

Sanat Sujata Gita

The Sanat-sujata-Gita is in the nature of a dialogue between the Rishi Sanat-sujata and Dhritarashtra, contained in chapters 41 to 46 of Udyoga-Parva of the Mahabharata.

Dhritarashtra said:

If there is anything still left unsaid by you, O Vidura, say it then, as I am ready to listen to you. The discourse is, indeed, charming.

Vidura said:

O Dhritarashtra, O you of the Bharata race! That ancient and immortal Rishi Sanat-sujata who, the foremost of all intelligent persons, leading a life of perpetual celibacy,

has said that Death does not exist, will clear you of all the doubts in your mind, both expressed and unexpressed.

Rishi Sanat-sujata is no other than Sanatkumara, according to Shankara. The doubts expressed or unexpressed relate to subjects freely discussed by all, or those that may not.

Dhritarashtra said:

Do you not know what that immortal Rishi will say to me? O Vidura, do you say it, if indeed, you have that degree of wisdom.

Vidura said:

I am born in the sudra order and, therefore, do not venture to say more than what I have already said. The understanding, however, of that Rishi, leading a life of celibacy,

is regarded by me to be infinite. He, that is a brahmana by birth, by discoursing on even the profoundest mysteries, never incurs the censure of the gods. It is for this alone that I do not discourse to you, upon the subject.

The knowledge of the Rishi is infinite in the sense that it is never-failing. Sanatkumara is, incidentally, the teacher of Narada in the famous dialogue in Khandogya-upanisad.

Dhritarashtra said:

Tell me, O Vidura, how with this body of mine, I can meet with that ancient and immortal one?

Then Vidura began to think of that Rishi of rigid vows. And knowing that he was thought of, the Rishi showed himself there. Vidura then received him with the rites prescribed by ordinance. And when, having rested a while, the Rishi was seated at his ease, Vidura addressed him, saying:

O illustrious one! There is a doubt in Dhritarashtra's mind which is incapable of being explained away by me. It behooves you, therefore, to expound it, so that

listening to

your discourse, this chief of men may tide over all his sorrows. To that extent, he may bear the gain and loss, what is agreeable and what is disagreeable, decrepitude and

death, fright and jealousy, hunger and thirst, pride and prosperity, dislike, sleep, lust and wrath, and decrease and increase, with equanimity.

The 'gain and loss' refers to what results from a general dissatisfaction with everything.

Then Dhritarashtra bowed (respected) and questioned Sanat-sujata in a secluded place (free from the presence of ignorant and vulgar people), desirous of obtaining the

highest knowledge of the Self:

O Sanat-sujata! I hear that you are of the opinion that there is no death. Again it is said that the gods and the asuras practise ascetic austerities in order to avoid death. Of these two opinions, then, which is true?

Sanat-sujata said:

Some say that freedom from death is attainable by particular acts (prescribed in the Vedas). Others opine that there is no death. O Kshatriya! Both have been truths since creation. The learned are of the opinion that death results from ignorance. I say that ignorance is Death. So, the absence of ignorance, that is, knowledge is immortality. It is from ignorance that the asuras became subject to defeat and death. It is from the absence of ignorance that the gods have attained to the nature of the Brahman. Death does not devour creatures like a tiger; its form is unascertainable. Besides, some (deluded by worldly objects) imagine Yama to be Death. This is, however, due to the weakness of the mind.

Shankara suggests that asuras (demons) might mean creatures attached to worldly objects and gods might mean those pleased in their own self. The 'defeat and death' of asuras is an allegory to the story in the Khandogya-upanishad

The pursuit of the Brahman or Self-knowledge is immortality. That imaginary god Yama holds his sway in the region of the Pitris, being the source of bliss to the virtuous, and of woe to the sinful. It is at his command that death in the form of wrath, ignorance and covetousness occurs among men. Swayed by pride, men always walk in unrighteous path. None amongst them succeeds in attaining to his real nature. The being who pursues desires is destroyed (in pursuing) after the desires. With their

understanding clouded, and themselves swayed by their passions, such beings cast off their bodies and repeatedly fall into hell (the cycle of life and death). They are always followed by their senses. It is for this that ignorance receives the name of death.

Those men that desire the fruits of action, when the time comes for enjoying those fruits, proceed to heaven, casting off their bodies. Hence they cannot avoid death.

Embodied creatures, from inability to attain the knowledge of the Brahman and from their connection with earthly enjoyments, are obliged to sojourn in a cycle of re-births,

up and down and around. The natural inclination of man towards pursuits that are unreal is alone the cause of the senses being led to error. The soul (mind) that is constantly affected by the pursuit of unreal objects, remembering only that with which it is always engaged, adores only earthly enjoyments that surround it. The desire of

enjoyments first kills men. Lust and wrath soon follow behind it. Thus, the desire for enjoyment, lust and wrath lead foolish men to death.

Those that have conquered their souls (minds), however, succeed, by self-restraint, to escape death. He that has conquered his mind conquers the senses, regarding them

as of no value, by the aid of self-knowledge. Ignorance, assuming the form of Yama, cannot devour that learned man who controls his desires in this manner. That man who follows his desires is destroyed along with his desires. He that can renounce desires can certainly drive away all kinds of woe.

Desire is, indeed, ignorance and darkness, and hell in respect of all creatures. For, swayed that way, they lose their senses. As intoxicated men walking along a street reel towards ruts and holes, men under the influence of desire, misled by deluding joys, run towards destruction.

What can death do to a person whose soul (mind) has not been misled by desire? To him, death has no terror, like a tiger made of straw.

Therefore, O Kshatriya, if the existence of desire which is ignorance, is to be destroyed, not even the slightest wish is either to be thought of or pursued. That soul, which is in your body, associated as it is with wrath and covetousness, and filled with ignorance, is indeed death. Knowing that death arises in this way, he that relies on knowledge entertains no fear of death. Even as the body is destroyed when brought under the influence of death, death itself is destroyed when it is brought under the influence of knowledge.

