauper", "illness has overtaken me", "I am dying" and so on. The prospect of destruction does not affect the individual subject who has

diverted his gaze to the core of his being, which is pure consciousness, in the manner described above.

All that appears as the objective world because of the false identification of the not-self [the physical body etc.] with the Self is actually of the nature of "this-ness" which is born and dies. The Self, whose nature is pure consciousness and is characterised by "I"-nature, is essentially autonomous and uncreated. Furthermore it does not contribute towards production of any effect. [Hence it is immutable].

The spiritual adept who realises this is not afflicted by grief, etc., arising from his connection with the body which might otherwise cloud his vision.



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 59*

The mind of an illuminated soul who has established himself in his real Śiva-nature through deep contemplation of his essence does not then suffer from any deficiency. This has been pointed out [in the following verse]:

### Verse 59

अतिगूढहृदयगञ्ज-

प्ररूढपरमार्थरत्नसंचयतः ।

अहमेवेति महेश्वर-

भावे का दुर्गतिः कस्य ॥ ५९ ॥

*atigūḍha-hṛdaya-gaṇja*

*-prarūḍha-paramārtha-ratna-saṁcayataḥ ।*

*aham eveti maheśvara*

*-bhāve kā durgatiḥ kasya । । 59 । ।*

When by virtue of the store of the gems of supreme wisdom, which are collected in the treasurehouse of the mystic heart, the state of Maheśvara (the Great Lord) is reached, one realises "I am all; what misfortune can befall, and to whom?"

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 59*

"The treasurehouse of the mystic heart" is the highest secret revealed by the teacher which provides the highest kind of assurance of reaching the ultimate goal of life. It may be likened to a unique precious storehouse of the spiritual adept since it is instrumental in the restoration of his latent divinity. When the highest wisdom in the form of the experience of the supreme "I"-ness dawns in him and expresses itself in the

realisation "I am all this" he becomes Śiva with the complete autonomy to express himself in any form he chooses while remaining embodied.

When the spiritual adept reaches such an exalted position, how can he be subject to misfortune or misery, or how could anyone else surpass him in acquired glory? Śiva is the soul of all objective manifestation. When the objects manifested in the world appear to the perfect spiritual adept as being of the nature of his own Self, how can any of these contribute to his advancement or subject him to misfortune? Only those who look upon their physical bodies as the real Self can be affected by misfortune. When such persons obtain a desired object other than their Self, they feel elated and feel like lords; in the same way, when they are unable to obtain a desired object and return empty-handed they become dejected, feeling themselves to be lowly and deprived. For the spiritual adept, on the other hand, who succeeds in obtaining the highest knowledge by constant meditation on his real Self, the supreme "I"-ness results in his having the experience "I am everything thus there is nothing in the world to seek." Such a spiritual adept is truly the supreme Lord. How, when nothing is sought for by him, can not acquiring it subject him to misfortune?

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 60*

Now the nature of liberation is described [in the following verse]:

### Verse 60

मोक्षस्य नैव किञ्चिद्  
धामास्ति न चापि गमनमन्यत्र ।  
अज्ञानग्रन्थिभिदा  
स्वशक्त्यभिव्यक्तता मोक्षः ॥ ६० ॥

*mokṣasya naiva kiñcid  
dhāmāsti na cāpi gamanam anyatra |  
ajñāna-granthi-bhidā  
sva-śakty-abhivyaktatā mokṣaḥ || 60 ||*

Liberation entails neither a fixed place nor a journey to another abode.<sup>1</sup> Liberation is the revelation of the Śakti inherent in the Self, in whom the bonds of ignorance have been burnt.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 60*

The essence of liberation is the fullest revelation of the supreme "I"-ness and as such it does not denote a particular site, because time and space are not its limiting conditions. Liberation is not a journey to a particular level nor is it a merging therein. [It may be recalled that] the dualist [Śaivites] have maintained that liberation occurs with one's dissolution on the level called *dvādaśānta* [beyond the twelve-petalled lotus] after one ascends and successively pierces the centres (*cakras*). Contesting the above view of the dualist [Śaivites], it has been said [in the monistic Śaiva traditions]:

*If Śiva is all-pervasive, then what is the need for going out [of the body] after ascent? If Śiva, the highest one, is not all-pervasive in nature, then also what is the use of going out [of the body]?*

In this way, many views about liberation have been advanced by other schools of thought. If all such views were described, then the volume of the present work would increase; hence we will not [elaborate all these other views].

Mere aspiration for liberation while the taint of duality persists is only the appearance of liberation. What then is the real nature of liberation? The reply is given by the author in the verse beginning with the word "ignorance" [in the phrase "... ignorance have been burnt"]. Ignorance is the experience of the not-self in the Self, which is caused by delusion and is followed by the experience of the Self in the not-self represented by the physical body etc. It is likened to a knot because it causes a contraction of the individual being's fullness-nature. This knot is at the root of his bondage and is caused by his experiencing himself as the physical body, etc., and not as the real Self, which is essentially all-pervasive and endowed with divine freedom.

The untying of this knot involves the replacement of the experience of the Self in the body, etc., by the experience of one's self as the real Self after long and firm contemplation of one's divine nature, which is characterised by divine freedom. The attainment of this kind of liberation culminates in the manifestation of the divine powers lying latent in the individual. This is the intended meaning [of the above verse]. Just as ether is characterised by such qualities as all-pervasiveness and eternity, but when surrounded by objects like a jar etc. it appears to be qualified by such characteristics as non-pervasiveness, etc. It is then called by the name "ether surrounded by a jar." Such qualified ether



appears as different from the all-pervasive ether. So, when this contraction, due to the ether being surrounded by limiting conditions like a jar, etc., is destroyed then the qualified ether again resumes its natural and innate qualities like all-pervasiveness, eternity etc. No new quality [in the ether] is produced by the destruction of the jar. [It is only restored to its original nature].

In the same way, pure consciousness only appears to be in bondage due to the contraction caused by the false experience of the Self in the not-self, such as the body, etc. After the rise of true knowledge of the real Self in the individual being, the experience of the Self in the not-self is destroyed, resulting in the manifestation of divine powers, and then that individual obtains liberation.<sup>2</sup>

Thus bondage and liberation are relevant only from the limited perspective of the individual who lacks the knowledge of his real Self. There is no scope for their existence on the highest level, the level of the supreme Being [who knows no bondage and no liberation]. Therefore nothing new is achieved in liberation, one's own real Self simply becomes manifest.

This has also been stated in the *Viṣṇudharma Purāṇa*:

*Just by digging a well, the ether surrounded by [the well and its] water is not created; only an existing thing is manifested. [The ether already existed]. From where can the non-existent be created? When a bellows is broken, the air is not created afresh but remains as it is. In the same way, one who has liberated himself from the bonds caused by merit and demerit does not become different from Brahman. [He becomes one with Brahman.]*<sup>3</sup>

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 61*

In this way, an enlightened one, free from the bonds of ignorance, is liberated, even though he remains in an embodied condition in order to transmit grace to other fellow creatures. This is described in the following verse:

### Verse 61

भिन्नाज्ञानग्रन्थिर्

गतसंदेहः पराकृतभ्रान्तिः ।

प्रक्षीणपुण्यपापो

विग्रहयोगेऽप्यसौ मुक्तः ॥ ६१ ॥

*bhinnājñāna-granthir*

*gata-saṁdehaḥ parākṛta-bhrāntiḥ ।*

*prakṣīṇa puṇya-pāpo*

*vigraha-yoge'py asau muktaḥ ॥ 61 ॥*

He who has cut asunder the bonds of ignorance, whose doubts have passed away, who has overcome delusion, for whom merit and demerit alike have vanished, is a liberated being, though he continues to be united with a physical frame.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 61*

The embodied individual, illuminated by the knowledge of his real Self, is liberated, despite his continued connection with the body, as a result of the absence in him of the experience of identification with his body, which results in the unfolding of the *śaktis* lying latent within him. One might object that one's connection with the physical body itself constitutes bondage. If so, how can such a being [who remains embodied] be regarded as liberated?

This objection has been answered by the author [in the verse] with the words that begin "cut asunder." One who has succeeded in cutting asunder the knot of ignorance, i.e. the experience of identity with his physical body caused by the Self's contraction and the knowledge of his limited nature, is a liberated person. All his doubts are removed. In such a person the delusion arising from his experience of duality is completely removed by the knowledge of supreme unity. All his accumulated residual impressions of meritorious and demeritorious deeds also vanish following continuous contemplation of the knowledge of unity, which arises due to the absence of his experience of identity with his body. Such a person is called a *jīvan mukta*, a being liberated while living in a body.<sup>1</sup>

In this way, it has been shown that ignorance is bondage. One in whom this ignorance is destroyed is liberated, whether or not he is living in an embodied condition. This means that one's connection with a physical body is not bondage nor is its cessation liberation. But it is a fact that after one gains the knowledge of the supreme unity and the physical body ceases to exist, then one attains complete liberation.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 62*

An individual being, after attaining liberation in the body, continues to exist in an embodied condition in order to perform actions requiring a body. Such an individual is not subject to the fruition of his actions, although he continues to perform them while retaining the knowledge of his real Self. The author [Abhinavagupta] provides the rationale for such a view [in the following verse]:

## Verse 62

अग्न्यभिदग्धं बीजं  
 यथा प्ररोहासमर्थतामेति ।  
 ज्ञानाग्निदग्धमेवं  
 कर्म न जन्मप्रदं भवति ॥ ६२ ॥

*agny-abhidagdham bījaṃ  
 yathā prarohāsamarthatām eti ।  
 jñānāgni-dagdham evaṃ  
 karma na janma-pradaṃ bhavati ॥ 62 ॥*

As a seed scorched by fire becomes incapable of sprouting, so also the deeds burnt or scorched in the flame of real knowledge are incapable of causing rebirth.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 62*

Just as a rice seed which has been scorched in a fire becomes incapable of sprouting even though it lies in the soil, is watered, and is touched by sunlight, because it lacks all the necessary conditions, so the residual impressions of deeds lying stored in his intellect cannot sprout when burnt by the fire of knowledge, which is the fire of the experience of



the supreme unity in the form [of the conviction] "I alone manifest myself as the universe" and the experience of his false identification with his body ceases. As a consequence he abandons the concept of good and bad deeds and whatever good or bad deeds he might have performed in the past their residual impressions have now lost their capacity for fruition. Just as a scorched seed fails to germinate, similarly good and bad deeds then become incapable of generating results such as rebirth after death.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 63*

It may be asked: how can the unlimited or uncontracted pure consciousness become embodied? This is explained [in the following verse]:

### Verse 63

परिमितबुद्धित्वेन हि  
 कर्मोचितभाविदेहभावनया ।  
 संकुचिता चित्तिरेतद्-  
 देहध्वंसे तथा भवति ॥ ६३ ॥

*parimita-buddhitvena hi  
 karmocita-bhāvi-deha-bhāvanayā |  
 saṃkucitā citir etad  
 deha-dhvaṃse tathā bhavati || 63 ||*

When this body is destroyed, pure consciousness [once again] becomes a limited intellect (*buddhi*) by the formation of its future body in conformity with the fruits of this body's present deeds.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 63*

Actions performed by the limited intellect (*buddhi*), accompanied by the experience of the Self in the not-self such as the body, which is caused by ignorance [of the real Self] produces defilement in the form of desire. Actions performed with such feelings [of attachment] like "I shall perform the *aśvamedha* sacrifice so that I will secure happiness and not misery in this life and also in heaven [after death]," or "I will attain the elevated position of Indra (the ruler of heaven)," produce corresponding residual impressions which in turn initiate and govern the performance of further actions.

The residual impressions [retained in the intellect] create tendencies or desires which cause the creation of bodies of the appropriate kind for the enjoyment of the fruits of actions. In other words, when one kind of body, created as a consequence of the fruition of accumulated past impressions of actions, is destroyed, the individual gets another body in the future, in order to be able to fulfill his desires, for example [the attainment of] a kingdom as a result of his performing the *aśvamedha* sacrifice. By means of the *kārma mala*, this desire contracts his essential nature, which is his all-pervasive absolute consciousness, like a jar surrounding the all-pervasive ether. The *kārma mala* has the *āṇava* and *māyīya malas* as its root defilements. Although the individual being is all-pervasive in essence, he becomes subject to limitation in the form of a physical body in order to be able to enjoy the fruits of his past deeds.

When the physical body is destroyed [in the course of time], he is restored to his original all-pervasive nature. The embodied being, who in fact is the enjoyer of all the fruits of his past deeds, loses his physical body after exhausting the

fruits of those deeds. A new physical body is once again created, impelled by the residual impressions of the deeds performed in the past to the enjoyment of the fruits of his deeds in the present, and this cycle of birth and death continues.

Thus whatever actions are performed by the embodied being in one life act as the efficient cause of rebirth and further enjoyment. [All this however is true only for those who perform actions after identifying themselves with their physical bodies or experiencing the Self in the not-self].

On the other hand, one who performs actions without identifying himself with his physical body cannot possibly, as an enlightened individual, be subject to misery and rebirth. How can an enlightened individual being who experiences himself as identified with his consciousness-essence "I am Brahman," and who is all-pervasive consciousness, be subject to rebirth? Desires and the residual impressions of deeds performed in past lives are totally absent in him.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 64-66*

If actions performed by the individual being who does not experience himself as his real Self cause his transmigration from one physical body to another, then the true nature of the Self should be revealed [to him by some means]. This has been pointed out before and is repeated in the following three verses so that it may be firmly grasped by all:

## Verses 64-66

यदि पुनरमलं बोधं  
 सर्वसमुत्तीर्णबोद्धृकर्तृमयम् ।  
 विततमनस्तमितोदित-  
 भारूपं सत्यसंकल्पम् ॥ ६४ ॥  
 दिक्कालकलनविकलं  
 ध्रुवमव्ययमीश्वरं सुपरिपूर्णम् ।  
 बहुतरशक्तिव्रात-  
 प्रलयोदयविरचनैककर्तारम् ॥ ६५ ॥  
 सृष्ट्यादिविधिसुवेधसम्-  
 आत्मानं शिवमयं विबुद्धयेत ।  
 कथमिव संसारी स्याद्  
 विततस्य कुतः क्व वा सरणम् ॥ ६६ ॥



*yadi punar amalam bodham  
 sarva-samuttīrṇa-boddhī-kartṛ-mayam  
 vitatam anastamitodita  
 -bhā-rūpam satya-saṁkalpam || 64 ||  
 dik-kāla-kalana-vikalam  
 dhruvam avyayam īśvaram suparipūrṇam |  
 bahutara-śakti-vrāta  
 -pralayodaya-viracanaika-kartāram || 65 ||  
 sṛṣṭy-ādi-vidhi-survedhasam  
 ātmānam śivam ayaṁ vibudhyeta |  
 katham iva saṁsārī syād  
 vitatasya kutah kva vā saraṇam || 66 ||*

If one is able to behold the Self as being of the nature of Śiva, the undefiled consciousness, exalted in the highest, whose nature is that of the highest perceiver, subject and agent, who is omnipresent and formed of the illumination that neither sets (dies) nor rises (begins), who realises his will unencumbered by the conceptions of space and time, who is constant, indestructible, the perfect Lord, fullness incarnate, the sole agent in the contemplation of the dissolution and rise of the innumerable powers that create the universe, the expert creator of the laws of creation and other conditions—then how can such a one be subjected to the cycle of birth and death? Since he is all-extensive, how and to where can he wander?

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 64–66*

Again, an individual subject who has received divine grace in intense form and who as a consequence has realised his Śiva-essence, which is his nature as pure consciousness and

massive bliss, after giving up his false sense of Self in the not-self such as the physical body, cannot be subject to transmigration from one physical frame to another, as has been indicated by the author. An individual associated with a subtle body of the nature of consciousness as well as a body made of matter transmigrates as a result of his being covered by *kārma mala*. But the individual being who is the embodiment of pure consciousness and who has successfully destroyed the defilements which cover him beginning with the *āṇava [mala]*, thereby having become Śiva, cannot possibly remain a transmigratory creature. This is the essence of what the author has sought to convey here.

One might ask: what harm is there in being at the same time an embodiment of pure consciousness and a transmigratory creature? The author replies that the individual subject, who after giving up his self-created [false] experience of the Self in the not-self such as the physical body etc., has secured an expansion that is not affected by the limitations of space and time, and who has eradicated desires of all kinds and become full-in-himself cannot possibly transmigrate, since he has already become all-pervasive. There is nothing that exists apart from him from which he could separate himself or from which he could depart. Separation and location are possible only in cases where subjects have a false experience of the Self in the not-self. How can one even talk of transmigration in the case of the individual who has been restored to his Brahman-nature, which is of the nature of pure consciousness and is therefore above all limiting conditions including time and space?

It may be asked: in what Śiva-form should the spiritual adept know himself? [In the above verses] the author replies that the spiritual adept should know himself in the form of pure consciousness in whom all the defilements, beginning

with the *āṇava mala*, have been fully eradicated. [In such a form] he becomes absolutely pure and exalted in the highest. In other words, the spiritual adept should have the powers of knowledge and will in the fullest measure, unsurpassable by anyone. He should become all-pervasive, not conditioned by limitations of any kind, including those of space and time.

In such a spiritual adept the pure illumination of knowledge neither perishes nor expands but remains ever the same. Moreover, the resolutions or desires of such a spiritual adept are always fulfilled. Whatever he desires happens immediately. Such a spiritual adept who has realised his essential Śiva nature, remains fully free from even the conceptions of space and time on account of his being all-pervasive and immutable. He remains constant, ever the same, always existing in his spiritual essence. He remains the perfect Lord, absolutely independent and free. As a matter of fact, he is fullness incarnate, free from any kind of want. Such a spiritual adept is a free agent who can dissolve and create innumerable worlds. He possesses immense powers, those of Brahma etc. which underlie all worldly objects, such as a jar, a cloth, etc., that arise from words (*śabda*). Moreover, he is regarded as the expert creator of the worlds and the laws of creation themselves.

One who realises himself to be Maheśvara (the great Lord) characterised by such qualities as the omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence as described in the foregoing paragraphs, despite his participating in some worldly activities to maintain his embodied form, does not migrate, on account of his having successfully scorched his karmic seeds. Such a spiritual adept, despite his living in embodied form in the world, is fully liberated as a result of his realisation of his true essence.<sup>1</sup>



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 67*

The deeds performed by an individual being who has realised his divine essence do not bear fruit, due to the absence of any desire in him for the fruits [of those deeds], as indicated [by the author] in the following verse, citing an example from his own experience.

## Verse 67

इति युक्तिभिरपि सिद्धं  
यत्कर्म ज्ञानिनो न सफलं तत् ।  
न ममेदमपि तु तस्ये-  
ति दाढर्यतो नहि फलं लोके ॥ ६७ ॥

*iti yuktibhir api siddham  
yat karma jñānino na saphalam tat |  
na mamedam api tu tasyeti  
dāṛḍhyato nahi phalam loke || 67 ||*

By reasoning it is proved that the deeds performed by an enlightened being bear no fruit. Because of his intense conviction that "this is not mine but his [the Lord's]" no fruits [of actions] accrue [to such a being] in the world.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 67*

"I am of the nature of massive consciousness, ever free, underlying all subjects as their core," "I as the supreme Lord, am the agent," or "I as the subject am not really the agent, but it is the divine freedom that actually motivates actions." Such reasonings, arising out of one's divine nature, lead to the certain conclusion [that the individual being, aware of his



divine essence, does not actually perform deeds. It is the divine freedom of the Lord which actually induces actions].

As has already been stated, the enlightened individual, aware of his divine essence, does not have to suffer from the consequences of his deeds. This is the case for two reasons. First because there is the absence in him of the experience of the Self in the not-self, i.e., the physical body, etc., [hence the sense of agency is totally absent in him], and second because such an enlightened being does not have the urge to accept or reject anything. How can any deed performed by an enlightened being bear fruit when there is the total absence of a superimposed ego-sense in him? In the absence of the experience of the Self in the not-self such as the physical body, the fruits of actions performed by enlightened subjects are never borne by them. In the case of ordinary ignorant persons, the fruits of their actions, after they have been performed, are appropriated by the agent, because the agent is the location in which all fruits accrue. But an enlightened being has no false ego, no agency on this level, hence the fruits of the actions performed by him, having lost their capacity for adhesion, fail to cling to him.

In case proof is asked for the view that an individual's connection to the fruit of the deeds performed by him is due to the false ego-sense, the experience of the Self in the not-self, the author of the verse furnishes it in the phrase in the above verse beginning with the expression "this is not mine . . ." [i.e. "this is not mine but his (the Lord's)"]. It is the common experience of a priest performing a sacrifice that he feels he is not actually the performer [of the sacrifice], but that the performer of the sacrifice is someone else, the man who pays for the performance of the sacrifice (the *yajamāna*)<sup>1</sup>. The sacrifice is performed by the sacrificer-priest on behalf of the (*yajamāna*) sacrificer [who pays for the sacrifice]<sup>2</sup>. Thus

when the sacrificer priest performs the sacrifice, he does so with the feeling that "this *aśvamedha* sacrifice is not mine but it belongs to the sacrificer, the *yajamāna* desirous of the fruit of this meritorious deed; I only want money for rendering this job. Let the sacrificer be granted a place in heaven, etc., as the fruit for the performance of the sacrifice." Thus, the act of sacrifice does not result in the fruit of action accruing to the agent, the sacrificer-priest, because there is the absence of [the idea of] agency in him with respect to the sacrifice which he performs. On the other hand, the fruits of the action of the sacrifice are bestowed on the *yajamāna* (the sacrificer), who does not take part [as the agent] in the action performed by someone else, the sacrificer-priest. This is because the *aśvamedha* sacrifice was performed on the sacrificer's behalf by the priest-sacrificer [acting as the agent] and because the *yajamāna* (the sacrificer) imagines that the sacrifice performed is his. The sacrificer-priest did the job in exchange for fees paid to him. Therefore only the sacrificer was entitled to receive the fruit, namely entry into heaven after death. [This is also described in Pāṇini's Sanskrit grammatical rule 1.3.72] (*kartrabhiprāye kriyāphale*) "If the result of the action accrues to the agent then the middle voice is used" as in "*yajate yajamānaḥ*" ("The priest-sacrificer performs the sacrifice [not for himself, but for the other])." If [on the other hand] the fruit of the action does not accrue to the person on whose behalf the action has been undertaken, then the verb in the active voice is used [as in] "*yajanti yajakaḥ*" (The sacrificers are performing the sacrifice [for their own sake])."

