

# Bhaja Govindam

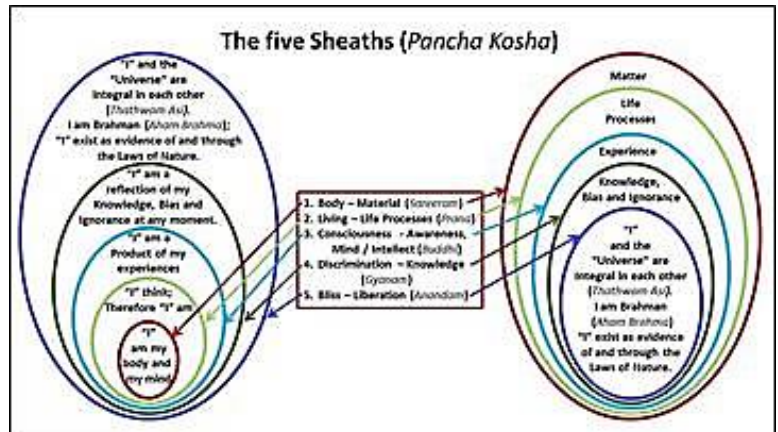
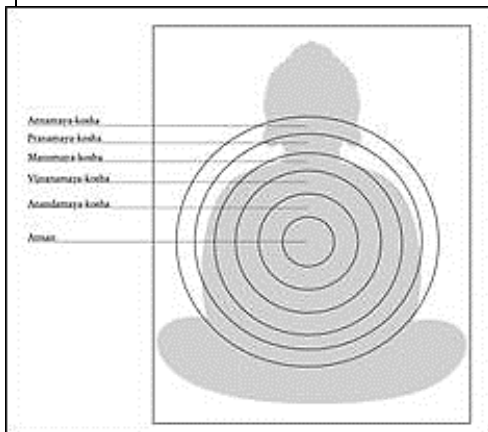
by Adi Sankaracharya



1	Bhaja govindam Bhaja govindam govindam Bhaja muudha mate sampraapte sannihite kaale nahi nahi rakshati dukrijnkarane	Oh, you man of foolish mind, offer your prayers to the Lord (Govindha); what good will your meticulous reciting of the rules (of Grammar) will do at the appointed time of death (the time of decision making, at the time to react or respond, at the time of crisis)?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foolish mind: The brilliant, objective and analytical mind shrouded with the ash of subjective desires, bias, opinions and judgements, acquired through our life (lived merely as a collection of experiences).</li><li>• Govindha: One who is the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom to be learned from scriptures like Vedas. Also identified as Brahman</li><li>• Prayers to the Lord: Seeking knowledge and understanding of Brahman. Becoming one with the view that we as individuals are mere microcosm of the universe at large; anything and everything exists (or lives) enabled by and as witness to the laws of nature at work. Such knowledge and awareness promotes Objectivity (which reflects as divine qualities in our actions, experiences and in our way of living)</li></ul> <p><a href="https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/anatomy-of-our-experiences-objectivity-the-end-result/">https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/anatomy-of-our-experiences-objectivity-the-end-result/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reciting of rules: Blind allegiance to scriptures; learning without reflection and contemplation of their inner meaning and values.</li><li>• Death at the appointed time: Every thought dies with the birth of the next thought that follows. If objectivity permeates through a series of thoughts that pass through our mind, then the waxing and waning of experiences as a result of these thoughts are merely waves in an ocean. Mind (Self) remains stable and unperturbed by these thoughts. The deep ocean by itself remains stable and changeless for long periods of time. Analogy to an eternal life (<i>Jeevan Mukthi</i> – Liberation during the life time); a life of lasting peace and inner happiness with the waves of daily happenings superimposed on it.</li></ul>	
2	Mudha jahiihi dhana aagama trishhnaam kuru sad buddhim manasi vitrishhnaam yallabhase nija karmo paattam vittam tena vinodaya chittam	Oh foolish man, give up your relentless passion for material wealth. Liberate your mind to learn the truth about Reality (as described above). With that knowledge in mind, enjoy whatever you get as the reward of your efforts in the material world.