Dhritarashtra said:

The Vedas declare the emancipating capacity of those highly sacred and eternal regions obtainable by the regenerate classes of men, by prayers and sacrifices. Knowing this, why should not a learned person have recourse to religious acts?

The question that Dhritarashtra asks is fair and straight. When the Rishi has applauded knowledge and its efficacy in procuring emancipation, the King asks, if knowledge is of such efficacy, what then is the value of prayers and sacrifices as ordained in the Veda? The Vedantic Idea of emancipation is not peace or bliss enjoyed by a conscious individual, but freedom from the obligation of re-birth resulting from karma. Mere karma, as such, implies pain and misery, and the Supreme Soul is without action and attributes. The emancipation that is the subject of this dialogue is freedom from this action (karma).

Sanat-sujata said:

Indeed, he that is without knowledge proceeds thither by the path indicated by you. The Vedas also declare that thither are both bliss and emancipation. But he, that regards the material body to be self, if he succeeds in renouncing desire, at once

attains emancipation (the Brahman). If, however, one seeks emancipation without renouncing desire, one must have to proceed along the (prescribed) route of action, taking care to destroy the chances of one's retracing routes that one has once passed over.

The Rishi answers that karma or action does, indeed, lead to the emancipate state. The materialist, by renouncing desire, attains to the state of emancipation. What it means is that, by renouncing desire, both actions and attributes are lost. The state, therefore, of such a soul is one of inaction, or perfect quietude and the absence of attributes which is exactly the nature of the Supreme Soul. If, again, emancipation is sought without extinguishing desire by the aid of prayers and sacrifices, it is to be attained by 'extinguishing path by a path'. It means that the seeker is to proceed along a definite or ordained route, taking care that the route he once passes over is not re-trodden. Action such as prayers and sacrifices, no doubt, leads to regions of bliss and emancipation, but that state is only transitory. For, when the merit is extinguished, and the body falling off, he has to re-commence action. If permanent emancipation is to be attained, the obligation of re-commencing action has to be got rid of. It means that the path once passed over is not re-trodden, and getting rid of the paths which keep one away from the Brahman, for emancipation.

Dhritarashtra said:

Who is it that constrains that Unborn and Ancient One (primeval Self)? Is it He all this severally? If, again, it is He that is this entire Universe in consequence of His having

entered everything (without desire as He is) what can be His action, or His happiness (very purpose of existence)? O learned sage, tell me all this truly.

The Rishi has said that the ordinary soul, by a certain process such as renunciation of desire, attains to the state of the Supreme Soul. But the King infers it vice versa and

asks: If it is the Supreme Soul that becomes the ordinary soul, who is it that urges the Supreme Soul to become so? And if this entire universe be indeed that Soul, in consequence of the latter pervading and entering into everything, then divested of desire as the Supreme Soul is, where is the possibility of Its action or work being the direct consequence of desire? If it is answered that the universe is the Supreme Soul's sport, then, as every sport is ascribable to some motive of happiness, what can be the

happiness of the Supreme Soul, which is supposed to be without desire?

Shankara explains the dilemma of the King ontologically: Having shown that true death is heedlessness, and having shown that heedlessness in its forms of anger, etc is the cause of all evil, and having also shown further that heaven, etc are really not man's highest goal, the author has only implied the unity of the Supreme Self and the

individual self. On that arises a doubt which is stated in the passage.

Sanat-sujata said:

There is great objection (to contravening the Vedic texts such as 'I am the Brahman') in completely identifying (as here) the two that are different. Creatures always spring

from the union of conditions (with what in Its Essence is without conditions). This view does not detract from the supremacy of the Unborn and the Ancient one. As for men,

they also originate in the union of conditions. All this that appears is nothing but that everlasting Supreme Soul. Indeed, the universe is created by the Supreme Soul itself

undergoing transformation. The Vedas attribute this power (of self-transformation) to the Supreme Soul. For the identity, again, of the power and its possessor, both the Vedas and others are the authority.

The Rishi explains that the ordinary soul and the Supreme Soul are not identical. As such, their identity cannot be admitted. As regards embodied beings, they flow continually from the union of the Supreme Soul with the conditions of space, time, etc. While the Supreme Soul is totally Unconditioned, there is this much of identity between the Supreme Soul and the ordinary soul in that the embodied beings arise and perish and arise, continually because of the union between the Supreme Soul and

the conditions resulting in their creation. In consequence of this activity, the superiority of the Supreme Soul is not lost. The favourite analogy for explaining the connection of the Supreme Soul with the universe is derived from the connection of space absolute and unconditioned, and space as confined by the limits of a vessel. The latter has a

name, is moved when the vessel is moved, and is limited in space. On the other hand, the space of which the vessel's space is only a part is absolute and unconditioned, immovable and unlimited.

Shankara says:

The question of Dhritarashtra having suggested a difference between two principles one of which constrains, and the other of which is constrained, the answer is 'such a difference ought not to be alleged, as it involves danger (objection)'. Then the question arises, 'how is the difference, which does appear, to be explained'. The reply is, 'it is due to the beginning-less principle—delusion or ignorance'. The next sentence shows that the universe as it appears is also a result of delusion.

Dhritarashtra said:

In this world, some practise virtue, and some renounce action or karma (adopting what is called sannyasa Yoga). (In respect of those that practise virtue) I ask, is virtue

competent to destroy vice, or is it itself destroyed by vice?

Sanat-sujata said:

The fruits of virtue and of (perfect) inaction are both serviceable for procuring emancipation. Indeed, both are sure means for the attainment of emancipation. The man that is wise achieves success by knowledge (inaction). On the other hand, the materialist acquires merit (by action) and (as the consequence thereof) emancipation. He has also (in course of his pursuit) to incur sin. Having obtained again fruits of both virtue and vice which are transitory (heaven having its end, as also hell in respect of the virtuous and the sinful), the man of action becomes once more addicted to action as the consequence of his own previous virtues and vices. The man of action, however, who possesses intelligence, destroys his sins by his virtuous acts. Virtue, therefore, is strong, and hence the success of the man of action.

