

Teachings and Sublime Words of Avatar Kapila

Saul Judoeus

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The Eight Sublime Paths of Lord Kapila's Teaching.

- 1) The philosophy of Sankhya, also called the science of Sankhya.
- 2) The Origin of the Constituents of Material Creation.
- 3) The Lord teaches us how to distinguish between material and spiritual energy and then lets us know how to act as a spiritual being.
- 4) The Lord teaches us the path of yoga, which is the concentration of the mind. By this practice, one progresses step by step on the path of the Absolute Truth.
- 5) The Lord explains the devotional service offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- 6) Lord Kapila describes the harmful acts of self-interest, and reveals to us the formidable power of eternal time.
- 7) Lord Kapila describes the wanderings, journeys or movements that the embodied spirit soul that each of us truly is undertakes.
- 8) The Lord explains what attachment to self-interested activities is, what its consequences are, and how to get rid of it.

Brief preliminary exposition of the subjects discussed.

Sublime teachings and words of the Avatar Kapila, plenary emanation of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

In transmitting this sublime knowledge, the Lord addresses his mother, and through her, all of us. Lord Kapila shows us the path followed by spiritualists, who concentrate on the realization of the soul.

The philosophy of Sankhya enunciated by Lord Kapila to his mother and to all of us at the same time, serves as a springboard to rise to the spiritual level. It is the basis of liberation, of salvation. Beings who suffer in this world because they are conditioned by material energy, can indeed easily escape the grip of matter.

This philosophy allows one to attain liberation without delay, even if one is still in the material universe, and in a material body in particular, which serves as our prison.

Verily, one who knows the basic principle of Sankhya philosophy, rises in devotional service and becomes fully conscious of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and liberated even in this material world.

The Lord teaches us about devotional service, stating that devotional service is the basis of all philosophies. Devotional service enables one to maintain a sublime eternal relationship with Godhead, and thus renew the bond of love that unites one with Him. The aim of life is to observe the principles of devotional service until one reaches the planet of the Supreme Lord, imbued with the most perfect devotion and love as an eternal servant of Godhead.

Lord Kapila's teaching is about the loving and devotional service that we offer to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the bond that results from this service through which we regain our proper position and through which we can approach the Supreme Lord, see Him face to face, be united with Him, and abide eternally with Him.

The Lord reveals to us the path through which we can know the Absolute Truth. In truth, through the Absolute Truth, we will be able to know everything that concerns matter and spirit, as well as their relationship.

The philosophy of Sankhya, also called the science of Sankhya.

The Lord came to spread the philosophy of devotional Sankhya, also called the science of Sankhya.

When the Lord comes to this world, it is generally to spread true knowledge. Thus, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, came down as an Avatar under the divine name of Kapila. He came to spread the philosophy of Sankhya, the science of Sankhya.

Sankhya is all-embracing knowledge, true knowledge. This philosophy is meant to establish one firmly in devotional service to Krishna. Lord Kapila has designed this philosophy in such a way that the embodied being can know the truth as it is. It is the knowledge of the path that leads out of the material body, which is the source of all problems.

The philosophy of Sankhya corresponds to the analytical study of everything that exists. It is thus a question of knowing each thing by examining its nature and its characteristics. This is the acquisition of knowledge.

Lord Kapila says that the Sankhya philosophy was not exactly introduced by Him, because it already existed, but had mysteriously been lost in the course of time. Therefore, He had appeared to reformulate it. This is the purpose of God in coming down to this world. He comes here to re-establish the real principles of this world.

When men forget their eternal relationship with Krishna, God, and engage in occupation other than the devotional service that they should render to Him, their activities are irreligious.

The way to escape from the miserable conditions of material existence is stated in the Sankhya philosophy, and the Lord Himself has come to explain this sublime path.

Verily, one who desires to gain real life, eternal life, must absorb himself in devotional service, or Krishna consciousness.

Addressing his father, the Supreme Lord, Kapila, said:

Whatever I say, directly or through the scriptures, is authoritative in all respects for the inhabitants of this world. In order that this word may become truth, I have come to fulfill this promise.

I have descended into this world to expound the philosophy of sankhya, which is highly esteemed by those who wish to escape the labyrinth of vain material desires for the sake of spiritual realization.

This path of spiritual realization, difficult to understand, has been lost in the course of time. Know that I have appeared in the form of Kapila to reintroduce and explain this philosophy to men anew.

Now, with My approval, go as you wish, and surrender all your actions to Me. Conquering the insurmountable death, worship Me in order to gain eternal life.

Within your innermost being, through your intellect, you will always see Me, the Supreme Soul, shining with My own light and residing in the hearts of all beings. You will thus realize eternal life, free from all affliction and fear.

I will also expound to My mother this sublime knowledge which represents the access to spiritual life, so that she too will attain perfection and spiritual realization, putting an end to the consequences of all selfish acts. Thus, will she also be freed from all material fear.

The Supreme Lord taught his mother and said to her:

Yoga (true yoga is spiritual science. The practice of yoga leads to spiritual perfection. It is the path of communication and union with God) which is concerned with the Lord and the separate soul, aims at the ultimate good of the living entity and brings about detachment from the joys and sorrows of the material world, is the highest form of yoga.

O virtuous mother, I shall now explain to you the ancient science of yoga, the same science which I once revealed to the great sages. This path is practical in every respect.

The Lord teaches the science of Sankhya.

When the consciousness of the living entity is attracted by the three forms of influences of material nature, he is said to be conditioned. But let this same

consciousness attach itself to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the living entity is then at the liberated stage.

He who is completely free from lust and greed, these defilements arising from the illusory concept of “I” as applied to the body and “mine” as applied to the possessions of the body, will have his thoughts purified. Having attained this state of purity, he transcends the level of so-called material happiness and unhappiness.

The soul can then see itself as it is, transcendent to material existence, shining forever with its own light, never fragmented, and this, even though it is infinitesimal.

At this stage of spiritual realization, the application of knowledge and renunciation in devotional service enables one to see all things in their right perspective. One then becomes indifferent to worldly existence, and material influences begin to loosen their hold.

No spiritualist can attain the perfection of spiritual realization without adopting the path of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, for that is the only path that is truly auspicious.

A man of knowledge knows that attachment to material things is the greatest bondage for the spirit soul. But this same attachment, when transferred to the realized saints, opens the door to liberation.

The distinguishing marks of a saint are his tolerance, compassion and friendly attitude towards all living entities. He has no enemies, is peaceful, conforms to the scriptures, and all his personality traits are sublime.

Such a saint is firmly engaged in devotional service to the Lord without any deviation. For the sake of the Lord, he renounces all other relationships, such as family relations or worldly friendships.

Because they constantly engage in listening to and singing My divine glories, the saints do not suffer from the evils inherent in material existence, for they are always absorbed in the thought of My Pastimes and My Deeds.

O my mother, virtuous woman, know that these are the qualities of great devotees who are free from all attachment. You yourself must learn to attach yourself to these holy ones, for this will have the effect of neutralizing the pernicious effects of attachment to material things.

In the association of pure devotees, the discussions on the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are very pleasant and satisfying to the ear and the heart. One who cultivates this knowledge advances with certainty on the path of liberation; from there, he becomes free from all material constraints, and his attraction to the Lord becomes unalterable. Then true devotion arises and devotional service begins.

The living entity who thus consciously employs himself in devotional service to the Lord in association with devotees, obtains disdain for material pleasure, in this world as in the next, through constant remembrance of the Lord's activities. This practice, Krishna consciousness, is the easiest way to acquire supernatural power; once one truly establishes himself on the path of devotional service, he is able to control the mind.

Thus, one who, instead of obeying the gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*), cultivates Krishna consciousness, renounced knowledge, and practices yoga by which the mind is constantly fixed on devotional service, he obtains to live in My association in this life itself, for I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth.

The senses represent the celestial beings, and their natural inclination is to act according to the directions of the Vedas. Similarly, the mind represents the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and its natural duty is to serve. But when this inclination is used in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without any ulterior motive, then it becomes far more precious than salvation.

Devotional service itself dissolves the subtle body of the living entity, just as the fire in the stomach digests whatever we eat.

The pure devotee, attached to the activities of devotional service and constantly absorbed in the service of My lotus feet, does not desire at any time to merge with Me. Unwavering, such a devotee constantly glorifies My acts and pastimes.

