

Preface

A new Hindu enquiry into Self - Realization, enshrining Sri J. Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing as *sine qua non* and bridging the gulf between the *nascent and virgin* continent of *self* - Knowing and the *ancient and haloed* continent of Self - Realization.

The Ancient and Haloed Continent of Self - Realization

Though there is no difficulty in understanding the meaning and significance of *dharma*, the same cannot be said about the subtler sphere of *moksha*, for the latter term will not be intelligible in the simple way in which *dharma* has always been intelligible. This has called for a closer examination of both *dharma* and *moksha* in broader perspective, so as to prepare the ground for dealing with the *contrasting themes* of *self* - Knowing and Self - Realization. Obviously, these themes cannot be adequately dealt with at all, without going deeply into the intricacies of the spiritual life in the spheres of *dharma* and *moksha*.

For both mature seekers as well as *mumukshus* (seekers of *moksha*), who are on the *advaitic* path of Self-Realization (*Jnana yoga*); the *upanishads*, the many *moksha shastras* in the Hindu world, the works of Adi Sankaracharya and the vast corpus of literature sourced in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj - all of these, would have already clarified the significance of the *ancient and haloed* Self - Realization. Thus, in the present context, this theme does not really call for any further elucidation. 'Continent' came to mind naturally, in view of the vastness of the history and the corpus of this literature. It seems to convey the idea in a simple metaphoric way.

There is an unrecognized obstacle in the traditional path of Self - Realization. Though this obstacle is actually of Himalayan proportions, yet its virulence has never been exposed, muchless detected and brought under the scanner in any of the traditional *advaitic* and *Jnana yoga* teachings. Why should this be so? True *advaita* teachers, who are in the Self - Realized state, can never see what an insuperable obstacle this *self* can be, because it is an unreality and even fundamentally 'non-existent' in their state. The term *self* does not appear in the traditional *advaitic* literature. Instead *Jiva* is the term used there for signifying *self*. For our part, we shall use the two terms synonymously or interchangeably, and shall provide a justification for the same. But perceptive, honest and sincere seekers travelling in the terrain of *moksha*, in search of Self - Realization, will have no hesitation in admitting that the *self* is the greatest obstacle in their quest.

The mature seeker or *mumukshu* would qualify to pursue this Self - Realization, only if the *self* has fallen silent. Why do we say this? Only because, in truth, the *self* alone is the greatest obstacle to Self - Realization. *If there is no calming and silencing of the self, the inner thirst for moksha, does not even come into being in a natural manner.* Instead, when seekers hear it repeatedly said, that this is the highest goal, which all ought to tenaciously seek; they develop an idealistic aspiration at best, but this will not certainly be what is beloved to the heart, as the heart may still be engrossed in the pursuit of some material goal in the spheres of *artha and kama*.

The divergence between the idealistic aspiration on the one hand and the actual aspiration of the heart on the other is bound to create unending conflict in the spheres of *dharma and moksha*. This is the reason, inner purity and nobility, in the form of a calmed and silenced *self* is the true qualification for stepping into the terrain of *moksha*, in ‘search’ of Self - Realization.

Paradoxically, unlike the *mumukshu*, whose *self* has not fallen silent, the one whose *self* has truly fallen silent through the process of Krishnamurti’s *self* - Knowing, is unlikely to even seek the grandiose Self - Realization. He will be in the state of innocence, perfectly contented and the Hindu scriptures describe such a one as a *sthitha prajnya*, that is, one in whom, *prajnya* or the intelligence, sourced in *Parabrahma*, has become steady and stabilized. The awakening to the Divine, in the wake of the awakening of *prajnya* (intelligence), is something which happens, only after a seeker has crossed the important milestone of being a *sthitha prajnya*. The vast corpus of the *advaitic* and *Jnana yoga* literature will generally touch only the heart of the *sthitha prajnya*.

In contrast to the traditional Self - Realization, Krishnamurti’s *self* - Knowing, is really the only new and enigmatic term in the title. So this certainly calls for a *clear vindication*, and on two accounts. Firstly because, it is a relatively nascent teaching, which, rather than being in line with the traditional Hindu *moksha shastras*, *has taken an all together new course, in an entirely different direction, divergent from the traditional mainstream.* Secondly, we have to also vindicate how Krishnamurti’s *self* - Knowing has a profundity and potency that is commensurate with the corresponding virtues seen in traditional Self - Realization (*advaitic* path and *Jnana yoga*).

The Nascent and Virgin Continent of *self* - Knowing

The *nascent and virgin self* - Knowing, cannot be ignored, because ever since its birth, it has been intensely alive, almost like a continuous luminous thread, running through Krishnamurti’s life-long teachings, which had flowed without any break for seven significant decades. Moreover, because we have juxtaposed this *self* - Knowing beside the *ancient and haloed* Self - Realization, we have unwittingly created an enigma, which we will now be obliged to address and resolve.

What indeed is *self* - Knowing and how does it differ from Self - Realization, which is already familiar to us from the *advaitic* and *Jnana yoga* traditions? What is the difference between *self* & Self? The differentiation in the meanings of the two terms - notwithstanding the same word

and even the very same pronunciation, being used in both cases - probably alerts us to a rather paradoxical truth. In that, though both may have a mysterious relationship with each other; say, like belonging to the same genus; or, like the *self*, being a peculiar derivative of the Self; or, through being fundamentally inseparable; yet as the world of the *self* and the world of the Self, are so disparate and far-flung from each other, they may well be taken to be akin to the irreconcilable worlds of hell and heaven, which are clearly poles apart.

A number of mature seekers the world over, may have already slaked their spiritual thirst at the springs of Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing. Nevertheless these seekers may be small in number in comparison with multitudes of seekers who have been walking on the traditional *advaitic* and *Jnana yoga* path of Self - Realization; not only in our own age, but also over the bygone centuries and millennia. The corpus of Krishnamurti's writings, talks and dialogues too, spanning seven significant decades is also very vast, in likeness to a continent. For these reasons, the description, *nascent and virgin* continent of *self* - Knowing, came to mind. *Virgin*, because at this moment, some three decades after the passing away of Krishnamurti, this continent of *self* - Knowing, bears a likeness to the continent of America, the new world, just about a century or so, after Columbus had made a landfall on that continent.

The Dichotomy and Duality between *self* and Self

So, in one way, *self* and Self, may be inseparable and of a kindred kind, yet they are also unmistakably, like polar opposites. If we take this latter kind of a relationship alone of having diametrically opposite properties - where there is a sharp paradoxical contrast - the proper term for that would be a dichotomy. Thus in our thinking, we will be obliged to make allowance for the fact that while there is indeed a dichotomy between *self* and Self, we must not forget that there is also an underlying unity between the contrasting *self* and Self - under certain unusual conditions. The central problem in *moksha* therefore, seems to be, one of intelligently digesting the co-existence of this dichotomy and duality between *self* and Self, on the one hand; with the undeniable unity between the two on the other - under certain conditions. In later chapters, we will be exploring into the conditions under which *self* and Self, lose their dichotomy and duality and come through as the two legitimate faces of an *advaitic* reality.

The *Atma* of the Hindu *Moksha Shastras* is really the Self

The Hindu *Advaita* and *Jnana yoga* traditions, have a special Sanskrit term for the Self, namely, the *Atma*, or the inner Self, the Seeing, Illuminating and Knowing Light. *Though the Atma, has nothing whatever to do with our thoughts and feelings, nevertheless, It constitutes the deepest essence of who we are, not even as Divine souls, no; but rather as the Divine Light Itself.* This *Atma* then, is the Knowing and Seeing Light, which is itself the Self, behind the scenes, as it were.

What then is the *self*?

What however is this *self*, which appears to have received so much of importance in Krishnamurti's life-long work? How is this *self*, formed in the first place? Is it good or bad, for our material and spiritual life? While the spiritual life in *dharma*, often goes on with perfect ignorance of the difference between *self* and Self; that in the farther sphere of *moksha*, demands a clearer understanding of the dichotomy between the two, and the paradoxical unity between them, as well. At the very commencement of the spiritual journey in the terrain of *moksha*, one has the obvious, feeling that one is only the *self*; yet as the journey advances, one ultimately goes on to make the monumental discovery that far from being the *self*, which, one had all along imagined oneself to be; one is, on the contrary, the Self, which is Itself the Seeing Light, the imperishable *Atma*.

In a metaphoric sense, Self, which is the *Atma*, may be likened to the Sun, whereas, the puny *self*, may be taken to be nothing more than the *distorted reflection of this Sun in the troubled waters of man's consciousness*. The more agitated and sorrow-stricken this consciousness, the more 'twisted', even this *self* is going to become; for, after all, it is only an aberrant and distorted reflection and nothing superior with a truth-bearing power. If on the other hand, the waters of man's consciousness were to reach a state of purity and tranquility, then naturally the reflection of the Sun, in those limpid waters is also going to be faithful to the original source, the *Atma*. Under the condition of such tranquility then, the *self* which was formerly an untrustworthy and unfaithful reflection, now begins to faithfully reflect the Divine glories of the *Atmic* Sun.