Dhritarashtra said:

Tell me, according to their gradation, of those eternal regions that are said to be attainable, as the fruits of their own virtuous acts, by regenerate persons, engaged in the practice of virtue. Speak to me of others' regions also of a similar kind. O learned sire! I do not wish to hear of actions (towards which man's heart naturally inclines, however interdicted or sinful they may be).

Sanat-sujata said:

Those regenerate persons that take pride in their yoga practices, like strong men in their own strength, departing hence, become glorious in heaven. Those regenerate persons that proudly exert in performing sacrifices and other Vedic rites, as the fruit of that knowledge which is theirs, in consequence of those acts, freed from this world,

proceed to that region which is the abode of the deities (which is free from the three-fold source of pain, namely, physical, mental and such as is caused by super-human agency). There are others, again, conversant with the Vedas, who are of the opinion that the performance of the sacrifices and rites (ordained by the Vedas) is obligatory (their non-performance being sinful).

Wedded to external forms, though seeking the development of the inner self (for they practise these rites for only virtue's sake, and not for the accomplishment of particular

aims), these persons should not be regarded very highly (although some respect should be theirs).

Wherever, again, food and drink worthy of a brahmana are abundant, like grass and reeds in a place during the rainy season, there should the yogi seek his livelihood (without afflicting the householder of scanty means). By no means should he afflict his own self by hunger and thirst. In a place, where there may be both inconvenience and

danger to one to disclose one's superiority, he that does not proclaim his superiority is better than he that does. The food offered by that person who is not pained at the sight of another disclosing his superiority, and who never eats without offering the prescribed share to brahmanas and guests is approved by the righteous. As a dog oftentimes devours its own evacuations to its injury, so those Yogis devour their own

vomits, who procure their livelihood by disclosing their pre-eminence.

The wise know him for a brahmana, who, living in the midst of kindred, wishes his religious practices to remain always unknown to them. What else a brahmana deserves to know other than the Supreme Soul, that is unconditioned, without attributes, unchangeable, one and alone, and without duality of any kind?

In consequence of such practices, a Kshatriya can know the Supreme Soul and behold it in his own soul. He that regards the soul to be the acting and feeling self is like the thief who robs the soul of its attributes.

A brahmana should be without exertion, should never accept gifts, should win the respect of the righteous, should be quiet, and, though conversant with the Vedas, should seem to be otherwise, for then only may he attain to knowledge and know the Brahman. They that are poor in earthly but rich in heavenly wealth and sacrifices, become unconquerable and fearless, and they should be regarded as embodiments of the Brahman. That person, even in this world, who (by performing sacrifices) succeeds in meeting with the gods that bestow all kinds of desirable objects (on performers of sacrifices), is not equal to him that knows the Brahman, for the performer of sacrifices has to undergo exertions (while he that knows the Brahman attains to Him without such exertions).

He is said to be really honoured, who, destitute of actions, is honoured by the deities. He should never regard himself as honoured who is honoured by others. One should

not, therefore, grieve when one is not honoured by others.

People act according to their nature just as they open and shut their eyelids; and it is only the learned that pay respect to others. The man that is respected should think so. They that are foolish, apt to sin and adept in deceit never pay respect to those that are worthy or respect. On the other hand, they always show disrespect to such persons.

The world's esteem and asceticism (practices of mauna) can never exist together. Know that this world is for those that are candidates for esteem, while the other world is for those that are devoted to asceticism. Here, in this world, O Kshatriya, happiness (the world's esteem) resides in worldly prosperity. The latter, however, is an impediment (to heavenly bliss). Heavenly prosperity, on the other hand, is unattainable by one that is without true wisdom.

The righteous say that there are various kinds of gates, all difficult of being guarded, for gaining access to heavenly bliss. These are truth, uprightness, modesty, self-control, purity of mind and conduct, and knowledge (of the Vedas). These six are destructive of vanity and ignorance.

Dhritarashtra said:

What is the object of asceticism (mauna)? Of the two kinds of mauna (that is, the restraining of speech and meditation), which is approved by you? O learned one!

Tell

me the true aspect of mauna. Can a person of learning attain to a state of quietude and emancipation (moksha) by that mauna? O Muni! How is asceticism (mauna) to be

practised here?

Shankara says of mauna: The fruit of the destruction of the consciousness of anything other than the self. This is clarified as ‘the conviction in the mind that one is the self—the Supreme Brahman—and that there is nothing else existing but oneself’.

Sanat-sujata said:

Since the Supreme Soul cannot be penetrated by both the Vedas and the mind, it is for this that the Soul itself is called mauna. That from which both the Vedic syllable Aum and this one (ordinary sounds) have arisen, that One, O King, is displayed as the Word.

Shankara takes the whole expression to mean Jyothirmaya, consisting of light (effulgence). Neelakantha considers this to be the substance of the answer to the questions being that the use of taciturnity (mauna) is to attain the seat which is not to be grasped even by the mind, and that taciturnity includes both restraint of mind and of the external senses. By means of such restraint, the external and internal worlds cease to be perceived as existing, and the highest goal is attained.

Dhritarashtra said:

Is he that knows both the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, or is he that knows the Sama Veda, sullied by sins or not, when he commits sins?

This question is naturally an off-shoot of the preceding observation by Sanat-sujata which, in effect, is that the Vedas cannot grasp the Brahman fully, but they are of use towards a rudimentary comprehension thereof.

Sanat-sujata said:

I tell you truly that the man that has not restrained his senses is not rescued from his sinful acts by either the Sama or the Rig, or the Yajur Veda. The Vedas never rescue from sin the deceitful person, living by deceit. On the other hand, like new fledged birds forsaking their nest, the Vedas forsake such a person at the end.

Dhritarashtra said:

O you that has restrained your senses! If, indeed, the Vedas are not competent to rescue a person without the aid of virtue, why then is this delusion of the brahmanas, that the Vedas are always destructive of sins?

Sanat-sujata said:

O magnanimous one! This universe has sprung from that Supreme Soul by the union of conditions respecting name, form and other attributes. The Vedas also, pointing it out duly, declare that the Supreme Soul and the universe are different, and not wholly identical. It is for attaining to that Supreme Soul that asceticism and sacrifices are

ordained, and it is by these two that the man of learning earns virtue. Destroying sin by virtue, his soul is enlightened by knowledge.