A unique characteristic of freedom from the ego (the false "I"-sense) is that one who performs actions but does not aspire to the enjoyment of their fruits does not obtain those fruits. But if actions have been performed by others (for

example the priest-sacrificer), the fruits [of those actions] go to the person (like the *yajamāna*, the commissioner of the sacrifice) who firmly believes that "these actions are mine, they have been performed for me." Similarly, the actions performed by a perfect spiritual adept do not produce any result, due to the absence of any desire in him for the enjoyment of their fruits.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 68*

In this way, an individual being who has liberated himself from the thought that a particular action should be performed and another action should not be, has his mind illuminated by knowledge [of the highest kind]—all this has been stated [in the following verse]:

### Verse 68

इत्थं सकलविकल्पान्  
 प्रतिबुद्धो भावनासमीरणतः ।  
 आत्मज्योतिषि दीप्ते  
 जुह्वज्ज्योतिर्मयो भवति ॥ ६८ ॥

*itthaṃ sakala-vikalpān  
 pratibuddho bhāvanā-samīraṇataḥ ।  
 ātma-jyotiṣi dīpte  
 juhvaj jyotir-mayo bhavati ॥ 68 ॥*

Thus in the kindled light of the Self, stirred up by the wind of contemplation, all his imaginings are sacrificed and he becomes one with the light.



*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 68*

As described above, the contemplation or intense feeling that "I am the Śiva-consciousness who eternally manifests himself in all forms" constitutes a current of the experience of the Self that gradually increases like the wind. A spiritual adept illuminated by that knowledge is like a fire whose ashes are rekindled, lighting up with the blowing air [and illuminating the intellect of the adept]. He offers all his worldly imaginings—such as "I am a fettered being," "I am bound by the bonds of the *kārma mala* defilement, hence I am an embodied being," "these are my children and wife," "I can go to heaven or hell by performing such actions," and so on, all of which are [only] a part of his experience that "I am all,"—to the fire of consciousness which is absolute and of the nature of the supreme "I"-ness. And thus he becomes an illumined individual.

The very act of offering all his imaginings to the fire of pure consciousness symbolises union with the pure consciousness, which in itself is absolutely free from all kinds of imaginings and conceptualisations. When this offering of his imagination is consumed and reduced to ashes by the fire of consciousness, what remains is only the fire of consciousness, the supreme subject. This is the import of the author's words in the verse.



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 69*

In this way, the illumined spiritual adept is engaged in performing the best kind of yogic exercise, while he spends his time in worldly pursuits [without any fear]. This is explained in the following verse:

### Verse 69

अश्नन् यद्वा तद्वा  
संवीतो येन केनचिच्छान्तः ।  
यत्र क्वचन निवासी  
विमुच्यते सर्वभूतात्मा ॥ ६९ ॥

*aśnan yadvā tadvā  
saṁvīto yena kenacic chāntaḥ |  
yatra kvacana nivāśī  
vimucyate sarva-bhūtātma || 69 ||*

Eating whatever may come, wearing raiment of anything, absolute, still, living anywhere he comes upon by chance, he attains liberation, being the Self of all beings.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 69*

He eats not according to [dietary] rule, but whatever may come, without considering whether that food is pure or impure, unpleasant or sweet in taste. In other words, free from any consideration of what is advantageous or disadvantageous for him, the spiritual adept lives on the food which appears before him without exerting any effort. Whatever clothes a spiritual adept wears to cover his body, whether a shawl, a hide, or the bark of a tree, whether cotton

cloth or divine dress, he does not consider their value. Such an individual is not partial to any kind of dress.

It may be asked: How is this possible? The reply given by the author is that the spiritual adept remains still, unruffled, above the feelings of pleasure and pain. He lives anywhere. The expression "anywhere" [in the above verse] means whichever place appears to him suitable for shelter because of its purity or otherwise. He shuns unholy places like cremation grounds or animal houses [as these are not congenial to his manner of living]. He lives at the place which automatically appears before him without having to search for it.

The meaning of the expression "he attains liberation" [in the above verse] is that, passing the rest of his life in the world and engaging himself in dispensing grace to others [who come near him], he attains salvation and at the end becomes Śiva. It has been said [in some unspecified text]:

*The Gods consider him to be a brahmin<sup>1</sup> who remains satisfied with whatever appears before him, who eats whatever comes his way, and who sleeps wherever he finds a place to sleep.*

It is said in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (the chapter dealing with liberation) of the *Mahābhārata*:

*Undeiled, I perform the python vow<sup>2</sup> in which food for eating in the form of fruits etc. and water for drinking are uncertain and their time and place are governed by the laws of fate. The "cowardly" ones cannot enjoy performing this vow which gladdens the hearts of the brave.*

The question of how an enlightened individual performing these deeds can achieve liberation is addressed by the author of this verse. Since the enlightened being is the Self existing in

all creatures, and all beings are also his Self, there cannot be anything which can possibly bind him. Everything in the world exists for the liberation of all beings.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 70*

In this way, no merit or demerit can accrue to the enlightened being who is free from pride and who performs all actions without a sense of ego.

### Verse 70

हयमेधशतसहस्राण्यु-

अपि कुरुते ब्रह्मघातलक्षाणि ।

परमार्थविन्न पुण्यैर्

न च पापैः स्पृश्यते विमलः ॥ ७० ॥

*haya-medha-śata-sahasrāṇy*

*api kurute brahma-ghāta-lakṣāṇi ।*

*paramārtha-vinna puṇyair*

*na ca pāpaiḥ sprśyate vimalaḥ ॥ 70 ॥*

Though he causes hundreds of thousands of *aśvamedha* sacrifices to be offered or hundreds of thousands of brahmins to be slain, since he is illumined by the supreme knowledge he is not affected by merit or guilt. He remains stainless.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 70*

If the individual being, knowing the supreme Being [which is the same as his divine essence], is the agent for the performance of innumerable sacrifices, like the *aśvamedha* or the *rājāsūya* etc., without any desire on his part for enjoying their fruits, nor with the sense that this is his duty, nor as part

of the operation of divine will in the manner laid down in the holy scriptures; or if such a person indulges in the slaying of brahmins, in drinking wine, or in stealing, etc., which are against the scriptural injunctions and lead to great demerit; [he is not affected in either case by any fruits because] in both these cases he lacks the feeling that "I am doing this" or "this is mine." Instead he feels that it is God's will that operates [in him]. [He feels], how can these [actions] affect me [when I am not the conscious agent]? Such illuminated souls are therefore said not to be "touched" by merit or demerit arising out of these actions [mechanically] performed by a [now egoless] person.<sup>1</sup>

It may be asked: how is this so? The reply given by the author is that the illumined individual has been freed from the three defilements, the *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma* [*malas*] that [cover his true nature and] lie at the root of his transmigration [from one physical body to another as well as to the bodies of other species]. The subject who is covered by the defilements experiences himself as an embodied subject and has the ego-feeling (*ahaṁtā*) which arises from his identification with the physical body, experiencing such thoughts as "I am this," "this is mine," "this action of mine is meritorious," "this is an action of the opposite kind" and so on. Such a person accumulates merit and demerit arising from the actions performed by him due to his false ego-sense. But when an individual being is freed from the false ego-feeling which is caused by being covered by the defilements resulting in the non-accumulation of the fruits of the deeds performed by him, he cannot possibly be touched by merit or demerit.



This has also been stated in the *Bhagavad Gītā* thus:

*He in whom the feeling that "I am the doer" is absent, he whose intellect does not get ensnared, such a person does not kill even after slaying the entire world, nor is he ensnared by demerit [arising from his actions]. [Bhagavad Gītā XVIII.17]*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 71*

The daily routine of the life of such an enlightened spiritual adept is described [in the following verse]:

### Verse 71

मदहर्षकोपमन्मथ-  
 विषादभयलोभमोहपरिवर्जी ।  
 निःस्तोत्रवषट्कारो  
 जड इव विचरेदवादमतिः ॥ ७१ ॥

*mada-harṣa-kopa-manmatha*  
*-viṣāda-bhaya-lobha-moha-parivarjī |*  
*niḥstotra-vaṣaṭ-kāro*  
*jaḍa iva vicared avāda-matiḥ | | 71 | |*

Removing himself from conceit, the joy of gain, the misery of loss, wrath, lust, fear, avarice, and delusion, without a hymn of praise, he walks like an insentient creature without speech or intelligence.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 71*

Conceit is the feeling of the individual ego which arises from identification with the physical body. Joy is the happiness which arises from gaining that which was absent before. Wrath is the [intense] feeling of anger. Lust is the desire for copulation. Unhappiness is the feeling of misery upon the loss of a dear one. Fear is the feeling arising from the presence of a fearsome object like a tiger, a lion, or an enemy. Avarice is stinginess. Delusion is caused by the feeling of intimate relations with other beings. All these feelings and sentiments, which arise incessantly following his identification with the physical body, are removed after he experiences that "I am the all-pervasive Brahman" and secures his original resting place in pure consciousness, which by its nature is free from thought constructs. These feelings and experiences [mentioned in the above verse] are then reduced to aspects of his awareness of himself in the pure Self.

The words "without a hymn of praise" [occurring in the verse] really mean that [for such an individual] there is nothing besides himself for whom the hymns of praise can be uttered, nor is there anything to which "*vaṣaṭ*" (an exclamation of praise) can be said. In short, there is no deity existing apart from himself who could be addressed by such mantras.

[The phrase in the verse] "he walks like an insentient being without speech or intelligence . . ." [means that] being an embodiment of fullness, he is absolutely free from any desire, hence he behaves like a mad person [an abnormal person, and not a lunatic]. He does not have any sense of judgment about the actions enjoined in the scriptures, or transactions performed on the basis of worldly judgments, such as "this is right and this is not." Thus removing from his

mind the sense of judgment, he needs no instruction about what he should do or should not do, nor does he instruct others. He moves about in this world, looking upon everything as Brahman, as part of a divine play. The author's intention is to convey all this by the word "insentient."

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 72*

After liberating himself from conceit etc., an illuminated one is not affected the way we are while living in an embodied form. The reason for this is stated [in the following verse]:

### Verse 72

मदहर्षप्रभृतिरयं  
वर्गः प्रभवति विभेदसंमोहात् ।  
अद्वैतात्मविबोधस्  
तेन कथं स्पृश्यतां नाम ॥ ७२ ॥

*mada-harṣa-prabhṛtir ayaṃ*

*vargaḥ prabhavati vibheda-saṃmohāt*  
*advaitātma-vibodhas*

*tena katham spṛśyatām nāma || 72 ||*

Conceit, joy, and the rest of these passions arise from the illusion of differentiation. Why should they [the illumined ones] be affected by such feelings when they have the vision of the non-dual Self?

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 72*

In the previous verse it was made clear that conceit etc. arise from the persistence of the illusion of differentiation, which is called the limited nature [or the opposite of the fullness-nature] and gives rise to the experience of duality, discreteness and delusion, and which takes the form of the differentiation between what is to be rejected and what is to be accepted, and so on. On the other hand a person who, after realising the supreme unity becomes all-pervasive like ether and has the experience of "I am the all-pervasive Brahman" and who possesses a mind fully illumined by the supreme spiritual knowledge cannot possibly be touched or defiled by "conceit" etc. [mentioned in the above verse]. If the object of knowledge [i.e. conceit, joy, etc.] were different from knowledge, it could affect [i.e. limit the all-pervasive] nature of the Self, but if everything is Brahman then conceit etc. are also Brahman. Under such circumstances, how could they [the objects of knowledge] conflict with Brahman?



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 73*

External praise, sacrificial offerings, etc., are all based on the experience of duality. These cannot possibly satisfy illumined persons. This has been described [in the following verse]:

### Verse 73

स्तुत्यं वा होतव्यं  
नास्ति व्यतिरिक्तमस्य किञ्चन च ।  
स्तोत्रादिना स तुष्येन्  
मुक्तस्तन्निर्ममस्कृतिवषट्कः ॥ ७३ ॥

*stutyaṃ vā hotavyaṃ  
nāsti vyatiriktam asya kiṃcana ca ।  
stotrādinā sa tuṣyen  
muktas tan nirnamaskṛti-vaṣaṭkaḥ ॥ 73 ॥*

Having passed beyond worship, he will not rejoice in praise and the like. There is nothing separate from himself to which he should offer praise or oblation.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 73*

To a person whose mind has been illumined by the experience of supreme unity there is nothing to which he should offer praise or oblation. This is because nothing exists apart from himself. Such a person, the knower of the real Self, cannot derive any pleasure from offering praise or oblation because on experiencing supreme unity he tastes supreme bliss and becomes satisfied. He therefore does not pay any heed to the artificial felicity that arises from offering praise or oblation. Such a person naturally keeps himself aloof from worshipping or giving praise. He is called a liberated person in Vedānta.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 74*

To one whose physical body is the Self or God, the resting place for pure consciousness, there is no use for any [external] temple. As a matter of fact, there is nothing different from his Self which might be looked upon as a temple. All this has been made clear [in the following verse]:

## Verse 74

षट्त्रिंशत्तत्त्वभूतं  
 विग्रहरचनागवाक्षपरिपूर्णम् ।  
 निजमन्यदथ शरीरं  
 घटादि वा तस्य देवगृहम् ॥ ७४ ॥

*ṣaṭ-triṁśat-tattva-bhūtaṁ  
 vighraha-racanā-gavākṣa-paripūrṇam ।  
 nija-manyā-datha śarīraṁ  
 ghaṭādi vā tasya deva-grham ॥ 74 ॥*

Either his own body or another's, made from thirty-six *tattvas* and fully equipped with the windows [i.e. the senses] of the bodily organism, or any [external] object like a jar etc. is his temple [of worship].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 74*

To an illumined being (*jñānin*), his own body or that of another is the dwelling place of the Lord because the locus of all objects is in the Lord who is his own Self.<sup>1</sup> After the spiritual teacher has the disciple contemplate his own body as constituted by the thirty-six *tattvas*, any external temple becomes an abode of God. [The *tattvas* constitute his body as well as the temple]. He contemplates that the Lord, his own

Self, which is a mass of consciousness, also pervades his external surroundings. [He contemplates:] "If this is not so, how can the Lord existing outside the physical frame like a piece of stone [of an external temple] and therefore insentient, be capable of redeeming devotees or be close to a departed soul?" Thus the physical body, being the location of pure consciousness, is literally the abode of the Lord, and the pure consciousness residing inside the physical frame is the Lord himself. To an illumined soul, the physical body is verily a temple, an abode of God.

The question arises, what kind of temple is the physical body? The reply given by the author is that the abode of the Lord in the form of the physical body is made of the thirty-six *tattvas*. An external [temple] is also through contemplation [understood to be made of] the thirty-six *tattvas*. Just as a temple existing in the external world has windows [to permit light to enter], the physical body, too, has windows in the form of the senses in order to remove the darkness from within. Thus the temple of the body fully resembles a temple existing outside in the external world.

Not only is the physical body a location of pure consciousness and therefore rightly described as a temple, but everything else is also the locus of pure consciousness and must be regarded as a temple. This has been indicated by the author [in the above verse] by the words "jar etc." [in the phrase "... any object like a jar etc. is his temple"]. These words imply the five types of sense-objects which are the objects enjoyed through the [five] senses—the eyes etc.—and which are also pervaded by pure consciousness. As mentioned in the *Spanda Śāstra*:

*The Enjoyer always exists everywhere as the object of enjoyment. [Spanda Kārikā III.2]*

According to it [the teaching of the Spanda school], all objects of enjoyment are of the nature of *saṃvid* (pure consciousness). To an illumined mind, objects like a jar etc. are also a kind of body; therefore being non-different [from the physical body of an individual] they are also the abodes of God. Here God refers to the supreme Lord who is always engaged in the [cosmic] play and who is the instrument for the enjoyment of objects.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 75*

Ordinarily a devotee in an external temple engages himself in the worship of the Lord after collecting flowers etc. [to make an offering to the deity]. The question may be asked: how does an illumined soul behave in the temple of his physical body? This question has been answered [in the next verse]:

### Verse 75

तत्र च परमात्ममहा-  
भैरवशिवदेवतां स्वशक्तियुताम् ।  
आत्मामर्शनविमल-  
द्रव्यैः परिपूजयन्नास्ते ॥ ७५ ॥

*tatra ca paramātma-mahā*  
*-bhairava-śiva-devatāṃ sva-śakti-yutām*  
*ātmāmarśana-vimala*  
*-dravyaiḥ paripūjayann āste || 75 ||*

He worships there with the pure substance of his contemplation on the Self, the blessed deity, who is the supreme reality, the great Bhairava, in company with his intrinsic *śaktis*.



*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 75*

The highest kind of spiritual adept makes his offering as follows. He exists in the temple of his own body, always worshipping the blessed deity, the lord Śiva. The blessed deity is essentially of the nature of pure consciousness and is an expert in dissolving all [sense] objects, like sound etc. [His name] Bhairava is [formed from the words] *bharaṇa* (maintaining) [within himself the entire creation], *ravaṇa* (roaring) [out the word (*vāc*)], and *vamaṇa* (projecting) [the universe outward]. It might be asked: since external deities are always accompanied by their family [and are worshipped as such], shouldn't this deity, Śiva, also be propitiated with his family? The reply given by the author is that he should be propitiated with his *śaktis* (powers), which are in the form of "rays" of pure consciousness. The *śaktis*-*cit* (the power of consciousness), *ānanda* (the power of bliss), *icchā* (the power of will), *jñāna* (the power of knowledge), and *kriyā* (the power of action)—are expressed in the form of the power of the senses such as the eyes etc. by means of which the spiritual adept worships Lord Śiva.

What are the objects with which he worships Lord Śiva? The reply is given in the phrase beginning with the words "contemplation of the Self." The contemplation of the Self by the spiritual adept takes the form of [the understanding that] "my pure Self is all this." This [understanding] implies that the perceiver who rests in the absolute *ahantā* ("I"-nature) experiences all [i.e. the totality]. The experience [of resting in the absolute "I"-ness] removes from an object any blemish arising out of the experience of duality. Thus the five-fold sense objects such as sound etc. are purified by the disappearance of their material nature. He [the adept] worships Lord Śiva by means of such objects, purified by his

own self-experience. In this way, an enlightened individual incessantly experiences the glory of the absolute "I"-ness in himself, establishing within himself, while experiencing them, the identity of all external objects with his pure Self. This is the real meaning of worshipping the divine being within oneself. It is in the light of this fact that external objects like sound etc. are considered to be the instruments of worship. A careful spiritual adept therefore should always act as a worshipper of his inner Self in the course of his transactions with worldly objects. This is the view of those who know the secret of the act of worship.

Rājānaka Rāma has said this in his devotional hymn:

*Because you are daily worshipped by me with the worldly objects offered to you as gifts by the radiant powers of the senses, O Lord, please reveal to me your form as Bhairava, who is an expert in moving about in the worldly night of darkness, who lives in a burning ground for corpses, the body made of flesh, fat, and bones.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 76*

All worship should be followed by the performance of sacrifice. The way an enlightened being performs this is described [in the following verse]:

### Verse 76

बहिरन्तरपरिकल्पन-

भेदमहाबीजनिचयमर्पयतः ।

तस्यातिदीप्तसंविज्-

ज्वलने यत्नाद्विना भवति होमः ॥ ७६ ॥

*bahir-antara-parikalpana*

*-bheda-mahā-bīja-nicayam arpayataḥ*

*tasyāti-dīpta-saṁvij*

*-jvalane yatnād vinā bhavati homaḥ | | 76 | |*

When he offers a great pile of seed made from the diversity of the external and internal figments of thought to the blazing flame of consciousness, this is his fire-oblation (*homa*), given effortlessly.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 76*

The enlightened being performs a sacrifice [by offering oblations] to his own inner Self, the consciousness-fire which is illuminated by the radiant light of the absolute "I"-nature. He accomplishes this by imagining the [sacrificial] materials, the sesame, clarified butter, and sacrificial wood, without making any effort to procure them from the external world.

[An opponent] might ask: by what means is this sacrifice performed effortlessly? The reply given by the author [in the verse] is [that the sacrifice is performed effortlessly by contemplating both the] "external and the internal," i.e.

external objects like blue etc., and internal objects like happiness etc. Thus "the great pile of seed" [offered to the flame of consciousness] is comprised of imaginings, the ego, and the concept that there is a difference between the two forms [external and internal] of the content of a determinate cognition (knowledge of something as unique and different from something else). All subjects and objects arise from the "great pile of seed." The imaginings at the root of differentiation and multiplicity are infinite in kind. All these are viewed by the enlightened individual from the point of view of the highest non-duality, which is non-imaginative and non-conceptual pure consciousness. Thus the enlightened being makes an offering every day into the fire of consciousness, meaning that for the spiritual adept who has become [i.e. realised] Brahman, the cessation of the ego-sense in the body and the cessation of the perception of any distinction between subject and object is his natural sacrifice. As Bhaṭṭaśrīvīravāmanaka says:

*They [the enlightened Beings] sacrifice eternally with this sacrifice in which the forest of duality is the fuel and death is the great [sacrificial] animal.*



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 77*

The nature of the meditation of the enlightened sacrificer is described by the author [in the following verse]:

### Verse 77

ध्यानमनस्तमितं पुनर्  
एष हि भगवान् विचित्ररूपाणि ।  
सृजति तदेव ध्यानं  
संकल्पालिखितसत्यरूपत्वम् ॥ ७७ ॥

*dhyānam anastamitaṁ punar  
eṣa hi bhagavān vicitra-rūpāṇi  
srjati tad eva dhyānaṁ  
saṁkalpā-likhita-satya-rūpatvam || 77 ||*

His [the enlightened being's] meditation is without cessation because the Lord creates diverse forms and his meditations constitute the variety of forms depicted by the mind.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 77*

A form which has been imagined is destroyed when the attention of the mind is diverted and goes elsewhere. But meditation by an enlightened spiritual adept is uninterrupted because the Lord, infinite Śiva, who is the same as the pure Self of the spiritual adept, incessantly creates the variety of forms by operating his power of action (*kriyā*). He possesses infinite powers for imagining any form he likes. The continuous creation of the infinite variety of objects takes the form of his conceptualisations or imaginings, which he depicts in the mirror of his mind. His imaginings are without beginning or end, and they are nothing but his meditation. For

one who knows all this, all the activities of his mind, free from limitations, become divine.

