

# Path to Dharma

தர்ம நெறி



News Letter

28

செய்தி மடல்

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April

2010

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கேஷத்திர (வயல்) விநாயக ஆலயம்,

ஸ்ரீ முன்னேஸ்வரம், சிலாபம், ஸ்ரீ லங்கா.

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### *Editorial.*

*'Path to Dharma', the periodical published monthly by Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, Sri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka, is presenting the 28<sup>th</sup> issue this month.*

*As held before the principal endeavor of this publication is to transmit the thoughts related to Hinduism basically by responds to the doubts put forwarded by the anxious readers.*

*I am truly enthusiastic to the readers of 'Path to Dharma', magazine, who are yielding me colossal advise in bringing out this periodical.*

*B.S.Sarma,  
Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, Sri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka.  
April.2010*

### **Suggestions from the readers**

**Dear Sarma,**

I go through regularly the 'Path to Dharma' magazine every month. Thanks very much for sending me regularly this valuable issues, and appreciate the themes and concepts that are expressed in exceptionally simple style for any reader to appreciate.

Please let me know the Hinduism practiced in countries, other than India, Sri Lanka,, Malasia, Singapore. U.K etc.

Bless you with a long healthy life to tell us about Hinduism and other related topics.  
With kind regards,

K.Balakrishna, Chennai ,India

20<sup>th</sup> March.2010

Dear Sarma,

I went through your monthly news letter.'Path to Dharma". Please give the meaning and translations of some important mantras that are chanted during the poojas at the temple.

N. S. Srinivasn, Singapore.

The Editor,  
Path to Dharma.

Dear Mr.B.S.Sarma

I went through some magazines of your 'Path to Dharma', which are very informative and really authoritative work.I think you are taking a lot of effort in producing this magazine monthly.can you send me the back issues,vis e-mai?

L.R.Mohan Raj,U.K

## Quatations

“Even as the embodied Self passes, in his body, through the stages of childhood, youth, and the old age,so does It pass into another body. Calm souls are not bewildered by this”.

- **Bhagavad Gita . II, 13.**

“Atman, smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the hearts of all living creatures. A man who is free from desires beholds the majesty of the Self through tranquility of the senses and the mind and becomes free from grief”

- **Kata Upanishad I .ii., 20.**

“If a man knows Atman here, he then attains the true goal of life .If he does not know I t here, a great destruction awaits him. Having realized the Self in every being, the wise relinquish the world and become immortal”.

- **Kena Upanishad II. 5.**

“He who knows the Supreme Brahman verily becomes Brahman. In his family no one is born ignorant of Brahman. He overcomes grief; he overcomes evil; free from the fetters of the heart ,he becomes immortal” .

- **Mundaka Upanishad, III. ii. 9**

“ By knowing Him who alone pervades the universe, men become immortal”.

- **Svetasvtara Upanishad, III, 7.**

“As these flowing rivers, bound for the ocean, disappear into the ocean after having reached it, their names and forms being destroyed, and are called simply the ocean – even so,thses sixteen parts of the seer, whose goal is the Purusha ,disappear into the Purusha after having reached Him, their names and forms being destroyed, and are called simply the Purusha, He becomes free of parts and immortal”

- **Prasna Upanishad.vi, 5**

“The great, unborn Self iscundecaying,immortal,undying,fearless;It is Brahman(infinite).Brahman is indeed fearless.He who knows It as such becomesthe fearless Brahman”

- **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,IV,iv,25**

“This body dies, bereft of the living self; but the living self dies not”,

- **Chandogya Upanishad ,VI, xi,3.**

“Having realized Atman,which is soundless,intangible,formless,undecaying,and likewise tasteless,eternal and odourless;having realizedThat which is without beginning and end,beyond the Great and unchanging-one is freed from the jaws of death”

- **Kata Upanishad, I .iii.,15.**

“When all desires that dwell in the heart fall away,then the mortal becomes immortal and here attains Brahman”-

-**Kata Upanishad, II .iii.,14.**

**1. What is Atma? Is it soul? Is Atma and soul are one and the same?**

According to the context (circumstances/ situation) Atma has two different meanings. For instance, when it is told that atma takes birth, at that instant it means soul and when it is said that atma is Almighty and creates universe, then it means Almighty God.