There is one other rather tragic thing about traditional Self - Realization that comes to mind, which we will do well to discern. If a *mumukshu* or a mature seeker goes after Self - Realization on the traditional path, imagining it to be an achievement, like the other achievements in *artha and kama*; without the *self*, having undergone the actual calming and silencing, there is indeed the grave possibility of this *self*, sooner or later, *revelling in the thought* that it is one with *Brahman* and that it is the *Atma*! Such a grave possibility is not an anticipation, triggered by our fear or criticism of the traditional path; rather, it is an often occurring happening that is certainly not of any salutary value. It occurs, because in the traditional path of Self - Realization, this final truth alone is rammed in, a million times in an idealistic way, even when the *self* is still rather immature and has not brought to a natural finale, it's materialistic pursuits in *artha and kama*. It is a tragedy, because this reveling *self*, still may have its temptations in *artha and kama*, and more often than not, has not crossed the milestone of the *sthitha prajnya*. Its only merit, if we may call it that, is its conceptual understanding of *Atman* and *Brahman*. But we may legitimately ask, of what great use is this conceptual understanding, when the heart and intelligence (*prajnya*) have not been awakened at all?

Though we may not utter one word of criticism against such as idealistic aspiration of the *mumukshu's self*, because, this is quite in tune with how any *mumukshu* ought to progress on this path; what is however, unwholesome and undesirable in *moksha*, is the possibility that when the

mumukshu's self has not actually fallen silent, this *self*, through the above mentioned idealistic aspiration, may come to revel in the comforting idea that *moksha*, has after all been secured. Such a revelling in the sphere of *moksha*, sustains the *self*, rather than liquidates it.

From the point of view of the *mumukshus* who have been travelling on the austere path of Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing, this revelling of the *mumukshu's self*, will be patently seen as *self* - deception, rather than Self - Realization. The reason is that, the so-called Self - Realization is possible *only after the self has fallen silent*. If *self* - Knowing had preceded, then the seeking would have ended by itself, and such a thing as even 'seeking Self - Realization' would not even have come into existence in the first place. This possibility of *self* - deception, may convince us at least provisionally and intellectually, why Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing is really of paramount importance and *sine qua non* in the terrain of *moksha*.

In passing we may note the rather amusing fact, that much like the *self* and *Self*, which are related to each other through a dichotomy, as well as a paradoxical unity; even the *nascent and virgin self* - Knowing and the *ancient and haloed Self* - Realization, are related to each other through a dichotomy, as well as a paradoxical unity. Both being *moksha shastras*, certainly have common ground, so they enjoy an underlying unity, whereas, as they are also the *alpha* and the *omega* points in *dharma and moksha*, they also are seen to suffer from a concomitant dichotomy. With these preliminary observations, we are now ready to embark on a closer examination of the four Hindu goals of life, which constitute the matrix for this entire work. In later sections, after having adequately grasped *dharma and moksha*, we will be returning to re-examine this dichotomy and duality between *self* and *Self*, from newer points of view. This will enable us to understand why in the spiritual life, in the terrain of *moksha*, we would be far wiser to begin with the *nascent and virgin self* - Knowing, rather than with the *ancient and haloed Self* - Realization.

Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha: Hindu Purusharthas (Goals) of Life

As a preparation for understanding the intricacies of the spiritual life in the ancient Hindu world (as well as in our modern world) we are obliged to take a closer look at the four Hindu *purusharthas* (goals of man in life), *dharma, artha, kama and moksha*. One sees in the spiritual life, endless confusion and conflict between our so-called material aspirations on the one hand and the spiritual life of *dharma and moksha* on the other. *Only a clear understanding of these four purusharthas, taken as a whole, may be able to lay at rest the demon of this confusion and conflict.*

There are many nuances of meanings of *dharma*, depending upon the particular connotation we are looking at. In one sense, *dharma* is natural or social justice, social order or even social stability. And this has to be invariably rooted in social virtue. A collective manifestation of virtue in society at large must in turn only stand upon the ground of the moral order or moral virtue in the individual. *In ancient Hindu society, such an individual moral order*

had an undeniable spiritual foundation of profound depth. It arose from the individual's thought and feeling, word and behavior, being inspired by an insightful understanding and devotion either to the imperceptible inner Self, the *Atma*, or if this was too intangible, then, at least to an outer manifestation of that *Atma* as a worshipful deity - *which like 'God' is but an objectified form of that self same imperceptible Inner Self, the Atma.*

As a preparation for the actual realization of this *mature form of dharma in later life*; children were initially anchored to a spiritual master (*guru*) and spiritual teachings (*dharma*) and also naturally, to the ethical values that spring from the soil of such teachings. This was achieved through a well thought out humane system of spiritual-education, commencing at the tender age of seven. You may introspect at this stage to find out whether you were fortunate enough to have this foundational basis in *dharma* during your early years of upbringing, or as a compensation for the precious time lost in the early part of life, it was only in later life, that you finally succeeded in finding a *guru* and a *dharma*?

Importantly for the Hindus, *dharma* is also the very first of the four successive goals in human life. Etymologically it means, 'that which holds up or supports' (see glossary), namely, social justice, which in turn has to be supported by the individual moral order as well. The *rishis* (sages) used the effective model of *the metaphoric bull of dharma* to communicate what they had in mind regarding the different orders of social justice and moral stability that become possible in each successive age (*yuga*) of a civilization, as it inevitably succumbed to the natural process of the break-down, decline and fall of that civilization. They realized that this was anyhow bound to happen with the inexorable turning of the *cosmic wheel of time (kala chakra)*. *Kala* is cosmic time and *chakra* being wheel.

The Model of the Bull of *Dharma*

To secure deeper insights into the whole process of break-down, decline and fall of a civilization, they invoked this metaphoric bull in different postures of strength and stability (or of weakness and instability). When it would be strongest and possessing the utmost stability, it would naturally be standing firmly on all four legs. So, they called this *sathya yuga*, the age of *satya* (truth), when *dharma* was also expected to flourish at its maximum strength of 100%. As the civilization begins to break-down, the bull must be expected to develop some weakness, say in just one leg to begin with, so that in this age, characterized by a break-down, it could still be standing though somewhat less firmly, but at least on the remaining three strong legs. They identified this as *treta yuga*, the age characterized by only 75% *dharma* and 25% *adharma* (moral chaos or moral instability).

With the inevitable further aging of the civilization, which happens with the onset of decline, from among the bull's remaining three healthy legs, we may expect a still further weakening, say, again in one of the remaining three healthy legs. However, even in this condition

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of increased weakness, even if the worst comes to the worst, the bull would still be able to stand with some difficulty, at least on two of the four legs, both of which may be supposed to still possess their full strength. This they called *dwapara yuga*, the age characterized by 50% *dharma*, because the remainder has been eroded by the emergence of *adharma* (moral chaos).

As the process of break-down and decline continues further, the final fall is approached, and the bull may now be imagined to be standing most precariously, on just one leg only (suppose this acrobatic position were actually possible!), as in *kali yuga* the darkest of the four *yugas*, we expect to have only 25% *dharma*, but 75% *adharma*. We may also take note that the four legs of the bull of *dharma*, would correspond to such macroscopic manifestations of *dharma* as, ‘law and order’, ‘natural justice’ as dispensed by the small and big courts in that society, ‘ethical governance’ dispensed by the king or the government, ‘ethical values and conduct’ of the subjects, etc. In *kali yuga*, most of these pillars of *dharma* are so debilitated that they are close to tottering and falling.

Sri Yukteswar Giri's model for the chronology of <i>Yugas</i> , based on the Precessional Cycle of the Equinoxes of roughly 24,000 years [1].		
Descending Half of the Cycle	<i>Yuga</i>	Extent in Time
	<i>Satya</i>	11501 BCE to 6701 BCE - 4800 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Treta</i>	6701 BCE to 3101 BCE - 3600 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Dwapara</i>	3101 BCE to 701 BCE - 2400 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Kali</i>	701 BCE to 499 CE - 1200 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
Ascending Half of the Cycle	<i>Kali</i>	499 CE to 1699 CE - 1200 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Dwapara</i>	1699 CE to 4099 CE - 2400 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Treta</i>	4099 CE to 7699 CE - 3600 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>
	<i>Satya</i>	7699 CE to 12499 CE - 4800 years, inclusive of <i>sandhis</i>

According to Sri Yukteswar Giri, who was not only a fully Self-Realized Hindu master but also a *Vedic* astrologer, we are currently in the ascending cycle of the *dwapara yuga*. [1] See the chronology of the *yugas* as given by him, based on the precessional cycle of about 24, 000 Yrs of the Earth's axis of spin. Considering the timing of India's independence (1947) and the strong spiritual ingredients of *satyagraha*, *ahimsa* and a general Hindu ethos of *dharma* enkindled in the

consciousness of all Indians during the freedom struggle by Mahatma Gandhi, and the emergence of so many illustrious Indian spiritual luminaries in the 20th Century, it seems reasonable to suppose that this political and spiritual rebirth of India could have happened, only after she had emerged from the darkest period of *kali yuga*, and entered into the relatively more luminous age of *dwapara yuga*.