O mother, My devotees are always contemplating My smiling face and My eyes like the rising sun; they love to admire My many spiritual and absolute forms, which are infinitely benevolent, and to converse pleasantly with Me.

By seeing the delightful forms of the Lord, smiling and attractive, and by hearing His most sweet words, the pure devotee practically loses all other forms of consciousness. His senses are freed from all other occupations, and he becomes absorbed in devotional service. Thus, even if he does not desire it, he attains liberation, and that without any further effort.

Thus, because he is completely absorbed in Me, the devotee does not desire even the highest benediction that can be obtained in the higher planetary systems, including **Satyaloka** (*Satyaloka, also called Brahmalo***ka, is the most advanced planet in our galaxy**). Nor does he desire the eight material perfections conferred by the practice of astanga-yoga, nor does he aspire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. However, even without desiring them, the devotee enjoys all these blessings, even in this very life.

Dear mother, devotees who enjoy these divine perfections are never deprived of them; no weapon or even the passage of time can destroy them. Because My devotees see in Me their friend, their relative, their son, their preceptor, their

benefactor and their supreme divinity, they cannot at any time be separated from what they possess.

Thus, worshipping Me, the omnipresent Lord of the universe, through unwavering devotional service, the devotee renounces all desire to reach the heavenly planets or to be happy in this world, with wealth, children, cattle, house or any other object related to the body. Such a one I take beyond birth and death.

He who seeks refuge elsewhere than in Me can never get rid of the terrible fear of death and rebirth, for I am the almighty Lord, the original source of all creation, and the Super soul, the Soul of all souls.

It is because of My supremacy, out of fear of Me, that the wind blows. Out of fear of Me, the sun shines and Indra, the master of clouds, sends down rain. Out of fear of Me, fire burns and death goes, taking its due.

Spiritualists enriched with spiritual knowledge and renunciation, and absorbed in devotional service for their eternal benefit, seek shelter at My lotus feet; and since I am the Lord, they qualify to enter My divine kingdom without any fear.

Therefore, men whose thoughts are fixed on the Lord practice devotional service intensively. This is the only way to attain the ultimate perfection of existence.

The Origin of the Constituents of Material Creation.

Lord Kapila continues:

O Mother, I shall now describe to you the various divisions of the Absolute Truth; knowing them, every man is free from the influence of the three gunas.

Knowledge is the ultimate perfection of spiritual realization. And I shall explain to you that knowledge, by which the knots of attachment to the material universe are cut.

The Supreme Lord is the Supreme Soul, and His existence is beginningless. He transcends the three gunas and lives beyond the material universe. He can be perceived everywhere, for He radiates His own light, and by His own effulgence He sustains the entire creation.

As a pastime, this same Supreme Lord, the greatest of the great, assumes the manifestation of the subtle material energy, which is covered by the three gunas and which remains linked with Visnu.

Diversified by the effect of its three attributes, the material nature generates the forms of living beings, who, seeing this, fall under the influence of the illusory energy which veils their knowledge.

Due to his forgetfulness, the distinct being, of spiritual nature, accepts as his field of action the field of influence of the material energy, and falsely attributes to his own being the acts which he performs under this influence.

Material consciousness is at the origin of conditioned existence, within which the material energy imposes a thousand conditions on the distinct being. Although the spirit soul does not itself act and transcends such activities, it nevertheless becomes affected by this form of existence.

Material nature is the origin of the material body and senses of the conditioned soul and of the celestial beings who direct the senses. This is well known to men of knowledge. As for the feelings of happiness and distress experienced by the soul, which by nature transcends matter, they arise from the spiritual soul itself.

The eternal combination of the three gunas in the unmanifested state represents the origin of the manifested state and is called pradhana (***pradhana***: *the total material energy in the unmanifested state*). When it becomes manifest, it is called prakrti (***Prakrti***: *the total material energy better known in its form of material nature, the primordial nature*).

The totality of the material elements, namely the five gross elements, the five subtle elements, the four internal senses, the five senses for acquiring knowledge and the five organs of action, are known as pradhana.

The five gross elements are earth, water, fire, air and ether. As for the five subtle elements, they are smell, taste, colour, object of touch and sound.

The senses for acquiring knowledge and the organs of action in turn form a total of ten elements; These are hearing, touch, sight and smell, then the organ of speech, the limbs allowing action and those used for movement, as well as the organs of reproduction and evacuation.

The internal, subtle senses manifest themselves in four ways, in the form of the mind, intelligence, false ego (***False ego***: *the false ego or material ego, is the force that binds the incarnate being to material existence. It is the force that pushes the incarnate being to identify with his body, to want to dominate matter and material nature, and to monopolize all material possessions*) and defiled consciousness. They can only be distinguished by their respective functions, which have various characteristic features.

All these elements constitute the spiritual being endowed with attributes. And the element that makes them combine with each other, that is to say time, is considered as the twenty-fifth in the list.

The influence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is felt through the time factor which arouses the fear of death in the soul misled by the false ego (***False ego***: *the false ego or material ego, is the force which chains the incarnate being to material existence. It is the force which pushes the incarnate being to identify with his body, to*

want to dominate matter and material nature, and to monopolize all material possessions), in contact with material nature.

My dear mother, you the daughter of Svayambhuva Manu, know that the time factor, as I have described it, represents the Supreme Lord, from whom creation proceeds by setting in motion the unmanifested or neutral nature.

Through the unfolding of His potencies, the Supreme Lord adjusts all these different elements, dwelling Himself within all that is as the Supersoul, and outside as time.

After the Supreme Lord has introduced His internal potency into the bosom of material nature, the material nature releases the all-embracing intelligence of the cosmos, known as Hiranmaya. All this takes place within the material energy when it is set in motion under the influence of the destiny of the conditioned souls.

Then, after manifesting the variety, the resplendent mahat-tattva (*the global material energy composing the cosmic manifestation*) which contains within itself all the galaxies, which is at the origin of all cosmic manifestations and which resists the action of time at the moment of annihilation, devours the darkness which covered its brilliance at the moment of dissolution.

Virtue, that stage where the Divine Person is clearly and soberly perceived and which is generally referred to as Vasudeva, or consciousness, then becomes manifest in the universal form.

After the manifestation of the universal form, these characteristics appear together. Just as pure water, which has not mixed with earth, is sweet, clear and limpid, pure consciousness is perfectly serene, crystalline and unadulterated.

The material ego proceeds from the universal form, itself issued from the self-energy of the Lord. This false ego is found to be fundamentally endowed with three powers of action, according to virtue, passion and ignorance; and it is from these three forms of material ego that the mind, the senses of perception, the organs of action and the gross elements manifest.

The triple ahankara, which represents the source of the gross elements, the senses and the mind, is identical with these because it is their origin. It is also known under the name of Sankarsana, which is none other than Sri Ananta himself with His thousand heads.

This false ego is defined as the doer, as the instrument and as the effect. It is also called serene, active or inert according to whether it is influenced by virtue, passion or ignorance.

From the false ego in virtue another transformation occurs, from which the mind is born; and it is thoughts and reflections that awaken desires.

The mind of the conditioned being is known as Aniruddha, the ultimate master of the senses. It has a dark blue Form, which makes It resemble an autumnal lotus. Spiritualists are gradually discovering It.

From the transformation of the false ego in passion, O virtuous woman, intelligence is born, which has the function of helping to determine the nature of the objects perceived and of assisting the senses.

Doubt, right and wrong understanding, memory and sleep, as determined by their different functions, constitute the proper features of intelligence.

Egoism in passion produces two kinds of senses: those enabling the acquisition of knowledge and those enabling action. The former depend on intelligence, and the latter on vital energy.

When the sexual energy of the Supreme Lord acts upon the egoism marked by ignorance, the subtle element of sound becomes manifest, and from sound come ethereal space and hearing.

Sages who possess true knowledge define sound as that which expresses the meaning of a thing, and that which indicates the presence of a speaker invisible to our eyes; sound constitutes the subtle form of ether.

The movements and characteristics of ether can be seen as factors of accommodation of the internal and external habitats of all living beings, namely, the fields of action of the vital breath, the senses and the mind.

From the ethereal existence, which proceeds from sound, a new transformation takes place under the impulse of time which brings about the manifestation of a subtle element composed of the objects of touch, and from there, that of air and touch properly speaking.

Softness and hardness, as well as warmth and coldness, are the distinctive attributes of the object of touch, which represents the subtle form of air.