In Vedas, there are three eternal matters Almighty God, prakriti and souls. Almighty God and souls are alive matters whereas prakriti is non - alive matter. From Prakriti, all the matters of universe are created. Soul can never be God being unchangeable and God can also never be soul being unchangeable. Soul due to the attraction towards prakriti is indulged in illusion and has to face the birth, death and rebirth again and again. God is never indulged in any type of illusion.

**2. What is the probability or chance of a person taken the human body again in the next birth?**

According to the Vedas, if a person carries out sanctimonious activities in the current life, he acquires rebirth as human if he does not get salvation. Conversely, if a person does not do self-righteous activities, he faces the consequence of previous lives- deeds in present life and the deeds - good or bad, done in the present life will have to be borne in the next birth.

**3. When was original epic Ramayana written?**

Original Ramayana was written by Rishi Valmiki about 1 crore, 81 lakh, 49 thousand years ago. In samvat 1631 Tulsiji started writing Ramayan and in samvat 1633 it was completed according to Swami Ramswarup

**4. With how many shlokas was epic Mahabharata written by Vyas Muni in the beginning?**

Vyas Muni and his disciple Gemini originally wrote **epic Mahabharata** with only ten thousands shlokas. Nevertheless at the present time, about one lakh twenty thousand shlokas are there in Mahabharata. Hence one lakh, ten thousand shlokas are later additions.

**5. What are the five basic matters mentioned in the Vedas and from where did these come?**

Five basic matters are namely;

- 1) Earth (*prithivi*)
- 2) Water (*apas*)
- 3) Fire (*tejas*)
- 4) Air (*vayu*)
- 5) Ether (*akasha*)

These matters are made from non-alive prakriti by the power of Almighty God. From prakriti - mahat (mind) came and from mahat - ahankar came and, from ahankar - panch tanmatrayein came and from panch tan matrayein- five matters came. The entire world including human bodies is made from these five matters.

**6. What is quintessence?**

Quintessence, or the fifth essence, is a fifth element beyond the standard earth, air, fire and water of ancient chemistry. Steinhardt and colleagues have adopted quintessence as the name for a particular model for the vacuum energy which causes the accelerating expansion of the Universe.

**7. What are the names of Sapta Rishis?**

The names of Sapta Rishis are;

1. Atri,
2. Bhrigu,
3. Kutsa,
4. Vasishtha,
5. Gautama,
6. Kasyapa
7. Angirasa.

**8. Is it possible to believe in good fortune, bad luck, chance, drishti dosha, etc. in life according to the Vedas?**

According to the Vedas there is no reference or trust in good fortune, bad luck, chance, drishti dosha, etc. in life. Human beings face only the result of the good or bad deeds of their previous lives' deeds in the nature of happiness and sorrowfulness, respectively.

**9. What is the most established model for the Universe?**

The most established model for the Universe is a flat  $\Lambda$ CDM Big Bang model where the expansion of the Universe is accelerating, and according to this model the age of the Universe is 13.7 billion years.

**10. What is said in Veda about the number of days in an year?**

The supposition that the 360 day year is a fundamental measurement of Hindu cosmological time cycles is revealed, in the *Rg Veda*, which have been composed no later than 1000 B.C. shows that;

*Twelve spokes, one wheel, navels three.  
Who can comprehend this?  
On it are placed together  
three hundred and sixty like pegs.  
They shake not in the least. - (Dirghatama, Rg Veda 1.164.48)*

*A seven-named horse does draw  
this three-naved wheel...  
Seven steeds draw the seven-wheeled chariot...  
Wise poets have spun a seven-strand tale  
around this heavenly calf, the Sun. -(Dirghatama, Rg Veda 1.164.1-5)*

the "navels three" must stand for the three mean motions of the Sun and "seven-wheeled chariot" for the precession of the equinoxes.

### 11. Can we believe in fate according to Veda?

According to Yajurveda mantra 7/48, the human beings are at liberty to do good deeds (punya karma) or sins (papa karma) and the result is awarded by natural laws of almighty God. When a person is reborn, he is granted with the outcome of the consequence of good deeds and sins of the previous lives to face which is called **prarabdha karmas** (fate). So in prarabdha (fate) man has to face or countenance the results of the deeds of his own previous lives. However, the fate can be changed or nullified by performing pious deeds according to Vedas.