In the view of the *rishis*, after the completion of such a *maha yuga*, the cycle was deemed to start afresh all over again, through a cosmic purgation and cleansing of the massive debris of the fallen civilization, through the proverbial ‘flood’, or cosmic deluge (*pralaya*). It is important to note that the measure of *dharma* varied from one *yuga* (age) to the next, depending on which *yuga*, i.e., whether *sathya*, *treta*, *dwapara* or *kali*, one was actually looking at.

Dharma as the Hindu System of Spiritual Education

Being the very first goal of human life in traditional Hindu society, *dharma* was naturally centered on spiritual education and learning and the understanding of the Self (*Atma*), the Divine (*Brahman*) and the world on the basis of a *Vedic* and Divinity-centered world-view. In this way, Hindu male children studied for a period of fourteen years (up to their 21st year), at the feet of a competent spiritual master (*guru*) and his consort (*gurupatni*) in order to gain a firm foundation in *dharma*. Such a foundation in spiritual education (*dharma*) was intended to serve as the bedrock for the whole of the future life, which was soon scheduled to unfold, the moment the individual completes this stage of spiritual education and steps headlong into the seemingly irresistible, yet also what will later prove to be the treacherous waters of the mainstream of his adult life.

We may also mention in passing, a *Vedic* astrological insight, which may appear a little disturbing at first sight and which pertains to the question of whether *everyone in life* (at least the males of the species, as Hindus were thinking in the last five hundred years, in their fallen condition in *kali yuga*) *will be fortunate in securing a guru in life*? It is only when an individual has either a strong Jupiter in his birth chart, or a strong IXH (ninth house) or a good *Navamsha* DC (divisional chart) that the *guru* manifests in life (*sutra*). Sometimes, individuals with abundant blessings in the birth chart (*Rasi Chart* or RC), may also be their own *guru*, or the scriptures may serve the role of a *guru*. In some cases, where the above astrological variables, which point to a *guru* are afflicted, the *guru* may vanish from our life, or relationship with him may be fraught with much pain. In fact the possibilities are too numerous, but *Jyotisha* helps us to see what blessings are in store for us in this matter and what wrath of *Isvara*, we must be prepared to face, as a result of past life *karma*. You are already seeing here the brilliant light *Jyotisha* is beginning to throw on the enigmas and paradoxes of life.

After Dharma, came the Goals of Artha and Kama

The second and third goals (which always occur as a complementary pair) were called *artha* and *kama*. *Artha* was the seeking and subsequent attainment of wealth, status, professional

proficiency, *but through compliance with dharma*. Whereas, *kama* was the seeking and subsequent attainment of the aesthetic enjoyment of all aspects of human life, including all the sensory gratifications and even the aesthetic enjoyment of the whole of nature, the arts, music, dance, poetry, theatre, but *again only through the compliance with dharma*.

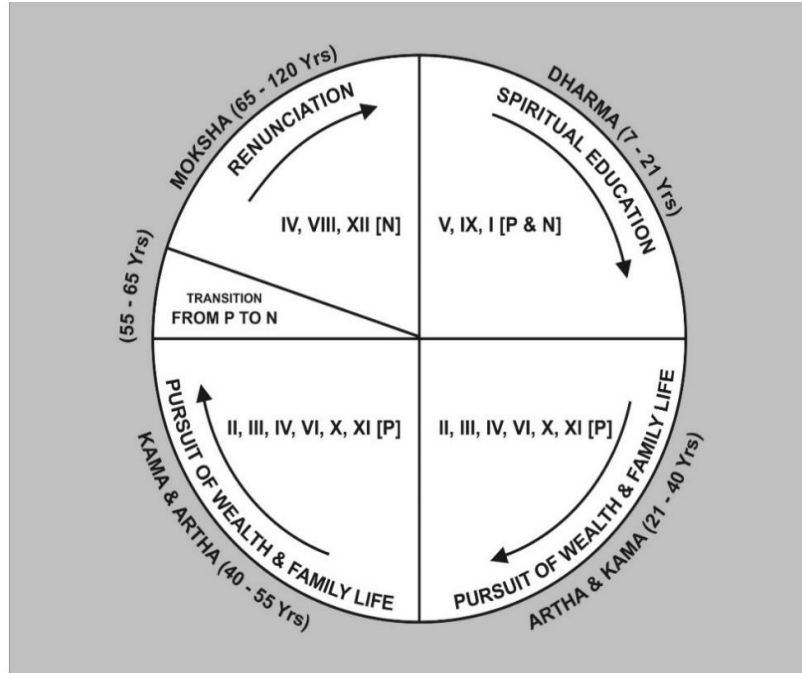
Artha and Kama vis-à-vis Dharma and Moksha

Before we venture to learn something about the esoteric notion of *moksha*, it might be good to begin by taking a bird's eye view of all the *purusharthas* (goals of human life) taken as a whole, namely, *dharma, artha, kama and moksha*. As we know, these represent the four successive goals and aspirations of human life in a traditional Hindu society. Understanding the ramifications of these four goals in that ancient society will give us a definitive advantage, in that it will awaken us to the importance of having to constantly bear in mind the sphere of life - whether *dharma, artha, kama* or *moksha* - in which the individual in question is moving at the time, before any specific question, astrological or otherwise, is being taken up for analysis.

We shall see that these four goals and pursuits, taken together, will give us a highly satisfying and all encompassing picture of human life. In Isvara's (see glossary) beautiful creation, as man is a miraculous synthesis of body, mind and spirit, it was recognized by ancient Hindus that if society had to have stability as well as ample scope for creativity, then the fulfillment of the appetites of body, mind, and spirit had to be provided for. In meeting these requirements, they took on the challenge of satisfying the appetites of body and mind first, and once this was over and done with, they turned to the subtler challenge of fulfilling the appetites of the spirit.

The former appetites constituted the spheres of life called *artha and kama*, whereas the appetites of the spirit were dealt with in the spiritually more advanced spheres of *dharma and moksha*. The ancient Hindus achieved this by blending the worldly aspect of our human nature which was brought to fulfillment and appeasement in the period of youth and middle age (*artha and kama* spheres), with the spiritual aspect of our human nature, which was brought to flower in the afternoon and evening of life (*dharma and moksha* spheres). *For the very reason that they accommodated the worldly as a prelude to the spiritual, ancient Hindu society had built into itself, ab initio, what may appropriately be called 'the completeness and fullness of life'.*

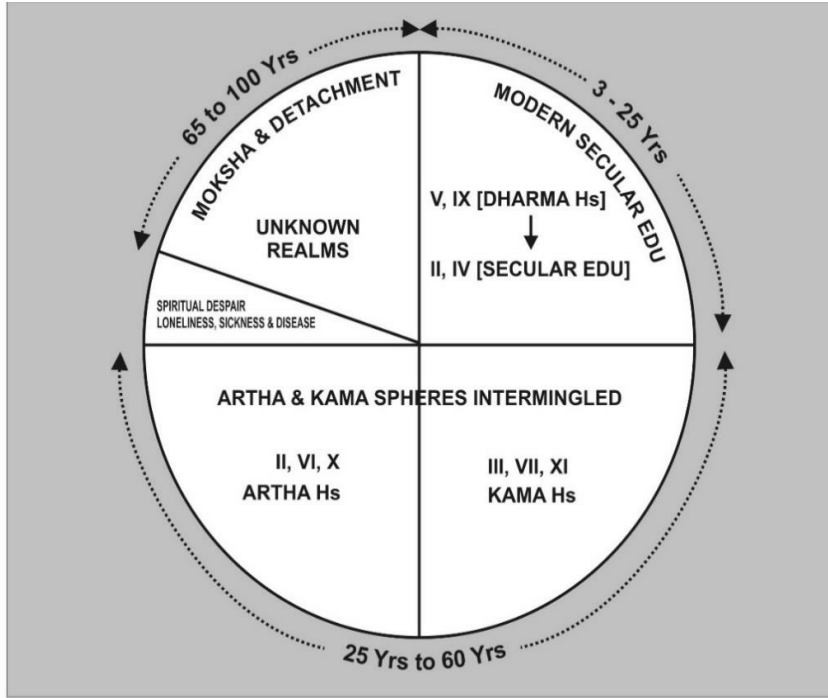
Put differently, *artha and kama* provided for the fulfillment of humanity's physical, emotional, artistic, intellectual and social appetites. They took into account the important fact that humans were social beings who needed to relate to people, and that the seeking of skill, honor, achievement, vocation, status, wealth, property and prestige on the one hand (*artha*); and spouse, family, pleasure, enjoyment, children, home-life (*kama*) on the other, was but an inevitable aspect of being human, and that unless these appetites on the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social planes were fulfilled, there was not much meaning and purpose in the pursuit of a spiritual life in which there was not going to be room for any of these mundane cravings and satisfactions.