When a particular deity is meditated upon, then the meditation takes a definite form in accordance with the imagination of the face and limbs etc. [of that particular deity]. But in fact every activity of the mind is only a manifestation of the highest *śakti*. Thus, whatever form is imagined in the meditation [of the spiritual adept] as a mental formulation is not different from illumination, despite its being only the mind's imaginings. This is due to the omnipresence of pure consciousness. This has been stated in the *Svacchanda Tantra*:

*Wherever the mind goes, one should concentrate one's mind there. Where can it go [that is not Śiva], as everything is Śiva.*

Similarly the *Śaiva Upaniṣad* says:

*O dear one, wherever the mind goes, externally or not, it is not separate from Śiva, who pervades everywhere.*

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 78*

It might be asked what is the nature of *japa* (the repetition of *mantras*)? The reply is given by the author [in this verse]:

### Verse 78

भुवनावलीं समस्तां

तत्त्वक्रमकल्पनामथाक्षगणम् ।

अन्तर्बोधि परिव-

र्तयति यत्सोऽस्य जप उदितः ॥ ७८ ॥

*bhuvanā-valīm samastām*

*tattva-krama-kalpanām athākṣa-gaṇam |*

*antar-bodhe parivartayati*

*yatso'sya japa uditaḥ || 78 ||*

The spiritual adept transforms the entire series of worlds (*bhuvanas*), the order of the *tattvas* and his various senses into his inward vision. This is called *japa* (the repetition of *mantra*).

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 78*

What is the order of the prayer? This author answers thus. Two hundred and forty four beads [constituting the garland of beads used for prayer] symbolise the thirty-six *tattvas* constituting the entire universe, the order of elements [*tattvas*] beginning from the limits of the *atma vidyā* to the *śiva tattva* and the group of all internal as well as external senses. The power of all this is transformed into inner consciousness or a garland of the middle *prāṇa-śakti* [i.e. the vital breath which moves up and down along the middle channel of the spinal cord] expressing itself in *nāda* form [i.e. the *anahata nāda* which arises from lowest centre or *cakra*] and the *bindu* [situated at the apex].

As the garland of beads is moved up and down by the spiritual adept during *japa*, the consciousness of the impressions of all the objects symbolised by the beads move up and down in him in the order of creation, preservation, and dissolution with every movement of the vital breath like a Persian wheel. As a consequence of all this, the spiritual adept experiences them within him in the form of *nāda* (primordial uncreated sound), which is the locus of the "I"-nature. This is the real *japa* (repetition of *mantra*).

This is the intended meaning of the above statement. *Japa* is the repetition of a *mantra* signifying a particular deity, the relation between them being one of signifier and signified. This is to be understood in the sense that the turning of the beads is pervaded by the power of the underlying vital breath.

The *prāṇa śakti* of a spiritual adept, a worshipper of the supreme unity, produces *nāda* (the primordial sound) during its upward and downward movement through the inner channel of the middle path, or spinal cord. Hence this [*prāṇa śakti*] is called a "garland of beads," owing to its effortless rise within himself, and also holding within its bosom the power of all the senses. It is on account of all this that the universe comprised of thirty-six *tattvas* constituting the signified is said to exist in the *prāṇa śakti* which is identified with the supreme Goddess. The spiritual adept accomplishes effortlessly the task of *japa* by the movement of the vital breath within himself without being aware of it. As to the number of times this *japa* is performed by the spiritual adept, the *Śaiva Upaniṣad* says:

*It is said that the repetition of the name of the Goddess during the day and during the night takes place 21,600 times, and this occurs naturally in the spiritual adept. But for an ignorant being, this is a difficult task to achieve.*<sup>1</sup>



Śiva Sūtra III.27 [says]:

*His common speech is the repetition of the mantra.*

The venerable spiritual adepts who are careful in performing spiritual discipline achieve all this easily.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 79–80*

[The spiritual adept's] act of austerity (*vrata*) is described [in the following verse]:

### Verses 79–80

सर्वं समया दृष्ट्या  
 यत्पश्यति यच्च संविदं मनुते ।  
 विश्वश्मशाननिरतां  
 विग्रहखट्वाङ्गकल्पनाकलिताम् ॥ ७९ ॥  
 विश्वरसासवपूर्णं  
 निजकरगं वेद्यखण्डककपालम् ।  
 रसयति च यत्तदेतद्  
 व्रतमस्य सुदुर्लभं च सुलभं च ॥ ८० ॥

*sarvaṃ samayā dr̥ṣṭyā*

*yat paśyati yac ca saṁvidam manute |*

*viśva-śmaśāna-niratām*

*vigraha-khaṭvāṅga-kalpanā-kalitām || 79 ||*

*viśva-rasā-sava-pūrṇam*

*nija-karagaṃ vedya-khaṇḍaka-kapālam |*

*rasayati ca yat tad etad*

*vrataṃ asya sudurlabham ca sulabham ca || 80 ||*

When the spiritual adept views the totality of his being with the vision of unity, he then considers his consciousness to be resting entirely in the cemetery of the universe, considers his own body to be an emblem of the skeleton, and drinks from the skull that lies in his hands, which is a fragment of limited cognition and which is full of the drink of the universe's essence. This is called his austerity (*vrata*), which is both easy and difficult to observe.<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 79–80*

As will be explained later, to an enlightened spiritual adept an austerity is the following of certain rules in order to worship the divine Being within himself. Why this austerity is both difficult and easy to observe is explained as follows. It is difficult to observe because ignorance can only be destroyed by suffering and because it is attainable only through the supreme Lord's grace after the spiritual adept has given up all other paths of spiritual discipline. It is easy to observe because it is not necessary for the spiritual adept to suffer the pain of such practices as dietary rules, the wearing of ornaments of bones, or the smearing of his body with ashes etc.

It may be asked: what is the nature of this austerity? This is explained as follows: there is only diversity in all that is experienced in the world. The practice of experiencing unity in this world of diversity is his austerity (*vrata*). It is brought about through reasoning, through the authority of scriptural texts and through the experience that "I alone am manifest in the different forms."

As [has also been stated] in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*Harmonised by yoga, he sees the Self abiding in all beings, and all beings abiding in his Self everywhere the same. [Bhagavad Gītā VI.29]*

This affirmation of the experience of unity is his [the spiritual adept's] austerity. The universe is comprised of subjects and objects, i.e. embodied beings, jars, etc. that are material in nature and are lying scattered here and there like hundreds of dead bodies, and [therefore the universe] can be likened to a cremation ground. This is because pure consciousness alone is the Goddess in the world and therefore non-material in nature. All other things, including the physical body and the objects of enjoyment, are inert and material, and require the light of consciousness for their revelation. Therefore all objects are like corpses, and the universe, which is full of them, is similar to a cremation ground.

In the mundane world, consciousness alone shines amidst a very fearful atmosphere characterised by birth and decay. A spiritual adept practising austerities spends his time in this cremation ground. He is indeed an extraordinary practitioner of austerities, as he lives like a mad person in the world, playing with [living] beings in bondage (*paśu*) and also with inert objects like jars and so on, which are also like so many corpses on account of their perishable nature. The spiritual adept always has the self-experience "I am the sole reality. I am of the nature of pure consciousness" while living in this world and playing with the material of [dead] creation. Moreover he [the spiritual adept] regards the embodiment of pure consciousness in the physical body as similar to consciousness being associated with a "skeleton."



When he succeeds in negating his experience of being a [limited] subject, which arises from his false identification of his Self with his physical body, he regains his true Self [which is of the nature of pure consciousness]. The physical body then becomes like a corpse to him. He starts imagining his physical body as a skeleton. The physical body is then made to serve as an instrument for wearing the *kaṅkāla mudrā* (skeleton sign).

A spiritual adept then imagines his pure Self as associated with that *mudrā* (sign) which serves as an instrument for the enjoyment of the object of experience. A spiritual adept practices this kind of experience. It is required that a *vīra sādḥaka* (a particular kind of spiritual adept) should show the *kaṅkāla mudrā* (skeleton sign) while practicing his austerities. He enjoys drinking from the skull of the world of objects. All the five kinds of objects of experience [i.e. ether, air, fire, water, and earth] are objects of our knowledge; thus they can be likened to a skull, a bony object in the head, from which the spiritual adept drinks. In other words, the spiritual adept performs the wonderful feat of sucking the pith (the substance or essence of experience) while resting in the absolute Self, which is also a kind of austerity. The spiritual adept who practises austerities tastes "the drink meant for the 'brave' (*vīra*) from the skull" as indicated by the author, Abhinavagupta, [in the above verse] by the words "universe's essence etc." The meaning of this statement is that the "essence" called nectar that is stored in the skull, symbolised by the fivefold objects of the world, constitutes the best kind of drink, which is technically called *rasāsava* (the liquor of nectar) on account of its ability to produce the highest kind of bliss. The skull is full of that nectar.

In other words, the material portion of the world is symbolised by the skull as its outer covering or shell; the



essence stored therein is the nectar capable of producing perfect bliss; hence it is said to constitute the best kind of "drink."

A skull is held in the hands of the spiritual adept who practices austerities. This has been indicated by the author in the [above] verse by the phrase "[the skull] that lies in his hands." The rays of consciousness symbolised by the *śakti* (power) underlying the senses, such as the eyes etc., are the instruments for the enjoyment of objects. This has been stated in the verse by the words "... he drinks from the skull that lies in his hands ...". Spiritual adepts are said to taste the nectar, the universal drink, through the senses which are in essence rays emanating from the skull which symbolises all the objects of experience in the world.

This is the meaning of the verses. The spiritual adept always sucks through the channel of power inherent in his senses the nectar underlying all objects of experience, all of which he experiences as resting in his own pure consciousness *bhairava*. He thus enjoys the integral unity of everything until he reaches the supreme goal. This constitutes the austerity for the spiritual adepts who serve the lotus feet of their spiritual master. All other austerities only dessicate and emaciate the [adept's] physical bodies in the course of time.

#### *Yogarāja's introduction to verse 81*

All that has been described above is summarised in the following verse in order to prove its superiority to other views:

## Verse 81

इति जन्मनाशहीनं  
 परमार्थमहेश्वराख्यमुपलभ्य ।  
 उपलब्धताप्रकाशात्  
 कृतकृत्यस्तिष्ठति यथेष्टम् ॥ ८१ ॥

*iti janma-nāśa-hīnam  
 paramārtha-maheśvarākhyam upalabhya ।  
 upalabdhr̥tā-prakāśāt  
 kṛta-kṛtyas tiṣṭhati yatheṣṭam ॥ 81 ॥*

Having realised the supreme Being, named Maheśvara (the great Lord), who is without birth and dissolution, he abides as he wishes, his aim fulfilled because of the manifestation of his nature as the knower.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 81*

In the manner described above, the spiritual adept realises the supreme truth, Maheśvara, who normally remains hidden [to ordinary mortals]. Realisation here means the firm experience within the spiritual adept of the nature of the Being who is devoid of birth and dissolution. Upon attaining this realisation, the spiritual adept experiences no birth nor death. This is the meaning [of the above verse]. The phrase "[he] abides as he wishes, his aim fulfilled" [in the above verse] means that the spiritual adept, on realising the supreme truth and thus achieving his highest purpose, has no other duty to perform. He lives in the physical frame with absolute freedom, never deviating from his own wishes [which are identified with those of the supreme Lord on this level], just

as the wheel [of the potter, once set spinning] revolves, thus bidding time.

How does this happen? The reply is given by the author in the above verse in the phrase "because of the manifestation of his nature as the knower." By constant reflection, the real nature of the spiritual adept as the knower or experiencer under all conditions is revealed. He then becomes of the nature of the absolute while living in the physical body.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 82*

[When] in this way [described above], any individual [embodied] living being obtains the knowledge of his real [divine] nature, he will become identical with Śiva. Such a person therefore will not be governed by the requirement that he first develop [within himself] any prerequisites for that [attainment]. This is stated here [in the following verse]:

### Verse 82

व्यापिनमभिहितमित्थं

सर्वात्मानं विधूतनानात्वम् ।

निरुपमपरमानन्दं

यो वेत्ति स तन्मयो भवति ॥ ८२ ॥

*vyāpinam abhihitam itthaṃ*

*sarvātmānaṃ vidhūta-nānātvam ।*

*nirupama-paramānandaṃ*

*yo vetti sa tan-mayo bhavati ॥ 82 ॥*

He who knows the all-pervasive, omnipresent Self, the obliterator of multiplicity, the supreme bliss, who is beyond comparison, becomes one with him [Śiva].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 82*

In the manner described above, the spiritual adept knows himself as Śiva, pure consciousness and massive bliss incarnate, and is not affected by limitation in any form. Obtaining this wisdom from reasoning, scriptural authority (Āgama), his own experience, and deep reflection, the adept becomes Śiva, casting away all of his self-imposed limitations.

No prerequisites are required to obtain the knowledge of the Self. Therefore, all those who are subject to birth and death and are human can become one with Śiva, after the awakening of the recognition of Śiva [i.e. the realisation that "I am Śiva."]

What is the nature of Śiva? The reply given in the verse is the "all-pervasive omnipresent Self." Śiva is the Self of all subjects and objects and the one whose Self is constituted by all subjects and objects. In other words, he is both the transcendent and the immanent reality. He is the one who, everywhere and at all times, dissolves into pure consciousness the infinite variety of the world manifestation. He is unique because of the absence of any deficiency or want in himself, and therefore he is of the nature of supreme bliss. One who realises his Self to be of this nature becomes Śiva.



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 83*

Where could the spiritual adept who realises his real nature as Śiva after loosening his attachment to his physical body forsake his physical body and to where could he depart? These questions have been answered [in the following verse]:

### Verse 83

तीर्थे श्वपचगृहे वा  
नष्टस्मृतिरपि परित्यजन्देहम् ।  
ज्ञानसमकालमुक्तः  
कैवल्यं याति हतशोकः ॥ ८३ ॥

*tīrthe śvapaca-gr̥he vā  
naṣṭa-smṛtir api parityajan deham ।  
jñāna-sama-kāla-muktaḥ  
kaivalyaṃ yāti hata-śokaḥ ॥ 83 ॥*

Whether he departs from his physical body in a holy place or in an outcaste's hovel, and even if he loses his memory, he obtains liberation immediately upon receiving knowledge thus overcoming sorrow.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 83*

An individual being who has realised his true nature, who has been deeply assured within his own heart by glimpsing his absolute non-dual nature, and who has experienced that "all this is only a manifestation of the divine freedom of my real Self" obtains liberation after departing from his physical frame, whether "in a holy place" like Prayāg, Puṣkar, or Kurukṣetra, or "in an outcast's hovel," i.e. in an extremely

unholy place. This is because he is beyond the consequences arising from accepting or rejecting a particular place to die.

[The phrase] "he obtains liberation" [in the above verse] means the attainment of the total isolation of oneself from the effect of *prakṛti*, the cause of the production of the physical body following the physical death. The nature of this supreme isolation is pure consciousness and bliss. Since to an enlightened being who has developed the vision of absolute oneness the entire universe appears as pervaded by the supreme Lord, he does not distinguish a holy place from an unholy one. He has also obliterated the sorrow arising from thought constructs. As has been stated in the *Śrīnirvāṇa Yogottara*:

*There is absolutely no difference if the knower of the true Śiva nature dies in the Himālayas at the mouth of the Ganges or at Vārāṇasī, or Kurukṣetra, or Prayāg, or in the house of an outcast.*

A realised being has no use for his memory when he forsakes his physical body. This has been conveyed [in the phrase in the above verse] by the words ". . . even if he loses his memory." The words "even if" are used to indicate that his memory may remain in some cases. But if when forsaking the physical body the memory is lost on account of the cessation of the three vital principles, i.e. wind (*vāyu*), bile (*pitta*), and phlegm (*śleṣa*), he then becomes inert like dead wood or a piece of stone and loses all consciousness about himself and leaves his physical body involuntarily. [Despite all this] having attained the knowledge of his real Self, he attains liberation. It therefore makes no difference to him whether or not his memory is gone at the moment of his departure from his body.

It might be argued by an opponent that the distinction between a holy or an unholy place might be of little consequence to the enlightened person, but that the lack of memory at the time of departure from the physical body [does make a significant difference to him, and] if the knowledge of the real Self, which is instrumental in attaining liberation, is forgotten, how can he possibly become liberated? It has been stated in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*The individual being who, while remembering me, leaves the body, he gains identity with me. There is no doubt about this.*  
[*Bhagavad Gītā* VIII.5]

Thus the utility of memory (in the attainment of liberation) has been recognised. Also, it might be argued by an opponent that if an individual adept is able to become one with the supreme Being without his remembering [his distinction from other fellow creatures] at the time of his exit from the body, then all creatures, even if they are ignorant of their real nature at the time of their death, would attain identity with him, there being no [recognisable] distinction [between the enlightened and ignorant one]. In that case the words of the *Bhagavad Gita* [mentioned above] would become invalid.

The author of the verse refutes this objection maintaining that it is not correct. [In the above verse] he uses the words "he obtains liberation immediately upon receiving knowledge" to elaborate. Yes it is true that memory is not essential [for achieving liberation] but as the true spiritual teacher speaks the supreme wisdom about his divinity into the ears of his disciple, the disciple immediately comprehends the true spiritual wisdom in the form of the self-experience "I am all this."<sup>1</sup> All of the veils, beginning with *māyā* [and the *kañcukas*], covering his true divine essence are destroyed



simultaneously, hence such an enlightened spiritual adept does not stand in need of anything else. He only carries on with his body [and its activities] like a potter's wheel revolving from its momentum. Therefore he has no need to retain or not to retain his memory after obtaining the highest knowledge from the true spiritual teacher.

His veiling by the form of the physical body is a result of the defilements, *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma malas*, which are due to ignorance about the true nature of the Self. This [ignorance] is destroyed following the transmission of true spiritual wisdom by the spiritual teacher, and thus the veiling in the form of the physical body is virtually destroyed. How then could such a body cause anguish to the enlightened one? He then becomes liberated immediately upon receiving the highest spiritual wisdom about his divine nature from the true spiritual teacher. As has been said in the thousand-versed *Kularatnamālikā*:

*When the true spiritual teacher gives instructions about the true Self to the disciple, he is immediately liberated, but he retains his physical body mechanically like a machine.*

It has also been said in the *Śrī Nisāṭana [Tantra]*:

*One attains union with the divine Being once and for all like the flow of milk from [the udders of] a cow or an arrow from the bow. Such a one becomes liberated at once, and also liberates others.*

How can one who has placed his Self in the supreme Being [attaining union] remember the moment [of his union with the supreme] at the time of his physical death, or [in other words], who can have the experience of the last moment [before death] of a knower of the true Self? This [last moment]



is witnessed exclusively by him, and thus it cannot be remembered or known [by another person] at a later moment. Such an experience of the true Self by the illuminated knower cannot be subsequently known or remembered by anyone. As a matter of fact, the answer with respect to these matters should be sought from the omniscients.

When an individual who has attained the highest wisdom dies, there is the cessation of all activity in his physical body. How can one then infer that the moment of his death was either auspicious or not? It is thus established that the supreme Being, existing in the innermost part of the enlightened individual, causes his mind to be filled with the knowledge of his Self. He then remembers his body as [inert like] a piece of wood or stone at the time of actual death. As has been said:

*O Nārada, the beings who are physically active [in their lives] remember me at the time of departure from this world. I also remember them as being like an inert piece of wood or stone [at that time].*

Also thus spoke the Lord in the *Lakṣmī Saṁhitā*:

*That devotee, who while in his fully fit body, remembers my universal nature in his still mind after the achievement of the equilibrium of the three humours, wind, bile, and phlegm but who then dies [when his body becomes inert] like a piece of wood or stone is remembered by me and taken to the highest place, the abode of Viṣṇu.*

Thus the very fact that the enlightened being remains completely seized by the thought of the supreme Lord lies at the root of his attaining liberation. Otherwise, in the absence of strong residual impressions, how could the memory of

one's identity with the supreme Being arise at the time of death? Therefore, to an enlightened being nothing is essential at the time of death.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 84*

One may ask: if a journey to a holy place does not constitute an essential part of the life of the spiritual adept, why then do wise persons undertake such journeys? This has been addressed by the author, who points out its implications:

### Verse 84

पुण्याय तीर्थसेवा

निरयाय श्वपचसदननिधनगतिः ।

पुण्यापुण्यकलङ्क-

स्पर्शाभावे तु किं तेन ॥ ८४ ॥

*pun्यāya tīrtha-sevā*

*nirayāya śvapaca-sadana-nidhana-gatiḥ ।*

*pun्यāpunya-kalaṅka*

*-sparśābhāve tu kiṁ tena ॥ 84 ॥*

Visiting a holy place results in merit, and meeting one's death in an outcaste's hovel leads one to hell. But what difference does that make to one who is not affected by merit or demerit?