### 12. What is karma and reincarnation.

The origin of the word *Karma* is from the Sanskrit language 'karman' which means 'action - effect- fate'. Karma is the summation of a person's dealings in this state and previous states of existence, analyzed as affecting their future destinies. This briefly means that the effects of a person's actions that determine his destiny in his next incarnation)

The origin of the word *Reincarnation* is from the Latin language in- carn- which means 'into' 'flesh'. Reincarnation is the rebirth of a soul in a new body. Incarnation is a spirit embodied in a living human form. Reincarnation is a necessary adjunct to Karma. This is because incomplete chastisement for a person's evil deeds in this life will be completed in future lives.

### 13. What is Nirvana?

Nirvana is described as a transcendent state in which there is no suffering or desire and no sense of self. The source of this term is from the Sanskrit nirvāna word where nirvā means 'be extinguished'. An individual is released from the repeated cycles of reincarnation and suffering on attaining nirvana. Hindus as well as Buddhists believe in a state of Nirvana or Nibbana.

### 14. What is mentioned in Hinduism about unit of time or time factor?

The Hindu metrics of time (Kāla Vyavahara) could be outlined as follows;

**Hindu units of time on a logarithmic scale.**

#### *Sidereal metrics*

- ❖ a **paramanu** is the normal interval of blinking in humans, (approximately 4 seconds)
- ❖ a **vighati** is 6 paramaanus, (approximately 24 seconds)
- ❖ a **ghadiya** is 60 vighatis, (approximately 24 minutes )
- ❖ a **muhurta** is equal to 2 ghadiyas, ( approximately 48 minutes )
- ❖ a **nakshatra ahoratra Agama** or sidereal day is *exactly* equal to 30 muhurtas (Note: A day is considered to begin and end at sunrise, not midnight.)

The Vishnu Purana describes another system of Time measurement in section, of the Vishnu Purana Book I, Chapter III is as given below:

- ❖ 15 twinklings of the eye = 1 Káshthá
- ❖ 30 Káshthás = 1 Kalá
- ❖ 30 Kalás = 1 Muhúrta
- ❖ 30 Muhúrtas = 1 day (24 hours)
- ❖ 30 days = 1 month
- ❖ 6 months = 1 Ayana
- ❖ 2 Ayanas = 1 year or one day (day + night) of the gods

### Small units of time used in the Vedas

- ❖ a **trasarenu** is the combination of 6 celestial *atoms*.
- ❖ a **truti** is the time needed to integrate 3 *trasarenu*s, or 1/1687.5th of a second.
- ❖ a **vedha** is 100 *trutis*.
- ❖ a **lava** is 3 *vedhas*.
- ❖ a **nimesha** is 3 *lavas*, or a blink.
- ❖ a **kshanas** is 3 *nimeshas*.
- ❖ a **kashthas** is 5 *kshanas*, or about 8 seconds.
- ❖ a **laghu** is 15 *kashthas*, or about 2 minutes.
- ❖ 15 **laghus** make one *nadika*, which is also called a *danda*.  
(This equals the time before water overflows in a six-pala-weight [fourteen ounce] pot of copper, in which a hole is bored with a gold probe weighing four *masha* and measuring four fingers long. The pot is then placed on water for calculation).
- ❖ 2 **dandas** make one *muhurta*.
- ❖ 6 or 7 **dandas** make one *yamah*, or 1/4th of a day or night.
- ❖ 4 **praharas** or 4 **yamas** are in each *day* or each *night*.