The man of knowledge, by the aid of knowledge, attains to the Supreme Soul. Otherwise, he that is covetous of the four objects of human pursuit, taking with him all that he does here, enjoys their fruits hereafter, and (as those fruits) are not everlasting, comes back to the region of action (when the enjoyment is over).

Indeed, the fruits of ascetic austerities performed in this world have to be enjoyed in the other world (as regards those persons who have not obtained mastery of their souls).

As regards those brahmanas employed in ascetic practices (who have the mastery of their souls), even these regions are capable of yielding fruits.

Dhritarashtra said:

O Sanat-sujata! How can ascetic austerities which are all of the same kind be sometimes successful and sometimes unsuccessful? Tell me this in order that I may know it!

Sanat-sujata said:

Asceticism (tapas) which is not stained by (desire and other) faults is said to be capable of procuring emancipation, and is, therefore, successful, while asceticism stained by vanity and want of true devotion is regarded unsuccessful. All your enquiries, O Kshatriya, touch the very root of asceticism. It is by asceticism that they, that are learned, know the Brahman and win immortality.

Dhritarashtra said:

I have listened to what you have said about asceticism unstained by faults, and by which I have succeeded in knowing an eternal mystery. Tell me now, O Sanat-sujata, about asceticism that is stained by faults!

Sanat-sujata said:

O King! The twelve, including anger, as also the thirteen kinds of wickedness are the faults of asceticism that is stained. Anger, lust, avarice, ignorance of right and wrong, discontent, cruelty, malice, vanity, grief, love of pleasure, envy and speaking ill of others are generally the faults of human beings. These twelve should always be avoided by men. Any one amongst these can singly effect the destruction of men.

O bull among men! Indeed, every one of these waits for an opportunity in respect of men, like a hunter expectant of opportunities in respect of deer.

Assertion of one's own superiority, desire of enjoying others' wives, humiliating others from excess of pride, wrathfulness, fickleness and refusing to maintain those worthy of

being maintained--these six acts of wickedness are always practised by sinful men defying all dangers here and hereafter.

He that regards the gratification of lust to be one of life's aims, he that is exceedingly proud, he that grieves having given away, he that never spends money, he that

persecutes his subjects by exacting hateful taxes, he that delights in the humiliation of others and he that hates his own wives--these seven categories of men are also called wicked.

Righteousness, truth (abstention from injury and truthfulness of speech), self-restraint, asceticism, delight in the happiness of others, modesty, forbearance, love of others,

sacrifices, gifts, perseverance, knowledge of the scriptures--these twelve virtues constitute the practices of brahmanas. He that succeeds in acquiring these twelve virtues becomes competent to sway the entire earth. He that is endued with three, two or even one of these should be regarded of heavenly prosperity. Self-restraint, renunciation and knowledge of the Self lead to emancipation. Those brahmanas that are endued with wisdom say that these are the attributes in which truth predominates.

Self-restraint has eighteen defects; if (any one of them) is committed, it is an obstacle (to self-restraint). They are stated thus: Untruthfulness, backbiting, thirst (for objects

of sense), antipathy (to all beings), darkness (ignorance), repining (discontent even when one obtains much), hatred of people, haughtiness, quarrelsomeness, injuring living creatures, reviling others, garrulity, vexation (of oneself by brooding, or thinking ill of others without cause), want of endurance, want of courage (restraint of senses in the presence of their objects), imperfection (of piety, knowledge and indifference to worldly objects), sinful conduct and slaughter. These eighteen faults constitute what is called mada or pride.

Renunciation is of six kinds. The contraries of these six again are faults, called mada. (The faults, therefore, that go by the name of mada are eighteen and six).

The six

kinds of renunciation are all commendable. The third one is difficult of practice, but by that all sorrow is overcome. Indeed, if that kind of renunciation be accomplished in

practice, he that accomplishes it overcomes all the pairs of opposites in the world.

The six kinds of renunciation are all commendable. They are these: The first is never experiencing joy on occasions of prosperity. The second is the offering of gifts at Vedic ceremonies and at ceremonies as laid down in the smritis. (This is also interpreted as offerings to gods, offerings to the manes, or sacrifices, etc and works of charity such as digging of wells and tanks).

That which is called the third, O King, is the abandonment of desire or withdrawing from the world. Indeed, it is in consequence of this third kind of renunciation of desire,

which is evidenced by the abandonment of all objects of enjoyment (without enjoying them). It is not their abandonment neither after acquisition, nor by abandonment only

after one has become incompetent to enjoy from loss of appetite.

The fourth kind of renunciation consists in this: One should not grieve, nor suffer his self to be afflicted by grief when one's actions fail, notwithstanding one's possession of all the virtues and all kinds of wealth. Or, when anything disagreeable happens,

one shall not feel any pain.

The fifth kind of renunciation consists in not soliciting even one's sons, wives, and others that may all be very dear. The sixth kind consists in giving away to a deserving

person who solicits, which act of gifting is always productive of merit.

By these acts, again, one acquires the knowledge of the Self. As regards this last attribute, it involves eight qualities. These are truthfulness, meditation (concentration),

distinction of subject and object (absorbed contemplation), capacity for drawing inferences (reflection), withdrawal from the world (indifference to worldly objects), never taking what belongs to others (not stealing), the practices of brahmacharya vows (abstinence) and non-acceptance (of gifts).

So also the attribute of mada (the opposite of dama or self-restraint) has faults which have all been indicated (in the scriptures). These faults should be avoided. I have

spoken (to you) of renunciation and self-knowledge. And, as self-Knowledge has eight virtues, so the want of it has eight faults. Those faults should be avoided.

O Bharata! He that is liberated from the five senses (the five classes of sensuous objects), mind, and also from (thoughts regarding) the past and the future becomes happy. O King! Let your soul be devoted to truth; all the worlds are established on truth; indeed, self-control, renunciation and self-knowledge are said to have truth for their foremost attribute. Avoiding (these) faults, one should practise asceticism here.