Four Purusharthas [Goals] of Life in Hindu Society

The above figure illustrates the progression of goals in a traditional Hindu society. We must start with the upper right quadrant and move in a clockwise direction to follow the progression of these goals. The first quarter of life (the school going years) was devoted to spiritual learning or *dharma*. *This was to be a spiritual foundation for the whole of the adult life to follow, but was to bear the highest fruit of moksha only in the last quarter of life, which was entirely devoted to the fulfillment of the spiritual life (moksha)*. Note that the spiritual goal of *dharma* was the first of the goals of life, whereas the highest spiritual goal of *moksha* was the last of the goals of life. The Roman numerals in the four quadrants of the following two figures refer to the ‘houses’ or areas of human life in *Vedic* astrology to which these goals or *purusharthas* correspond.

The second and the third quarters of life were devoted to *pravritti* (extroversion or involvement in the worldly spheres of *artha* and *kama*). *Artha* meant the acquisition of wealth and achievements in life, whereas *kama* meant the graceful surrender to the temptations of life and the aesthetic enjoyment of the same, which marriage and family life provided for. Significantly, *dharma* was to be the guiding light even as the individual traversed through these worldly spheres. *Artha* and *kama* are necessarily intertwined and constituted the second and third goals of life.



Four Purusharthas [Goals] of Life in Modern Society

Artha and kama were intended to bring about a full blown fulfillment to all desires; at the end of this journey, the individual was spiritually self composed and mature enough to *withdraw from worldly involvement, responsibilities and enjoyments through renunciation (nivritti)*. To facilitate this renunciation and to make the transition to a profound spiritual life of solitude and bliss, smooth, ancient Hindus provided for an intermediary third stage of life called *vaanaprastha* or *withdrawal into the seclusion of a forest hermitage*. This intermediary stage was intended to make a passage to the profound spiritual goal of *moksha* devoid of any sense of shock on account of *withdrawal from the world and its enjoyments*.

Hindu Purusharthas Vitiated in Modern Secular Society

The above figure pertains to the goals of life in a modern secular society. In a modern secular society by contrast, the first goal of life, namely *dharma*, undergoes dissociation from its spiritual and religious roots with secular education taking its place. The spiritual and moral foundation for the whole of the adult life is now lost; even the possibility of *moksha* in the last stage of life becomes only remote, if not an impossibility, as this *moksha* cannot come to pass, without the foundation of *dharma* in the first quarter of life.

The essential interconnectedness of *artha and kama* is as valid in a modern secular society as in a traditional Hindu one. Significantly, on account of the fundamental shift that has occurred in the nature of *dharma*, the goals of *artha and kama* must now necessarily be pursued without the moral and the spiritual foundation that *dharma* had provided in a traditional Hindu society.

Worst of all, the aspiration to seek *moksha* does not even manifest, and old age, now bereft of spiritual wisdom and insights, becomes burdened with despondency and despair. Under these conditions, the last goal of life, namely, *moksha* becomes *terra incognita* for us moderns-*unless we seek this through our individual initiative in spite of our modern secular society remaining completely indifferent to our spiritual appetites.*

Once we have grasped the meanings of these four goals in the original context of the ancient society, it will then become possible for us to see what the transformed versions of these four goals are in our own contemporary Hindu society, which, at this hour, has unfortunately already succumbed to the pressure of Westernizing itself at the expense of losing its Hindu heritage. And this misfortune has struck more forcefully in an important section of the creative minority in Hindu society, namely the English educated Hindu intelligentsia.

Narrowing our focus to *moksha* now, we see that throughout human history, whether it was in the very ancient *Vedic* society or in the later civilizations of the world, *moksha* had always remained an esoteric affair, as the highest blessing in the spiritual life, which only a handful of fortunate individuals could receive. For Hindus, *moksha* has always held an irresistible fascination as the fourth and last goal of human life-the *summum bonum* of life itself. And as moderns who are quite out of touch with the spiritual ethos of our ancients we might well wonder what the nature of such an esoteric *moksha* could possibly be.....

At this stage, as a seeker, you may do some stock taking, and see if your life would fit into the model of the modern secular society, in which the Hindu goals of life are vitiated. You are naturally going to ask the legitimate question of whether under these conditions, there is not going to be any hope for building a spiritual life, without the foundation of *dharma*, in the early years of schooling and upbringing. A little reflection will tell you that in the circumstance when society does not by itself offer encouragement and opportunity for the pursuit of spiritual goals, the impetus for the same, will have to come from your own initiative. Thus in the modern setting, you will have to pursue the spiritual life and build it, through your own effort and initiative, and this is the only way in which you may successfully compensate for the absence of a spiritual foundation in our modern secular society. *In fact this compensatory process is already underway, thanks to the numerous spiritual movements at this time offering encouragement and opportunity to attend to our much neglected spiritual flowering.*

Moksha, after Artha and Kama

Moksha is the ending of all our inner sufferings that are rooted in past *karma* and in the egoistic and disorderly functioning of the illusory *self*. This perception of *moksha* may be a little hard in the beginning, but as you ponder over it in the light of your own life experiences, everything will become clear in course of time. In our present disorderly state, the *self* appears intangible to us, only because of our excessive extroversion. For this reason, we are unable to know what it is,

even unable to know that it is in fact illusory, notwithstanding being so central to the whole of our life. In fact, it may even appear to be the most real thing so far as we are concerned. However, as we start an introverted observation of *what is*, which is our ‘now’ state of consciousness, we will be able to acknowledge the disorderly style of functioning of the *self*, and in this way, the *self* will no more appear intangible, and its illusory nature will also come home to us, as the effortless *choiceless awareness of what is* (J. Krishnamurti’s sense), just happens to us as a blessing.

Such a blessing of *moksha* can come to pass only when a two-step process of inner purification and transformation attains completion. Firstly, there has to be an insightful meditative understanding of how this *self* functions in a *self*-centered and *self*-perpetuating way. Secondly, in the wake of this insightful meditative understanding there has to occur a *phase transition*, manifesting either as a radical shift in the very style of functioning of this *self*, or the *self* may also palpably fall silent. This is the kind of structural change that physicists would describe as a *disorder-order phase transition*, such as occurs for example, when either the gaseous, the disordered state of steam (‘disordered’ because of thermal agitation in the gaseous state), undergoes a condensation to the much more orderly and fruitful state of water. Or even better still, when the already fairly ordered state of water undergoes a *phase transition* to the maximally ordered solid-state of ice (‘maximally’ ordered, because in this solid state, the molecules of ice are arranged in a perfectly ordered crystal lattice).

In actual terms, it results in a more or less, constant and sometimes, even a profound sense of inner well-being, clarity and serenity that is the fruit of liberation from all bondages, sufferings and from all ignorance (*maya*); all of which, had in the earlier disorderly state, constituted the very stuff of the illusory *self*. Under certain conditions, when the same is also accompanied by mystical experiences of cosmic consciousness, or other esoteric manifestations of an awakened *kundalini*, we may take that to represent the exalted climax, the farther reaches of *moksha*. But it should be noted that these exalted transcendent states of cosmic consciousness and awakened *kundalini*, will never endure, they will come and go, lasting for shorter or for longer durations. We should therefore never take these exalted states of cosmic consciousness to be the hall-mark, the definition, or even the pinnacle of *moksha*. On the other hand, it must be noted that the freedom from all sufferings resulting in a perpetual inner clarity and serenity, is what may be considered to be the primary hall mark of *moksha*. The reason is that many seekers and *mumukshus* who experience these transcendental states for a while, can also, in the wake of these exalted experiences, become extremely confused with the yoke of duality and suffering still heavily resting upon their shoulders, with hardly a clear understanding, as to what the Divine is, and more importantly, who they are, in relation to the Divine?

It is the fourth and final goal of human life in Hindu society since very ancient times. In the *Vedic*-Hindu tradition, the ultimate unmanifest aspect of the Divine is held to be unknowable, beyond all understanding even, so that only the process of a chain of negations of every knowable thing, in an enquiry into the Divine (or into our true nature), along the lines, *neti*,

neti (not this, not this; or neither this, nor that), was held to be the reliable means of ‘reaching’ the unknowable, which paradoxically was also the imperceptible inner Self (*Atma*). This kind of an enquiry alone was expected to burn out and terminate *becoming and searching*, and thereby facilitate the abidance in being, which is both, who we are, as well as the portal to the unapproachable, unknowable, unmanifest Divine.

While Hindus were aware of *moksha* since the early years of their upbringing, it was really only after sixty-by which time, they would have become more or less free of the enticing pull of *maya*, and therefore, would have also handed over all their family and social responsibilities to their children - that they could take that final plunge with full dedication as full fledged seekers into the last goal of life, *moksha*.

Moksha as we have seen can also be taken to be that *insightful understanding* of the nature of absolute Reality, the unknowable and an *insightful understanding into the nature of the self, as a prelude*; so that this understanding results in a constant equanimity, clarity and empathy with the whole of life. A constant awareness, fascination and sense of unity with the Divine in all its infinite mystifying manifestations is the wellspring underlying the blessing of *moksha*.