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 84*

Spiritual adepts who have not dispelled the [false] identification of the real Self with the not-self despite their attaining spiritual knowledge, and who therefore have not become assured [of their innate divinity], though they might be devoted to the cultivation of pure knowledge about the

Self, such persons may earn merit by performing pious deeds like sacrifice etc. or accumulate demerit by doing the opposite.

Living in a holy place like Prayāg etc. before death might ensure such persons attainment of merit and rebirth on higher levels of existence. Similarly, living in an outcaste's hovel might force an individual to go to hell. Here the hovel of an outcaste is only symbolic of an unholy place where death results in a fall to the hell called *avīci*. These [fruits of actions] occur because of the continuance of the experience of the identification of the Self with the not-self by the individual [despite his having received a glimpse of pure knowledge]. Such individuals continue to be born and die in pious or unholy places after enjoying the fruits of their deeds in accordance with the place of their death. Persons who identify the Self with the not-self continue to remain bound [by ignorance] which results in their [continued experience of the] cycles of birth and death.

But there are persons who have succeeded in dispelling the ignorance caused by the false identification of the Self with the not-self through firmly acquiring the true knowledge of their real divine Self. These persons become immune to the touch of merit or demerit following their becoming one with the all-pervasive pure consciousness. What then is the relevance of merit or demerit to such illumined beings? As a matter of fact they [merit and demerit] are meaningless as far as illumined souls are concerned. As has been stated in the *Dharma Śāstra of Manu*:

*If King Yama, the son of Vivasvān, lives in your heart and if there is no controversy arising out of this, then do not go to the Ganges [for a holy dip] or to Gayā [a holy place in eastern India].*

The experience of the Self in the body, which is the not-self, is Yama (death) in the heart. One who is able to destroy him succeeds in dispelling the experience of the Self in the not-self after realising his absolute Śiva-nature. What is the purpose of such an illumined person visiting holy places? [None whatsoever]. This is the conclusion [of all of the above].



## Yogarāja's introduction to verses 85-86

It has already been stated that the individual in whom the *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma malas* have been destroyed and who exists in his real essence after the destruction of the physical body [at the time of death], such a being does not contribute to the sprouting of worldly existence, just as a burnt seed does not sprout. [Since] once the covering in the form of the physical body is destroyed, immediately after the rise of the pure knowledge of the real Self in an individual, there is no possibility of the sprouting of the world [which only exists for embodied beings]. But if the physical body persists in some individuals [as in the case of liberated but embodied beings], then the question arises of why the Self is not affected by the traits of the physical body. And if the individual being is affected by the traits of the physical body, then would that individual being be subject to transmigration after death? These questions have been addressed [by the author in the following verses]:

## Verses 85-86

तुषकम्बुकसुपृथक्कृत-

तण्डुलकणतुषदलान्तरक्षेपः ।

तण्डुलकणस्य कुरुते

न पुनस्तद्रूपतादात्म्यम् ॥ ८५ ॥

तद्वत् कञ्चुकपटली-

पृथक्कृता संविदत्र संस्कारात् ।

तिष्ठन्त्यपि मुक्तात्मा

तत्स्पर्शविवर्जिता भवति ॥ ८६ ॥

*tuṣa-kambuka-suprthak-kṛta*  
*-taṇḍula-kaṇa-tuṣa-dalāntara-kṣepaḥ |*  
*taṇḍula-kaṇasya kurute*  
*na punas tad-rūpatād ātmyam || 85 ||*  
*tadvat kañcuka-paṭālī*  
*-prthak-kṛtā saṁvid atra saṁskārāt*  
*tiṣṭhanty api muktātma*  
*tat-sparśa-vivarjitā bhavati || 86 ||*

The insertion of a grain of rice which has been completely separated from its covering and bran into another covering does not cause that insertion to be permanent. In the same way, the pure consciousness which by purification has been severed from its surrounding veils and is in the state of release is free from the influence of the veils, though that influence lasts for a while.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 85–86*

A grain of rice, fully separated from its covering and bran, if reinserted as before, does not become capable of sprouting like other grains of rice which possess that capacity on account of their never having been separated from their covering and bran. It is not like an iron rod which when divided can be made one again.

In the same way, the pure consciousness in the enlightened soul, when separated from the different veils called *kañcukas* covering the soul, becomes fully liberated after obtaining the firm experience "I am of the nature of Śiva, I always manifest myself as the supreme Self." In such cases, the physical body persists for some time, arising as it does from the *kañcukas* [the progeny of *māyā*], which last only for a limited period of time. Such individuals are free from the grip

of the veils in the shape of the physical body etc, and therefore from the karmic defilement (*kārma mala*). Merit and demerit in these cases cease to produce the feeling of attachment, which normally leads to the production of the "world-sprout" in exactly the same way as the [separated] grain of rice, when once again inserted in its covering and bran, fails to develop the "attachment" that is necessary for sprouting.

The intended meaning of all that has been stated is as follows. The world is caused by nescience. In the spiritual adept in whom the coverings have been destroyed following the awakening of knowledge of the real Self, his pure consciousness constituting his real Self does not cause the production of the world since the forces produced by nescience lose their causal efficiency. Even the residual impressions of nescience that persist and are responsible for the continuance of the fetters in the form of the physical body are incapable of producing the world because the roots of nescience have been consumed by the fire of spiritual knowledge. It is therefore held that the enlightened being actually exists in the fourth state despite the continuance of his physical body. When his physical body falls off in the course of time, the enlightened being transcends even the fourth state. Thus there is no possibility for his worldly existence in either of these conditions.

#### *Yogarāja's introduction to verses 87-88*

An opponent may raise the objection that the continuance of the physical body, even after the realisation of their true divine nature by spiritual adepts, implies the persistence of the impurity caused by the defilement [the *kārma mala*] in the form of the physical body. This objection has been addressed by the author in the following verses, citing an example from life:

## Verses 87-88

कुशलतमशिल्पिकल्पित-  
 विमलीभावः समुद्रकोपाधेः ।  
 मलिनोऽपि मणिरुपाधेर्  
 विच्छेदे स्वच्छपरमार्थः ॥ ८७ ॥  
 एवं सद्गुरुशासन-  
 विमलस्थिति वेदनं तनूपाधेः ।  
 मुक्तमप्युपाध्यन्तर-  
 शून्यमिवाभाति शिवरूपम् ॥ ८८ ॥

*kuśalatama-śilpi-kalpita*  
*-vimalī-bhāvaḥ samudgakopādheḥ |*  
*malino'pi maṇir upādher*  
*vicchede svaccha-paramārthaḥ || 87 ||*  
*evaṃ sad-guru-śāsana*  
*-vimala-sthiti vedanaṃ tanūpādheḥ |*  
*muktam apy upādhy-antara*  
*-śūnyam ivābhāti śiva-rūpam || 88 ||*

A gem, which has been made translucent by an extremely skillful jeweller may nevertheless be darkened by the covering which surrounds it, but it regains its true clarity when that covering is removed. In the same way, consciousness which has been fully purified by the instructions of a true teacher reveals itself in the form of Śiva when it is released and fully freed from the surrounding covering.



*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 87-88*

Just as a gem [in this context a pearl] skilfully purified and cleansed or made translucent remains darkened or devoid of lustre when it lies concealed inside mother-of-pearl but becomes clean and full of radiance after the mother-of-pearl is broken, so the knowledge about his real essence, which had remained secret, bestowed on the disciple by the spiritual teacher equipped with the highest spiritual wisdom, causes the disciple to become pure by reflecting on the knowledge of the Self. This causes the destruction of the fundamental defilement, the *āṇava mala*, and the removal of the *kārma* and *māyīya* defilements. When the limiting property, the physical body, falls away in the course of time, then this knowledge, purified and transformed into illumination, manifests the Śiva nature of the disciple, who becomes Śiva following the destruction of his physical body.

An opponent might raise the objection that just as a gem might again become covered by another defilement even after the destruction of its covering, the mother-of-pearl, in the same way, the pure knowledge embodying the divine essence of the disciple might once again be covered by some other defilement even after the defilement in the form of the physical body is destroyed.

The reply given by the author is that there is no similarity between the two cases, the example of the gem and the example of the knowledge of one's essence. This is because after the destruction of the physical body, the highest knowledge, namely the knowledge of the pure Self embodying the divine essence, cannot be covered by any other veil as this knowledge is of the nature of the great effulgent illumination, which is non-dual in character. Everything else which might appear as capable of veiling it is

only an aspect of the great illumination itself. Thus there is no similarity between the two examples, the pearl and its impurities which are independent from it, and knowledge and its veiling defilements which are dependent on it. Moreover the assumption of a physical body by an individual is due to nescience. When nescience is fully uprooted and destroyed by the spiritual adept with the help of the axe of the pure knowledge of the Self, then how can such an individual assume the limiting property, the physical body? As has been said in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*Knowledge is enveloped by nescience; by which all creatures are deluded. [Bhagavad Gītā V.15]*

*In them, the ignorance [about the Self] has been destroyed by the pure knowledge of the Self, shining like the sun it reveals the supreme [Being]. [Bhagavad Gītā V.16]*

In other words, the self-experience of a spiritual adept always remains pure after he realises his divine essence.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 89*

In the production [or removal] of different kinds of limiting properties nothing new is produced. There is only the purification of the intellect through reflection on the true nature of the Self. This has been stated [by the author in the following verse]:

### Verse 89

शास्त्रादिप्रामाण्याद्  
अविचलितश्रद्धयापि तन्मयताम् ।  
प्राप्तः स एव पूर्व  
स्वर्गं नरकं मनुष्यत्वम् ॥ ८९ ॥

*śāstrādi-prāmāṇyād  
avicalita-śraddhayāpi tan-mayatām ।  
prāptaḥ sa eva pūrvam  
svargaṃ naraḥ manuṣyatvam ॥ 89 ॥*

Through previous unwavering faith in the authority of the holy texts and their instructions etc., one becomes the same as [the object of faith] and thereby passes to heaven, hell, or the human state.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 89*

The individual being who has succeeded in obtaining knowledge of his real Self continues to perform actions to fulfill his desires or remains engaged in carrying out worldly pursuits, all due to [past] practise and through unwavering faith in the authority of holy texts or instructions received through the tradition of teachers, or as a result of reasoning, which contributes to the strengthening of residual

impressions resulting in his becoming the same as [the object of faith]. Such persons go to heaven to enjoy unalloyed happiness, or to hell to suffer pain, or they attain the form of human beings, who experience both happiness and pain, all due to the persistence of attachment on the eve of physical death.

But persons who are free from the residual impressions of the feeling of attachment are not subject to rebirth after the destruction of their bodies. This is because all individual beings achieve oneness with that upon which they reflect deeply and for a long time. But whatever they desire in clear terms at the time of their death, that object and no other manifests before them. Objects that they never contemplated during their lifetimes and whose residual impressions therefore do not persist cannot present themselves before them. Thus in all cases an individual's unwavering reflection on objects is the cause for his attraction towards those particular objects or his achieving them.



## Yogarāja's introduction to verses 90-91

In the same way, a realised soul who is completely identified with the Lord at the time of death achieves the manifestation of fullness. Therefore one should not regard his association with merit or demerit in worldly life as the cause for obtaining heaven or hell. This has been explained [by the author in the following two verses]:

## Verses 90-91

अन्त्यः क्षणस्तु तस्मिन्  
 पुण्यां पापां च वा स्थितिं पुष्यन् ।  
 मूढानां सहकारी-  
 भावं गच्छति गतौ तु न स हेतुः ॥ ९० ॥  
 येऽपि तदात्मत्वेन विदुः  
 पशुपक्षिसरीसृपादयः स्वगतिम् ।  
 तेऽपि पुरातनसंबोध-  
 संस्कृतास्तां गतिं यान्ति ॥ ९१ ॥

*antyaḥ kṣaṇas tu tasmin*  
*puṇyāṃ pāpāṃ ca vā sthitiṃ puṣyaṇ |*  
*mūḍhānāṃ sahakārī*  
*-bhāvaṃ gacchati gatau tu na sa hetuḥ | | 90 | |*  
*ye'pi tadātmātvena viduḥ*  
*paśu-pakṣi-sarīsrpādayaḥ sva-gatiṃ |*  
*te'pi purātana-sambodha*  
*-saṃskṛtās tāṃ gatiṃ yānti | | 91 | |*

The last moment [in life], which serves to produce a state of merit or demerit, becomes a cause of destiny in ignorant ones, but this is not the case [for an enlightened one] who determines the course of his destiny. Those who at that hour realise their state to be that of the Self, even though they be an animal, bird, or creeping creature, or the like, are nevertheless purified by the insight they had in a previous time, and now proceed on that course [their chosen destiny].

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 90-91*

With respect to an enlightened person, the nature of his last moment at the time of physical death may lead one to suppose that there is merit or demerit in him, because there are deformities in his body or because a serious accident has happened to it. This is true for [the death of] an ignorant person who experiences the Self in the not-self, such as the body etc., and in whom, therefore, demerit is the cause for this kind of suffering. But what is true in the case of ignorant persons cannot be said about persons who [following their enlightenment] have ceased to experience the Self in the not-self, and who have become adepts in experiencing themselves as Śiva. For such a spiritual aspirant, his last moment [before death] cannot be the cause of his transmigration from one physical body to another.

One may ask: how do you know this? This has been explained by the author in the verse. Anyone who has been reborn [in this life] as an animal because of the dominant residual impressions of his past life, or of a curse, etc., is able to recognise the nature of his present condition at the time of his death. Thereafter he is restored to his original [human] state due to the awakening of the residual impressions of his

knowledge of his real state, despite his having been ignorant of it during his present life as an animal. [This means that the fall of a human being to the animal state due to demerit, is temporary and lasts only for the present life]. To support this contention, the commentator gives an example from the Purāṇas. In the story of Gajendra, the elephant (Gajendra) has the memory of his devotion to God awakened within himself whereupon he casts off his *kañcukas* [sheaths due to ignorance], utters prayers to Viṣṇu, and realises his real nature.

What was the cause of the awakening of the memory [of past experience] in him? The reply is that an enlightened being who is subject to certain constraints in the embodied state due to physical limitations [such as living in the body of an animal] and who therefore, [sometimes] acting like dead wood or stone [incapable of thinking and devoid of ego-sense], leaves the body muttering something [within himself], such as that his present existence as an ape or a cat is due to demerit. His present state of existence, however, does not destroy or adversely affect the spiritual wisdom that he might have gained when he existed normally as a human being in a previous life. The bodily characteristics always remain in the body, but these do not obliterate the knowledge, which was acquired in the past from meditation. Thus the development of pure spiritual knowledge is the ultimate thing that remains [and prevails] at the moment of death. As has been said in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*O son of Kuntī, whosoever leaves the body thinking upon anything, to that does he go, conformed in nature to that.*  
[*Bhagavad Gītā* VIII.6]

And:

*To those devotees, ever harmonious, who always engage themselves in worshipping me with love, I give the yoga of discrimination by which they come unto me.*  
[Bhagavad Gītā X.10]

Thus using the mind to meditate on the supreme Being brings about the achievement of the ultimate end.



*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 92-93*

As has been shown above, the enlightened being who is constantly engaged in meditating on the supreme Being does not receive a new body after his present physical body, subject to destruction, falls away. It is destroyed in natural course, and there is no accumulation of [residual impressions of past actions which might force him to receive another body]. This is indicated by the author in the following two verses:

## Verses 92-93

स्वर्गमयो निरयमयस्  
 तदयं देहान्तरालगः पुरुषः ।  
 तद्भङ्गे स्वौचित्याद्  
 देहान्तरयोगमभ्येति ॥ ९२ ॥  
 एवं ज्ञानावसरे  
 स्वात्मा सकृदस्य यादृगवभातः ।  
 तादृश एव तदासौ  
 न देहपातेऽन्यथा भवति ॥ ९३ ॥

*svarga-mayo niraya-mayas*  
*tad ayaṃ dehāntarālagah puruṣaḥ*  
*tad-bhaṅge svaucityāḍ*  
*dehāntara-yogam abhyeti || 92 ||*  
*evaṃ jñānāvasare*  
*svātmā sakṛd asya yādr̥g avabhātaḥ |*  
*tādr̥śa eva tadāsau*  
*na deha-pāte'nyathā bhavati || 93 ||*

Thus the fettered being is enclosed within a body which is his own heaven and hell, and when this [body] dissolves, the soul enters into union with another appropriate body.

Thus also the Self is in him, the same as when at the hour of enlightenment it once and for all is revealed to him, and it does not change upon the dissolution of the body.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 92-93*

Therefore the embodied fettered soul associated with the *kārma* defilement, performs actions that generate corresponding impressions from which he becomes the enjoyer of their fruit in the form of heaven [etc.]. In this way, he becomes the enjoyer of the fruit of deep impressions from his actions unconsciously left on his mind which fructify and yield results. In a like manner, a fettered soul impelled by [the impressions of] past impious deeds becomes the enjoyer of their fruits in the form of hell.

The body is the instrument for the enjoyment of the fruits of both kinds of actions. When this body is destroyed [in the course of time], then the residual impressions of the deeds performed in it cause an individual's association with another body, in accordance with his fitness. Once again the residual impressions of deeds generate a specific inclination, which forces the individual to adopt the appropriate kind of body to serve as the instrument for the enjoyment [of that inclination].

In the same way, when the true nature of the Self is revealed to the disciple through the instructions of the teacher, or in other words, when he is restored to his divine nature and is endowed with unrestricted freedom, then the [corresponding] impressions become firmly rooted in him and

are manifested as such. His [true] nature thus revealed before the falling away of his body, does not again get veiled by another worldly manifestation. What has been revealed once cannot become concealed, otherwise no one would practise anything, and thus there would be an end to all worldly transactions.

It has been rightly said that by performing pious deeds one goes to higher regions (worlds), and that by performing impious ones a person goes to lower ones. By practising knowledge one obtains liberation, but its opposite leads one to bondage. Therefore the body, regardless of its state on the eve of death, [does not determine the nature of ones existence after death] but the impressions of past actions unconsciously left in the mind condition whether liberation or bondage occurs.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 94–95*

If the disturbed condition in the equilibrium of the three humours causes a painful death, then this increase in pain does not cause real damage. It only helps in restoring the individual to his previous state. This has been stated by the author [in the following two verses]:

## Verses 94-95

करणगणसंप्रमोषः

स्मृतिनाशः श्वासकलिलता च्छेदः ।

मर्मसु रुजाविशेषाः

शरीरसंस्कारजो भोगः ॥ ९४ ॥

स कथं विग्रहयोगे

सति न भवेत्तेन मोहयोगेऽपि ।

मरणावसरे ज्ञानी

न च्यवते स्वात्मपरमार्थात् ॥ ९५ ॥

*karāṇa-gaṇa-saṁpramoṣaḥ*

*smṛti-nāśaḥ śvāsa-kalilatā cchedaḥ ।*

*marmasu rujā-viśeṣāḥ*

*śarīra-saṁskāra-jo bhogaḥ । । 94 । ।*

*sa katham vighraha-yoge*

*sati na bhavet tena moha-yoge'pi ।*

*maraṇāvasare jñānī*

*na cyavate svātma-paramārthāt । । 95 । ।*

Utter palsy of senses, failure of memory, disturbance of breathing, breaking down of joints, malady, the sufferings arising from bodily confirmation, all these befall an individual while his union with the body lasts. Although he is united with an illusion [in the form of physical infirmities], the enlightened being does not because of that fall away from the supreme Being at the hour of death.



*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 94-95*

The utter failure of the thirteen external and internal senses, for example the failure of the eyes to grasp the form of objects etc.; the failure of the motor organs like those of speech etc., to produce sound etc.; the failure of the intellect to produce determinate cognition; of the mind to concentrate; even of the ego [to produce the sense of individuality]; of the memory to recapitulate the things experienced in the past; all these occur at the time of death.

The individual on the verge of death is often, upon being asked by a friend, unable to recognise any object lying before him, even if he has experienced it repeatedly before. Therefore for one who has never meditated on God, receiving instruction about the supreme Being, or giving away gifts on the eve of death, or any other such action is like a picture drawn on the sky and does not then get fixed [or leave any impression] on his mind. Nevertheless all such actions should be performed as a matter of duty; this is the instruction.

Interruption of the breath by hiccups, pain, or a breaking sensation in the joints, and diseases like fever, dysentery, etc., all cause distress. Similarly, the disturbance in the equilibrium of the three vital humours, wind, bile, and phlegm in the body causes the experience of pain. All these are the suffering arising from an individual's connection to the body. This suffering is inevitable due to that connection. Hence, how can an enlightened being who is embodied escape from this; he has to suffer them all.

But the enlightened one, who has overcome his false identification with the physical body after identifying himself with the supreme Lord, does not deviate from his essence, his self-experience as pure consciousness, despite his being conscious of his relationship with his physical body at the

time of death. It is because of this that the spiritual adept who has forsaken his intimate connection with the physical body does not become a forced victim of the enjoyment of [or suffering from] worldly objects, like other worldly ensnared persons, who do so until their bodies fall away in the course of time. Such a person is pure at heart and impelled by pious resolve always keeps himself engaged in pious deeds. One who has cultivated devotion to God does not face any new problems. Such enlightened and holy persons are liberated immediately after they receive illumination, and the continuing impressions due to the connection with the body cannot put such persons in bondage. This has been stated hundreds of times before.