The Ordainer has ordained that truth alone should be the vow of the righteous. Asceticism that is dissociated from these faults and endued with these virtues becomes the

source of great prosperity. I have now briefly told you about that sin-destroying and sacred subject which you had asked me, and which is capable of liberating a person from birth, death and decrepitude.

Dhritarashtra said:

With Akhyana (Puranas) as their fifth, the Vedas declare the Supreme Soul to be this universe consisting of mobile and immobile things. Others regard four God-heads;

and others three; others again regard two; and others only one; and others regard the Brahman alone as the sole existent object (there being nothing else possessing separate existence). Amongst these, which should I know to be really possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman?

Sanat-sujata said:

There is but one Brahman which is Truth's self. It is from ignorance of that One, that god-heads have been conceived to be diverse. But who is there, O King, that has attained to Truth's self or the Brahman?

Man regards himself wise without knowing that One Object of knowledge and, from desire of happiness, is engaged in study and the practices of charity and sacrifices. Men have deviated from Truth (the Brahman) and entertain purposes corresponding

(with their state) and, relying on the truth of Vedic texts thereof, perform sacrifices. Some perform (or attain the object of) sacrifices by the mind (meditation), some by works (recitation of particular prayers or Japa) and some by acts (actual consummation of the Jatistoma and other costly rites). The person, however, who seeks the Brahman through Truth, obtains his desired object even at home.

When, however, one's purposes become abortive (through absence of knowledge of the Self), one should adopt vows of silence, and such-like called Dikshavrata. (Indeed,

the word Diksha comes from the root Diksha, meaning the observance of vows.) As for those that have knowledge of the Self, Truth is the highest object of pursuit.

The fruits of knowledge are visible; asceticism yields fruits hereafter. A brahmana who (without knowledge and asceticism) has only read much, should only be known as a

great reader. Therefore, O Kshatriya, never think that one can be a brahmana (Brahman-knowing) by only reading the scriptures. He who does not deviate from Truth, on the other hand, should be known to be possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman.

O Kshatriya! The verses that were recited by Atharvan to a conclave of great sages, in days of old, are known by the name of Chhandas. They are not to be regarded as acquainted with the Chhandas, who have only read through the Vedas, without having attained to the knowledge of Him who is known through the Vedas.

The Chhandas, O best of men, become the means of attaining the Brahman independently and without the necessity of anything foreign. They cannot be regarded as acquainted with the Chhandas, who are acquainted only with the modes of sacrifice enjoined in the Vedas. On the other hand, having waited upon those that are acquainted with the Vedas, have not the righteous attained to the Object that is knowable by the Vedas? There is none who has truly caught the sense of the Vedas, or there may be very few who have, O King, caught the sense. He that has only read the Vedas does not know the Object knowable by them. He that is, however, established in Truth, knows the Object knowable by the Vedas.

Amongst those faculties which lead to perception of the body as the acting agent, there is none by which true Knowledge may be acquired. By the mind alone one cannot acquire the knowledge of the Self and Not-Self. Indeed, he that knows the Self also knows what is Not-self. On the other hand, he that knows only what is Not-self, does not know Truth. Again, he that knows the 'proofs' knows also that which is sought to be proved. But what that Object in its nature is (which is sought to be proved) is not known to either the Vedas or those that are acquainted with the Vedas.

For all that, however, those brahmanas that are (truly) acquainted with the Vedas succeed in obtaining knowledge of the Object knowable (by) through the Vedas. As the small digit of the moon, which cannot be perceived by itself, is pointed out as being at the tip of a branch of a tree pointing towards the moon, so the Vedas are of use as pointing towards the Brahman, though inaccurately and imperfectly. (This is called sakhakandra-nyaya).

Know him to be a brahmana (possessing knowledge of the Brahman) who clears the

doubts of others, having himself mastered all his own doubts, and who is possessed of the knowledge of the Self.

One cannot find what the Soul is by seeking in the East, the South, the West, the North, or in the subsidiary directions or horizontally. Very rarely can It be found in him

who regards this body to be the Self. Beyond the conception of even the Vedas, the man of Yoga-meditation alone can behold the Supreme Self. Completely restraining all

your senses and mind, you see that the Brahman resides in your own soul.

He is not Muni who lives only in the woods (having retired from the world). He is, however, a Muni, who knows his true nature, and is self-restrained. In consequence of one's being able to expand (analyse) every object (Vyakarana), one is said to be endowed with the highest knowledge (Vaiyakarana); and, indeed, the science itself is called Vyakarana owing to its being able to expound every object to its very root (which is the Brahman).

He that stays in Truth and knows the Brahman is said to be brahmana, and a brahmana possesses omniscience (universal knowledge). A Kshatriya that practises such virtues may also behold the Brahman. He may also attain to that high state by ascending step by step, according to what is indicated in the Vedas. Knowing it for certain, I tell you this.

Dhritarashtra said:

Excellent, O Sanat-sujata, as this your discourse is, treating of the attainment of the Brahman and the origin of the universe! I pray to you, O celebrated Rishi, to go on telling me words such as these that are unconnected with the objects of worldly desire and are, therefore, rare among men.

Sanat-sujata said:

That Brahman about which you asked me with such joy is not to be attained easily. After (the senses have been restrained and) the mind (withdrawn from worldly objects)

has been merged in the pure intellect, the state that succeeds is one of utter absence of worldly thought. Even that is knowledge (leading to the attainment of the Brahman).

It is attainable only by those that have been brought up under preceptors (in the state of brahmacharya).

Dhritarashtra said:

You say that the knowledge of the Brahman dwells of itself in the mind (soul), being discovered only in brahmacharya; that is, dwelling in the mind, it requires for its manifestation no efforts (such as are necessary for work) during the seeking (by means of brahmacharya). How then is the immortality associated with the attainment of the Brahman?