Artha and kama, which were the natural goals of life between 21 yrs of age and 60 yrs of age, were intended for the fulfillment of the *self*, whereas, *moksha* (after 60 yrs of age) was held to be the result of an *insightful understanding of the self*, and consequently, *implied a negation of the self into the Divine, an ending of the self*, so that this was also a total liberation from every conceivable suffering that human beings were heir to (because of the illusory *self*), in the three preceding spheres of *dharma, artha and kama*. The result if attained would naturally be a state of well-being, undistracted attention and equanimity, arising from the unity with the Divine, and even with the whole of life itself, which in the *Vedic* view was after all, only a manifestation of that same Divinity, the source of our life.

The Importance of *Intellectual Conviction* in the Spiritual Life

In our modern times, due to the *perennial solace* provided to seekers in the material spheres of *artha and kama*, by the many contemporary spiritual mass movements as well as by the traditional spiritual institutions of ancient religions; seekers may not clearly recognize to what a great extent, *intellectual conviction*, is necessary for actually moving forward in the spiritual spheres of *dharma and moksha*, and for even undergoing that critical transformation from being mere seekers to *mumukshus* (seekers of *moksha*).

Much of the time, seekers can be seen becoming self-complacent and may therefore not not be in a position to seek *moksha*-because they have found, instead of *salvation (moksha)*, at least, the more easily available and more *self-satisfying solace* - from all of the spiritual institutions, masters and *gurus*, mentioned above. *The most important reason why seekers do not undergo metamorphosis into mumukshus is the absence of an intellectual conviction in them-about*

the importance of pursuing moksha. Thus while there are millions of seekers leisurely walking along in the sphere of *dharma*, very few, manage to graduate into *mumukshus* and thus cross over to the terrain of *moksha*.

If there is no proper understanding of *dharma and moksha*, intellectual conviction and the concrete steps necessary for the pursuit of *moksha* may not be forthcoming, so that *moksha* remains no more than a mere nominal goal.

It is for this reason, we have to go back to the past and see what a perceptive indologist, a brilliant scholar-commentator and an illustrious Hindu master have had to say about the importance of intellectual conviction in this regard. We may also note in passing that such an intellectual conviction, whose importance we seem to have completely missed, also happens to be one of the essential ingredients in every one of the following seven chapters.

Prof M. B. Emeneau in his presidential address delivered to the American oriental society in Toronto (1955), had brought home to us, the full significance of the Hindu predilection for *intellectual conviction*.^[2]

“Intellectual thoroughness and an urge towards ratiocination [3], intellection, and learned classification for their own sakes, should surely be recognized as characteristic of the Hindu higher culture. It has often been pointed out that the Hindu is spiritual, i.e. concerned with his soul and its relation to the universe, and that his philosophy is a means of *salvation* whereby his soul may be released from the bonds of the phenomenal and may attain to union with the spiritual element of the universe. *It should be just as often stressed that the Hindu’s intellectual urge has not allowed him to be satisfied with the minimum of theological philosophy that might suffice for a conviction of salvation. He must elaborate and refine the intellectual substructure before he will go on to the mystical experience of his salvation that is to be based as firmly as possible on this foundation.* Since, notoriously, philosophers cannot agree, a large number of philosophical substructures have emerged from Indian thinking-monist (*Advaita*), modified monist (*Visishtadvaita*), dualist (*Dvaita*), and pluralist, theist (*Asthika*) and atheist (*Nasthika*), based on a soul (*Atmavada*) and denying a soul (*Anatmavada*), concentrating on the substantiation of evidence and relatively neglectful of this. *One suspects often enough that the Hindu enjoys philosophizing for its own sake, even though his warrant for philosophy is that it leads to salvation.*” (Sanskrit terms added in parenthesis by me, so too the emphasis through italicizing.)

Adi Sankaracharya on the Importance of *Intellectual Conviction*

We cite below another instance of the same kind of emphasis on the *paramount importance of intellectual conviction* in the spiritual life, sourced in critical commentaries of the illustrious *Adi Sankaracharya* and brought to our notice by a brilliant Western commentator. Trevor Leggett, translator and commentator of ‘*Sankara on the Yoga Sutra-s*’^[4], in his introduction makes the following observations regarding the importance of *intellectual conviction* for the Hindus.

“A Western reader may be surprised to find so much philosophical discussion in a text (the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali) which claims to be a practical manual. *But the view in India was that, as Adi Sankaracharya explains at the beginning, people will not continue practice which demands their whole life unless they are intellectually satisfied about the goal and the means to it. This view is based on wide experience of human nature.*

“As a Western example, Dr Esdaile in Calcutta (1840) carried out hundreds of operations, including amputations, under hypnosis without pain to the patients, and modern surgeons who read the reports find them impressive; but he could give no account of how it worked, and his medical colleagues gave him no support. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor of Bengal, however, who knew prejudice when he saw it, backed Esdaile and put him in charge of a hospital in Calcutta. But when Dr Esdaile returned to Britain, he was far less successful with the patients in his native Aberdeen. They must have longed to be freed from pain, *but because of their intellectual doubts, could not give the full co-operation required. The Indian patients on the other hand, could do so because there was justification in their own culture for the idea that mind could be separated from the operation of the senses.* Soon after (1846), ether and chloroform were discovered, and the whole subject was dropped with relief. There is still no satisfactory account of hypnosis in Western intellectual terms, and this is undoubtedly a barrier to its further development; *there is a justifiable unease about employing something not properly understood.*

“Adi Sankaracharya stresses that *intellectual conviction is supremely important* in the early stages of *yoga* especially. Before there has been any direct experience, however small, it is all second hand as it were. After the first direct experience (as he explains on pages 148 and 149 here), there is an invigoration of the whole personality, *and doubts no longer trouble the practitioner.*”

In the light of all these observations made by Prof M. B. Emeneau, the illustrious *Adi Sankaracharya* and the brilliant Western commentator, Trevor Leggett, we may now rest satisfied that the inclusion of intellectual conviction in the tenor of this teaching will go a long way in transforming mere seekers of *dharma* into seekers of *moksha* (*mumukshus*).

The *self* in the Spheres of *Dharma* and *Moksha*

Our concern at this point is to sensitize ourselves to the *self* and its ways, and even consider the esoteric theme of the possible silencing of the *self*, for in so far as we are able to see, *moksha*, seems to be just this very subtle blessing, which comes with the calming and silencing of the *self*.

We have seen that *kama* is the goal of the aesthetic enjoyment of all aspects of life, including every kind of sensory gratification and appeasement. This happens through the comforts of a good life, through the eating and drinking of things delicious, through the pampering of the body and the *self* in innumerable ways, through the watching and hearing of delightful artistic creations, even an aesthetic communion with nature, through adventures in the wild, through family life and marital relationship, through sexual enjoyment and progeny.

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Then we also surveyed the spiritual goals of *dharma and moksha*. Life began with the first chapter of spiritual education or *dharma* (7 to 20 yrs of age) and culminated in the last chapter called *moksha*, because it brought in the highest spiritual fulfillment, characterized by an imperturbable inner peace and tranquility. Such an almost impossible spiritual fulfillment usually happened either through the dramatic and spontaneous silencing of the *self*, as in the case of a fortunate few, or, through the less dramatic, but certainly, humbler and wiser option of the *conscious renunciation of the self and its ways*, as in the case of the majority. This more deliberate process; though 'still tainted' in the sense that, even this desire to renounce, is but an expression of that very *self*; it is nevertheless, at least a mature means to liberation from the totality of sufferings-which are a natural concomitant of the *self* and its ways. Such liberation (*moksha*) was held to be possible, at any stage between 60 yrs of age and the end of life, depending on the actual level of maturity of the individual, and the structure of his destiny. This is to be contrasted with the full social sanction for pursuing headlong the life of the *self*, with its inevitable share of joys and sorrows in the earlier spheres of *artha and kama*, spheres which covered the more ebullient and energetic years of youth and middle age.

As we are verily this *self* we probably do not know enough about ourselves as the pleasure-seeking, success-seeking, enjoying, brooding and sorrowing *self*, the subject, and this ignorance is especially striking in the earlier spheres of *artha and kama*. This is after all expected, for the spheres of *artha and kama* are by and large devoted to sensory indulgence and gratification, which is possible only with the extroversion and engrossment of the *self* in the pleasure gardens of life. In such an extroverted condition, the *self* has no opportunities at all for getting to know itself truly-for it functions here under the Divinely programmed delusion called *maya*, that it is indeed only the body, or at best, the body and the accompanying sense of *self* in consciousness.

In fact, as long as the *self* is still feeding incessantly on the pastures of *artha and kama*, it is obsessed all the time with one form or the other of, what is truly not the *self*, but rather, the 'other', which is invariably one of the attractive sense objects and the polar opposite of the brooding, seeking and enjoying *self*. The immersion and engrossment of the *self* in the pleasure gardens of *artha and kama* is generally a continuous process, except when the *self* has to face the challenge of a denial of its pleasures-then of course it becomes temporarily despondent as a sorrowing *self*. Because of this, throughout the exciting and pleasurable life of the *self* in the mundane spheres of *artha and kama*, a sustained and compelling opportunity never arises for the *self*, to take stock of its sorrow-breeding activities, to look within, to introspect and go to the end in its search for its true identity. Going to the very end in this ultimate search can possibly happen only with detachment and this can come to pass only with a greater awareness of the impending end of the body - we know too well that this happens, if at all, only in the last sphere of *moksha*.