The action of air is manifested by different movements, by amalgamating, by allowing the perception of objects of sound as well as other sensory perceptions, and by ensuring the proper functioning of all the other senses.

Through the interaction of air and tactile sensations, the being receives different forms according to its destiny. From the evolution of these forms arises fire, and the eyes can therefore distinguish various forms and colors.

My dear mother, the form is characterized by its dimension, its quality and its individuality. The form of fire is appreciated through its radiation.

Fire is therefore perceived through its light, but also through its capacity to cook food as well as to digest it, to overcome the cold, to evaporate liquids and to arouse hunger and thirst like eating and drinking.

Under the action of fire and visual sensations, the subtle element that is flavor develops according to a higher design. Then comes the taste from which water and the tongue proceed, which perceives flavors.

Water is characterized by the following properties: it moistens other elements, coagulates various substances, provides satisfaction, maintains life, softens certain things, drives away heat, constantly feeds watercourses and refreshes by quenching thirst.

By the interaction of water and the perception of taste, and according to a higher purpose, the subtle element of smell becomes manifest. From this then come the earth and the sense of smell, by which we can sense the various perfumes of the earth.

The smell, although of one essence, becomes diverse, sometimes mixed, sometimes repulsive and sometimes fragrant, sweet, strong or sour, etc., according to the proportions in which the substances from which it emanates are combined.

The characteristics proper to the functions of the earth can be perceived by fashioning forms of the Supreme Eternal, by erecting places of residence, by making pots to hold water, etc. In other words, the earth serves as a support for all the elements.

Hearing is the sense whose object of perception is sound, and touch, that whose object of perception is that which is touched.

Sight is the sense whose object of perception is form, which characterizes fire. Taste, on the other hand, has as its object of perception flavor, which is the mark of water. Finally, smell has as its object of perception odor, which belongs specifically to the earth.

Since the cause can be seen through the effect, the characteristics of the former are visible in the latter. That is why the characteristics of all the elements exist in the earth alone.

While all these elements had not yet combined, the Supreme Lord, the origin of creation, entered the universe, followed by time, action and the three gunas, with the total material energy, which has seven divisions.

Then, from these seven principles, set in motion and united with each other by the presence of the Lord, arose an egg devoid of intelligence, from which appeared the Cosmic Being in all His glory.

This universal egg, that is, the universe in the form of an egg, corresponds to the manifestation of material energy. The layers of water, air, fire, ether, false ego and mahat-tattva (*The primordial principle of matter manifesting material nature, the ultimate totality of matter. Total material energy, composing the cosmic manifestation. Corresponds to the material cosmos*) which cover it are each ten times thicker than the previous one, and the last layer is enveloped by the total material energy, in the unmanifested state. Inside this egg is the universal form of Sri Hari, which contains as so many parts of His Body the fourteen planetary systems.

The Sovereign Lord, the universal form, settled in that golden egg which rested on the water, and divided it into several parts.

First, he manifested a mouth, then came the organ of speech, and with it the celestial being of fire who governs this organ. Then appeared two nostrils, and in them the sense of smell, as well as the vital air.

After smell manifested the celestial being of wind, who governs this sense. Then, two eyes appeared on the universal form, and in them sight. Following this sense appeared the celestial being of the Sun, who governs it. Then appeared two ears, and in them hearing, with the celestial beings governing the directions.

Then manifested the skin of the universal form of the Lord, and with it the hair, the moustache and the beard. After which all the medicinal herbs and drugs became manifest, then the genitals.

The skin is the seat of tactile sensations, and the celestial beings that direct the production of medicinal herbs and drugs also govern touch.

Then came the seminal fluid (*which allows procreation*) and the celestial being that governs the waters. After that came an anus, evacuation organs, and the celestial being of death, feared throughout the galaxy.

Then appeared the two hands of the universal form of the Lord, and with them the power of taking up and letting go of objects; then came Indra. Then came the legs, and with them the ability to move; then appeared Sri Visnu.

The celestial being governing the hands is Indra, and the one who directs the movement is Visnu, the Supreme Personality, who appeared with the manifestation of the legs of the universal form.

Then appeared the veins of the universal form, and with them the red corpuscles, or blood. These were succeeded by the rivers (*the celestial beings governing the veins*), and then the abdomen of the universal form.

Then came the sensations of hunger and thirst, followed by the oceans. Then appeared the heart of the universal form, and after it the mind.

After the mind came the moon, then intelligence, and then Brahma. Then appeared the false ego, Siva, consciousness and finally the celestial being governing it.

When the celestial beings and the divinities governing the various senses were thus manifested, they wanted to awaken the source of their existence. But not succeeding, they returned one after the other to the body of the universal form, to awaken it.

The celestial being of fire entered His mouth with the organ of speech, but the universal form did not awaken. Then the celestial being of wind entered His nostrils with the sense of smell, but the universal form still refused to awaken.

The celestial beings who were masters of skin, herbs and aromatic plants entered the skin of the universal form with the hairs covering the body, but the cosmic Being still did not awaken. The celestial being of water entered His reproductive organ with the faculty of procreation, without succeeding in awakening Him either.

The celestial being of death entered His anus with the power of evacuation, but this also did not succeed in stimulating the universal form. The celestial being Indra then entered His hands with the power of taking and letting go of objects, but He still did not get up.

Sri Visnu entered His feet with the power of movement, but in vain. The rivers entered His blood vessels with the blood and its power of circulation, but still the Cosmic Being did not move.

The ocean entered His belly with hunger and thirst, but the Cosmic Being refused even then to rise. Then the celestial being of the Moon entered His heart with the mind, but still in vain.

Brahma also entered His heart with intelligence, but without any more success in convincing the Cosmic Being to rise. And Rudra himself came to His heart with the false ego, but without any more success.

However, when the inner master, the celestial being governing consciousness, entered the heart with reason, at that very moment the Cosmic Being rose from the causal waters.

When a man is asleep, all his material powers, the vital energy, the senses of perception, the senses of action, the mind and intelligence, cannot awaken him. **Only the Supreme Soul can help him.**

Therefore, through devotion, detachment and the development of spiritual knowledge acquired by concentrating on devotional service, one has to meditate on this Supreme Soul present in this same body although simultaneously separated from it.

The Lord teaches us how to distinguish between material and spiritual energy and then lets us know how to act as a spiritual being.

Kapila, the Supreme Lord, continues:

When the living entity, having realized his immutable position and claiming to possess nothing, ceases to be affected by the gunas, he remains aloof from material influences, even though he lives in a material body, just as the sun remains detached from its image on water.

The soul which is under the influence of material nature and false ego and is identified with its body, becomes absorbed in material activities and, under the influence of false ego, believes itself to be the possessor of everything around it.

Thus, the conditioned soul transmigrates through different species, sometimes higher, sometimes lower, by the very fact of its contact with the attributes of material nature. Unless it is liberated from its material occupations, it has to accept this position because of its sinful acts.

Although the soul is transcendent to material existence, its existence in this world continues endlessly because of its mind of domination over nature. As in a dream, it experiences all kinds of unpleasantness.

It is the duty of every conditioned soul to direct its impure consciousness, now attached to material pleasure, towards devotional service, by applying itself to it with great seriousness and detachment. Thus, the mind and consciousness will be perfectly controlled.

One should strengthen one's faith by practicing self-control through yoga, and raise oneself to the level of pure and unadulterated devotional service by chanting and listening to My glories.

When acting in devotional service, one should view all beings with one eye, without harboring hostility toward anyone, but without having any intimate relationship. In addition, one should observe the vow of continence, be grave, perform one's eternal duties, and offer the fruits to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

As for his income, the devotee should be satisfied with what he can earn without great difficulty. He should also not eat more than is necessary. He should live in a secluded place and always be thoughtful, serene, benevolent, compassionate and aware of his true self.

One should perfect one's vision through the knowledge of matter and spirit, and avoid vainly identifying oneself with the body at the risk of being attracted by material affinities.

One should establish oneself on the spiritual plane, beyond the different levels of material consciousness, and remain free from all other conceptions of existence. Thus, freeing oneself from the false ego, one should learn to see one's own being as one sees the sun in the sky.

The liberated soul realizes the Absolute Supreme Lord, who transcends everything and who manifests Himself even within the false ego, in reflected form. He represents the support of the material cause and penetrates into all things. It is absolute, unique, and constitutes the eyes of illusory energy.