### Lunar metrics

- ❖ a **tithi** (*thithi*) or lunar day  
(lunar days defined as the time it takes for the longitudinal angle between the moon and the sun to increase by 12°. Tithis begin at varying times of day and vary in duration from approximately 19 to approximately 26 hours).
- ❖ a **paksa** (also *paksha*) or lunar fortnight consists of 15 **tithis**
- ❖ a **masa** or lunar month (approximately 29.5 days) is divided into 2 **pakshas**  
(the one between new moon and full moon is called *gaura* (bright) or *shukla paksha*; the one between full moon and new moon *krishna* (dark) *paksha* ).
- ❖ a **ritu** is 2 **masa**
- ❖ an *ayana* *Agamais* 3 **rituhs**
- ❖ a **year** is 2 **Ayanas**

### Tropical metrics

- ❖ a **yaama** is 7½ *Ghatas*
- ❖ 8 **yaamas** 1 half of the day (either day or night)
- ❖ an **ahoratra** *Agamais* a tropical day (Note: A day is considered to begin and end at sunrise, not midnight.)

### Reckoning of time among other entities

Reckoning of time amongst the *pitrs*.

- ❖ 1 human year = 1 day of the *pitrs*
- ❖ 30 days of the *pitrs* = 1 month of the *pitrs*
- ❖ 12 months of the *pitrs* = 1 year of the *pitrs*
- ❖ The lifespan of the *pitrs* is 100 years of the *pitrs* (= 36,000 human years)

Reckoning of time amongst the *Devas*.

- ❖ 1 human year = 1 day of the *Devas*.
- ❖ 30 days of the *Devas* = 1 month of the *Devas*.
- ❖ 12 months of the *Devas* = 1 year of the *Devas* = 1 divine year.
- ❖ The lifespan of the *Devas* is 100 years of the *Devas* (= 36,000 human years)

The **Vishnu Purana** Time measurement section of the Vishnu Purana Book I Chapter III explains the above as follows:

- ❖ 2 **Ayanas** (six month periods, see above) = 1 human year or 1 day of the *devas*
- ❖ 4,000 + 400 + 400 = 4,800 divine years = 1 *Krita Yuga*
- ❖ 3,000 + 300 + 300 = 3,600 divine years = 1 *Tretá Yuga*
- ❖ 2,000 + 200 + 200 = 2,400 divine years = 1 *Dwápara Yuga*
- ❖ 1,000 + 100 + 100 = 1,200 divine years = 1 *Kali Yuga*
- ❖ 12,000 divine year = 4 *Yugas* = 1 *Mahayuga* (also called *divine yuga*)

Reckoning of time for *Brahma*.

- ❖ 1000 Mahayugas = 1 kalpa = 1 day (day only) of Brahma (4320,000,000 human years).  
(Two *kalpas* constitute a day and night of Brahma)
- ❖ 30 days of Brahma = 1 month of Brahma (259,200,000,000 human years)
- ❖ 12 months of Brahma = 1 year of Brahma (3,110,400,000,000 human years)
- ❖ 50 years of Brahma = 1 Parardha
- ❖ 2 parardhas = 100 years of Brahma = 1 Para = 1 Mahakalpa  
(the lifespan of Brahma)(311,040,000,000,000 human years)

One day of Brahma is divided into 10000 parts called charanas.

The **charanas** are divided as follows:

#### The Four Yugas

- |                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| ❖ 4 charanas (1,728,000 solar years) | Sathya Yuga  |
| ❖ 3 charanas(1,296,000 solar years)  | Tretha Yuga  |
| ❖ 2 charanas(864,000 solar years)    | Dwapara Yuga |
| ❖ 1 charanas(432,000 solar years)    | Kali Yuga    |

The cycle repeats itself so altogether there are 1000 cycles of mahayugas in one day of Brahma.

- ❖ One cycle of the above four **yugas** is one **mahayuga** (4.32 million solar years)
- ❖ as is confirmed by the Gita statement "sahasra-yuga paryanta Agamaahar-yad brahmano viduH", meaning, a day of brahma is of 1000 mahayugas. Thus a day of Brahma, kalpa, is of duration: 4.32 billion solar years. Two *kalpas* constitute a day and night of Brahma
- ❖ A **manvanthara** consists of 71 mahayugas (306,720,000 solar years).  
(Each Manvanthara is ruled by a Manu).
- ❖ After each manvanthara follows one **Sandhi Kala** of the same duration as a *Krihta Yuga* (1,728,000 = 4 Charana).  
(It is said that during a Sandhi Kala, the entire earth is submerged in water.)
- ❖ A **kalpa** consists of a period of 1,728,000 solar years called *Adi Sandhi*, followed by 14 manvantharas and Sandhi Kalas.
- ❖ A day of Brahma equals  
(14 times 71 mahayugas) + (15 x 4 Charanas)  
= 994 mahayugas + (60 Charanas)  
= 994 mahayugas + (6 x 10) Charanas  
= 994 mahayugas + 6 mahayugas  
= 1000 mahayugas