On the other hand, an individual being, having identified himself with his physical body, is subject to the laws of merit and demerit. How can such a person, afflicted by the experience of pleasure and pain arising out of his bodily connection, escape from being identified with his body? It has rightly been said in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*When the body of an embodied being goes to dissolution while sattva is predominant, such a person, knowing the supreme Being, goes to the spotless worlds of great sages. [Bhagavad Gītā XIV.14]*

*Sattva* etc. are constituents of *prakṛti*. Therefore these [qualities of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*] can control those who become identified with *prakṛti*; but they cannot affect the spiritual adepts who by obtaining discriminative wisdom have achieved separation from it. Therefore, the path followed by an enlightened one is different. Fettered individuals who have not come in contact with teachers project their own characteristics onto others.

[They think:] "If such a person is enlightened, then why should he suffer from a disease like other people?" Or "[if he's enlightened then] why did he become (decompose into) matter when he died"? Or "why could he not remember [his real nature when he died]?" This is how those who are subject to ignorance convince others [about an enlightened one's real nature] through reasoning. But there is no fault if a person is enlightened and has also identified himself with a physical body.

The self-effulgent nature of an enlightened person under any circumstance remains self-effulgent and it never disappears from his view; hence he continues to have the experience of his real nature and his knowledge about his real Self is never destroyed. Though Lord Vāsudeva was endowed with the six divine attributes, he left his mortal body in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa when pierced by a hunter's arrow. Did his nature as the supreme Godhead become eclipsed as a consequence of this?

All beings, from a worm up to *sadāśiva*, have some knowledge of the Self despite their remaining identified with their bodies, but some, the enlightened beings, are always equipped with the knowledge of the real [divine] Self. However in those who are ignorant, the real Self remains concealed in the body. This is the difference between the two. Thus though bodily characteristics remain the same in enlightened and ignorant beings, there is no similarity in them with respect to their consequences. This has been stated in the *Bhagavad Gītā* thus:

*Even enlightened beings behave in conformity with their own nature. Beings follow their own nature, therefore, of what use is restraint? [Bhagavad Gītā III.33]*



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 96*

The difference in the intensity of divine grace descending on individuals engaged in the practice of the yoga of knowledge lies in its being bestowed either all at once or in gradual steps. This accounts for the [apparently] different results [of that grace in different seekers], as explained by the author [in the following verse]:<sup>1</sup>

### Verse 96

परमार्थमार्गमिनं

झटिति यदा गुरुमुखात् समभ्येति ।

अतितीव्रशक्तिपातात्

तदैव निर्विघ्नमेव शिवः ॥ ९६ ॥

*paramārtha-mārgam enaṁ*

*jhaṭiti yadā guru-mukhāt samabhyeti ।*

*atitīvra-śaktipātāt*

*tadaiva nirvighnam eva śivaḥ ॥ 96 ॥*

Upon hearing the words of his teacher, divine grace descends on him in great intensity and he immediately finds the path to the Supreme Being and without any hinderance becomes Śiva.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 96*

The moment a fortunate individual receives instructions from the spiritual teacher regarding the secret way to attain the realisation of his divine nature, which is characterised by absolute divine freedom, he immediately becomes Śiva.



As has been said in the Śrīkula:

*Beloved one, an individual, upon whom the enlightened spiritual teacher casts his glance easily, or sportively, or out of love, is liberated at once.*

It may be asked how such secret knowledge is made available to the individual being from the lips [of the teacher]. The reply given in the verse is "when divine grace descends on him with great intensity." [In other words] after realising his divine essence by hearing about it from the mouth of the teacher, the Lord's grace, in an extremely intense form, descends into the lotus heart of the fettered being and thus he becomes Śiva. This is like the transformation of copper into gold on account of being submerged in an alchemic liquid.

The individual being obtains the knowledge of his divine essence by the grace of the supreme Lord, thus repetition of the name [of the Lord], meditation, and sacrifice, etc. are of no use to him. The individual being whose heart is "pierced" by the power of the grace of the Lord is forcibly and immediately attracted towards the secret spiritual knowledge emanating from the mouth of the Lord, and consequently he attains divinity immediately. Thus the effect of the descent of divine grace is without any parallel. About this one should not entertain any doubt.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 97*

Persons who receive grace in a medium, or a less intense, or a very mild form attain Śiva by following the instructions of the teacher, after meditating on them [the instructions] until they die, and by performing the spiritual discipline consistent with the intensity of grace infused in them. This is described [in the following verse]:

## Verse 97

सर्वोत्तीर्णं रूपं  
 सोपानपदक्रमेण संश्रयतः ।  
 परतत्त्वरूढिलाभे  
 पर्यन्ते शिवमयीभावः ॥ ९७ ॥

*sarvottīrṇaṃ rūpaṃ*  
*sopāna-pada-kramaṇa saṁśrayataḥ ।*  
*paratattva-rūḍhi-lābhe*  
*pariyante śiva-mayī-bhāvaḥ ॥ 97 ॥*

Some, after ascending in gradual steps to the level of the all-transcending supreme Being, become identical to Śiva when they establish themselves firmly in the supreme principle.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 97*

The individual being who has received grace in a mild form is unable to [fully] realise the instruction about the supreme knowledge. Therefore he visualises the divine essence in all the *tattvas* in gradual steps through the centres (*cakras*), i.e. the pubic, navel, heart, throat, tongue, *bindu*, and *nāda*, which are all ascending steps leading to the realisation of the divine Śakti [in full form]. The ascent is accomplished by moving

from the lower steps through the higher ones in a gradual way.

The first step of the ascent is the pubic *cakra*, then the navel [*cakra*], then the heart [*cakra*] and so on. The individual, after firmly recognising his identity with the supreme Being, becomes of the nature of Śiva in gradual steps, [achieving liberation] following the destruction of the physical body. This is known as "the liberation in gradual steps."<sup>1</sup>

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 98–99*

If the spiritual adept, who practices *yoga* in gradual steps after attaining a firm conviction is unable to achieve identity with the supreme Being due to some obstacle, then what happens to him when he dies without attaining the highest realisation in this lifetime? This is explained [in the following two verses]:

### Verses 98–99

तस्य तु परमार्थमयीं  
 धारामगतस्य मध्यविश्रान्तेः ।  
 तत्पदलाभोत्सुक-  
 चेतसोऽपि मरणं कदाचित्स्यात् ॥ ९८ ॥  
 योगभ्रष्टः शास्त्रे  
 कथितोऽसौ चित्रभोगभुवनपतिः ।  
 विश्रान्तिस्थानवशद्  
 भूत्वा जन्मान्तरे शिवीभवति ॥ ९९ ॥

*tasya tu paramārtha-mayīm*  
*dhārām agatasya madhya-viśrānteḥ |*  
*tat pada-lābhotsuka*  
*-cetaso'pi maraṇam kadācit syāt || 98 ||*  
*yoga-bhraṣṭaḥ śāstre*  
*kathito'sau citra-bhoga-bhuvana-patiḥ |*  
*viśrānti-sthāna-vaśad*  
*bhūtvā janmāntare śivī-bhavati || 99 ||*

A person who yearns to reach the level of the highest Being but who stops in midstream [without reaching the goal] and who dies one day, is called in the scriptures a *yoga-bhraṣṭa*, one who has fallen from the path of *yoga*. He remains in a happy state, and shares in the various delights of the world of the gods, and attains Śivahood in the following life.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 98–99*

When an individual practises *yoga* and ascends in rapid steps [skipping some of the levels], but then stops in the middle due to some obstruction, feeling satisfied with his experience of some level of spiritual ascent, and therefore is unable to follow the path leading to the highest spiritual level, or when he is unable due to obstacles to achieve the desired identification with the supreme Being, what happens to him when he dies?

This is answered by the author in [the above verse in] the phrase beginning with “fallen from the path of *yoga*” etc. The word *yoga-bhraṣṭa* refers to one who has fallen from the path of both *yoga* and *samādhi* (union with the supreme) as has been observed in the holy scriptures.

What happens to him [the *yoga-bhraṣṭa*]? The reply [in the verse] is that when such a person dies, he becomes lord of



those regions where he is able to enjoy various heavenly pleasures, such as numerous damsels, food, drink, the wearing of beautiful garlands or clothes, the application of beautiful pastes and listening to music, and so on consistent with his level of ascent.

When his eligibility for such enjoyment comes to an end, how can he again be regarded as one fallen from the path of *yoga*? The reply is that when the residual impressions about the ascent from the level of the *mūlādhāra cakra* etc. arise, then on his subsequent rebirth, he gets a body which serves as a fit vehicle to practice *yoga* which he strives to perform [in his next life]. He easily ascends to the highest level of the supreme Being and becomes Śiva after separation from his physical body [at death].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verses 100–101*

Spiritual adepts engaged in the practice of *yoga* are not often able to secure a resting place at any single level owing to the fickle nature of the mind, but what happens after death to those with a firm faith in *yoga* is explained by the author in the following two verses:

## Verses 100-101

परमार्थमार्गमिनं

ह्यभ्यस्याप्राप्य योगमपि नाम ।

सुरलोकभोगभागी

मुदितमना मोदते सुचिरम् ॥ १०० ॥

विषयेषु सार्वभौमः

सर्वजनैः पूज्यते यथा राजा ।

भुवनेषु सर्वदैवैर्

योगभ्रष्टस्तथा पूज्यः ॥ १०१ ॥

*paramārtha-mārgam enaṁ*

*hy abhyasyāprāpya yogam api nāma ।*

*sura-loka-bhoga-bhāgī*

*mudita-manā modate suciram ।। 100 ।।*

*viṣayeṣu sārva-bhaumah*

*sarva-janaiḥ pūjyate yathā rājā ।*

*bhuvaneṣu sarvadaivair*

*yoga-bhraṣṭas tathā pūjyaḥ ।। 101 ।।*

One who though labouring on the path of *yoga* leading to the supreme Being does not attain him, shares in the delights of the world of the gods where he rejoices with a glad spirit. Just as an emperor is universally adored by all the people in his kingdom, he, though fallen from the path of *yoga*, is adored by all the gods.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verses 100-101*

As has been explained repeatedly [in previous pages], if a spiritual adept who has practised *yoga* with faith and devotion leading to the ultimate self-realisation dies without

having secured a resting place for his mind [i.e. achieved stillness of mind] because of its fickle nature, then he, fallen from the path of *yoga*, remains in a delightful condition for a long time, enjoying the pleasures of the higher regions due to his firm faith in and deep devotion to the *yoga* of knowledge. Such a person is adored by the people residing on his level of existence [i.e. on earth] and by the gods in their kingdom.

How? This is answered [in the above verse by the phrase] beginning with the word "universal." Just as a King-Emperor, lord of the seven island kingdoms [i.e. of the whole world], is adored and worshipped by all the people living in different parts of his kingdom, in the same way the spiritual seeker within whom the accumulated merit and demerit have loosened their grip, who has developed non-attachment, and who has taken on a physical body for the last time, becomes worthy of adoration by all of us.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 102*

What happens to such a spiritual adept after returning from his enjoyment in other higher regions? This is answered [in the following verse]:

Verse 102

महता कालेन पुनर्  
 मानुष्यं प्राप्य योगमभ्यस्य ।  
 प्राप्नोति दिव्यममृतं  
 यस्मादावर्तते न पुनः ॥ १०२ ॥

*mahatā kālena punar  
 mānuṣyaṃ prāpya yogam abhyasya |  
 prāpnoti divyam amṛtaṃ  
 yasmād āvartate na punaḥ || 102 ||*

After a long time he returns and assumes a human frame and practicing *yoga* he comes to the divine deathless state from which he never returns.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 102*

After enjoying for a long time the pleasures of the higher realms as indicated above, the spiritual adept, fallen from the path of *yoga*, reverts to the life of a human being in the world and obtains a physical body suitable for the practice of *yoga*, [the final attainment of] which was difficult to achieve during his previous life due to the fickleness of his mind. He then effortlessly resumes the practice of *yoga* after recalling the residual impressions of *yoga* that were created by his faith and devotion [in his previous life]. He becomes firmly established [in *yoga*] and attains divine immortality, the divine essence, after his death. Therefore there is no rebirth for such individuals. A slight concentration on his real essence, which is the highest purpose, prevents his transmigration in the world. As has been said in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

*In this [yoga] there is no loss of effort, nor is there transgression. Even a little of this dharma (religious duty) protects one from great fear. [Bhagavad Gītā II.40]*



Again [in the *Bhagavad Gītā*]:

*O Krishna, one whose mind wanders away from yoga failing to attain perfection, but who possesses faith—what path does he tread? [Bhagavad Gītā VI.37].*

Answering this question [the *Bhagavad Gītā* proclaims]:

*He, fully perfected through manifold births, reaches the supreme goal. [Bhagavad Gītā VI.45]*

One should keep in mind the [above] reply recorded by the sage [Vyāsa] in the text [the *Bhagavad Gītā*].

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 103*

In this way a fettered being who has even a little access to the path of knowledge attains such extraordinary powers that they cannot adequately be described. Therefore one whose mind has been purified by discriminatory knowledge should be careful to obtain freedom from the cycles of birth and death. This has been stated [in the following verse by the author]:

Verse 103

तस्मात् सन्मार्गेऽस्मिन्  
 निरतो यः कश्चिदेति स शिवत्वम् ।  
 इति मत्वा परमार्थं  
 यथातथापि प्रयतनीयम् ॥ १०३ ॥

*tasmāt san-mārgē'smin  
 nirato yaḥ kaścid eti sa śivatvam |  
 iti matvā paramārthe  
 yathā-tathāpi prayatanīyam || 103 ||*

Therefore whoever is devoted to this holy path comes to the state of Śiva. Contemplating on this, one should by every means strive for the supreme unity.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 103*

Whoever devotedly pursues the path of self-realisation in the manner described above obtains the best results. There is no rule about who is fit to follow this superior path leading to liberation, as has been shown before. Whoever is afflicted by the different kinds of pain arising from birth, death, and disease, and who is fully engaged with complete faith [in spiritual discipline] leading to the achievement of discriminatory wisdom, obtains Śiva-hood in a single birth, in no time at all, after destroying his worldly pains. As has been stated in the *Śivadharmottara Purāṇa*:

*One should [always] search for the path whereby one attains liberation in this world in one birth, instead of being interested in obtaining liberation over many rebirths.*

Reflecting that "efforts made in this manner always yield good results," one should strive to obtain liberation by any possible means. If one is able to realise his Self without feeling any pride then he obtains the desired result. If not [and he dies before achieving the highest goal] he will reach the divine regions. Hence one should not feel proud while practising the yoga leading to the supreme goal.

When an individual returns from the higher divine regions, he again renews his contact with the path of *yoga* [in the present birth] as a result of his awakened memory of the *yoga* practices in his former birth. Thus the bestowing of beneficial fruits cannot cause any obstruction in his pursuit of the path of *yoga*.

*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 104*

Thus Abhinavagupta [the author of this work], after having modified the instructions given by Śeṣabhaṭṭaraka in the *Paramārthasāra* in accordance with the non-dual Śaivite teaching, incorporating within it logic, spiritual experiences, and the Śaivite Āgamic tradition, concludes the text to his own satisfaction. Considering the instructions he's given to be conducive to the achievement of the supreme goal, he records his own name [in the next verse]:

### Verse 104

इदमभिनवगुप्तोदित-  
 संक्षेपं ध्यायतः परं ब्रह्म ।  
 अचिरादेव शिवत्वं  
 निजहृदयावेशमभ्येति ॥ १०४ ॥

*idam abhinavaguptodita*

*-saṃkṣepaṃ dhyāyataḥ paraṃ brahma |*

*acirād eva śivatvaṃ*

*nija-hṛdayāveśam abhyeti || 104 ||*

Śiva's nature (*Śivatva*) quickly comes to penetrate the very heart of the individual who meditates upon the supreme Brahman whose nature has been described by Abhinavagupta.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 104*

By meditating on his real divine Self, whose nature is all-pervasive absolute bliss, described in detail in the foregoing pages, [the spiritual adept] realises his Śiva-nature easily and quickly, i.e. not after many rebirths.

[It may be asked here:] how? [The reply is that he achieves this result] by penetrating his very heart, his innermost core, within which the experience of the Self is obtained.

What is the nature of Brahman [the all-pervasive divine Being]? It is revealed by his [the author's] famous name [Abhinavagupta that means "the ever new which is hidden"], referring to the hidden nature of Brahman that is generally not revealed to others but remains concealed. It is revealed, and is concisely explained [in this text]. The nature of the teaching has also been stated [in the above verse].



*Yogarāja's introduction to verse 105*

After indicating the extent of the text, the authorship of this *prakaraṇa* (compendium) text has been stated [in the following verse]:

## Verse 105

आर्याशतेन तदिदं  
संक्षिप्तं शास्त्रसारमतिगूढम् ।  
अभिनवगुप्तेन मया  
शिवचरणस्मरणदीप्तेन ॥ १०५ ॥

*āryā-śatena tad idaṃ  
saṃkṣiptaṃ śāstra-sāraṃ atigūḍham |  
abhinavaguptena mayā  
śiva-carāṇa-smaraṇa-dīptena || 105 ||*

This most profound essence of the teaching has been summed up in a hundred verses in *āryā* metre by me, Abhinavagupta, inspired by the remembrance of Śiva's feet.

*Yogarāja's commentary on verse 105*

The sublimest essence of the teaching, which could not be described in hundreds of texts, has been summed up [by Abhinavagupta] in a hundred verses. This indicates his extraordinary intellectual capacity. How has this been accomplished by him? By his being one who is "inspired by the remembrance of Śiva's feet," i.e. by his remembrance of the feet or the rays of the light of consciousness. Śiva is by his very nature the transcendent Being, the innermost Self, the embodiment of consciousness and bliss. Remembrance [of

the feet of Śiva] means not losing the awareness of the Self while cognising [ordinary] objects like sound etc. Being illuminated by this experience of the light of *pūrṇaḥaṁtā* is the true significance of the one bearing the name [Abhinavagupta].

The authorship of this great work of deep and sublime significance could not be accomplished by one who is ignorant of his own divine essence, or by one who possesses the ego-sense which arises out of the false identification of the not-self, the body, etc., with the Self. An individual is able to discuss the nature of his own being only as he experiences it, and thus it is clear that the author of this work experiences himself as identified with the supreme Lord.

### Abhinavagupta's Colophon

Here ends the *Paramārthasāra* written by Abhinavagupta the great disciple of the Lord.

### Yogarāja's Colophon

This *vivṛti* commentary named *Yoga*, explaining the work from the monistic perspective, has been written by me, an unattached hermit resident of Vitastāpurī, the disciple of Kṣemarāja, a true teacher well-versed in the [Śaiva] tradition who has directly seen the supreme Lord.

Here ends the *vivṛti* commentary on the *Paramārthasāra Saṁgraha* (epitome) by the great disciple of Lord Śiva, the venerable Yogarāja Rājānaka.



## APPENDIX

### The Seven Kinds of Subjects in Creation

Yogarāja in his commentary on verse 14 refers to seven different kinds of subjects which reside on seven different levels of creation. These different beings are the *śiva*, *mantramahēśvara*, *mantrēśvara*, *mantra*, *vijñānākala*, *pralayākala*, and *sakala* subjects, which exist respectively on the levels of *śiva tattva*, *sadāśiva tattva*, *īśvara tattva*, *śuddha vidyā tattva*, the void between *śuddha vidyā tattva* and *māyā tattva*, *māyā tattva*, and *prakṛti tattva*. These different beings have different natures, and the environment they experience is appropriate to their different natures.

*Śiva pramātā*, or Śiva as subject, who is different from Paramaśiva the supreme subject, exists at the level of the *śiva tattva*. Since nothing exists projected outside of Śiva at this level, he experiences himself as the universal "I" (*aham*). In him, the fivefold Śakti:—*cit* (consciousness-power), *ānanda* (bliss-power), *icchā* (power of volition), *jñāna* (knowledge-power), and *kriyā* (power of action)—are prominent.

The *mantramahēśvaras* exist on the level of the *sadāśiva tattva* where they experience themselves as universal, transcendental being which takes the form "I am this universe" (*aham idam*). The experience of their real nature as *aham* ("I"-ness) dominates their experience of the universe as "this" (*idam*). *Ichchā śakti* is the prominent *śakti* in them.

The *mantrēśvaras* reside on the level of *īśvara tattva*. They experience the totality of the universe as an extension of their real, divine nature. Their experience takes the form of "the universe is none other than my own Self" (*idam aham*).



The *mantra* subjects live on the level of *śuddha vidyā tattva*. They experience the universe as "this" (*idam*), but that experience is dominated by their self-experience as "I"-ness (*aham*) to such an extent that the universe appears as unreal to them. Their experience on this level can be summed up as "I-I this-this" (*aham-aham idam-idam*). The two poles, "I" (*aham*) and "this" (*idam*), are not manifest clearly and simultaneously in their experience. Sometimes they experience only their "I"-nature (*aham*), with the universe remaining somewhat concealed, but at other times they experience the totality of the universe i.e. *idam*, with their "I"-nature remaining somewhat indistinct.

These the *śiva*, *mantramahēśvara*, *mantrēśvara*, and *mantra* beings are considered the pure subjects because they reside in the pure domain (*śuddha adhvan*). They are manifested by the operation of the divine Śakti in its pure spiritual form *cit śakti*, they are free from the *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma malas* (defilements) and possess pure bodies made of the divine Śakti in a condensed form called *bindu*. They enjoy eternal bliss and are incapable of performing any action except to carry out the will of the supreme Lord. Sometimes divine grace is transmitted through them to fettered beings lying below.

The *vijñānākala* subjects are permanently unembodied and live in the void that lies beneath the pure *śuddha vidyā* but above the impure *māyā tattva*. They are conscious of themselves as pure awareness (*bodha*). They are free of the *kārma* and *māyīya mala* defilements but have the *āṇava mala* defilement and thus experience themselves as separate beings. Not being embodied they can neither raise nor lower themselves through meritorious or demeritorious action. And because they do not even have a subtle body they lie in an immobile condition from the beginning of creation until the cosmic dissolution and do not have any experience of a universe.