The presence of the Supreme Lord can be perceived just as the sun is perceived, first through its image on water, then through its reflection on the wall of a room, the sun itself never leaving the firmament.

The realized soul is thus reflected in the three forms of the false ego, then in the body, the senses and the mind.

Although the devotee may seem totally merged in the five material elements, the objects of enjoyment, the material senses, the mind and intelligence, he must be considered awakened and free from the false ego.

The living entity can clearly perceive that he exists as a real observer, but because of the disappearance of the ego in the state of deep sleep, he thinks himself lost, just as a man in despair at having lost his fortune considers himself annihilated.

When, through mature understanding of things, one comes to realize his own identity, the situation to which he has submitted under the influence of the false ego becomes manifest to his eyes.

Liberation can be attained by earnestly performing devotional service and thus listening for a long time to the utterances concerning Me or emanating from Me. One who thus discharges his prescribed duties will not suffer any repercussions for any of his actions, and will find himself liberated from material defilement.

This devotional service should be vigorously performed in perfect knowledge and with spiritual vision. One should be firmly renounced and practice austerity and yoga so as to establish oneself steadily in inner absorption.

The influence of material nature has covered the distinct being, thus plunging him as into a perpetual blazing fire. But by the earnest practice of devotional service, this influence can be dispelled, just as the pieces of wood used to light a fire are themselves consumed by it.

Abandoning his desire to dominate material nature by realizing the wrong nature of this desire, the living being becomes independent and stands in his own glory.

He who is dreaming and whose consciousness is almost entirely veiled, may see many dire signs, but in the waking state, in full consciousness, these same phenomena cannot disturb him.

The influence of material nature cannot harm an enlightened being, even if he indulges in material acts, because he knows the truth about the Absolute, and his mind remains fixed on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

When a person thus devotes himself to devotional service and spiritual realization for many years, in many lifetimes, he becomes quite unwilling to enjoy the pleasures offered by any material planet, even the highest one, known as Brahmaloaka; his consciousness then becomes fully developed.

My devotee verily attains spiritual realization through My infinite and causeless grace, and thus, freed from all doubt, he marches steadily towards his own destination, which is directly under the protection of My spiritual energy, all pure bliss. This is the ultimate perfection that the individual must attain. After leaving his material body, the spiritualist therefore returns to that absolute abode, never to return to this world.

When the attention of the perfect spiritualist is no longer captivated by the feats that supernatural powers, these manifestations of external energy, allow to be accomplished, his progress towards Me knows no limits, so much so that death has no more hold on him.

The Lord teaches us the path of yoga, which is the concentration of the mind. By this practice, one progresses step by step on the path of the Absolute Truth.

The Supreme Lord, Kapila said:

My dear mother, daughter of a king, I shall now explain to you the path of yoga, which is the concentration of the mind. By this practice, one becomes joyful and progresses step by step on the path of the Absolute Truth.

One should perform one's prescribed duties to the best of one's ability and avoid those that are not assigned to one. One should be satisfied with what comes by the grace of the Lord, and worship the lotus feet of a spiritual master.

One should stop indulging in conventional religious practices and be attracted only by those that lead to salvation. One should eat very frugally and always live in solitude so as to attain the highest perfection of existence.

One should practice non-violence and truthfulness, not steal, and possess only what is necessary for one's subsistence. In addition, one should abstain from sexual activity, practice austerity and purity, study the Vedas, and worship the Supreme Form of Godhead, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

One should observe silence, acquire constancy through the practice of the various yoga postures, control the circulation of the vital air, detach the senses from their objects, and then concentrate the mind on the heart.

Samadhi (or samadhana, or concentration, or meditation) of the mind is the act of fixing the vital breath and thought on one of the six circles in which the vital breath circulates within the body, and thus concentrating the mind on the transcendent pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

Through these practices, or by any other recognized path, one must achieve control over the unbridled mind, which is defiled by matter and always yields to the lure of material pleasure, and thus establish oneself in the thought of the Sovereign Lord.

After mastering the mind and the sitting postures, one must arrange a seat in a secluded and sanctified place, sit on it in an easy posture, keep the body erect, and practice control of breathing.

The spiritualist should free the passage of the vital breath by breathing in the following manner: he should first inhale very deeply, then hold his breath, and finally exhale. Or, by reversing the process, he can first exhale, then hold the air outside, and finally inhale. This practice is intended to acquire stability of mind and to free it from all external disturbances.

Spiritualists who practice these breathing exercises soon find themselves freed from all mental disturbances, just as gold is freed from all impurities when it is immersed in fire and fanned.

By the practice of pranayama (*practice of breathing exercises*), one can eliminate the defilement of one's physiological condition, and by concentration of the mind, one can free oneself from all sinful acts. By the discipline of the senses, one can escape contact with matter, and by meditation on God, the Sovereign Person, one can free oneself from the hold of the three gunas, the source of material attachment.

When the mind is thus purified by this practice of yoga, one should then focus on the tip of the nose, with half-closed eyes, and contemplate the Form of the Supreme Lord.

The Supreme Lord shows a smiling, lotus-like face, with eyes of reddish hues like the interior of a lotus, and a complexion dark like the petals of the blue lotus. In three of His hands He carries a conch, a discus and a mace.

A silken cloth of the bright yellow of the lotus filaments is girded about His loins. On His chest He wears the Srivatsa, a tuft of white hair, and the resplendent Kaustubha jewel hangs around His neck.

He also wears around His neck a garland of beautiful wild flowers, around which buzzes a swarm of bees intoxicated by its sweet fragrance. He also adorns Him with a beautiful pearl necklace, a crown and pairs of armlets, bracelets and ankle rings.

A girdle is encircled around His loins and hips, and He stands on the lotus of His devotee's heart. His appearance is most charming, and His serene bearing delights the eyes and souls of the devotees who contemplate Him.

The Lord is eternally blessed with indescribable beauty, and He is worthy of the worship of the inhabitants of all the planets. His youth is eternal, and He is ever eager to bestow His blessings on His devotees.

The glories of the Lord are always worth singing, for they enhance the glories of His devotees. Therefore, one should meditate on the Supreme Lord as well as on His devotees; one should meditate on His eternal Form until the mind becomes stable.

Thus constantly absorbed in devotional service, the spiritualist sees the Lord standing, reclining, sitting before him or moving about, for His pastimes are always wonderful and attractive.

When fixing his mind on the eternal Form of the Lord, the spiritualist should not gaze upon the whole of His Body, but should rather focus his thoughts on each separate part of His Form.

The devotee should first concentrate his mind on the lotus feet of the Lord, marked with the signs of the lightning, the mahout's staff, the banner and the lotus flower. The splendour of their nails, like wonderful rubies, recalls the curved line of the moon and dispels the dense darkness of the heart.

Already blessed, Siva is all the more blessed because he carries on his head the sacred waters of the Ganges, which originates from the water that has bathed the lotus feet of the Lord. Now, these feet act like lightning, which shatters with its repeated blows the mountain of sins accumulated in the mind of the meditating devotee. Therefore, one should meditate for a long time on the lotus feet of the Lord.

The spiritualist should also fix in his heart the activities of Laksmi, the goddess of fortune, who receives the worship of all celestial beings and who is the mother of Brahma, the supreme being in this world. She can always be seen massaging the legs and thighs of the Absolute Lord, thus serving Him with care.

The spiritualist should then absorb his mind in meditation on the thighs of the Supreme Lord, which represent the source of all energy. These are of a snowy blue, comparable to the luster of the flax flower, and they appear even more graceful when the Lord is mounted on Garuda. The spiritualist should also contemplate His rounded hips, which are girded with a belt resting on the exquisite yellow silk cloth reaching down to His ankles.

Then the spiritualist should meditate on the navel of the Lord, situated in the centre of His abdomen and similar to the moon. From this navel, which represents the foundation of the entire universe, grows the lotus stem which contains all the different planetary systems, and whose flower serves as the residence of Brahma, the first created being. Similarly, he should concentrate his attention on the Lord's nipples, which are like a pair of lovely emeralds and are tinged with opalescent hues by the luster emanating from the necklaces of milky pearls adorning His chest.