#### The present date

We are currently in the 28th kaliyuga of the first day of the 1st year of the shvetavaraha kalpa of the second parardha of Brahma in the reign of the 7th Manu, Manu Vaivasvata. This is the 51st year of the present Brahma and so about 155 trillion years have elapsed since he took over as Brahma.

The current Kali Yuga (Iron Age) began at midnight 17 February / 18 February in 3102 BC in the proleptic Julian calendar.

#### 15. Can you brief about yogi Paramahansa Yogananda ?

Mukunda Lal Ghosh was the original name Paramahansa Yogananda at birth who was born on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1893 in the northern Indian city of Gorakhpur. Yogi Yogananda died on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1952 at Los Angeles, USA. Yogananda was trained in the yoga discipline from the age of seventeen, by Swami Sri Yukteswar for ten years. Paramahansa considered his gurus as *avatars*. Paramahansa Yogananda was conferred with the Swami order in 1915, after graduating from the University of Calcutta. He founded a 'how to live' school for boys where spiritual - yoga training was combined with modern educational methods. He founded a society called Self-Realization Fellowship in 1920 at United States. Yogananda settled in Los Angeles five years later. Kriya Yoga is a form of yoga popularized by Paramahansa Yogananda. An English translation of 'The Bhagavad Gita' and Autobiography of a Yogi (Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramahansa Yogananda published by Self-Realization

Fellowship, 3880 San Raphael Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90065-3298 U.S.A. ISBN 0-87612-082-6.) are his master pieces.

#### **16. What is Samadhi?**

The derivation of this word Samadhi is from Sanskrit samādhi which means 'contemplation'.

Samadhi is a state of powerful concentration attained through meditation. Samadhi has also been expressed as a state in which one's consciousness becomes in unity with the atman.

Yogis express samadhi as a state of absolute happiness. Hindus accept as true that they can arrive at samadhi by meditating and looking within themselves in order to 'self-realize'. The mediator is required to disciple himself to a guru (yogi) and move closer to Nirvana after many years of meditation.

By the process of Yoga - meditation, the mediator attempts to empty himself of all his ego driven desires, reason and logic. The mediator trusts that through practice and submissive following of a Yogi, he can achieve self realization (fulfillment of one's own potential).

#### **17. What is Rta with reference to Hinduism?**

Rta (or Rita) is a dynamic principle of order, manifesting itself in change, not in rigidity. Rta enables natural bodies to move rhythmically and in balance without undergoing the disorganizing and destructive effect otherwise implicit in motion.

Because of rta we have a cosmos, an ordered universe that undergoes change without becoming chaos. "All natural actions in this three-layered universe are governed by an impersonal principle called rta .

Because of adhering to the dynamic principle of rta the sun follows its daily path, setting, but rising again and continuing to support the world with its light. When rta is observed by human beings, order prevails and there is peace among individuals. In social affairs, makes harmony possible in the actions of all living beings. In human speech rta means truth, and in human dealings it is justice.

In veneration, rta is the pattern of correct performance. Right ritual maintains synchronization between humanity and nature, and one human being and another. According to Hindu mythology the vedic deity Varuna, the custodian of the cosmic order, is the special guardian of rta. It is believed that Varuna, penalizes those who do not speak the truth or who commit inappropriate actions. Rta is a theoretical principle, an enormously ancient Hindu abstract idea that from the commencement was independent of theology .

#### **18. What is the different between God and soul with reference to Hindu Veda?**

Atharvaveda mantra 10/8/25 confirms that, soul is a living (alive) matter which (who) is even minutest than the tip of hair and also is immortal. Shwetashwtaropnishad chapter 5, shloka 9, also endorses this fact.

Soul is the minutest matter and cannot be seen with naked eyes or with any instruments or equipments like electron microscopes therefore, and taken for granted that soul to be shapeless like an amoeba.