When we enter into the spiritual sphere of *dharma* during the early years of our discipleship, our attention comes to be temporarily centered on the Self (*Atma*), for the first time, but this happens only on the superficial, conceptual and intellectual plane, for there is no

opportunity as yet, so early in life, to discover the Self, to be that very Self, that seemingly unknowable and imperceptible fulcrum, on which the whole of life and consciousness seems to be so delicately poised. In the mature sphere of *moksha*, the situation is entirely different. Here life-circumstances make it necessary for us to know the *self* (*self* - Knowing) with a greater degree of intimacy through introversion, say, along the lines suggested by either *maharshi Patanjali* in his *Yogasutras* or along the lines suggested by the master Sri J.Krishnamurti, *through a dispassionate watching of our actual state of consciousness i.e., what is, through choiceless awareness*. Without the calming and silencing of the *self*, through *self* - Knowing, there is no possibility of Self - Realization. This will be shocking for people on the path of *advaita and Jnana yoga*, but this is the truth which is generally true, except in the case of extraordinary exceptions like Sri Ramana Maharshi, who secured *moksha* without the slightest seeking.

Knowing Self as *Siva*, *thinking and feeling self*, as *Sakti*

In the first place, this whole theme of *the self and its ways* and even *its falling silent*, may not make much sense to seekers, in general. There are bound to be vast numbers of seekers, who may still be quite unaware of the *self*. The abode of the *self* is human consciousness-this is where it properly belongs. It arises, changes, suffers and builds itself here, and if at all, it is fated to wind up its mad activity, this desirable ending will also transpire here in its own abode, leaving the residue of the *Atma*, the Self.

We will have to either 'locate' the *self* in the abode of human consciousness or, identify the nature and mechanism of its working in this same abode. As we observe our human consciousness closely, we find that though the *self* is certainly indivisible and integral, yet, it also appears to consist of two rather complementary halves, two kinds of engines, with two distinct styles of functioning. A subtle, almost invisible, imperceptible, quiescent, almost 'non-existent' but nevertheless ever present Witnessing and Knowing Self (if you like, you can call this Self, the Knower, yes, but without the implied individuality). This Knowing Self is aware of and serves to perpetually register two kinds of stimuli or impressions which knock at its door. (i) The sense impressions streaming in from the outside world. (ii) And all the feelings and the thought perceptions generated by the *thinking and feeling self*, from the inner world.

This *thinking and feeling self* is the other half, and the other dimension of our human consciousness. Thus, we seem to have two facets or aspects of the self, the Witnessing and Knowing Self, and the *thinking and feeling self*. The former is in the background, unchanging and timeless, imperceptible, silent, watchful and passive, the latter is in the foreground, changing, ever wandering between the past memories and the imagined future, perceptible, active, energetic, restless, noisy, selfish, chaotic, stubborn, sorrowing, pleasure-seeking, the source of all the 'chattering', to use Sri J. Krishnamurti's apt description.

As a rule, most of us appear to be unaware of the Witnessing, Knowing Self, while everyone will readily attest to the existence of the *thinking and feeling, noisy and chattering self*.

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To go more deeply and create some appreciation for the central role of the *self* in the spiritual spheres, we must bring in some fundamental framework of understanding in which we may cast these two complementary halves. Once we do this, we will have more clarity and can then move on faster down the road.

There is a universal *sutra* available from the Hindu scripture of the Bhagavad Gita, from Ch XIII, as sloka 26.[5] The theme of this chapter is *the differentiation of the Knower from the known*. By ‘known’ is meant the field observed by the ‘Knowing Self’. It is so universal a *sutra* that we can turn to it, to understand a wide variety of phenomena, irrespective of whether it be the foundations of *vastu shastra* or *Vedic* astrology or even our human consciousness.

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।

क्शेत्रक्शेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥

॥ १३.२६ ॥

Yāvat sañjāyate kiñcit sattvaṁ sthāvarajaṅgamam ।

kṣetrakṣetrajña saṁyogāt tad viddhi bharatarṣabha ॥ ॥ 13.26॥

Its meaning is this: “Whatever comes into existence, whether a so-called living being or a non-living being, know that, it is the union of the observed field, the ‘other’ (*Kshetra*, or field of observation) and the observing Knower (*Kshetrajña*).”

Going a step further, we should identify the Observing or the Knowing Self as the Knower (*Kshetrajña*) with the *Siva* aspect of consciousness; whereas, the observed field, in which the activities of the *thinking and feeling self*, transpire, namely, the ‘other’ (*Kshetra*), should be identified with the *Sakti* aspect of consciousness (*in the circumstance that we as the Witnessing Self are looking inwards and watching this thinking and feeling self in action*). Implied in this is the truth that the Knowing Self is indeed the auspicious *Siva*, whereas, the frenetically active *thinking and feeling self* is *Sakti*. Human consciousness has the option of being either dominantly *Siva*, or dominantly *Sakti* or even a balanced harmonization of both. When there is the falling silent of the *self* or the calming and silencing of the *self*, then the *thinking and feeling self* or *Sakti* becomes void, and with it *maya* too becomes void, leaving *Siva* alone to be majestically and serenely present as the *Atma*, the imperceptible inner Self. The other extreme is the so-called ‘fallen condition’ of humanity, one in which *Sakti* or the *thinking and feeling self* is so frenetically active and so dominant (the *thinking and feeling self* fully under the spell of *maya*) that *Siva* is eclipsed, and goes missing!

This same truth is also reiterated and corroborated by the *Mundaka Upanishad* (III.1, 2, *slokas*) [6]:

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।

तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ १ ॥

dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte ।

tayoranyaḥ pippalam svādvattyanaśnannanyo abhicākaśīti ॥ 1॥

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनिशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।

जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ २ ॥

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno'niśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ ।

juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamīśamasya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ ॥ 2॥

Their meaning: “Two birds are always together on the same tree (i.e., the body), both with beautiful plumes and similar to each other. One of them eats the sweet fruits; the other simply looks on without eating anything”. In terms of our understanding, the bird which eats the sweet fruits is the thinking, enjoying & feeling *self*, fraught with desires as well as disappointments, the *Sakti* aspect, the individual *self*; while the other bird, who is ever vigilant and ever observing, is the Knower, the Knowing and Witnessing Self, the *Siva* aspect.

Again the meaning of the second *sloka*: “*The individual self* is with the Cosmic Self on the same tree (i.e., the body). Because the *individual self* is engrossed, deluded and therefore unaware of its own Divine nature, it is given to sorrowing. However, *when* the *individual self* sees its essential oneness with the Cosmic Self, *then*, it is released from all sorrows.” Here the translator has used the expressions, the *individual self* and Cosmic Self, whereas we had coined the more reasonable terms, *thinking and feeling self* and Knowing Self respectively.

In its engrossed and deluded state, the *individual self* (*thinking self*) cannot possibly know its identity with the *Siva* aspect of consciousness, Cosmic Self (Knowing Self). It is only when its excessive activities subside, Self - Realization becomes possible. This is the reason, the condition, *when* in the *sloka* becomes extremely significant. We have cited the authority of the Hindu scriptures, just to drive home the fact that our present line of analysis, using the terms, the *thinking and feeling self* and the Knowing Self is not by any means speculative and arbitrary, like a modern line of psychological reasoning. On the contrary, it is also in unison with the Hindu sacred texts, rooted in the Self - Realization of countless sages in the ancient tradition.

Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing is *sine qua non* for *Dharma* and *Moksha*

Knowing is also seeing, perceiving and understanding, so this faculty of knowing seems to be also the unsuspected, faculty of intelligence. Wondering, pondering, gazing also belong to this knowing. But for these higher potentialities to come into manifestation, it is very necessary for the

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thinking and feeling self to more or less fall silent, to renounce its activities and learn how to make way for the imperceptible, Knowing Self. With its falling silent, there is *awakening of intelligence*, a spiritual happening corroborated by the Bhagavad Gita in Ch. II [7], and repeatedly emphasized by Krishnamurti. [8]

In fact, our knowing is automatic. If we consider this carefully, we will even come to the rather startling conclusion that though the body has been steadily ageing, the faculty of knowing, i.e., *the Knowing Self, alone seems to be practically untouched by time*, and we also feel, we are this ‘unknown Knower’. ‘Unknown’, yes, because while we may feel comfortable with being referred to as the Knower, at a deeper level, we certainly have no clue - wherefrom this mysterious Knower sprang into existence? Did this happen, possibly as a quantum leap in the evolutionary development of hominids, or maybe, even, insects, birds, animals, mountains and rivers, all have this same ‘Knowing Self, the *Atma*?

We have to realize that the *thinking and feeling self* is a dynamically active process that is more or less going on all the time, using and retrieving memories, making decisions, creating goals, planning the future, brooding over the past, remembering the hurts, shying away from pain, manipulating, building castles in the air, etc. And all of this dreaming built on the foundation of *maya*: that the *thinking self* is identical with the body, or some *anatma* (false Self) of what the *thinking self*, imagines itself to be.