The spiritualist should then meditate on the chest of the Supreme Lord, the abode of Goddess Maha-Laksmi; the Lord's chest is the source of all transcendent bliss for the mind and of complete satisfaction for the eyes. He should then engrave in his mind

the neck of the Lord, whom the entire universe worships; His neck enhances the beauty of the Kaustubha jewel adorning His chest.

The spiritualist should also meditate on the four arms of the Lord, which represent the source of all the powers of the celestial beings who govern the various functions of material nature. He should then concentrate on the glittering ornaments of His arms, which have been polished by the gyratory motion of Mount Mandara. He should also duly contemplate the Lord's thousand-rayed disc, the sudarsana-cakra, resplendent with dazzling brilliance, and His swan-like conch in the palm of His lotus hand.

The spiritualist should meditate on the mace of the Lord, which is called Kaumodaki and is very dear to Him. This mace crushes the ever-warlike asura warriors (*unbelievers, demoniac miscreants*), and is stained with their blood. He should also meditate on the beautiful garland hanging from the Lord's neck, which is constantly surrounded by sweetly buzzing bees. He should further meditate on the pearl necklace of the Lord, which is considered to represent pure souls constantly absorbed in His service.

The spiritualist should then meditate on the expression of the lotus face of the Lord, which shows His various forms in this world out of compassion for His anxious devotees. His nose is prominent, and His crystal-clear cheeks are illuminated by the swaying of His glittering alligator-shaped earrings.

The spiritualist should then meditate on the radiant face of the Lord, framed by locks of hair and adorned by His lotus eyes and dancing eyebrows. A lotus surrounded by bees and a pair of fishes frolicking in the water would be ashamed of their grace before His.

The spiritualist should contemplate with deep devotion the compassionate glances that the Lord's eyes frequently cast, for they relieve the three dreadful forms of suffering that overwhelm His devotees. These same glances, accompanied by affectionate smiles, abound in grace.

Similarly, the spiritualist should meditate on the kind smile of the Lord, Sri Hari, which, for all who bow before Him, dries up the ocean of tears that flow from the most intense sorrows. He should also meditate on His arched eyebrows which manifest His internal power to charm the god of pleasure for the good of the wise.

With devotion full of love and affection, the spiritualist should meditate from the depths of his heart on the laughter of Sri Visnu; this laughter is so captivating that one can easily meditate on it, and when the Supreme Lord laughs thus, one can see His little teeth, like jasmine buds tinged pink by the splendor of His lips. Having devoted his mind to this meditation, the spiritualist should not desire to see anything else.

By following this path, the spiritualist gradually develops pure love for the Supreme Lord, Sri Hari. In the course of his progress on the path of devotional service, the hairs on his body come to stand on end with extreme joy, and he is bathed in a constant stream of tears occasioned by his intense love. Gradually, even his mind, which he has been using to attract the Lord just as a fish is attracted to a hook, renounces all material activities.

When the mind is thus perfectly freed from all material contamination and detached from all material objectives, it becomes like the flame of a lamp. It then becomes truly united with the mind of the Supreme Lord, and can be seen as one with Him, freed from the flow of combined material influences.

Now situated on the highest spiritual plane, the mind cuts itself off from all material reactions and establishes itself in its own glory, beyond all material conceptions of happiness and unhappiness. At that moment the spiritualist realizes the truth of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discovers that the joys and sorrows attributed to his own being, as well as their interactions, are in fact the work of the false ego alone, which is a product of ignorance.

Because he has regained his real identity, the perfectly realized soul is not conscious of the way the material body moves or acts, any more than a drunken man is conscious of whether he is clothed or not.

The Supreme Lord Himself now takes charge of the body as well as the senses of a liberated spiritualist, so that his functions are maintained until his destiny is fulfilled. The liberated devotee, who has awakened to his natural and eternal position and is thus established in Samadhi, the highest level of perfection of yoga, no longer sees the products of his material body as his own. He therefore regards the activities of that body as so many manifestations of a dream.

Out of deep affection for family and wealth, one will see a son or money as one's own, and out of affection for the material body, one will regard it in the same way. But in truth, just as one can understand that family and wealth are different from oneself, so the liberated being knows himself to be different from his body.

Fire itself is distinct from flames, sparks and smoke, although all these are intimately related because they are the product of the same burning wood.

The Supreme Lord, known as Param Brahman, is the real observer, and He is distinct from the individual soul, the individual spiritual being distinct from God, which is united with the senses, the five elements and consciousness.

The spiritualist should see in every manifestation one soul, for all that exists is the product of the different energies of the Supreme Being. Thus the devotee should see all beings with an equal eye, without any distinction. This is the realization of the Supreme Soul.

Just as fire manifests in different kinds of wood, the purely spiritual soul, under different conditions created by the gunas, manifests in different bodies.

Thus the spiritualist can become a realized soul after overcoming the insurmountable spell of maya which presents itself as both the cause and the effect of material manifestation and which therefore proves very difficult to know.

The Lord explains the devotional service offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Supreme Lord, Sri Kapila, says:

O noble woman, devotional service has many paths, depending on the characteristics of those who perform it.

The devotional service performed by a person who is envious, proud, violent, angry and separatist is in the nature of ignorance.

The separatist who worships murtis (*depictions of God in temples*) in the temple, driven by a desire for material enjoyment, fame and opulence, is said to be passionate.

When a devotee worships the Supreme Lord and offers the fruits of his actions to Him so as to free himself from the defilement of selfish action, his devotion is in the nature of virtue.

Pure and unadulterated devotional service is manifested when the mind of the devotee is instantly attracted to hear the Name and the spiritual and absolute Attributes of the Supreme Lord, who dwells in the heart of every being (*In His form as the Supreme Soul, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, resides in the hearts of all living beings. In the hearts of all celestial beings inhabiting the higher planets of our galaxy, in the hearts of all human beings, white, black, yellow, red, half-caste, in the hearts of all terrestrial and aquatic animals, and in the hearts of all plants, from the blade of grass to the trees. That is why God commands us not to harm anyone, no human being, no animal or any plant*). As the water of the Ganges naturally flows towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows freely towards the Lord.

The pure devotee does not accept any form of liberation, whether it is that of living on the same planet as the Lord, of enjoying the same opulence as the Lord, of living in the company of the Lord, of having the same bodily features as the Lord, or of becoming one with the Lord, even if these are offered to him by the Supreme Lord Himself.

One who attains the highest level of devotional service, as I have explained, can overcome the influence of the three gunas and establish himself, like the Lord, on the plane of transcendence.

The devotee should discharge his own duties, all glorious, without aspiring for any material gain. One should regularly, and without unnecessary violence, perform devotional activities.

The devotee should regularly contemplate My forms (*my representations*) in the temples, touch My lotus feet and offer prayers and articles of worship to Me. His vision should be one of renunciation and virtue, and he should regard all beings as spiritual entities.

The pure devotee should practice devotional service, showing the utmost respect to the spiritual master and the acaryas (*perfect spiritual masters who teach by example*). He should also show compassion towards the unfortunate and befriend his equals; but in all these acts he should abide by certain rules and control his senses.

The devotee should always endeavour to listen to spiritual discourse and employ his time in chanting the holy name of the Lord. He must always behave in a frank and direct manner, be simple and, although envying no one and on the contrary showing friendship towards all, he must avoid the company of beings who are not very evolved on the spiritual plane.

He who perfectly develops all these spiritual qualities and whose consciousness is thus completely purified, finds himself attracted as soon as he hears My Name or the description of My divine features.

Just as the chariot of air carries fragrance from its source and immediately captures the sense of smell, one who is constantly absorbed in devotional service, in Krishna consciousness, can capture the Supersoul, who is present in all places equally.

I, as the Supreme Soul, inhabit the heart of every being. If someone neglects this omnipresent Supreme Soul or disrespects it, while offering a worship to the murti (*in the form or representation of God*) in the temples, his devotion is only a sham.

He who worships the murti, the Form of God installed in the temple, not knowing that the Supreme Lord is also present in the heart of each being as a Supreme Soul, must be in ignorance; He is like a person who would offer oblations in ashes.

He who shows respect to Me but envies the body of others is a separatist, and because of his hostility towards other beings, he never knows peace of heart.

My dear mother, even if someone worships Me in My Murti Form, following the proper rites and articles, he can never please Me if he ignores My presence in every being.

While fulfilling his duties, man must worship the murti, the arca form (*the adorable form of the representation of the Supreme Lord in temples*), until he realizes My presence in his own heart as in that of all other beings (*of all other living beings, humans, animals and plants*).