Sanat-sujata said:

Though residing in and inherent to the mind (soul), the knowledge of the Brahman is still un-manifest. It is by the aid of the pure intellect and brahmacharya that that knowledge is made manifest. Indeed having attained to that knowledge, Yogis forsake this world. It is always to be found among eminent preceptors.

Dhritarashtra said:

What should be the nature of that brahmacharya by which the knowledge of the Brahman might be attained without much difficulty? O regenerate one! Tell me this.

Sanat-sujata said:

They who, residing in the abodes of their preceptors and winning their good will and friendship, practise brahmacharya austerities and become, even in this world, the embodiments of the Brahman. When they cast off their bodies, they are united with the Supreme Soul.

They that, in this world, desirous of obtaining the state of the Brahman, subdue all desires, and endued as they are with righteousness, succeed in dissociating the soul

from the body like a blade projected from a clump of heath.

The body, O Bharata, is created by the father and the mother. The new birth, however, that is due to the preceptor's instruction is sacred, free from decrepitude, and

immortal. (The consciousness of being one with the Brahman is the new birth. That birth is not merely delusive, and does not result in death).

He who discourses upon the Brahman and grants immortality, and he who wraps all persons with the mantle of truth should be regarded as father and mother. Bearing in

mind the good he does, he should never be done any injury. (Immortality or final emancipation is not to be achieved without knowledge, which can only be got from a preceptor. And one is not perfect without that immortality; one is limited by the conditions of human existence.)

A disciple must habitually pay obeisance to his preceptor with respect, purity of body and mind and well-directed attention. (The necessity of having a guru is often insisted

even in the Upanisads). He must take to study seriously under his guidance. He must not consider any service as mean. He must not harbour any anger. This is indeed the

first step of brahmacharya. The practices of that disciple who acquires knowledge by observing the duties ordained for one of his class (category) are also regarded as the

first step of brahmacharya.

A disciple should, with his very life and all his possessions, in thought, word and deed do all that is agreeable to the preceptor. This is regarded as the second step of brahmacharya. He should behave towards the wife and the son of his preceptor in the same way as he does towards him. This is part of the second step itself.

Bearing in mind what the preceptor has done to him and understanding what has been taught, the disciple should think, with a delighted heart, that 'I have been taught and

made great by him'. This is the third step of brahmacharya.

A wise disciple shall not move to the next stage of life without making an appropriate gift to his preceptor. At the same time, he shall not say or even think in his mind, 'I make this gift'. This is the fourth step of brahmacharya.

A disciple, thus, attains a quarter of knowledge of the Brahman, the object of brahmacharya, by aid of time, the second quarter through the preceptor's protections, the third by the power of his own understanding, and the fourth by discussion.

The learned have said that brahmacharya is constituted by twelve virtues, namely, knowledge, truth, self-restraint, sacred learning, freedom from animosity towards living

beings, modesty, endurance, freedom from censoriousness, sacrifice, gift, courage and quiescence. The yoga-practices are its angas; perseverance in yoga-meditation is its strength. A disciple is crowned with success in brahmacharya, in consequence of the preceptor's aid and the understanding of the sense (core) of the Veda.

Whatever wealth a disciple, thus engaged, may earn should all be given to the preceptor. It is thus the preceptor obtains his highly praise-worthy livelihood. The disciple should similarly behave towards the son of the preceptor.

Thus stationed in brahmacharya, the disciple thrives by all means in this world, and obtains numerous progeny and fame. Men of all walks of life shower wealth on him.

Many people may go to his abode for practising brahmacharya.

It is through brahmacharya of this kind that the celestials attained to their divinity, and the sages, highly blessed and of great wisdom, have attained to the region of the

Brahman. It is by this that the Gandharvas and the Apsaras acquired such personal beauty. It is through brahmacharya that the Sun rises to make the day. All those that practise it derive great happiness in consequence of being able to have whatever they desire.

He, O King, who devotes to the practice of ascetic austerities, betakes himself to brahmacharya in its entirety and thereby purifies his body. He is truly wise. For, by this way, he becomes child-like, free from all evil passions and triumphs over death at last.

O Kshatriya! Men, however pure, obtain, by work, only worlds that are perishable. He that is blessed with Knowledge attains, by the aid of that Knowledge, to the everlasting Brahman. There is no way other than Knowledge leading to emancipation.

Dhritarashtra said:

The existence of the Brahman, you say, a wise man perceives in his own soul. Now, is the Brahman white, red, black, blue or purple? Tell me what is the true form and colour of the Omnipresent and Eternal Brahman?

Sanat-sujata said:

Indeed, the Brahman, as perceived, may appear as white, red, black, brown or bright. But neither on the earth, nor in the sky, nor in the water of the ocean is there anything like IT. ('Water' is said by some commentators to mean the five elements of which the body is composed. In the Svetasvatara-Upanisad, it signifies mind.

Ocean,

as such, means world or samsara).

Neither in the stars, nor in lightning, nor in the clouds, is IT's form to be seen. Nor is IT visible in the atmosphere, nor in the deities, nor in the moon, nor in the sun.

Neither

in the riks, nor among the yajus, nor among the atharvans, nor in the pure samans, is IT to be found. O King! Verily, IT is not to be found in Rathantara or Brihadratha (Brihat-saman), or in great sacrifices.

Incapable of being compassed and lying beyond the reach of the limited intellect, even the universal Destroyer, after the dissolution, is himself lost in IT. Incapable of being

gazed at, IT is subtle as edge of the razor, while being grosser than mountains.

IT is the basis upon which everything is founded. IT is unchangeable. IT is this visible universe. IT is vast and IT is delightful. Creatures have all sprung from IT and are to

return to IT. Free from all kinds of duality, IT is manifest as the universe and all-pervading. Men of learning say that IT is without any change, except in the language used to describe IT. They are emancipated that are acquainted with That in which this universe is established.

Sanat-sujata said:

Sorrow, anger, covetousness, lust, ignorance, laziness, malice, self-importance, continuous desire of gain, affection, jealousy and evil speech, O Monarch, are grave faults that are destructive of men's lives. Each of these waits for opportunities to seize mankind. Afflicted by them, men lose their senses and commit sinful acts. He that is

covetous, he that is fierce, he that is harsh of speech, he that is garrulous, he that is given to nursing anger, and he that is boastful are of wicked disposition. On obtaining

wealth, they cannot treat others with courtesy.