However in our entirely extroverted state of consciousness, the sense objects we perceive on the one hand and the stuff of the *thinking and feeling self*, on the other ‘come upon’ the Knowing Self so completely that we, as the Knowing Self, seem to have totally lost awareness (inherent in the Knowing Self) of our true spiritual identity as the same is completely encroached upon, overwritten, eclipsed and swamped not only by the dazzling sense impressions streaming in from the external world, but also by the incessant frenetic activity of day dreaming and worrying, in which the *thinking and feeling self* is engrossed. This is the reason we are total strangers to the *Siva* aspect of our consciousness, and remain puny, with only the limited identity of the *thinking and feeling self*.

We have been emphasizing that in the spheres of *dharma and moksha*, the *self* will be our focus of attention, mainly because in these spheres, we will be concerned with the life of the *self* as a prelude to its falling silent in the last sphere of *moksha*. For J. Krishnamurti, the *self* on which all human civilizations are based, had undergone periodic liquidation, so it was easy for him to question the foundations on which this *thinking and feeling self* rested. In paying attention to his philosophical enquiry into the genesis and activities of the *self*, we will become better equipped to examine both the *self*-perpetuation of the *self*, as well as its falling silent in the farther reaches of *dharma and moksha*.

“How is the psyche, the ego, the *self*, the ‘I’, the individual, put together? How has this thing come into being and from which arises the concept of the individual, the ‘me’, separate from

all others? How is this momentum set-a-going, this sense of the ‘I’, the *self*? We will use the word *self* to include the person, the name, the form, the characteristics, the ego. How is this *self* born? Does the *self* come into being with certain characteristics transmitted from the parents? Is the *self* merely a series of reactions? Is the *self* merely the continuity of centuries of tradition? Is the *self* put together by circumstances, through accidents, happenings? Is the *self* the result of an evolution, the gradual process of time, emphasizing, giving importance to the *self*?”[9]

It is obvious that all of J. Krishnamurti’s observations and questions pertain only to the *thinking and feeling self*, for it is this *thinking and feeling self*, which weaves *maya* or the illusion that one is the body, and that one is a separate individual, etc. Krishnamurti, for some reason is not making any reference at this stage to the Knowing Self, which is the Divine Knowing Light in us, unobtrusive and in the background of our all too noisy, chattering and frenetically active *thinking and feeling self*. So long as the *thinking and feeling self* is not liquidated, even the Knowing Self, will suffer a complete veiling, though this Knowing Self is certainly bereft of all mischief and all calculations. But with the liquidation of the *thinking and feeling self*, even the Knowing Self, may experience itself differently, in that, there may not be a Knower any more in the sense of any individual, though knowing and wondering may continue undiminished.

See further, how Krishnamurti’s caution when applied to the *thinking self*, the *seeking self*, in its quest for enlightenment, reveals that this could be an utterly illusory quest:

“The ‘me’ can never become a better me. It will attempt to, it thinks it can, but the me remains in subtle forms. The *self* hides in many garments, in many structures; it varies from time to time, but there is always this *self*, this separative, *self*-centered activity which imagines that one day it will make itself something which it is not.

“So one sees there is no becoming of the *self*. There is only the ending of selfishness, of anxiety, of pain and sorrow, which are the content of the psyche, of the me. There is only the ending of that, and that ending does not require time. It isn’t that it will all end the day after tomorrow. *It will end only when there is the perception of its movement. To perceive not only objectively, without any prejudice, bias, but to perceive without all the accumulations of the past; to witness all this without the watcher.* The watcher is of time, and however much he may want to bring about a mutation in himself, he will always be the watcher. Remembrances, however pleasurable, have no reality; they are things of the past, gone, finished, dead. Only in observing without the observer, who is the past, does one see the nature of time and the ending of time.”[10] (*Italics for emphasis*)

Here, the master Sri. J. Krishnamurti is suggesting being aware of the activities of the *thinking and feeling self* even as they are happening, but without the motive to alter what is perceived. According to him, any desire to change what is seen going on, in the *thinking self*, will be futile, because it is bound to add only further momentum to the *thinking self* and this way, desire to change or correct will come in the way of its falling silent. ‘Watcher’ as he uses the expression

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is only an aspect of the same *thinking and feeling self*, that aspect, which has taken up its position as the ‘reformer’ and the ‘policeman’, in the hope of effecting a radical transformation. The kind of observation he is talking about, totally bereft of all motives is what he calls *dispassionate observation of what is, or the choiceless awareness of what is. For him, choiceless awareness opens the doors to self - Knowing and also to the ending of the activities of the self, as choiceless awareness of what is, brings about a radical transformation of what is, or a silencing of what is. In the sphere of dharma and moksha, this is a never before heard of meditation, unknown to the the ancient and haloed tradition of Atmajnana and Self - Realization.* If a seeker learns this *self - Knowing*, it has the power to deliver the seeker to Self - Realization, provided the seeker also studies the *moksha shastras*, for understanding what has happened to him, as a result of continued dedication to Krishnamurti’s *self - Knowing*.

In Krishnamurti’s writings, reference is invariably made to the *self* that sustains thinking and feeling and which in turn is itself also thrown up, by the very processes of thinking and feeling, as both thinking and feeling arise in response to challenges of survival. This *self* is invariably only the *anatma* (false Self) that one is the body, or some other *anatma*. *Much of human thinking and feeling, becomes wasteful and conflict ridden, when centered on the self, as an anatma.*

However, we must not fail to realize that in clear and deep thinking or enquiry into truth (such as we meet with in creative thinkers, artists and scientists), *this self may have no place at all, it may simply be non-functional, during deep enquiry and spurts of clear wondering, contemplation and insightful perception.* In such cases, where lofty thinking and feeling is free of the *self*, thinking and feeling becomes sanctified, truth-bearing and fruitful. Implied in this is the precious converse *sutra* as well: that where thinking and feeling are contaminated and corrupted by the *self*, such thinking and feeling loses the fruitful, truth-bearing potency (*sutra*). Some of us may have been witnesses to such comical phenomena, seen in the conversations between people.

In the case of Ramana Maharshi, the definite ending of the *thinking self* happened suddenly, through a definitive and irrevocable kind of Knowing, and is best described in the Maharshi’s own words. In this remarkable example, it is the Knowing Self which has had the Self - Realization-because, the *thinking and feeling self* seems to have ended more by an abrupt stroke of fate, by the invisible hand of the Divine. A *Vedic* astrological decipherment of this very usual happening constituted the theme of Sri Ramana Maharshi’s Moksha.[11]

“It was about six weeks before I left Madurai for good, that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in the room on the first floor of my uncle’s house. I seldom had any sickness and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt ‘I am going to die’ and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor, or my elders or friends; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

Ramana Maharshi's Self - Realization: Abrupt Ending of the *thinking and feeling self*

“The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: ‘Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? The body dies.’ And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I laid with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word ‘I’, nor any other word could be uttered. ‘Well then’, I said to myself, ‘this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of the body, am I dead? Is the body, I? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the ‘I’ within me, apart from the body. So, I am spirit transcending the body. The body dies, but the spirit that transcends that, cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless spirit.’ All this was not dull thought, it flashed through me vividly as living truth, which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. ‘I’ was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centered on that ‘I’. From that moment onwards, the ‘I’ or Self, focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.”[12]

The Knowing Self Reflexively Turned Upon Itself (Self - Realization)

It is obvious that by the term, ‘I’, the Maharshi must be meaning only the Knowing Self, after the *thinking and feeling self* had become void, leaving only the majestic and serene presence of *Siva*, as the Knowing Self. His concluding words sum up the realization, and confirms to us, how his consciousness became *Siva* filled and *Siva*-centric, with hardly any room for *Sakti* or the *thinking self*: ‘From that moment onwards, the ‘I’ or Self, focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination.’ In the *Siva-Sakti* drama that is going on in our human consciousness, the Knowing Self as a rule never turns permanently upon itself in a reflexive ‘fall-back’, for it is ever Knowing only what it perceives as the ‘other’, namely either the sensory impressions which are streaming in, or Knowing all the goings on in the *Kshetra* (field) of the *thinking and feeling self*. In the case of the Maharshi, the Knowing Self, discovered Itself alone, as the primal Reality, and neither the body nor the sense impressions, nor even the contents of consciousness nor the world, beyond. This was the Maharshi's Self - Realization.

The Importance of paying heed to Ancient Traditions

Though I found the life-time work of the master J. Krishnamurti, as well as the master Nisargadatta Maharaj throwing *brilliant new light* on entirely different aspects of *moksha*, the former on *self* - Knowing and the latter on Self - Realization; nevertheless, there was, one common factor in their teachings, which for me was unsatisfactory. Both had decisively turned their back on the verdict of ancient traditions, rather than being truly open and therefore willing to dialogue

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with the best of the traditional teachers and learn what they had to say - if that was indeed warranted. It is true that J. Krishnamurti dialogued with leading thinkers from many different walks of life, but where the dialogue turned in the direction of the traditional religious matters, Krishnamurti showed more of an antipathy, rather than a sympathetic understanding of the wisdom inherent in traditional approaches, especially for seekers, who had utmost faith in those approaches. That J. Krishnamurti had a revolutionary new point of view that was entirely unknown to the religious traditions, is undeniable. Notwithstanding his extraordinary sensitivity, intelligence and originality, Krishnamurti, somehow was not vulnerable to important lessons from traditional teachings. For these reasons, notwithstanding having benefitted vastly from both exceptionally original masters, I must say that I lose resonance with both of them, when I see them critically turn their backs on the wisdom of numberless sages and saints - a priceless treasure, which is still available to us, and what can still come alive in our lives, if we will but turn in the direction of the traditional texts and care to study them diligently.