Through the burning fire of death, I create a fearful fear in anyone who makes the slightest distinction between himself and other living beings on account of external differences.

Then, by charitable donations and a kind attitude, by behaving in a friendly manner and by viewing all living beings with equal eyes, one should ingratiate himself with Me, who lives in each living being as their very Soul.

Know, O blessed mother, that animate beings are superior to inanimate objects, and among them, those in whom the signs of life are manifested are more evolved. As for animals with developed consciousness, they are better than these, and above them are beings with developed sense perception.

Among beings with sense perception, those with developed sense of taste are higher than those with developed sense of touch. But higher than them are those who can smell, and higher still are those who can hear.

Beings who can distinguish different forms are superior to those who perceive sounds. Superior to them are those who have jaws furnished with teeth, and higher still are those who have many legs. But higher still are the four-footed animals, and above all, humans.

Among humans, those whose social organization is based on the qualities and activities of each are superior to others, and in such a society, intelligent men, who are called brahmanas (*sage scholars*), are the most evolved. But one must also distinguish as the best among the brahmanas those who have studied the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), and among them, he who knows the true purpose of the Vedas is the highest.

However, above the brahmana who knows the purpose of the Vedas is he who can dispel all doubts, and better than him still is he who adheres strictly to the Brahmanic principles. But even higher than this shines the soul freed from all material defilement. As for the pure devotee, who performs devotional service without expecting anything in return, he dominates them all.

Therefore, I see no one greater than he who has no interest other than Mine and who offers Me everything, his actions and even his life, without knowing any rest.

This perfect devotee offers his respects to all beings, because he has the firm conviction that the Supreme Lord has entered into the body of everyone as the Supreme Soul, the absolute master.

My dear mother, you the daughter of Manu (*the father of humanity*), the devotee who practices astanga yoga (*astanga yoga is a method of yoga in eight stages or activities, which enable one to attain the level of perfection of devotional service*) by thus applying the science of devotional service, attains the abode of the Supreme Lord through this devotional service alone.

That purusa (*attribute of Krishna, the "Supreme Beneficiary, the Supreme Lord"*) which the separate soul has to approach is the eternal form of Godhead, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, also known as Brahma (*the demiurge and ruler of our galaxy*) and Paramatma (*the Supersoul*). He is the Supreme Spiritual Being, and all His acts transcend matter.

Time, which causes the transformation of the various material manifestations, is another aspect of Godhead, the Supreme Personality, but it arouses fear in one who does not know Him as such.

The Supreme Lord, Sri Visnu, the beneficiary of all sacrifices, represents the element of time and the Master of masters. He is present in the heart of everyone, sustains all beings and causes one to annihilate another.

No one is particularly dear to the Supreme Lord, no one is His friend or His enemy; but He inspires those who do not forget Him and destroys others.

It is out of fear of God that the wind blows and the sun shines, out of fear of Him that the rain falls, and again out of fear of Him that the multitude of stars shine.

Out of fear of the Supreme Lord, trees, shrubs, herbs and various seasonal plants flower and bear fruit, each according to its season.

It is also out of fear of the Supreme that rivers flow and the ocean never crosses its limits. And always out of fear of Him, the fire burns and the earth, with its mountains, does not sink into the oceanic abyss of the universe.

Under the direction of the Supreme Lord, space gives shelter to all the planets, which in turn shelter the innumerable living entities. Also under His supreme direction, the entire universal body unfolds with its seven layers.

It is also out of fear of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that the deities responsible for the three gunas perform their functions of creation, maintenance and destruction; and everything in this world, the animate as well as the inanimate, is under their sway.

Eternal time has neither beginning nor end; it represents the Supreme Lord, the creator of this criminal world. It is He who determines the end of the phenomenal universe. He perpetuates the work of creation by bringing about the birth of one being through another; Likewise he dissolved the world, even to the point of annihilating Yamaraja himself, the lord of death.

Lord Kapila describes the harmful acts of self-interest, and reveals to us the formidable power of eternal time.

The Supreme Lord says:

Just as a mass of clouds knows not the force of the wind, so the person absorbed in material consciousness knows not the awesome power of time which carries him away.

Whatever the materialist produces with much torment and effort for so-called happiness, the Supreme Lord, in the form of time, destroys it; and therefore the conditioned soul becomes distressed.

The misguided materialist does not know that his body is temporary, and that the attraction to home, land, and wealth, which is connected with the body, is also ephemeral. Ignorance alone makes him believe that everything is lasting.

Whatever species he is born into, the distinct being finds a special form of satisfaction in it, so that he is never dissatisfied with his condition.

The conditioned being is content with his lot whatever species he belongs to. Misled by the influence of the illusory energy that covers his vision, he is not inclined to abandon his body, even if he lives in hell, because he delights in the basest pleasures.

That the being is thus content with his condition comes from a deep-rooted attachment to his body, his wife, his home, his children, his animals, his wealth, and his friends. Thus surrounded, the conditioned soul has a very high opinion of itself.

Although consumed at every moment by anxiety, such a fool never ceases to indulge in all sorts of evil acts for the sole purpose of maintaining what he believes to be his family and society, nourishing a hope that will never be realized.

He surrenders his heart and senses to a woman who exercises over him the deceptive charm of *maya* (*illusory energy*). He enjoys secret embraces in her company, exchanges words with her, and becomes enchanted by the sweet chatter of her young children.

Attached to his home, the married man leads a family life in which intrigues and diplomacy reign. Invariably spreading unhappiness around him, and subject to his desires for material enjoyment, he seeks, by his actions, only to remedy the sufferings which arise from his way of life; and if he succeeds in doing so, he believes himself happy.

He amasses money by committing acts of violence here and there, and this money he uses in the service of his family, himself eating only a small portion of the food thus purchased; and he goes to hell for those whom he has supported by these irregular ways.

When he suffers some setback in the course of his occupations, he strives again and again to improve his situation, and when he sees all his efforts thwarted and ruin strikes him, he then accepts money from others, invaded by excessive greed.

The unfortunate man, no longer able to support his family, loses all beauty. He now thinks only of his failure and is deeply afflicted.

Seeing that he is unable to provide for their needs, his wife and other members of his family no longer respect him as they once did, in the manner of miserly farmers who no longer give the same care to an old ox worn out by age.

Although he is now a burden to those whom he formerly supported, the foolish man still feels no aversion to life at home. Deformed by old age, he prepares himself to meet the ultimate death.

He thus remains at home like a domestic dog, and feeds on what is carelessly given to him. Weakened by many disorders, such as dyspepsia and loss of appetite, he ingests only very small portions of food, and becomes completely invalid, henceforth incapable of the slightest work.

Thus afflicted by the disease, his eyes bulge under the pressure of the air coming from inside his body and his glands become loaded with mucus. He breathes with great difficulty, and with each breath, a rattle escapes from his throat: "ghura-ghura".

He thus falls under the clutches of death and lies surrounded by his relatives and friends who are pouring out their lamentations; and although he desires to address them, he is unable to do so, for time has taken possession of him.

This man, who has devoted himself to supporting his family without any control over his senses, finally dies in great pain and seeing his relatives weeping around him. He dies in the most pathetic way, overwhelmed with suffering and deprived of consciousness.

When his last hour comes, he sees the envoys of the lord of death coming towards him, their eyes shot with anger. Overcome with fear, he urinates and defecates.

Just as a criminal is arrested by the police to undergo his punishment, the man who has criminally indulged in sensual pleasure is seized by the Yamadutas (*the agents of Yamaraja, the lord of death and judge of guilty beings*), who tie him by the neck with strong ropes and cover his subtle body (*his ethereal body*) to make him undergo severe punishment.

As Yamaraja's agents lead him away, he trembles in their hands, seized with fear. All along the way he travels, dogs bite him, and he remembers the sins of his life. He experiences terrible distress.

Under a burning sun, the criminal must travel paths of burning sand through burning forests. His tormentors whip his back when he can no longer walk; hunger and thirst overwhelm him, but unfortunately, this path offers neither water, nor shelter nor a place to rest.

Along this road which leads him to the abode of Yamaraja, he often falls down from fatigue, and sometimes sinks into unconsciousness, but is forced to rise. Thus he finds himself quickly brought into the presence of Yamaraja.