He that regards sensual gratification as the end of life, he that is self-conceited, he that boasts having made a gift, he that never spends, he that is weak in mind, he that is given to self-admiration, and he that hates his own wife are counted as wicked men of sinful habits.

Righteousness, truth, asceticism, self-restraint, contentment, modesty, renunciation, love of others, gift, acquaintance with the scriptures, patience and forgiveness are the

twelve practices of a brahmana. He that does not fall off from these twelve may sway the entire earth. He that is endued with three, or two, or even one of these does never

regard anything as his own to the exclusion of others.

Self-restraint, renunciation and knowledge lead to emancipation. These are the attributes of brahmanas, endowed with wisdom and regarding the Brahman as the highest of all objects of attainment. True or false, it is not laudable for a brahmana to speak ill of others; they that do this have hell for their abode.

Mada has eighteen faults which have not yet been enumerated by me. They are ill-will towards others, throwing obstacles in the way of virtuous acts, detraction, falsehood in

speech, lust, anger, dependence, speaking ill of others, finding out the faults of others for report, waste of wealth, quarrel, insolence, cruelty to living creatures, malice,

ignorance, disregard of those that are worthy of regard, loss of the senses of right and wrong, and always seeking to injure others. A wise man, therefore, should not give

way to mada, for the accompaniments of mada are censurable.

Friendship is said to possess six indications; first, friends delight in the prosperity of friends, and, second, are distressed at their adversity. Third, if anyone asks for anything which is dear to his heart, but should not be asked for, a true friend surely gives away even that. Fourth, a true friend who is of a righteous disposition, when asked, can give away his very prosperity, his beloved sons, and even his own wife. Fifth, a friend should not dwell in the house of a friend, on whom he may have bestowed everything, but should enjoy what he earns himself. Sixth, a friend stops not to sacrifice his own good (for his friend).

The man of wealth who seeks to acquire those good qualities, and who becomes charitable and righteous, restrains his five senses from their respective objects. Such

restraint of the senses is asceticism. When it grows in degree, it is capable of winning regions of bliss hereafter (unlike Knowledge which leads to attainment even here).

They that have fallen off from patience (and are incapable, therefore, of attaining to Knowledge) acquire such asceticism in consequence of the purpose they entertain, that is, the attainment of bliss in the high regions hereafter. In consequence of his ability to grasp that Truth (the Brahman) from which sacrifices flow, the Yogi is capable of performing sacrifices by the mind. Another performs sacrifices by words (Japa), and another by work.

Truth (the Brahman) resides in him who knows the Brahman as vested with attributes. IT dwells more completely in him who knows the Brahman as divested of attributes.

Listen now to something else from me! This high and celebrated philosophy should be taught (to disciples). All other systems are only a farrago of words.

The whole of this (universe) is established in this Yoga-philosophy. They that are acquainted with it are not subjected to death. O King! One cannot, by work, however well-accomplished, attain to Truth (the Brahman). The man that is destitute of Knowledge, even if he pours homa libations or performs sacrifices, can never, by work, attain to immortality (emancipation). Nor does he enjoy great happiness at the

end. (For, he has got to undergo migration from one life to another as the result of the action).

Restraining all the external senses, and alone, one should seek the Brahman. Giving up work, one should not exert mentally. One should also (while thus engaged) avoid

experiencing joy at praise, or anger at blame.

O Kshatriya! By conducting oneself in this way, according to the successive steps indicated in the Vedas, one may, even here, attain to the Brahman. This, O learned one, is all that I tell you.

The primary (pure) Seed (of the universe), called Mahayasa, is destitute of accidents, is pure (free from ignorance and other traits) Knowledge, and blazes with effulgence. It

leads the senses, and it is in consequence of that Seed that Surya (the sun) shines.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). It is in consequence of that Seed (which is Joy's self) that the Brahman becomes capable of

creation and it is through it that the Brahman increases in expansion. It is that Seed which entering into luminous bodies gives light and heat. Without deriving its light and

heat from any other thing, it is self-luminous, and is an object of terror to all luminous bodies.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The body composed of the five gross elements, that are themselves sprung from the five subtler

ones is upheld (realized) in consciousness by both the individual creature (endued with life) and the Soul (Iswara). (These two, during sleep and the universal dissolution, are deprived of consciousness). The Brahman, on the other hand, never bereft of consciousness, upholds both these two, and also the earth and the heaven. The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The perfect is raised out of the Perfect. It (being raised) out of the Perfect is called the Perfect.

The perfect is withdrawn from the Perfect, and the Perfect alone remains.

What is meant is that the individual self is part of the Supreme Self. What is considered Perfect is what is not limited by space, time, etc. As being part of the Perfect in its Essence, the individual soul is also perfect. When the individual self is withdrawn from the whole aggregate of the body, senses, etc presided over by the self, it still appears to be the pure Self only.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The Seed upholds the two gods, the earth and the heaven, the directions and the whole universe. It is from that Seed those directions (points of the compass) and waters spring. Even the vast seas have derived their origin from it.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The body is like a car destined to destruction. Its acts, however, are undying. (The body is

perishable, but action done by the self while in the body leaves its effect, in the form

of samskaras.) Tied to the wheels of that car (which are represented by the acts of past

lives), the senses, as steeds, lead, through the region of consciousness.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The form of that One cannot be displayed by any comparison. None ever beholds Him by the

eye. They, who know Him by knowledge and by the faculties such as the mind and the heart, become immortal (a direct consciousness in self of its unity or identity with the Supreme Self).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The stream of illusion is terrible. Guarded by the gods, it has twelve collections. (The twelve collections relate to the five organs of action, the five senses of perception, the mind and the understanding). Drinking of its waters and beholding many sweet things (fruits of action) in its midst, men swim along to and fro. This stream flows from that Seed.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Destined to sojourn to and fro, the creature-soul, having reflected, enjoys (in the other world)

only part of the fruits of its acts. It is Iswara pervading everything in the universe that has ordained sacrifices.