As mentioned in above Atharvaveda mantra 10/8/25 though the soul is immortal, similar to Almighty God, Who is also formless and immortal. But Almighty is omnipresent, omniscient and Almighty.

Atharvaveda mantra 10/8/26 states that soul is 'AJARA' which means , changeless and 'Amrita' that means, immortal and resides in the body of the human being. Same Atharvaveda mantra further clarifies that body of human being is 'Martayasa' , that is destructible.

Atharvaveda mantra 10/8/27 affirms that soul while residing in the body of human being looks like woman or man or young boy/girl but soul itself is not man, woman, girl, boy etc.

As enlightened above soul resides in the body but soul is not the body. Not only the case of human body but it applies to all living beings. For example- in the body of fish, it looks like a fish and if in the body of dog, it looks like a dog. But see the soul is not a fish, a dog etc. Soul is always unchangeable. But soul changes body of living-beings based on his deeds of the previous lives. When the soul come in to the body then body acts and when the soul go away out of body , then body becomes dead. Hence body becomes dead and not soul. Soul enters another body when the previous body dies away.

As explained above, God has indefinite, diverse qualities, from soul. God is omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, creates, nurses and destroys the universe while such characteristics cannot be attained by soul. Soul faces the end-results of its (his )deeds of previous lives, in the present body of living being, but not the God.

God is Almighty which means, He has unlimited powers and Yajurveda mantra 31/4 states that 'Padasaya abhavatpunaha' which means that, only a part of this divine power creates, nurses and controls the whole universe. So, there is no reason for Almighty God would require to take birth etc.

Shwetashwataropnishad sloka 6/8 also states that, 'Swabhaviki gyan balkriya cha' which means that, divine knowledge, deeds and power to control the universe is automatic.

## **19. What are the names of twenty eight Siva Agama ?**

The names of twenty eight Siva Agama (Siva-gnanams) are namely:

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Kamika Agama        | 15) Veera Agama        |
| 2) Yagaja Agama        | 16) Rowrava Agama      |
| 3) Sindhiya Agama      | 17) Makuta Agama       |
| 4) Karana Agama        | 18) Vimala Agama       |
| 5) Ajitha Agama        | 19) Chandragnana Agama |
| 6) Dheeptham           | 20) Bhimbha Agama      |
| 7) shuushma Agama      | 21) Purothkeetha Agama |
| 8) Sahaskara Agama     | 22) Lalitha Agama      |
| 9) Amshuma Agama       | 23) Sdhha Agama        |
| 10) Suprabhedham       | 24) Sandhana Agama     |
| 11) Vijhaya Agama      | 25) Savoaktha Agama    |
| 12) Nishvasa Agama     | 26) Parameswara Agama  |
| 13) Swaayambhuva Agama | 27) Kirana Agama       |
| 14) Anala Agama        | 28) Vathulam Agama     |

## 20. What is the meaning of the mantra of 'saha naavavatu...' ?

The meaning of the mantra of 'saha naavavatu...' is as follows;

Aum saha naavavatu  
Saha nau bhunaktu  
Saha viiryan karavaavahai  
Tejasvi naavadhiitamastu  
Maa vidvishhaavahai

May we be protected together.  
May we be nourished together.  
May we work together with great vigour  
May our study be enlightening  
May no obstacle arise between us.

### Quatations

Only the bodies, of which this eternal,imperishable,incomprehensible Self is the indweller,are said to have an end ”.

- Bhagavad Gita, II,18.

It is never born,not does It never die,nor,having once been, does It again cease to be.Unborn,eternal,permanent,and primeval,It is not slain when the body is slain. ”.

- Bhagavad Gita, II,20.

This self is said to be unmenifest,incomprehensible,and unchangeable.Therefore,knowing It to be so,you should not grieve, ”

.- Bhagavad Gita . II,25.

It is that which transcends hunger and thirst,grief,delusion,old age,and death”.-

-Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,III,v,1

“It is the Self-free from sin,free from old age,free from death,free from grief,free from hunger,free from thirst;Its desires come true,Its thoughts come true”

- Chandogya Upanishad ,VIII, i,5.