The *pralayākala* subjects are bound by the *āṇava* and *kārma mala* defilements and are devoid of a body, but unlike the *vijñānākala* subjects who are unembodied permanently, they are disembodied temporarily. They reside on the level of the *māyā tattva*, and are so deluded by *māyā śakti* that they are not aware of anything. It is a state of total unawareness quite different from voidness. Their experience is of deep dreamless sleep. When their state of dissolution comes to an end they acquire an appropriate body and are then known as *sakalas*, and they have the potential to move downwards, toward the level of *prakṛti* or its evolutes.

The *sakala* subjects are embodied beings who exist on the levels below the *prakṛti tattva*. These subjects are cloaked by all three of the defilements, the *āṇava*, *māyīya*, and *kārma malas*. As bound beings (*paśus*) they experience the multiplicity of the world manifestation and have the self-experience of discreteness and limitation.

The *sakala* subjects are eight kinds of superhuman beings, including gods and semi-divine beings, human beings, and five kinds of subhuman creatures.

Both superhuman and subhuman beings are cloaked by the three kinds of defilements, but they possess different kinds of physical bodies according to their deeds performed in past lives. These bodies are the vehicles for enjoying the world through their senses and are called *bhoga-deha* (bodies for enjoyment). Though they continue performing actions in their present lives, they do not identify with their physical bodies and therefore have no ego sense and the residual impressions of the deeds they perform do not cling to them. Hence all their activities are guided by instinct, in the background of which lies the will of the supreme Lord. Such embodied beings exist in their superhuman or subhuman

state as long as the accumulated fruits of their past deeds are not fully exhausted.

Human beings on the other hand occupy a unique position among the embodied beings. They are enwrapped by the three kinds of defilements but they have the unique privilege of being able to evolve upwards into higher levels of existence or to descend into the lower levels as a result of the deeds they perform in this present lifetime. Thus temporarily they may become gods, demi-gods, or animals. The residual impressions of actions performed in this life that remain prominent at the time of their death determine their future life. They alone possess an ego-sense, which arises from the false identification of the physical body with the Self. Therefore they alone are able to achieve liberation.

In this way the supreme Lord reveals himself as different kinds of subjects as he unfolds the universe of thirty-six *tattvas* or levels of existence. Ordinary human beings are not aware of the existence of different levels of creation and the different types of subjects living on these levels, but a spiritual adept who ascends gradually by means of his spiritual disciplines progresses through the various levels on his journey to the supreme goal and experiences both the various levels of existence and the different kinds of subjects by becoming them. To rise from the material plane to the spiritual plane, he has to cross the two barriers of *prakṛti* and *māyā*, which requires a great deal of effort. He has to travel from *sakala* through *vijñānākala*, *mantra*, *mantrēśvara*, and *mantra-maheśvara* to Śiva, the final step of the ascent.



## GLOSSARY

*abhimāna*. False or prideful conception of oneself.

*adharma*. Unrighteousness.

*adhvan*. Realm. The thirty-six *tattvas* are divided into two realms, the pure (*śuddha*) and the impure (*aśuddha*).

*ādhikārikā devatā*. The presiding deity of a region in creation.

*Āgama*. A divinely revealed scripture of Śaivism.

*ākāśa*. Ether. One of the five *bhūtas* (earth, water, fire, air, and ether), the grossest *tattvas* that constitute the materiality of the universe. Ether (*ākāśa*) can be thought of as what constitutes space.

*akhyāti*. Self-negation, non-knowledge or imperfect knowledge. The self-negating power of the Lord.

*ahaṃkāra*. The ego. Literally, "the creator of I."

*ahaṃtā*. The pure Self. Literally, "I am"-ness.

*anāhata nāda*. The unstruck sound.

*ānanda*. Bliss.

*āṇava mala*. One of three distinct kinds of defilements that delude sentient beings. It is the impurity which is the sense that one is a limited, separate individual.

*aṇḍa*. Egg, sphere. Abhinavagupta in the *Paramārthasāra* classifies the thirty-six *tattvas* into four spheres or *aṇḍas* (eggs), each containing the next lower *aṇḍa*. They are, in descending order, the *śakti*, *māyā*, *prakṛti*, and *pṛthvī aṇḍas*, respectively.



*aṇu*. Monad. The experience of individuality or finiteness that affects those under the sway of *māyā tattva*.

*anugraha*. Grace.

*āśrama*. Stage of life. These stages of life traditionally are student (*brahmacarya*), householder (*grhastha*), forest dweller (*vānaprastha*), and renunciant (*saṇnyāsin*).

*aśvamedha*. The horse sacrifice. One of the most important Vedic sacrifices.

*ātman*. The Self.

*avastu*. Non-existent.

*avidyā kañcuka*. Also known as *vidyā kañcuka*. The second of the five *kañcukas* (sheaths). It is the *kañcukas* (sheath) that causes a limitation with respect to knowledge.

*bauddha ajñāna*. Intellectual ignorance. Ignorance or incomplete knowledge in the intellect or understanding.

*bindu*. Point. The point of creation at which Paramāśiva creates the appearance of duality (the *tattvas*).

*bhā*. Illumination.

*bhokta*. The enjoyer. The subject who experiences the world.

*bhūta*. A physical element. Ether (*ākāśa*), wind (*vāyu*), fire (*tejas*), water (*āpas*), or earth (*prthivī*).

*bhuvana*. A total of 118 *bhuvanas* or little universes are said to exist on the different levels of creation on which innumerable number of subjects live, enjoying the objects of enjoyment in accordance with the laws of their own actions (*karma*) performed by them in their previous births. Each of these little universes (*bhuvanas*) are presided over by a deity under whose governance the affairs of the particular little universe are carried out.

*bodha*. Knowledge.

*Brahman*. The highest principal in Advaita Vedānta philosophy. Brahman is the non-active and attributeless ultimate reality according to Advaita Vedānta.

*Brahmavādin*. An Advaita Vedāntin. One who considers Brahman as the highest principle.

*buddhi*. The intellect or reason. The limited intellectual tool of a fettered being.

*cakra*. Literally, "a wheel". A center of spiritual and subtle energy in the spiritual body.

*cid-aṇu*. The spiritual monad.

*cit*. Consciousness.

*dehin*. An embodied subject.

*dharma*. Righteousness, religious duty.

*guṇas*. The three qualities that comprise nature. They are *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (passion and activity), and *tamas* (dullness and impurity).

*icchā*. Divine will, free will.

*īśvara tattva*. The fourth *tattva* among the thirty-six principles of Kashmir Śaivism.

*jala*. Water also called *āpas*. One of the five physical elements (*bhūtas*).

*japa*. The repetition of a mantra.

*jīva*. The limited being.

*jīvan mukta*. A being who is liberated while still living in the body.

*jñāna*. Knowledge.

*kāla kañcuka*. Limitation with respect to time.

*kalā kañcuka*. Limitation with respect to authorship, the ability to act.  
It places limitations on what a fettered individual can do.

*kañcuka*. Sheath or covering. The sheath that appears to cover or limit the Self. There are five of these: (*kāla*) limitation with respect to time, (*niyati*) limitation with respect to place, (*rāga*) limited interest, (*vidyā*) limitation with respect to knowledge, and (*kalā*) limitation in the ability to act.

*kārma mala*. The impurity of the bondage caused by action and its consequences.

*kriyā*. Action.

*kṛtya*. Activity of the Lord. Refers to the five functions that the supreme Lord performs incessantly: *nigraha* (self-limitation), *śṛṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (sustenance), *saṁhāra* (absorption), and *anugraha* (dispensation of grace).

*mala*. Defilement veiling the Self.

*manas*. The mind.

*mantra*. A sacred phrase or word.

*māyā*. Power of illusion.

*māyā tattva*. The sixth *tattva* among the thirty-six principles of Kashmir Śaivism. The impure realm begins at the level of *māyā tattva*, and from that level on down duality is experienced.

*māyīya mala*. The impurity associated with the veil of *māyā*.

*nāda*. Sacred sound. Sounds that arise in a spiritual practitioner when he reaches a certain level of attainment.

*nara*. Man.

*nirvikalpaka*. Without or beyond thought.

*niścaya*. Determinate cognition. Knowing that something is a particular object or thing. For example knowing that an object is a jar and not a tree.

*niyati kañcuka*. Limitation with respect to causation, space and form.

*niyati śakti*. The power which limits space, knowledge, and action.

*pauruṣa ajñāna*. Spiritual ignorance which is innate in the very nature of being a person.

*parāvāk*. The highest level of speech, postulated by the grammarians as the highest principle.

*paśu*. The bound individual.

*paśu prametā*. The bound subject. Synonymous with *paśu*.

*piṇḍa*. The body. The embodied individual.

*prājña*. Understanding, wisdom.

*prakaraṇa*. A *prakaraṇa* text is one which deals with only one branch of the philosophy of a school. It aims at making the readers conversant with only one aspect of the philosophical thought of a school within a short period of time and with limited efforts on the part of its readers.



*prakāśa*. Pure consciousness as pure light, Illumination.

*prakṛti tattva*. Material reality. The thirteenth *tattva*. *Prakṛti* is the material world and all of the elements that make it up, including the physical as well as mental expressions of all sentient beings.

*pralayākāla*. One of the seven types of beings in creation. A type of temporarily disembodied being who resides on the level of *māyā tattva*.

*pratibhā*. The supreme illumination of consciousness. The conscious mirror of the supreme Self.

*Prayāg*. A celebrated place of pilgrimage where the Ganga and Yamuna rivers converge.

*pṛthvī aṇḍa*. The earth egg. It includes the fourteen kinds of gross material creation.

*pṛthivī tattva*. The thirty-sixth and final grossest principle of creation and manifestation in the philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism.

*pūrṇāhaṁtā*. The full and perfect state of "I am."

*puruṣa*. Person. Depending on the context it can mean either the cosmic Person or the limited person.

*puruṣa tattva*. The twelfth *tattva* among the thirty-six principles of Kashmir Śaivism. The level of creation where limited individuals affected by the five limiting sheaths (*kañcukas*) are manifested.

*puryaṣṭaka*. The physical body. Literally the city of eight (meaning the abode of the eight constituents).

*rāga kañcuka*. Limitation that reduces complete satisfaction and creates desire for particular things.

*rāhu*. In Indian astrology *rāhu* is an imaginary planet which obscures the moon thus causing eclipses. It is the point where the orbit of the moon passes from the southern hemisphere to the northern one and vice versa.

*rajas*. One of the three qualities of nature. The quality of activity or passion.

*śabda*. Words, sound.

*sadāśiva tattva*. The third *tattva* of creation.

*sakala*. Embodied being.

*śakti*. Divine power. The dynamic aspect of the absolute.

*samādhi*. The state of absorption in the divine.

*samāveśa*. The merging of consciousness in divine union.

Śambhu. The Benevolent One. An epithet for Lord Śiva.

Sāṅkhya. One of the six traditional schools of Indian philosophy. It is a dualist school that differentiates between matter (*prakṛti*) and spirit (*puruṣa*).

*saṁvid*. Supreme consciousness.

*saṁkalpa*. The will or desire for something.

*śāstra*. A philosophical, religious, or scientific body of knowledge, or a treatise on such a body of knowledge.

*sattva*. One of the three qualities of nature. The quality of purity.

*śiva tattva*. The first and highest of the thirty-six principles of creation and manifestation in the philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism.

*sphurattā*. The throb of creation.

*sṛṣṭi*. The act of creation.

*Śruti*. The Vedas. Literally that which is heard, i.e. transmitted orally from the original sages.

*śuddha adhvaṇ*. The pure realm. It includes the *tattvas* from the level of *śiva tattva* down to the level of *śuddha vidyā tattva*. It lies above the level of *māyā*, the realm that contains beings deluded by ignorance (*ajñāna*).

*śuddha vidyā tattva*. The fifth *tattva* of creation and the last *tattva* of the pure realm. Experience is still non-dualistic at this level but the emphasis is on the “*idam*” the outward aspect.

*tamas*. One of the three qualities of nature. The quality of impurity, dullness or darkness.

*tanmātra*. A primary subtle element of perception. There are five of these corresponding to the five senses as *śabda tanmātra* (non-specific sound), *śparśa tanmātra* (non-specific touch), *rūpa tanmātra* (non-specific colour), *rasa tanmātra* (non-specific taste), and *gandha tanmātra* (non-specific smell).

*tapas*. Austerities.

*tattva*. A category or principle of manifestation of the universe. In the philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism there are thirty-six hierarchical *tattvas*.

*tejas*. Fire. One of the five *bhūtas* (gross elements) that make up *prakṛti*.

*tirodhāna*. The power of concealment of the Lord by which he veils his true nature and appears as a limited being.

*turiya*. See *turyā*.

*turyā*. The fourth state. The state which is beyond the three states of dreamless sleep, dreaming and waking.

*upādhi*. A quality or attribute.

*varṇa*. Caste.

*vāsanā*. The residual impression in oneself from a past action that was performed.

*vāyu*. Air, wind. One of the five *bhūtas* (gross elements) that make up *prakṛti*.

*vijñāna*. Mental consciousness or thought faculty.

*Vijñāna-vadin*. A follower of the buddhist *Vijñāna-vāda* doctrine. *Vijñāna-vāda* conceives of ultimate reality as only an endless stream of consciousness.

*vimarśa*. The self-aware aspect of consciousness.

*virāj*. In Advaita Vedānta, *virāj* is synonymous with the Self and universe in the waking state.

*viśva*. The universe.

*vrata*. Religious vow.

*yoga bhraṣṭa*. A person who does spiritual practices but doesn't attain the final goal in this lifetime.

*yogin (yogī)*. A spiritual adept. A practitioner of yoga or spiritual practices and austerities.





## NOTES

### Verse 1

1 At the beginning of a sanskrit philosophical text it is customary to invoke the supreme Being and seek his blessings for the text being written. Here both Abhinavagupta the author of the verses of the *Paramārthasāra* and Yogarāja the writer of the commentary pray to Lord Śiva to bless their work.

2 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir hold the view that the entire creation comprised of animate living beings and inanimate objects is the self-manifestation (*ābhāsa*) by the Supreme Lord out of His own free will. He is therefore present in animate as well as inanimate creation and constitutes the core of their being. For the concept of *ābhāsa* see chapter II in the *The Philosophy of Sadhana* by the author.

3 The Supreme Lord, assuming the form of different kinds of subjects and objects of enjoyment, is said to exist on the various levels of creation. For details of the nature of these levels, the *tattvas*, see the *ṣaṭtriṃśattattva-saṃdoha*, Kurukshetra, B. N. Chakravarty University, 1977, translated by the author.

4 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir hold the view that each level of creation existing within the pure and the impure regions is governed by a presiding deity (*ādhikārikā devatā*) who is chosen by the Supreme Lord from among the subjects existing on those particular levels. These deities, referred to here as Rudras, function as the instruments of the divine will of the Supreme Lord, who is said to function through his agents on the different levels of creation.

5 The entire universe is said to exist at the very beginning, before manifestation, in the supreme Subject, i.e. the Supreme Lord as a "cosmic idea" in his mirror of consciousness.

6 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir hold the view that existence and revelation go hand in hand. Whatever has existence is necessarily either self-revealed or capable of being revealed to the cognising Self. The subject is always self-revealed. Objects, also of the nature of illumination, are not self-revealed, but are revealed by the light of the cognising Self, when they come in contact with the illumination-nature of the Self.

7 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir consider the possession of unrestricted divine power (*svātantrya śakti*) and free will (*svatantrā icchā*) as the two distinguishing characteristics of the supreme Lord. They consider these to be the essence of the supreme Lord's divinity (*aiśvarya*) and an inalienable form of his essence. From the functioning of his divine freedom, he is said to have the self-experience as *aham* (the pure "I").

8 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir mention two kinds of self-experience by a fettered man, one as the ego (*ahaṃkāra*), another as the pure "I" (*pūrṇāham*). The self-experience as the ego arises from the false identification of the physical body or any of its constituents with the Self, whose true nature is hidden by the veil of ignorance (*māyā*) enveloping him. This self-experience by the fettered individual existing on the mundane plane as "I" or ego is conceptual, arising as it does in the intellect due to the confusion of the not-self with the Self. Therefore it is regarded as false but it lies at the root of all his worldly transactions. When we say "I am writing, walking or sleeping" we really mean that the physical body identified as the Self by us is engaged in such activities as writing, walking, or sleeping without being aware of this false identification. All these activities really belong to the physical domain only. This view is also held by other schools of Indian philosophy such as Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta etc. The enlightened yogin has the "I" experience after securing his elevation to the levels beyond the realm of *māyā*, i.e. beyond the *aśuddha adhvan* (impure realm), which is his realisation of his identity with Śiva. The real spiritual Self is an altogether different kind of self-experience. It is said that the *yogin*, transcending the level of *māyā*, has his self experience as "I" (*aham*) in his pure divine Self, which is Śiva.

## Verse 2

1 A *prakaraṇa* text is one whose purpose is to make the readers conversant with only one aspect of the philosophical thought of a school within a short period of time and with limited efforts on their part.

2 Traditionally a philosophical text in India begins with the statement of the four prerequisites that are essential for its proper understanding. These are technically called the *anubandhas* (preliminary requirements). These are the *adhikārin*, the person who is qualified for undertaking the study of the *śāstra*; *viśaya*, the subject matter of the text; *sambandha* or the relation between the reader of the text and its subject matter; and *prayojana* or the purpose of understanding the text. None of these *anubandhas* have been explicitly mentioned by the author Abhinavagupta, but Yogaraja the commentator finds these implied in the text.

3 The *Ādhāra Karikas* are named *Ādhāra*, also known as Śeṣa or Ānanta, who was a very well-known teacher belonging to the Vaiṣṇava school of thought. He was looked upon as a partial incarnation of the lord Viṣṇu. *Ādhāra* was approached by a spiritual seeker who intensely desired to know the highest spiritual truth. Being fully satisfied that the student possessed a fully cleansed intellect and the capacity to receive the highest knowledge of spiritual Truth, lord *Ādhāra* gave instructions to this unnamed spiritual disciple. These instructions were fully grasped by the student and he reproduced by him in verse form called the *Ādhāra Kārikās* after his teacher *Ādhāra*. These teachings in the form of the *Ādhāra Kārikās* became popular with the masses in Kashmir. Noticing their popularity, Abhinavagupta, adapted them, making the necessary changes to convert them into a Śaivite text. The original *Ādhāra Karikas* are still available today in printed form, bearing the same title as Abhinavagupta's text, the *Paramārthasāra*. See the bibliography.

## Verse 4

1 The conceptual division of the universe into four spheres or *aṇḍas* (eggs) that constitute the totality of creation or *brahmāṇḍa* is unique to the *Paramārthasāra* and does not appear in any other text.



2 The divine Śakti, called the divine power of freedom, is unitary and undifferentiated when operating in the supreme Lord to bring out his "glory" (*aiśvarya*) as the Lord but during the creative phase of the Lord, he manifests his "glory" in the form of the universe and his infinite modes of functioning become manifest, causing the divine Śakti to apparently expand and differentiate. The infinite modes of functioning of the apparently expanded and differentiated Śakti can be classified under five headings, i.e. *cit śakti* (power of consciousness), *ānanda śakti* (power of bliss), *icchā śakti* (power of will), *jñāna śakti* (power of knowledge) and *kriyā śakti* (power of action). The *jñāna śakti*, *icchā śakti*, and *kriyā śakti* play a prominent role, and hence these three modes of the functioning of the divine śakti are said to constitute a triangle of śaktis, with the vertex pointing downwards.

3 The non-dual Śaivite writers from Kashmir state that the divine Śakti operating on the level of the *śakti tattva* "negates" the absolute nature of the Lord. This is because the manifestation of the universe is not possible until the supreme Lord's absolute nature is negated or veiled first. The divine Śakti operating on that level is described as the "negating power" (*akhyāti rūpa*), it is also called *niṣedha-vyapara rūpa*, i.e. the divine Śakti of the nature of negation, when operating just below the highest level.

It may be mentioned here that the levels of Śiva and Śakti, though included by the non-dual Śaivites in the list of *tattvas* or levels of creation constituting the universe, are eternal *tattvas*, not manifested in the course of the manifestation of the universe. The Supreme Lord is said to have His self-experience as *pūrṇāhamtā* (absolute-I-experience) on the level of Śiva.

4 Each "egg" (*aṇḍa*) in the created universe is governed by a ruling deity or deities who serve as the instruments of the supreme Lord's will.

5 The five *kañcukas* or sheaths of limitation are *rāga* (limited interest), *kalā* (limited authorship), *vidyā* (limited knowledge), *kāla* (limited time) and *niyati* (limited space). These sheaths veil the divine nature of the Lord like so many cloaks. These *kañcukas* are said to exist within the sphere of *māyā* and shackle the Lord, who is already deprived of his divinity, functioning in conjunction with *māyā śakti*, the divine Śakti which obscures (*tirodhāna-kari*).

6 The term *paśu* is a technical word used by the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir to signify all fettered beings (*paśu bandha*). It is not used by them in a derogative sense. In the *Paramārthasāra* it is used synonymously with *Puruṣa*.

7 The *prthivī aṇḍa* i.e. gross material sphere consists of the *bhuvanas* or the "little worlds" in which the limited fettered beings reside on different planes. The beings residing in this sphere (the *prthivī aṇḍa*) are all embodied beings. The total number of the *bhuvanas* admitted by the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir is 108 mentioned by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* under the chapter entitled *deśādhva*.

#### Verse 5

1 All presiding deities of the different spheres of creation are extra-ordinary beings because they are not fettered by either the *māyā* or the *kārma* defilements. They are agents of the supreme Lord and are the instruments for the execution of his divine will.

2 As already pointed out, the *niyati śakti* is a *kañcuka* (literally a cloak or sheath), veiling the divine nature of the supreme Lord. It is a product of *māyā śakti* which regulates the activities of the limited subject.