He has to cover ninety-nine thousand (99,000) yojanas (about 1,287,000 km) in two or three moments, after which he is immediately subjected to the tortures he deserves.

He is placed in the midst of burning pieces of wood and his limbs are delivered to the flames. In some cases he is forced to eat his own flesh, or else he is made to devour it by others.

His entrails are torn out by the dogs and vultures of hell while he is still alive to witness the scene; and serpents, scorpions, mosquitoes and other creatures bite and torment him.

His limbs are then torn from his body and torn to pieces by elephants. He is thrown from the top of mountains, and imprisoned under water or in a cave.

Men and women who have based their existence on the satisfaction of illicit carnal desires are placed in all sorts of horrible conditions in the hells called Tamisra, Andhatamisra and Raurava.

My dear mother, it is sometimes said that man experiences heaven or hell on this very planet, for hellish punishments are also visible there.

After leaving his body, the man who has provided for himself and his family by sinful acts, must undergo a life of hell, and with him his relatives.

Only, he joins the dark regions of hell after leaving his present body, and the money he has acquired by envying other beings is the price he pays to leave this world.

Thus, according to the design of the Sovereign Lord, the one who has only maintained his relatives is plunged into a hellish condition in order to suffer for his sinful acts, like a man who has lost his fortune.

Therefore, whoever yearns so intensely to maintain his family and relatives that he resorts only to illicit means, will certainly experience the darkest region of hell, known as Andhatamisra.

After passing through all the conditions of hellish suffering and experiencing in the natural order the lowest forms of animal life, the being having thus purged his faults is reborn again in a human form on this earth.

Lord Kapila describes the wanderings, journeys or movements that the embodied spirit soul that each of us truly is undertakes.

The Supreme Lord says:

Under the direction of the Supreme Lord and according to the fruit of His works, the living entity, the soul, is introduced into the womb of a woman through a drop of male seed to assume a particular body form.

On the first night, there is fusion of the sperm and the ovum, and on the fifth night, this germ becomes like a bubble. On the tenth night, this one develops and takes the form of a plum, after which it gradually transforms into a mass of flesh or an egg, as the case may be.

In one month the head appears, and after two months the hands, feet and other parts of the body take shape. At the end of the third month the fingers, toes, nails, hair, bones and skin appear, as well as the genitals and other orifices of the body, that is, the eyes, nostrils, ears, mouth and anus.

Four months after conception, the seven essential components of the body, namely chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bones, marrow and seminal fluid are created. At the end of the fifth month, hunger and thirst set in, and at the end of the sixth, the fetus, imprisoned in the amniotic cavity, begins to move on the right side of the abdomen.

When the body is fully formed at the end of the sixth month, the child, if it is a boy, begins to move on the right side; if it is a girl, she will move on the left side.

Ensuring its nutrition from the food and drink ingested by the mother, the fetus grows and remains confined in this abominable receptacle of excrement and urine, where all kinds of worms proliferate.

Constantly bitten all over the body by the hungry worms also in the mother's womb, the delicate child suffers terribly and sinks into unconsciousness at every moment, subjected to this terrible condition.

Because the mother takes bitter, pungent, too salty or too sour food, the child's body is endlessly subject to almost intolerable pain.

Enclosed in the amniotic cavity and surrounded on the outside by the intestines, the child remains lying on one side of the abdomen, its head inclined towards its belly and its back and neck curved like a bow.

The child thus finds itself like a bird in a cage, without any freedom of movement. At this time, if it is fortunate, it will be able to recall all the difficulties encountered during its last hundred lives, and it will grieve pitifully. How could one find peace of mind in such a condition?

Endowed with consciousness from the seventh month after conception, the child is pushed down by the breaths that press the fetus during the weeks preceding delivery. Just like the worms also born from this infected abdominal cavity, it cannot remain in place.

The ten-month-old child harbors these desires even while still in its mother's womb. But while it is thus praising the Lord, the breath that promotes childbirth propels it upside down, in order to give birth to it.

Suddenly pushed by this breath, the child comes out with great difficulty, upside down, unable to breathe and deprived of memory due to the intense pain.

The child then falls to the ground, covered in excrement and blood, and moves like a worm from feces. It forgets its higher knowledge and begins to cry, bewitched by *maya (the illusory energy of the Lord)*.

After its exit from the womb, the child is abandoned to the care of people who are unable to understand what it wants and who nevertheless take care of it. Unable to refuse what is given to it, it finds itself in an undesirable situation.

Lying on a dirty bed, soaked with sweat and infested with germs, the poor child finds himself unable to scratch himself to relieve the itching that overwhelms him, let alone sit up, stand up, or even move.

All sorts of gnats, mosquitoes, bedbugs, and other insects bite the helpless baby whose skin is so tender, just as little worms bite a larger one. Deprived of his wisdom, the child weeps bitterly.

Thus the being passes through the period of childhood, subjected to various trying situations, then he reaches his early years, where he continues to suffer from the fact that he can never obtain what he covets. Thus, enveloped by ignorance, he is unhappy and anger consumes him.

As his body grows, the distinct being, in order to silence his soul, develops his pride and anger, which leads him to harbor hostility towards beings as lustful as himself.

Under the effect of this ignorance, the distinct being considers his material body, made up of five elements (*earth, water, fire, air, ether*), as his own being. Thus misguided, he considers ephemeral objects as his own, and his ignorance leads him to the darkest regions.

For the sake of his body, which only causes him trouble and follows him everywhere, because he is chained to ignorance and self-interested action, he indulges in various acts that lead him towards the repetition of birth and death.

Therefore, if the distinct being again takes the path of impiety, influenced by sensual individuals absorbed in the pleasures of the flesh and the tongue, he is sure to return to hell.

He then loses all probity, purity, compassion, gravity and spiritual intelligence, all reserve, all sense of austerity, fame, clemency, control of the mind, control of the senses, the favour of fortune and all other similar assets.

One should avoid contact with these foolish boors who are deprived of all knowledge of spiritual realization and who are like dogs that women make dance at their will.

Nothing bewitches and enslaves man more than the intercourse with women or that of men who have attachment to them.

Brahma himself was troubled by the charms of his daughter and pursued her without any shame in the form of a deer when she took the form of a doe.

Among all the beings created by Brahma, men, celestial beings and animals, none except the sage Narayana escapes the attraction of maya manifested in the form of a woman.

See then the tremendous Power of My maya, manifested through woman; by the mere movement of her eyebrows she can keep under her thumb even the greatest conquerors of the world.

He who has realized his spiritual identity in serving Me and wishes to attain the culmination of yoga, should never approach an attractive woman, for the scriptures teach that for a progressing devotee such a woman represents the threshold of hell.

Woman, created by God, embodies maya, and he who lives in contact with her, accepting her services, must know without doubt that he is plunging towards death, as into a well covered with grass.

The being who, because of his attachment to a woman in his past life, has now been given a feminine form, foolishly contemplates maya in the form of man, her husband, and sees in him the one who assures her wealth, children, home and so many other material advantages.

Thus the woman must see in her husband, as well as in her home and children, the instruments of her death, set in place by the external energy of the Lord, just as the sweet song of the hunter represents death for the deer.

According to the body granted to him, the materialistic being wanders from one planet to another, absorbing himself in the interested action of which he endlessly reaps the fruits.

According to his selfish acts, the conditioned being gets a suitable body, with a material mind and senses. Then the aftermath of these acts ends and that is called death; and when a new set of karmic reactions begins, then birth takes place.

When the eyes lose their power to perceive colours or forms due to some morbid affection of the optic nerve, vision dies, and the living being, the one who governs both the eye and the sight, loses his power of vision. In the same way, when the physical body, the place where sense perceptions arise, becomes incapable of perceiving anything, what is called death occurs. And the moment when one begins to regard the body as one's own self is called birth.

Therefore, no one should view death with horror, nor be caught up in defining the body as the soul, nor enjoy in an exaggerated manner the necessities of life. Realizing his true nature, the distinct being should evolve in this world, without attachment and with a fixed goal.

Equipped with right vision and strengthened by devotional service and by a pessimistic attitude towards the material ego, one should, by reason, relegate his body to the illusory world. In this way one can lose all interest in the material world.

The Lord explains what attachment to self-interested activities is, what its consequences are, and how to get rid of it.

The Supreme Lord says:

A man whose life is centered on the family obtains various material blessings by performing religious rituals, and thus fulfills his desires for wealth and sense pleasure. Again and again he repeats the same acts.