Freedom was certainly J. Krishnamurti's original synonym for *moksha* that *choiceless awareness of what is* was expected to lead to, when the same was pursued relentlessly to its farther reaches. Though both masters were fiercely independent and stood out as courageous lions in opening up their spectacularly original paths to mature seekers and *mumukshus*, their unwillingness to listen deeply to the voice of traditional *moksha shastras*, should not be considered, a meritorious virtue that is beyond questioning, rather it should be considered as a weakness, concomitant with their originality and brilliance as teachers.

Tradition is not just a lack-lustre shroud, for it is the cumulative wisdom of numerous original sages and seers, in the last ten thousand years. So, the brushing aside of the voice of hoary traditions, carries with it the risk of being arrogant and also resistant to the priceless living wisdom of ten thousand sages and seers. Seen in this light, though three decades have passed off since J. Krishnamurti and Nisargadatta Maharaj have shuffled off their mortal coils, at least those whose hearts have been deeply touched by these extraordinary masters, may do well at least now, to critically re-examine the teachings of both masters in the broad flooding light of the ancient Hindu *moksha shastras*.

This is what I have in fact done in the Tat Tvam Asi retreat. While the teachings of many masters have stood out as beacons of light in my own spiritual journey, I have not allowed this to come in the way of a critical reappraisal of the fruitfulness of their life-long work. Both were masters on the *nivritti marga*, that is, in the sphere of *moksha* only. Neither was a scholar, so in that sense it may not have been their lot, i.e., their *swadharma*, to look back at the living wisdom of the past sages, in search of common ground. The search for common ground, usually falls to the lot of scholarly compilers, seekers or *mumukshus*, who are the ones who usually struggle to find common ground in various *moksha shastras*, for gaining that *intellectual conviction*, which undeniably is an advanced milestone in their *sadhana*. In contrast to both these brilliant masters, Sri Ramana Maharshi was an exemplary Self - Realized master, who also wonderfully bridged the

gap between his own experience of Self - Realization and the *ancient and haloed* continent of Self - Realization. He diligently studied every *moksha shastra* in the *Saivite* tradition of South India and also translated some of them into Tamil, his mother tongue-for the benefit of *mumukshus*, who came to him in search of this Self - Realization. Further, he encouraged mature seekers and *mumukshus* to study many of these *moksha shastras* diligently and with great devotion.

The Invocation of Ancient Hindu *Moksha Shastras* in this Retreat

Lest, we succumb to a spiritual fall, through *self*-delusion and *self*-deception, as we soar into the dizzying heights of an independent enquiry, I have deliberately kept the doors open, so that the light of the sobering wisdom of the sages and seers, will save us from the dangers of the above pitfall. We will thus periodically apply the traditional yardsticks, the *sutras* from the works of Adi Sankaracharya's Viveka Chudamani, the Bhagavad Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Upanishads, Kaivalya Navaneetham, Yoga Vasishtam, Advaita Bodha Deepika and Vedanta Panchadasi; to ensure that our spiritual journey in *dharma and moksha* is indeed corroborated and sanctified by the haloed *moksha shastras* of the Hindu tradition.

***self* - Knowing via-à-vis Self - Realization**

In the Hindu *moksha shastras* such as the Upanishads, the works of Adi Sankaracharya and in Ramana Maharshi's and Nisargadatta Maharaj's teachings, Self - Realization is the goal, for such of those seekers who have flowered into *mumukshus*. Self - Realization is a modern term for the classical term of *moksha* or *Atmajnana*. In this context, by Self (spelt with a capital S), is meant, the universal Self or the *Paramatma*, which is essentially also the same as the *Atma*, the Self, as felt and experienced by *mumukshus*, post Self - Realization.

On the contrary, *self* - Knowing, is *an entirely nascent field* that has been opened up for the very first time in the sphere of *moksha*, through the life-time work of J. Krishnamurti. The ancient Hindu tradition has been obsessed with the *Atma* or the Self, and our realization of that as our essential nature-who we really are. This Self, is naturally the omega point of the spiritual quest of the *mumukshus*, *their final destination, so to speak*. The, alpha point of the spiritual quest, by contrast is the miserable *self* (italicized and with, 's' in lower case) - *what humans actually feel themselves to be, who they actually consider themselves to be*.

However, from the point of view of the Self - Realized sage, this human *self*, is what may be called a false-Self or an *anatma*. The paradox is that, so long as one is without Self - Realization, this *self*, is the most real thing in any human life, in fact it is the only thing to which humans cling. It is all that humans have, it is the only tangible 'observable', the *mumukshu* has got, namely his own suffering *self*, as he sets out on his solitary quest for permanently annihilating and liquidating this *self* (*moksha*). In other words, the alpha-point of the spiritual journey is this known *self*, whereas the Self, of which the sages speak is completely intangible, incomprehensible, the unknown, at best only a purely dazzling intellectual idea, the omega point of the final destination.

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The long line of Hindu Self - Realized sages, including the illustrious Adi Sankaracharya and even, the contemporary sages of the last century, Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj, all of them completely missed coming upon the profound significance of *self* - Knowing, simply because, in the post Self - Realization phase, the *self* appears to be a mirage, an illusory thing, so this *self*, of which they were not even in a position to have direct knowledge, ceased to hold the attention of all these Self - Realized sages.

In the case of the Maharshi, as he had lost the illusion of the *self*, even before he could perceive that to be the real cause of all human sorrow, it was his fortunate lot, never to know anything about *self*, nor about the potency of *self* - Knowing. His *swadharma*, or the calling bestowed on him by the Divine, as we may infer by retrospectively looking at his life, seems to have been to make the ancient and esoteric goal of Self - Realization, once more, a tangible goal for present day *mumukshus*. He was a unique living example of how this Self - Realization would possibly express itself in a given human life, and so, that was more than enough for *mumukshus* to gain a conviction that this esoteric goal was really the *summum bonum* of human life. *When serious seekers, posed the pertinent question to the Maharshi, as to whom his path of Atmavichara (enquiry into the Self) would be ideally suitable; he never minced matters, but straightaway declared that, it was a path for the most mature and the noble-minded.*

Implied in this is the fact that for the vast majority of seekers, who are as yet, nowhere close to graduating into *mumukshus*, his clearly laid out path of *Atmavichara*, would not actually make the slightest sense. As these seekers are not certainly seeking *moksha*, nor even interested in it, the light of *Atmavichara* will necessarily recede and fade away from their spiritual quest, much like the sun going down the horizon at sunset. So, what do we expect such sincere seekers to do, those who are still engrossed in *maya* and in duality, and still travelling in the mundane spheres of *artha and kama*? As the Maharshi's *Atmavichara* and the *moksha shastras* of the Hindu tradition, will sooner or later fail to attract their attention, what are these helpless seekers to do, for undergoing a genuine spiritual transformation, while still young, while still being interested in *artha and kama*, while still under the sway of *maya*?

After the master J. Krishnamurti passed away, after he had, so to speak, completed his *swadharma*, we may infer retrospectively, that the seekers whose years in *artha and kama*, still seem to be unfinished; for them, the appropriate starting point would have to be, the alpha-point, that is, *self* - Knowing. Though Krishnamurti's, seemingly humble beginnings in *self* - Knowing, may not appear to be so lofty and sublime, as the direct hit at Self - Realization that Ramana Maharshi had envisioned; it turns out that, it is the commencement of the serious spiritual journey at the alpha-point, or *self* - Knowing, that is the more appropriate for seekers still travelling in the *artha and kama* terrain. The unbelievably thing is that, this path of *self* - Knowing, imperceptibly flows into the omega-point of Self - Realization. This may appear hard to believe in the beginning, but for sincere seekers who actually embark on this inner spiritual pilgrimage, this will be borne out by their own experience, as it was in my own case.

Unlike Ramana Maharshi and a few other gifted mystics and exceptional cases, humanity suffers enormously (and paradoxically also intensely enjoys), because of the *self*. From this arises the paramount importance of *self* - Knowing. Thus, J. Krishnamurti's *self* - Knowing, opens an entirely new door to *moksha*, a door, even the existence of which was, entirely missed in the ten thousand year long tradition of Self - Realization.

In the Tat Tvam Asi retreats, it is *self* - Knowing, that takes us all the way to the farther milestone of the calming and silencing of the *self*. At that farther milestone, the goal of Self - Realization begins to emerge on the horizon, naturally and brilliantly, whereas, without the precursor of *self* - Knowing, Self - Realization would have remained *terra incognita* and a utopian ideal that the vast majority of seekers will never ever achieve.