Shankara explains the concept thus: There may be a difficulty to understand if action performed here is to have part of its fruit in the next world (life), as the fruit is far

removed in time from the action. The answer is, 'the Lord, the Supreme Being, can effect this; and taking His existence into account, there is no more difficulty. The Lord

has arranged things so that each being receives part of this food in the next world (life), which is the fruit of its own action'. Then the question arises, 'do these beings always continue taking the honey (fruits of action) and migrating (from life to life), or are they ever released? The answer is, 'those, verily, who have knowledge are possessed of wings, those who are not possessed of knowledge are devoid of wings'. (Those possessed of knowledge get released from the cycle of life and death).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Souls divested of knowledge, coming to the Aswatha of golden leaves (for beneficial and pleasant experiences, and possessions such as wife, son, etc, attractive at first sight), there become possessed of wings (possessed of the knowledge of the Brahman),

and fly away happily (obtaining final emancipation). (The 'selves' are compared to birds in the famous passage in Mundaka-Upanisad).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). It is from that Seed that both the consumer and the consumed (called Agni and Soma) have

sprung, and it is in it that the living organisms with the senses rest. Everything should be regarded to have sprung from it. That Seed called in the Vedas TAT, we

are unable
to describe.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The vital air called Apana is swallowed up by the air called Prana; Prana is swallowed up by the Moon, the Moon by the Sun, and the Sun by the Supreme Soul.

According to Shankara, the author here explains the Yoga by which the Supreme Self is to be attained. The Moon means the mind, the Sun the understanding, as they are

the respective deities of those organs. One swallowing the other ultimately results in one remaining in the condition of being identified with the Brahman.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The Supreme Soul, endued with four legs (states), called respectively Waking, Dream, Deep Sleep and Turiya, like unto a swan, treading above the unfathomable ocean of worldly affairs, does not put forth one leg that is hidden deep. Unto him that beholds that leg (Turiya) as put forth for the purpose of guiding the other three, both death and emancipation are the same (as the whole of the material world is dissolved, when the self is dissevered from the delusion which is the cause of it).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Of the measure of the thumb, being the Inner-self, ever Full, and different from the organism,

coming in contact with the Vital airs, the Will, the Intellect, and the ten Senses, it moves to and fro. That Supreme Controller, worthy of reverential hymns, and the prime

cause of everything, is manifest as Knowledge in creature-souls. Fools alone do not behold Him.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Among individuals there are those that have obtained mastery of their minds, and those that have not. Yet in all men the Supreme Soul may be seen equally. Indeed, IT resides equally in him that is emancipate, and in him that is not, with only this difference that they that are emancipate obtain honey flowing in a thick jet (attain to the Supreme Brahman).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). When one makes life's sojourn, having attained to the knowledge of the Self and Not-Self, then it matters little whether one's agni-hotra is performed or not. (Yet one obtains the fruit of it). O Monarch! The Supreme Soul has another name that is Pure Knowledge. They that have restrained their minds alone attain to Him.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Even such is He. Illustrious and full, all living creatures are merged into Him. He who knows that embodiment of Fullness attains to his object (emancipation) even here.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). That which flies away stretching forth thousands of wings, even if endued with the speed of the mind, must yet come back to the Central Spirit within the living organism (in which the most distant things reside).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). His form cannot be an object of sight. They that are of pure hearts alone can behold

Him. When

one seeks the good of all, succeeds in controlling one's mind, and never suffers one's heart to be affected by grief, then one is said to have purified one's heart.

Those that

can abandon the world and all its cares alone become immortal.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Like serpents concealing themselves in holes, there are persons who, following the dictates of their senses, or by their own conduct, conceal their vices from scrutiny's gaze. They that are so deluded take to worldly life, appreciating nothing but the sensuous objects.

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). He that is emancipated thinks thus: This transitory organism can never make me liable to joy and

grief and the other attributes inhering to it; nor can there be, in my case, anything like death and birth: and, further, when the Brahman, which has no opposing force to

contend against and which is alike in all times and all places, constitutes the resting-place of both realities and unrealities, how can emancipation be mine? It is I alone that

am the origin and the end of all causes and effects (existing in the form of the Self).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). The Brahman knowing person, who is equal unto the Brahman Itself, is neither glorified by good acts nor defiled by bad ones. It is only in ordinary men that acts, good or bad, produce different results. The person that knows the Brahman should be regarded as identical with Amrita or the state called Kaivalya which is incapable of being affected by either virtue or vice. One should, therefore, disposing one's mind in the way indicated, attain to that essence of sweetness (the Brahman).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). Slander grieves not the heart of the person that knows the Brahman, nor the thought, 'I have not studied (the Veda)', or 'I have not performed my agni-hotra'. The knowledge of the Brahman soon imparts to him that wisdom which is obtained only by the restraint of the mind (and awakening of the soul).

The Eternal One endued with divinity is beheld by yogis (in consciousness). He that beholds his own self in everything has no longer to grieve for, they only have to grieve,

who are employed in diverse other occupations of the world. As one's purposes (appeasing thirst, etc.) may be served in a well, as in a large reservoir of vast expanse, so the various purposes of the Vedas may all be derivable by him that knows the Soul. Dwelling in the heart, and of the measure of the thumb, that illustrious One—the

embodiment of Fullness—is not an object of sight. Unborn, He moves, awake day and night. He that knows Him becomes both learned and full of joy. I am called the mother

and the father. I am again the son. Of all that was, and of all that we will be, I am the Soul.

O Bharata! I am the old grandsire; I am the father; and I am the son. You are staying in my soul, yet you are not mine, nor am I yours! The Soul is the cause of my birth and procreation. I am the warp and woof of the universe. That upon which I rest is indestructible. Unborn I move, awake day and night. It is I knowing whom one becomes both learned and full of joy. Subtler than the subtle, of excellent eyes capable of looking into both the past and the future, the Brahman is awake in every creature. They that know Him know that Universal Father dwells in the heart of every created thing!.