#### Verse 6

1 The analogy of a crystal reflecting all the different objects existing outside it but in proximity with it must be taken in a limited sense because the objects reflected in the crystal exist independently outside the crystal, but the multiplicity of the universe does not exist independently and outside of the Supreme Lord.

2 The *Pramāṇa-varttika* is a philosophical logical text by the famous buddhist logician Dharmakīrti.

#### Verse 8

1 Rāhu is the shadow of earth which ordinarily is not visible in the sky. But when it falls on the disc of the moon at the time of a lunar eclipse, Rāhu becomes visible to the naked eye. Here the author gives this analogy to show that the non-perception of the Self in worldly objects should not make anyone doubt its omnipresent existence. The Self exists in everything

as "being". It is perceived as "I". All our cognitions and activities centre around this "I experience".

#### Verse 9

1 The view of the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir is that the descent of divine grace from the Supreme Lord is indispensable for the extinction of the defilements enveloping individual beings, especially the *āṇava* defilement of self-imposed contraction.

The dispensation of divine grace is one of the supreme Lord's five functions which he is said to perform eternally in cyclic order, and which cause his self-manifestation as the universe and its re-absorption at the end of each cycle of creation.

2 Here Yogarāja the commentator refers to the manner in which the *śaktis* (powers) of the Supreme Lord called the *tirodhāna śakti* (the power of concealment) and the *anugraha śakti* (the power of showering grace) are responsible for the lord's self-contraction and his restoration to his original divine form. These two *śaktis* appear to be mutually opposed but as a matter of fact they are mutually complimentary. This is also affirmed by Avadhūta Siddhapāda in the verse quoted from an unknown source by Yogarāja.

#### Verses 10-11

1 Different Indian philosophical schools use the term *tattva* with different meanings. For example *tattva* means the ultimate truth according to some; it signifies a category to the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika schools; it is a constituent of creation according to the Sāṃkhya-yoga school; and it is a "level of creation" according to the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir. Even all exponents of the non-dual Śaiva philosophy do not use this term to convey the sense of a "level of creation". The confusion about the real meaning of the term *tattva* is due to the absence of a definition by any school of philosophical thought. Abhinavagupta has discussed the different meanings of the term *tattva* in his *Tantrāloka*, book II. See also the authors article on the *Concept of Tattva, A Study in the Mn. Gopinath Kaviraj Felicitation Volume*, Lucknow, 1965.



2 The views of the two monistic schools of Indian philosophical thought, the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, and the non-dual Śaivism of Kashmir have a few similarities but a great number of differences in their approach to the nature of ultimate Reality. While the Śaṅkara Vedāntins conceive the nature of Brahman to be pure being, pure consciousness, and pure bliss; the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir regard the nature of Paramaśiva to be pure self-effulgent illumination (*prakāśa*) which can be equated with pure being, consciousness-power and bliss power but which is also endowed with infinite powers that constitute the very nature Paramaśiva, whereas the Brahman is totally devoid of any power.

3 The concept of Parāvāk in the non-dual Śaiva thought of Kashmir is a multidimensional one; on one hand it is regarded as identical with the divine Śakti or divine freedom of the supreme lord Paramaśiva, while on the other hand it is said to constitute the "aggregate of words existing in seminal form."

4 The term *nirvikalpa* is frequently used by the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir in their descriptions of the true nature of the supreme *tattva* Paramaśiva. Since Paramaśiva is the material and the efficient cause of everything in creation it is not possible for the intellect or the senses which are themselves only objects in creation to seize or grasp Paramaśiva the root cause of all. Similar descriptions of the highest reality in the Upaniṣads declare that Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind or the intellect.

#### Verses 12-13

1 That the subject simultaneously experiences the reflecting medium, the mirror of pure consciousness, and the objects reflected in it in the form of an "idea" is the postulate that distinguishes the non-dual Śaivite's theory of reflection from that of the Yogācāra school of Buddhism. The Yogācāra Buddhists are subjective idealists who deny the existence of knowledge outside of the experience of manifestation of the world. They deny the existence of objects outside the unending stream of consciousness.

2 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir postulate that the illumination-nature of the supreme Being serves as both the subject and as the objects of experience, which are also part of the illumination-nature of the supreme Lord and which are "thrown up" onto the reflecting medium or the mirror



of consciousness serving as the instrument for experience. The supreme Lord's resolve to be many is the cause of this process of self-experience which in the beginning is in the form of "idea" on the Lord's part. The illumination-nature of pure consciousness in the Supreme Lord in this way appears in all the three forms as the subject, the object and the instrument of knowledge.

#### Verse 14

1 The concept of the *pūrṇāhaṁtā* (absolute "I" consciousness) is a multi-dimensional one, postulated exclusively by the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir and by the Śākta schools. Here in this context this technical word is used to convey the idea of the Self-experience of the supreme Lord on the supra-cosmic plane. It is held that when the supreme Lord has this self-experience in the absence of a second it takes the form of "I" awareness, which is the foundation of all his self experiences as the Supreme Subject. He then remains immersed in his bliss-nature. For details see *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* Chapter 1 and the article by this author entitled *Concept of Pūrṇāhaṁtā in the Trika philosophy of Kashmir in the Corpus of Indian Studies*, Gaurinath Śastri Felicitation Volume, Calcutta 1980.

2 The divine *śakti* operating on the level of the *śakti tattva* is described by the non-dual Śaivites as the power that negates the transcended nature of the Supreme Lord. It is therefore called "the negating power in nature" (*niṣedha-vyapara-rūpa*). The negation of his absolute nature is a precondition of the supreme Lord's Self-manifestation as the universe, because unless the supreme Lord's transcendent nature is negated, his cosmic nature cannot be revealed in his Self-experience. It is therefore held that the divine Śakti operating on the level of *śakti tattva* accomplishes this task, namely the negation of his absolute nature, creating a "void" in his Self-experience which is filled up subsequently by the projection of the *tattvas* lying latent in his illumination nature.

This is said to be the first "void" which appears in his self-experience in the unfoldment of the universe. The other one is said to appear when the supreme Lord undergoes further involution below the level of *suddha vidya*, the terminating point of the "pure creation" and enters into the realm of *māyā tattva*.

The *ānanda* aspect of the divine Śakti is said to dominate in the *śakti tattva*. The *śakti tattva* is said to be represented by both the negation of his

absolute nature and also his fullness (*pūrṇatva*) which is indicated by the emergence of "all that" i.e. the universe that was lying latent within him in potential form. As a matter of fact, the *śakti tattva* symbolises a point of transition from his transcendence to His imminence and indicates his fullness nature.

3 The *śiva tattva* and the *śakti tattva*, though counted as two separate *tattvas* and included in the list of the thirty six *tattvas*, are regarded as eternal *tattvas*, universal in nature. As such, they are not strictly speaking said to manifest at the time of the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe. The *cid* aspect (consciousness power) and the *ānanda* aspect (power in the form of bliss) of the divine Śakti are respectively said to be prominent in them.

We have mentioned before the five levels, *śiva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, and *śuddha vidya tattvas*, in the supreme Lord's self-experience as the universe when it appears as an "idea" in his mirror of consciousness. Of these levels, the *śiva* and the *śakti tattva* are eternal. The three levels, i.e., the *sadāśiva tattva*, the *īśvara tattva* and the *śuddha vidya tattva* are marked by the prominence of either pole, namely, the subject or the object in his self-experience. Both the subject or *aham* and the object or *idam* appear equally prominent in his self-experience on the level of the *īśvara tattva*. The is not the case on the level of the *śuddha vidya tattva*.

#### Verse 15

1 The non-dual Śaivites loosely use the term *māyā* to denote both *māyā śakti* and *māyā tattva*. Though these two are not essentially different, there is a slight distinction in their connotation in the context in which these terms are used. *Māyā śakti* signifies that mode of the supreme Lord's power of divine freedom by which the supreme Lord conceals his divine nature, resulting in his "forgetting" his true nature. *Māyā śakti* thus serves as the instrument for the Supreme Lord's self-concealment. *Māyā tattva* denotes, on the other hand, that level on which the *māyā śakti* operates to accomplish the task of self-concealment with the help of five *kañcukas* or "sheathes".

## Verse 17

1 It may be noted here that the concept of *puruṣa* described by the non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir is slightly different from that found in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikās*. The Sāṃkhya writers conceive the *puruṣa* to be the eternal *tattva*, universal in nature and the principle of pure being and pure consciousness. But the non-dual Śaivites use the term *puruṣa* to mean the spiritual monad enveloped by the *āṇava* and *māyīya malas*, and therefore limited in nature and created as a limited subject. For a comparative study of the nature of *puruṣa* in the two schools, the dualistic school of Sāṃkhya and the monistic school of the Advaita Śaivism see the authors introduction in the *Ṣaṭṭrimśattattva Sandoha*, Kurukshetra University. 1973.

2 The five *kañcukas* (lit. the sheaths) held to be existing one over the other and veiling the true nature of the *puruṣas* on the level of *māyā tattva* can be compared to the Upaniṣadic theory of five *kośas*, i.e., the *ānanda-māyā kośa*, the *viññāna-māyā kośa*, the *prāṇa-māyā kośa*, the *mano-māyā kośa* and the *anna-māyā kośa* covering the pure Self or the *atman*. For a comparison of the two parallel concepts in the two traditions, see the author's article entitled *Pañca-kañcuka and pañca-kośa, a study in comparison* in the *Charudevasastri Felicitation Volume*, New Delhi.

## Verse 23

1 The *viññānakala*, the *pralayākala* and the *sakalas* are regarded as impure beings or *paśu pramatās*. They are enveloped respectively by the *āṇava mala*; the *āṇava* and the *māyīya malas*; and the *āṇava*, the *māyīya* and *kārma malas*. Their experience therefore is said to be characterised by duality and discreteness. As already mentioned the *viññānakalas*, the *pralayākalas* and the *sakalas* are unembodied, disembodied and embodied limited being's respectively. See the appendix for greater detail.

## Verse 30

1 Here the author describes the nature of delusion as the failure to cognize reality due to the concealment of the true nature of the substratum, the universal pure consciousness. On the other hand, all the other subjects existing on the impure levels, i.e. the *viññānakalas*, *pralayākalas* and *sakala* beings living on the levels which extend from the level just below the *śuddha vidya* up to the gross level of *prthivī*, are said to be affected by the self-



imposed contraction (*saṅkoca*) the *āṇava mala*. As a consequence of this they forget their universal divine nature. They are therefore held to be veiled by *pauruṣa ajñāna*. The non-dual Śaivites hold that the *vijñānākala* subjects are affected by *pauruṣa ajñāna* as they are covered by the *āṇava mala* only.

The *pralayākala* and the *sakala* subjects exist in the sphere of *māyā*. Thus they are covered by a thick veil and no longer experience themselves as the real Self. They are therefore said to develop the experience of the Self in the not-self in order to retain their nature as a subject. The experience represented by the physical body or any one of its constituents has its seat in the intellect and therefore is *bauddha ajñāna*. It is obvious that this kind of ignorance is of the nature of superimposition of the "I" of not-self, hence it is said to be conceptual in nature (*vikalpa*).

#### Verse 31

1 All schools of Indian philosophy consider ignorance about the true nature of the Self to be the cause of the bondage of the individual being. Śaivism considers ignorance to be of two kinds which respectively conceal the true nature of the Self on two different levels. Spiritual ignorance, technically called *pauruṣa ajñāna* has its seat in the very contracted nature of the consciousness-nature of the Self. This is caused by the supreme Lord who voluntarily imposes limitation on himself at the beginning of creation. On the other hand, *bauddha ajnana* is located in the intellect of the embodied individual and arises from the wrong identification of the not-self with the Self. As such it is held to be conceptual in nature.

The *pauruṣa ajñāna* has been metaphorically compared to scalded skin on the body of an embodied being on which a more painful boil in the form of the *bauddha ajñāna* develops.

#### Verse 32

1 The commentator analyses the concept of the Self as put forward by the different schools of Indian philosophy and tries to show that all views about Self are conceptual (*vikalpa*), and ultimately not real. See also the commentary on verse 40.



## Verse 33

1 The Supreme Lord is popularly called *natarāja* the king of divine sport who always derives immense joy by enacting the cosmic play. He is said to watch the play as the spectator but also at the same time to actively participate in it by playing all the different roles.

## Verse 35

1 The author has attempted to shed light on the similarity existing between the Upaniṣadic theory of the four states of the existence of the Self in the world and the non-dual Śaivite concept of creation, preservation and absorption. All of these derive from the light of the pure consciousness which pervades all. The commentator has shown how the waking state in the individual being is similar to the manifestation of the universe, his dreaming state to the light of consciousness which possesses the power to reveal, and his dreamless sleep state to the state in which one is aware of his existence as Self only. The fourth state, a state of massive Self consciousness or the knowledge of the pure Self, is the foundation of all the other states as it permeates and pervades all these three states.

## Verse 39

1 As has already been pointed out, the experience of self, which every embodied individual has on the mundane plane and which is the basis for all his worldly transactions is conceptual in nature. Since the Self arises from the voluntary self-contraction of the supreme Lord, it cannot be undone by one's own efforts but can be annihilated only by the supreme Lord through his power of grace (*anugraha*) which is the opposite of his power of self-contraction (*nigraha*). He alone possesses the power to undo what he has done to himself to manifest himself as many.

## Verse 40

1 The non-dual Śaivites consider the descent of divine grace into a limited being as the starting point of his return journey to the ultimate goal, the realisation of his Śiva nature. This is because divine grace causes the destruction of the *āṇava mala* the source of *pauruṣa ajñāna* the root cause of bondage. All other experiences such as performance of the duties enjoined in the scriptures, visiting holy places of pilgrimages, repeating the name of God, listening to spiritual discourses, etc., are incapable of annihilating the *āṇava mala*. Only the descent of divine grace can achieve this.

## Verse 41

1 The non-dual Śaivites urge the spiritual seeker to adopt the path of integration rather than the path of negation or isolation of the spirit from matter as prescribed by the Sāṃkhya Yoga schools. The non-dual Śaivites emphasise that the entire universe is the play of divine Śakti which operates in different forms e.g. as the power of consciousness (*cit śakti*), the power of obscuration (*māyā śakti*), the power of matter (*prakṛti śakti*), the power of gross materialisation (*pārthiva śakti*) on the different levels in creation. Spiritual seekers can transform the experience of the universe of multiplicity, differentiation and gross materialisation into the experience of unity, realising that the entire universe is nothing but the divine play of the Lord's Śakti as the Lord.

## Verse 43

1 This is a partial quotation from verse 9 of the *Parātrīśika*. See Paul Muller, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva*, SUNY press, page 213. Also Jaideva Singh, *A Trident of Wisdom*, SUNY press, page 203

## Verse 45

1 From the point of view of the manifestation of the universe by Lord Śiva, the aspects of his *divine śakti*, i.e., his powers of will, knowledge and action (*icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*) are the most important as these play crucial roles in his self-manifestation as the universe. Hence these three divine powers are conceived to constitute a triangle of *śaktis* with the vertex symbolising the power of action or *kriyā* facing downward. Here the author has described another symbol the trident always held by the Lord Śiva in His hand to represent these three *śaktis*.

## Verse 46

1 For a detailed description of the five *tattvas* belonging to the pure sphere of creation (*śuddha adhva*) see the authors introduction to *ṣaṭtriṃśattattva sandoha* published by Kurukshetra University, 1972. The total number of *bhuvanas* (little worlds) within creation is 108 according to Abhinavagupta. See the chapter called *deśadhva* in Abhinavagupta's *Tantrasāra*.

## Verse 51

1 Here the word "contraction" signifies differentiation caused by the limiting conditions in the form of containers for water or milk.

## Verse 53

1 The ego, which arises from the experience of Self in the not-self i.e. the physical body or any one of its constituents, is responsible for the fruits of actions clinging to an embodied being and causing suffering to him. The ego is conceptual as it arises from the superimposition of the Self on the not-self but the "I" experience which a spiritual seeker has after the realisation of his true divine nature is a non-intellectual experience. To put it in the language of non-dual Śaivism, the recognition of his true nature is a non-intellectual experience and free from thought constructs (*nirvikalpa*). This experience belongs to a different domain beyond the grasp of the intellect or mind.

## Verse 55

1 Both merit and demerit, produced from the performance of pious or sinful deeds by an unenlightened embodied individual, have their seat in the intellect of the doer and as such are conceptual in nature. One who has succeeded in rising above ignorance or *māyā* and realised the true illumination-nature of his self, is not "touched" by the effects of merit or demerit. A realised spiritual seeker exists on a plane which is far above the level of the intellect.

## Verse 58

1 This is the supreme experience that a spiritual seeker can have after realising his Śiva-nature. The manifested universe does not disappear from his view after he realises his true nature but rather it is experienced as the divine glory as the Lord. This view is exactly opposite to that held by the Advaita Vedanta school of Śaṅkara and by the dualist Sāṃkhya Yoga school.

2 Compare this with the well known saying in the Upaniṣads *dvitīyād vai bhayaṃ bhavati* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 1.4.2). "Fear arises from the experience of duality in this world".

## Verse 60

1 The reference here is to the early Vedic notion that the attainment of heaven was looked upon as the coveted ideal. Heaven was regarded as an abode full of happiness without death and old age. This ideal was rejected and surpassed in Upaniṣadic times as seen in the *Kāṭhōpaniṣad*. The attainment of immortality in this very life replaced the attainment of heaven as the ultimate goal.

2 The non-dual Śaivites of Kashmir hold that the goal of life is achieved when a spiritual seeker is able to destroy the shackles ensnaring him and thus rising above the confining body consciousness he experiences his all-pervasive illumination nature fully endowed with all the divine powers.

3 The term *Brahman* is used here and in the rest of the text in the sense of "all pervasive reality".

## Verse 61

1 There is a striking resemblance between the Vedic ideal of *amṛtatva* (immortality) and the *jīvan mukta* enjoyment of liberation in an embodied condition.

## Verse 66

1 The classical example of the enlightened being who exists in an embodied condition is King Janaka, mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

## Verse 67

1 Vedic rituals are conducted by brahmin priests who are well versed in the conduct of rituals. These brahmin priests are engaged by the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) to perform the rituals for which he receives remuneration. Hence the performer or agent of the sacrifice is the sacrificer and not the priest who was commissioned to do the job.

2 In Sanskrit the verb *yajati* derived from the root *yuj* is used in active voice to denote action on the part of the sacrificer-priest on behalf of himself; and the same verb is used in passive voice to denote action by the sacrificer-priest on behalf of another, the *yajamāna* (sacrificer).



## Verse 69

1 The word *Brahmin* is used here in the sense of the one who has firmly established himself in his pure Śiva nature.

2 A python is said to eat indiscriminately all food that he comes across. In the same way a *yogin* observing the python vow accepts any food that is offered to him just to meet the demands of his physical body.

## Verse 70

1 See Krishna's words to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā* chapter 2.

## Verse 74

1 Spiritual masters, especially the Śaiva writers, look upon their physical body as an abode of God, a temple sanctified by the presence of God within their physical frame. They not only see God within themselves but in all other living creatures and they therefore pay due respect to them.

## Verse 76

1 The performance of sacrifice (*homa*) was looked upon by the Vedic people as a symbolic act as it consisted of an external rite and also as a subtle inner symbolic rite in which no gross objects are offered to the consciousness fire for one's spiritual elevation. Abhinavagupta interprets the performance of sacrifice in the inner spiritual terms as a symbolic act on the part of a spiritual seeker.

## Verse 78

1 Repetition of the holy name of God or of another *mantra* with the inhaling and exhaling of breath, which involves the movement of the vital breath, is looked upon as highest kind of *japa*, technically called *ajapa japa*.

## Verse 79

1 The author gives the inner meaning of the observance of *vrata* (austerity) in symbolic terms. One who is aware of the inner meanings of *homa*, *japa* and *vrata* can use these for his spiritual elevation, otherwise their performance remains a dead ritual.

Verse 83

1 On attaining the supreme spiritual wisdom, the universe does not disappear but is then experienced as the Lord's self-extension, the embodiment of his divine glory.

Verse 96

1 The non-dual Śaivites mention four distinct means of spiritual discipline commensurate with the intensity of the divine grace received by the spiritual seekers, their capacity, and their inclination.

Verse 97

1 The supreme goal, the realisation of one's divine Śiva nature accompanied by the "manifestation" of all the divine powers, can be reached all at once or in gradual steps depending on the intensity of the divine grace received.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Essence of the Exact Reality or Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta.*  
Dr. B. N. Pandit: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1991.

*Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with vivṛti by Yogarāja.* J. C. Chatterji, ed. Srinagar: KSTS no. VII, 1916.

*Paramārthasāra of Ādiśeṣa (The Essence of Supreme Truth).* Henry Danielson, ed. and trans. Leiden: Brill, 1980.

*Paramārthasāra of Ādiśeṣa, and the Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta.* S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri, L. D. Barnett, Fremont, Calif. : Asian Humanities Press, 2003.

*Le Paramārthasāra : texte sanskrit. edite et traduit par Lilian Silburn,* Paris: Publications de l'Institut de civilisation indienne, 1957

*Parātriṃśikā with vivaraṇa of Abhinavagupta.* Srinagar: KSTS no. XVIII, 1918.

*Tantrasāra of Abhinavagupta.* M. R. Shastri, ed. Srinagar: KSTS no. XVII, 1918.