Because of their excessive attachment to sense pleasure, such living entities never have access to devotional service. Therefore, even if they perform various sacrifices and take great vows to please the celestial beings and the forefathers, they do not show any interest in Krsna consciousness, devotional service.

Such materialists, attracted by sense pleasures and devoted to ancestors and celestial beings, can be elevated to the moon, where they can drink an extract of the plant called soma, and then return to our planet.

All the planets inhabited by materialists, including those in the heavenly realm, such as the moon, are annihilated when the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Hari, reclines on His couch, formed by the serpent Ananta Sesa.

Those who possess intelligence and whose consciousness is purified, find themselves completely satisfied in Krishna consciousness. Free from the influences of material nature, they do not act for the sake of sense gratification; on the contrary, since they are established in their proper duty, they act as every man is expected to do.

The being who performs his duties in a spirit of detachment, without any sense of possession and devoid of false ego, finds, through a total purification of his consciousness, his original, natural and eternal condition; thus indulging in seemingly material acts, he can easily enter the kingdom of God.

Taking the path of illumination, these liberated souls join the Absolute Divine Person, master of the material and spiritual worlds and ultimate cause of their manifestation as well as their destruction.

Those who worship the emanation of the Sovereign Lord remain within the material universe until the end of two parardhas (*One parardha corresponds to half of the life of Brahma, that is: 155 trillion 70 trillion solar years. The lifespan of Brahma is 100*

years, or 311 trillion 40 trillion solar years. Brahma is currently in the second half of his life), when Brahma dies.

After having crossed the time covered by the three gunas, i.e. two parardhas, Brahma closes the chapter of the material universe, which is enveloped by successive layers of earth, water, air, fire, ether, mind, false ego, etc.; after which he returns to God.

Spiritualists who succeed in detaching themselves from the material universe by practicing breathing exercises and controlling the mind reach the planet of Brahma, at the outermost reaches of the universe. After leaving their bodies, they enter the body of Brahma, and when the latter is liberated and goes to join the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Brahman (*the Supreme Person*), these spiritualists return with him to the kingdom of Godhead.

So, My dear mother, seek shelter directly in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is in the heart of every living being, by practicing devotional service.

My dear mother, one may worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead out of special self-interest, but one should know that even celestial beings like Brahma, noble sages like Sanat-kumara, and venerable munis (*great sages*) like Marici, have to come back to this world at the time of creation. When the three attributes of material nature come into play, Brahma, who is the creator of the cosmic manifestation and who is perfectly mastered in Vedic knowledge, and the august sages who initiated the spiritual path and the practice of yoga, themselves come back to this world under the yoke of time. Through their selfless acts, they attain liberation and thus join the first manifestation of the purusa (*Supreme Beneficiary, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*); but at the time of creation, they come back here in the same forms as they had before, occupying the same positions.

Men who are too attached to the material world discharge their prescribed duties very well, and with remarkable faith, and perform them daily with marked attachment to their fruits.

These, animated by passion, are steeped in anxiety, and because their senses are not mastered, they constantly aspire to material pleasure. They venerate ancestors and work day and night to improve the economic situation of their family, their community or their nation.

These beings are called *traivargikas*, because their interest is in the three so-called paths of evolution. They oppose the Supreme Lord, who alone can relieve the conditioned souls, and show no interest in His Pastimes, which are worth hearing because they testify to His transcendent power.

The supreme will of God condemns these men. Because they reject the nectar of the Acts of the Supreme Lord, they are compared to pigs feeding on excrement. They renounce listening to the narrative of the spiritual and absolute Pastimes of the Lord, preferring instead the abominable actions of materialists.

These materialists obtain passage to the planet called Pitrloka by the path taken by the Sun in its southern course; but they then return to this planet, where they are reborn in their own family to resume the same self-interested actions from birth to the end of their life.

Thus, when the fruits of their acts of piety are exhausted, they fall from their position by the design of a higher will and return to earth, just as a person elevated to a high position sometimes falls suddenly.

My dear mother, I therefore advise you to seek shelter in the Supreme Lord, whose lotus feet are worthy of worship. Receive this instruction with love and devotion, for in this way you will be able to establish yourself in absolute devotional service.

By adopting Krishna consciousness and serving the Lord with devotion, one can progress in detachment and knowledge and in spiritual realization.

The mind of an advanced devotee remains balanced in the course of sensory activities and is beyond the pleasant as well as the unpleasant.

A pure devotee, through his spiritual intelligence, has equal vision and is free from all material contamination. He does not distinguish anything higher or lower, and he feels himself elevated to the absolute level where he attains qualitative equality with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead alone represents perfect spiritual and absolute knowledge; but according to different modes of understanding, He appears differently, either as the impersonal Brahman (*the Impersonal Supreme Spiritual Being*), or as the Paramatma (*the Supersoul*), and sometimes as the Supreme Personality of Godhead or the purusa Avatar (*the Supreme Avatar*).

The highest level of realization common to all spiritualists is total detachment from matter, which can be attained through different forms of yoga.

Those who oppose Transcendence seek to know the Supreme and Absolute Truth through various speculations based on their sense perceptions; due to their mistaken conceptions, everything seems relative to them.

From the all-embracing energy, the mahat-tattva, I have manifested the false ego, the three attributes of material nature, the five gross elements, the individual consciousness, the eleven senses and the material body. Similarly, the entire universe has come from Me, the Supreme Lord.

This perfect knowledge can be obtained by one who is already practicing devotional service with faith and constancy, in a spirit of complete detachment, and whose thoughts are always absorbed in the Supreme. He is not affected by contact with matter.

O reverent mother, I have now illuminated for you the path to understand the Absolute Truth, through which one can truly comprehend the affairs of matter and spirit and their relationship.

Philosophical inquiry culminates in the knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who, after mastering this science, becomes free from the influences of material nature, attains the stage of devotional service. Thus, whether through devotional service directly or through philosophical inquiry, the goal always remains the attainment of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The same object is perceived differently by different senses, because it has different characteristics. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is one, but He assumes different aspects according to different scriptural injunctions.

By self-interested action, sacrifice, charity, austerity, study of the various scriptures, philosophical enquiry, control of the mind and senses, acceptance of the order of renunciation and observance of one's duties according to the social group to which one belongs, by mastering the different phases of yoga, by performing devotional service and by the simultaneous attachment and detachment that characterize this path, and by mastering the science of spiritual realization and developing a strong sense of detachment, the man who is adept at assimilating the different paths of spirituality realizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is represented in the material universe as well as at the level of transcendence.

My dear mother, I have explained to you the practice of devotional service and its nature according to the four orders dividing society. I have also described to you how eternal time pursues living beings, although they cannot perceive it.

There are various forms of material existence according to the occupation in which the individual being engages under the influence of ignorance, or in forgetfulness of his true identity. Know, dear mother, that whoever falls into this forgetfulness is incapable of understanding to what extent his wanderings will lead him.

This teaching is not intended for the envious, the agnostic or the unwholesome; nor is it intended for hypocrites or those who are proud of their material possessions.

Nor should it be delivered to persons who are overly greedy and attached to family life, nor to abhaktas (*unbelieving materialists, demoniac disbelievers, and anyone who is ignorant of or refuses the principles of devotional service*) or to those who envy the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

Rather, the devotee who is full of faith and respectful of his spiritual master, free from envy, friendly to all living entities, and eager to render service with faith and sincerity should be instructed.

This message should be conveyed by the spiritual master to those for whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead is dearer than anything else, who are envious of no

one, who are perfectly purified and have detached themselves from everything alien to Krishna consciousness.

He who, even once, meditates upon Me with trust and affection, who hears and sings My glories, is assured of returning to God, to His original abode.

Dear mother, the path of spiritual realization that I have expounded to you presents no difficulty. You can easily follow it, and thereby attain liberation very quickly, even in this life.

O mother, true spiritualists do not fail to observe My instructions, as I have transmitted them to you. You may be assured that by rigorously following this path of spiritual realization, you will free yourself from the dreadful defilement of matter and will finally join Me. As for those beings who are ignorant of this path, that of devotional service, know, O My dear mother, that it is impossible for them to escape the cycle of death and rebirth.

After instructing His beloved mother, and us through her, the Supreme Lord, Sri Kapila, took leave of her and left His home, having completed His mission.