# INDEX

- abhimāna*, 50  
*Abhinavagupta*, xix-xx, xxi, 120  
   works of, xxi  
   See also *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*;  
   *Śiva Sātra*;  
   *Tantrasāra*  
*Ādhāra*, 6-7  
*Ādhāra Kārikā*, 6-7  
*adhikārin*  
   See *Paramārthasāra*  
   qualifications to study  
*adhvas*, xxix  
*Ādiśeṣa*, xx  
*Advaita Vedānta*, xxxiv, xxxvii, xxxix,  
   30, 62, 150  
   concept of liberation in, xxxvi-xxxvii  
*Āgamas*, 12, 40, 93, 94, 96  
*aḥam*, 41, 67, 104-109, 213, 214  
*aḥam-aḥam idam-idam*, 214  
*aḥam idam*, 40  
*aḥamkātra*, 50, 51, 52  
*aḥanītā*, 10, 24, 31, 40, 104, 145, 154  
*Ajaḍa-pramāṭṛ-siddhi*, 84  
*ajñāna*  
   *bauddha ajñāna*, xxxviii, 69, 89-91  
   *pauruṣa ajñāna*, xxxvii, xxxix, 69, 89-91  
*akāśa*, 53  
*akhyāti*, 38, 67  
*anāhata nada*, 105  
*ānanda śakti*, xxiii, 2, 39, 102, 154, 213  
*Ānanta*. See *Ādhāra*  
*āṇava mala*, xxxi-xxxii, 14, 26, 41, 44, 45,  
   56-57, 118, 131, 135, 145, 173, 182, 214,  
   215  
*aṇḍa*. See *eggs*  
*aṇḍa*, 9-10  
   *māyā aṇḍa*, 9  
   *prakṛti aṇḍa*, 9  
   *pṛthvī aṇḍa*, 9  
   *śakti aṇḍa*, 9  
*anugraha*, xxiv  
*anugraha śakti*, 26-28  
*ārya metre*, 210  
*āśrama*, 65-66  
*aśvamedha*, 27, 47, 65, 112-113, 131,  
   139-141  
*ātma vidyā*, 160  
   austerities, 164-166. See also *vrata*  
*Avadhūta Siddhapāda*, 28  
*avidyā*, 44, 47  
*Bhairava*, 34, 153, 155  
*bauddha ajñāna*. See under *ajñāna*  
*Bhagavad Gītā*, 21, 27, 60, 92, 116, 146,  
   172, 183, 188-189, 196, 205, 206  
*Bhartrhari*, 98  
*Bhaṭṭa Divākara Vatsa*  
   See *Divākara Vatsa*  
*Bhaṭṭa Kallata*. See *Kallata*  
*Bhaṭṭasrīrāvāmanaka*, 157  
*bhuvanas*, 3, 12, 14, 20, 160  
*bhokta*, 14, 15  
*bhūtas*, xxxiv, 50, 53-54  
*bindu*, 160, 199, 214  
*bodha*, 44-45, 214  
*body*, 190-191, 193-196  
*bhoga-deha*, 215  
*bondage*, xxxi-xxxiv, 11, 68-70, 71-73, 74,  
   76,  
   126, 192  
*Brahmā*, 11, 101  
*Brahmavādins*, 43, 73  
   See also *Advaita Vedānta*  
*Brahman*, 7, 14, 30, 62, 79-83, 96-98, 100,  
   109-113, 147, 149, 157, 209  
*Brahmin*, 143  
*buddhi*, 47, 50, 72, 130-131  
*Buddhists*, 74  
   philosophical arguments of, 18  
   schools of  
   See *Yogācāra Buddhism*;  
   works of  
   See *Pramāṇa-varttika*  
*buddhi tattva*, 25  
*cakras*, 124, 160, 199-200, 202  
   cause and effect, 42  
*cid aṇu*, 14  
*cit śakti*, xxiii, 2

contraction, 126

*Dharma Śāstra of Manu*, 176-177

death, 174-176, 178, 186-188, 193-196

defilements, 14, 118, 135-136, 145, 182

See *malas*

*dehin*, 15

See embodied being

delusion, 10, 64-69, 73-76, 109, 113, 114

annihilation of, 89

Dharmakīrti, xxviii

differentiation, 16, 18, 21-22, 32, 34-38, 47,

58, 67, 68, 79-80, 85, 95

Divākara Vatsa, 82, 110

divine grace. See *grace*, divine

divine sport of the Lord, xxiv-xxv, 74, 76

dream state, 80

dualists, 124-125

See also *Śaivism*, dualists

duality, 114, 124-125, 150, 154

*dvādaśānta*, 124

eggs, xxx, 9-11, 12, 28, 93, 102

*māyā* egg, 9-11, 102

*prakṛti* egg, 9-11, 102

*prthvī* egg, 9

*śakti* egg, 9-11, 102

presiding deities of, xxx, 10-11

See also

*Brahmā*

*Īśvara*

*rudras*;

*Gaṇana*

*Sadāśiva*;

enlightened being, nature of, 144-149

fourth state, 77-78, 79-83

See also *turiya*

freedom, divine, 4, 9-10, 27, 43-44, 74-75,

80, 89, 102-103, 119, 137-141, 167, 197

fruits of deeds, 112-119, 129, 131-132,

137-140, 144-146, 186-188, 191

*Gaṇana*, 11

*gandha*, 52

grace, divine, xxv, xxxv, 26-28, 41, 134

descent of, xxxvii, 25, 26-27, 197-198, 199-200

different intensities of, xxxv

See also *anugraha śakti*

grammarians, 31

gross body, xxxiii-xxxiv, 71-72

gross products or creation. See *bhūtas*

*guṇas*, 50

See also *tamas*;

*rajas*;

*saṭtva*

*icchā śakti*, xxiii, xxxv, 2, 10, 39, 102, 154, 213

*idam*, 40, 41, 69, 94, 213-214

*idam aham*, 213

ignorance, xxxiv, 40, 58-59, 68, 71-73, 125, 128

See also *ajñāna*

illumination, 4, 30, 31-32, 36-38, 39, 63, 75, 93, 95-96, 99, 106, 119, 136, 150, 159, 183

See also *prakāśa*

impressions, residual, 190-191

I-nature. See *ahamkā*

*indriyas*, 55

initiation, 8

instruments of action, 51

*Īśvara*, 102

*Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikā*, xxxii

*Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarsinī*, 37-38

*īśvara tattva*, 3, 10, 39, 41, 213

*jala*, 53-54

*japa*, 160-161

*jīvaṇ mukta*, xxxvii, 128

*jñāna śakti*, xxiii, xxxv, 2, 39, 40, 102, 154, 213

*Kakṣyāstotra*, 110

*kālā kañcuka*, xxxiii, 44, 46-47

*kāla kañcuka*, xxxiii, 44, 46-47

Kallata, 95

*kañcukas*, xxxii-xxxiii, 44-49, 55, 56-58, 119, 172, 179, 188

See also *avidyā*;

*kālā*;

*kālā*;

*niyati*;

*rāga*

*karma*, xxxviii, 8, 19. See also *fruits of deeds*

*kārma mala*, xxxii-xxxiii, 14, 26, 45, 57, 131, 135, 141, 145, 173, 180, 182, 191, 214, 215

Kaula ritual, xxxix

Kaula Śaktism, xix

knowledge, 94, 106, 119, 129, 140-141, 206

See also *jñāna śakti*

*kr̥tya śakti*, xxiii, xxxv, 2, 39, 40, 102, 154, 158, 213  
*Kṣemarāja*, xxii, 211  
*kṣetrajñas*, 56, 101  
*Kularatnamālīkā*, 173  
*Lakṣmī Saṃhita*, 174  
 liberated being,  
   nature of, 153-155, 167  
   death of, 170-175  
 liberation, xxxiv-xxxix, xxxviii-xxxix,  
 74-76, 124-126, 142-144, 173, 192, 216  
   after death, xxxvii  
   higher path to, 207  
   in gradual steps, 199-200  
   while in the body, xxxix, 127-129, 148,  
   167, 184-185. *See also jīvaṇ mukta*  
*Madālasā*, 70  
*Mahābhārata*, 143  
*mahāmāyā*, 41  
*mahā-prakāśa*, xxxv  
*malas*, xix, 10, 131, 173  
   *See also āṇava mala*;  
   *māyīya mala*;  
   *kārma mala*  
*manas*, 50  
*mantra*, 27, 93, 96, 101, 160-162  
*mantra beings*, 213-215  
*mantraśvara beings*, 40, 41, 213-215  
*mantra-maheśvara beings*, 40, 213-215  
*Manu*, 176  
*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 70  
*māyā*, xxxvi, 2, 3, 16, 27, 45, 47, 55, 56,  
 65, 94, 109, 114, 172, 179, 216  
*māyā śakti*, xxiv, xxv, xxvii, 21, 41, 43,  
 66, 215  
*māyā tattva*, 11, 41, 43-44, 57, 213, 215  
*māyīya mala*, xxxii, xxxviii, 14, 26, 45,  
 57, 118, 131, 145, 173, 182, 214, 215  
 meditation, 27, 75, 94, 158-159, 190, 198  
*mudra*, 165  
*nāda*, 160, 199  
*nigraha*, xxiv  
*nirvikalpaka*, 31  
*niścaya*, 50  
*niyati kañcuka*, xxxiii, 44, 47  
*niyati śakti*, 13, 27  
 non-differentiation, 59-61  
*Nyāya Vaiśeṣika*, xix, xxxiv  
*Pañcarātra*, xix. *See also Vaiṣṇavism*  
*Pandey, K. C.*, xxv  
*Panini*, 139

*Paramārthasāra*  
   metre of, xx  
   previous Vaiṣṇavite version, xx  
   qualifications to study, 7-8  
   symbolism in, xxxix  
*pauruṣa ajñāna*. *See under ajñāna*  
*Parātr̥sika*, 98  
*Parāvāk*, 30-31  
*paśu*, 11, 12, 14, 21, 26, 44, 57, 164, 215  
 philosophical schools, conceptions of,  
 xxxiv, 61-63  
   *See also Nyāya Vaiśeṣika*;  
   *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*;  
   Śaivism;  
   Vaiṣṇavism;  
   Vedānta;  
   Yoga;  
   Yogācāra Buddhism  
 physical body, as a temple, 151-153  
*piṇḍa*, 62  
 power of action, 99. *See also kriyā śakti*  
 power of knowledge, 99. *See also jñāna*  
*śakti*  
 power of will, 99. *See also icchā śakti*  
*prājña*, 79-83  
*prakaraṇa*, 5, 210  
*prakāśa*, 4, 28, 30  
*prakṛti*, 7, 49, 50, 54, 55, 94, 195, 215, 216  
*prakṛti śakti*, xxiv, xxv, xxvii  
*prakṛti tattva*, 49-50, 213, 215  
*pralaya-kāla beings*, xxxii, 56, 213, 215  
*Pramāṇa-varttika*, xxvi, 18  
*prāṇa*, 62, 160-161  
*pratibhā*, 23  
*prthivī*, 54, 55, 94  
*prthivī tattva*, 29, 41  
 pure illumination. *See prakāśa*  
 pure realm, 3  
*purnāhaṇṭā*, xxix, 39, 40, 75, 77,  
 105-109, 211  
*puruṣa*, 7, 47, 62  
*puruṣa tattva*, 11, 45  
*Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, xxxiv  
 Python vow, 143  
*rāga*, xxxiii, 44, 47  
*Rāhu*, 23-24  
*Rājānaka Rāma*, 155  
*rajas*, 11, 65, 72  
*rājasāya sacrifice*, 144  
*rasa*, 52, 53



realization, summary of experience, xxxvi  
 rebirth, 8, 115, 117, 129-132, 133, 190-192  
   end of, 134-136, 206-207  
 reflection, theory of, xxv, 34-38  
 regions in creation. *See bhuvanas*  
 Rudra, 3, 12-13, 56, 101  
 rudras, 3, 11  
 rūpa, 52, 53  
 śabda, 52, 53  
 śabda-brahman, 62  
 sacrifice, 137-141, 198  
 Sadāśiva, 10, 101-102  
 sadāśiva tattva, 3, 10, 39, 40, 41, 213  
 sad-bhāva-vikāra, 8  
 Śaiva Upaniṣad, 159, 161  
 Śaivism  
   dualist, xix  
   as idealistic school, xxv-xxvi  
   liberation in, xxxiv-xxxv, xxxvi  
   monistic, xix  
   teachers of  
     *See* Abhinavagupta;  
       Somānanda;  
       Utpaladeva;  
       Vasugupta;  
 sakala beings, xxxii, 56, 213-216  
 śakta samāveśa, xxxv  
 Śakti, xxiii-xxiv, xxxv, 9-10, 14, 32, 37,  
 96-98, 99, 102, 159, 199  
 śaktis, 28, 29, 128, 153, 154  
 śaktis, five, 102-103  
   *See also* ānanda śakti;  
     anugraha śakti;  
     cit śakti;  
     icchā śakti;  
     jñāna śakti;  
     kṛtya śakti;  
     māyā śakti  
     niyati śakti;  
     tirodhāna śakti  
 śakti tattva, 39, 40, 93  
 Śaktis, wheel of, 104-105  
 Śaktism, xix  
 samādhi, 201  
 samāveśa  
   *See* śakta samāveśa;  
   *See* sambhava samāveśa  
 sambhava samāveśa, xxxvi  
 Śambhu, 2, 4, 93, 100  
 Śambhu-baṭṭaraka, 60

saṃhāra, xxiv  
 saṃkalpa, 50  
 Sāṃkhya. *See* Sāṅkhya  
 Saṃvid, 98, 99, 153  
 Śaṅkarācārya, 30  
 Sāṅkhya, xix, xxxiv, xxxvii, xxxix, 7  
   concept of liberation in, xxxvii  
 saṅkoca, xxxvii  
 Sarvamaṅgala Tantra, 10  
 sattva, 11, 72, 195  
 Self  
   false notions of, 71-74  
   in the not-self, 89-90  
 self-concealing power, 43-44  
   *See also* tirodhāna śakti  
 self-withdrawal, 100  
 sense organs, 50-51, 52-53, 194  
   *See also* indriyas  
 Śeṣa. *See* Ādhāra,  
   Ādiśeṣa  
 siddhā, 109  
 Siddhānta Āgama, 105, 108  
 Siddhapāda. *See* Avadhūta Siddhapāda  
 Śiva, 102-103, 109, 111, 117-119, 125,  
 158-159, 168-169, 181, 197, 199, 207, 209  
   becoming one with, xxxvi, 122-123, 170  
 Śiva being, 213  
 Śivastotrāvali, 120  
 Śiva Sūtras, 78, 80, 162  
 śiva tattva, 3, 39-40, 213  
 Śivas trident. *See* trident of Śiva  
 Śivadharmottara, 207  
 Somānanda, xix  
 Spanda school, 152-153  
 Spanda Kārika, 3, 4, 32, 82, 152  
 space and time, 17-18, 20, 36  
 sparśa, 52  
 sphurattā, 30  
 spiritual monad, 14, 49  
   *See also* cid aṇu  
 Śrīkālīkakra Tantra, 94  
 Śrīkula, 198  
 Śrīnirvāna Yogattara, 171  
 Śrī Nisāṭana Tantra, 173  
 sṛṣṭi, xxiv  
 śruti, 32, 108  
 sthiti, xxiv

subjects in creation, xxxi-xxxiv, 213-216

See also *mantra* beings;

*mantrēśvara* beings;

*mantra-maheśvara* beings;

subjects in creation (*continued*)

*pralaya*kala beings;

*sakala* beings;

*śiva* beings;

*vijñānaka* beings

subjects, limited. See *paśu*

subtle body, xxxiii-xxxiv

subtle objects of perception

See *tanmātras*

*śuddha adhvān*, 214

See also *pure realm*

*śuddha vidyā tattva*, 3, 10, 40, 41, 47, 102, 213, 214

*śūnya*. See *void*

*Śūnyavādin*, 72

super-imposition, 18

supreme Lord

negation of, 10

*Svacchanda Tantra*, 159

*Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, 80, 108

*tamas*, 12, 72

*tanmātras*, 52, 53

See also *gandha*

*rasa*

*rūpa*

*śabda*

*sparsa*

*Tantras*, xxxix

*Tantrasāra*, 76

*tapas*, xxxix, 66

*tattvas*, xxvii, xxviii-xxx, 14, 28, 29-33,

39-42, 49, 54, 57, 111-112, 151, 160-161,

199, 216

See also

*buddhi tattva*;

*māyā tattva*;

*puruṣa tattva*;

*prthivī tattva*

*sadaśiva tattva*;

*śiva tattva*;

*śuddha vidyā tattva*

*tejas*, 53-54, 79-81

*tirodhāna śakti*, 26-28

trident of Śiva, xxxv, 99-100

*turya*, 79. See also *fourth state*

union, divine, 4

universe

creation of, 10

Utpaladeva, xix, xxxii

works of, 37-38, 84, 120

Upaniṣads, 79, 97, 159

See also *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*

*vācaka mantra pramāṇas*, 41

*vācya mantra-maheśvara*, 41

Vaiśeṣikas, 62

*varṇa*, 65-66

*vāsānas*, 61, 67

Vasudeva, 196

Vasugupta, xix

Vaiṣṇavism, xix, xxxiv

See also *Pañcarātra*

*vāyu*, 53-54

Vedānta. See *Advaita Vedānta*

veils, 86-87. See also *kañcukas*

*videha mukta*, xxxvii

*vidyā kañcuka*, xxxiii

*vidyā tattva*, 39

*vidyēśvara*, 41

*vijñāna*, 60

*vijñānaka* beings, xxxii, 41, 213, 215

*Vijñānavāda*, xxvi, 61

See also *Yogācāra Buddhism*

*vikalpa*, 73

*virāj*, 79-80

*vīra* practices, 163-166

Viṣṇu, 11, 174, 188

*viśva*, 79-83

void, 40, 72-73

*vrata*, 66, 162-166

wheel of *śaktis*. See *śaktis*, wheel of

world-object, 12, 75

worship, 150, 153-155, 163

*yoga*, 48-49, 142, 164, 200, 202-205,

207-208

*yoga-bhāṣa*, 201-205

Yoga school of philosophy, xxxiv

Yogācāra Buddhism, xix, xxvi-xxvii

Yoga, commentary on *Paramārthasāra*, 211

Yogarāja Rājānaka, xxi-xxii, 211

*yogi*, 109

## Muktabodha Indological Research Institute

The Muktabodha Indological Research Institute is dedicated to uncovering and preserving endangered treasures of the religious and philosophical wisdom of India and the intangible heritage that supports it and making these accessible for study and scholarship. This knowledge is an invaluable resource for scholars and students and ultimately for the benefit of the world community. The Institute was founded in 1997 through the inspiration of Gurumayi Chidvilāsānda, the spiritual leader of the Siddha Yoga path. It was established as an independent educational trust in India by the Gurudev Siddha Peeth Trust and as a non-profit educational organization in the United States by the SYDA Foundation.

Muktabodha's project areas are:

1. Digital Library: to preserve rare manuscripts and texts in digital format and make them accessible for study worldwide through the internet at [www.muktabodha.org](http://www.muktabodha.org).
2. Publications: to publish translations and commentaries of important texts.
3. Vedashala (School of Vedic Studies): to preserve the oral tradition of Vedic recitation, ritual, and wisdom.
4. Audio & Video Documentation: to record performances of authentic traditional chants and rituals.

Dr. D. B. SenSharma is a Senior Research Fellow with the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture in Kolkata. During his distinguished career at Kurukshetra University, Dr. SenSharma was Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sanskrit and Director of the Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies; later he was a Senior Research Fellow at the Asiatic Society in Kolkata. Dr. Sensharma was a long-time student of Gopinath Kaviraj, who was one of the leading experts of his time on the Shaiva and Shakta traditions. Dr. Sensharma is himself a renowned scholar of Kashmir Shaivism and of Tantra Shastra.

Among his dozens of academic works, he has published *The Philosophy of Sadhana*, (State University of New York Press), which examines Tantric *sadhana* (spiritual practice) in the light of shaktipata, or the descent of divine grace, and *Aspects of Tantra Yoga* (Natraj Publications House). In 2006 he was chosen to receive the Certificate of Honor by the President of India for his contributions to the field of Sanskrit.



# PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

of Abhinavagupta

With the commentary of Yogarāja  
Translation & Introduction by Deba Brata SenSharma

*The contemplation that “I am Siva-consciousness who eternally manifests Himself in all forms” constitutes a current of the experience of the Self that gradually increases like the wind. A spiritual adept illuminated by that knowledge is like a fire whose ashes are rekindled, lighting up the blowing air and illuminating the intellect of the adept.*

— Paramārtasāra Vivṛtti 68

In medieval times, in the beautiful valley of Kashmir, a number of religious and philosophical currents met and interacted, mutually influencing each other. In that climate evolved the nondual Shaiva school of thought that has come to be known as Kashmir Shaivism. Its hallmark is an all-embracing vision of unity, the recognition that the world is the manifestation a single supreme Consciousness, the divine Self, identified as Siva.

One of the major exponents of this mystical philosophy was the great Abhinavagupta (10th century), who composed several extensive works that give full and intricate presentations of this thought and practice.

By contrast, Abhinavagupta's Paramārtasāra, translated and published here, is a short essence (*sāra*) of the supreme truth (*paramartha*). With this text, Abhinavagupta has fashioned in verse form an approachable compendium that makes key teachings of the nondual Shaiva tradition of Kashmir accessible to spiritual seekers and students of that tradition.

In the 11th century, Yogarāja wrote a commentary (*vivṛtti*) on the Paramārtasāra, also translated here, that explains and expands Abhinavagupta's points from the perspective of the nondual Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. In so doing, he drew comparisons with other important religious philosophies that thrived in Kashmir at the time, such as Vedānta, Yogācāra Buddhism, Sāṅkhya, and Nyāya Vaiśeṣika. These works have been translated and introduced here by Deba Brata SenSharma, a member of the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute faculty and a contemporary authority on the nondual Shaivism of Kashmir.

The full Sanskrit text of the Paramārtasāra with Yogarāja's commentary is available through Muktabodha's Digital Library at [www.muktabodha.org](http://www.muktabodha.org).



MUKTABODHA INDOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



978-81-904489-0-1