3	Naarii stanabhara naabhii desham drishhtvaa maagaa mohaavesham etan maamsaa vasaadi vikaaram manasi vichintaya vaaram vaaram	Do not fall prey for relentless enjoyment through the material effects and their satisfaction (like sensual pleasures). Think well repeatedly to stay focused on the larger Reality.
4	Nnalinii dalagata jalam ati taralam tadva jjiivitam atishaya chapalam viddhi vyaadhi abhimaana grastam lokam shokahatam cha samastam	Like the water droplet on the petal of a lotus flower, life as we know of it (with a beginning and end) is extremely unstable. Also be aware that the subjective life (the entire material world) is consumed by disease, desire and filled with grief.
5	Yaavad vitto paarjana saktaha staavan nija parivaaro raktaha pashchaad jivati jarjara dehe vaartaam ko api na prichchhati gehe	As long as you are seen as a productive member of the family you are wanted and welcomed. When you become old and unable to contribute, no one wants to speak even a word with you.
6	Yaavat pavano nivasati dehe taavat prichchhati kushalam gehe gatavati vaayau dehaa paaye bhaaryaa bi bhayati tasmin kaaye	As long as a person is alive there are relatives. When the breathing stops even his wife is afraid of being near a dead body.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The answer to the above dilemma (and reality) is not anger, despair and feeling of being a victim.</li> <li>Instead find ways to be useful to others when you are young, because it is the right thing to do. Then you will find ways to be useful even if you are old and feeble. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Besides your physical efforts – which earns money – you also have your mind to express compassion and intellect to stimulate others to think in positive ways!</li> </ul> </li> <li>Enlightened person of objective mind remains as one's own friend; through lack of objectivity (and driven by the desire and passions of subjectivity) one becomes one's own worst enemy. --- Divine qualities described in B.G. Ch. 12 and 14.</li> </ul>	
7	Baalastaavat kriidaa saktaha Tarunastaavat tarunii saktaha Vridhdastaavat chchinta saktaha pare brahmani ko api na saktaha	When you are young you are attached to your playing; as a grown up you are attached to your desires, passion and sensual pleasures; when you are too old anxieties rule over you. Any one attached to the Supreme (Brahman) at any time?
8	Kaate kaantaa kaste putraha samsaaro ayamata iva vichitraha kasya tvam kaha kuta aayaataha tattvam chintaya tadiha bhraataha	Who is your wife, son, family? This family is indeed very strange. Who are you? Where do you come from? Oh brother, think of that Truth here and now.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Reality is that you are made up of your body (<i>Deham</i>); all its activities are enabled by the life giving force, the soul or <i>Athman</i> (<i>Dehinam</i>). <a href="https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/every-house-is-different-all-residents-are-the-same-deham-vs-dehinam/">https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/every-house-is-different-all-residents-are-the-same-deham-vs-dehinam/</a></li> <li>The Truth is that you live in five sheaths (<i>Kosha</i>: layers): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body as a physical matter (<i>Annamaya Kosha</i>)</li> <li>engaged in activities (like any plant or animal) (<i>Pranamaya Kosha</i>)</li> <li>living through a collection of experiences (<i>Manonmaya Kosha</i>)</li> <li>with an understanding that the experiences are the result of the three Guna (BG Chapter 14) (<i>Vignanamaya Kosha</i>) and</li> <li>the realization that the life giving force (<i>Athman</i> or <i>Brahman</i>: Laws of Nature) is</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	

connected to everything and all layers. (*Anandamaya Kosha*)



<https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2016/11/26/maya-that-which-it-is-not/>

- At the core you and the universe exist as integral in each other (*Thath Thwam Asi*)
  - You are the life force enabled by Laws of nature (*Aham Brahma*)
  - Being aware of this reality is knowledge (*Vidya*)
  - Seeing yourself and the world around you only through – and limited to – tangible events and activities and results is like seeing the reflection as the object itself. That is illusion (*Maya*)

9	Satsangatve nitssngatvam nitssangatve nirmohatvam nirmohatve nishchalatattvam nishcalatattve jiivanmukti	Through association with the good (people) and on learning about the true nature of the Self – Who am I? - one develops non-attachment, which in turns leads to a dispassionate outlook on life; that in turn leads to a calm and contemplative mindset which results in eternal peace and harmony within (or liberation in this life: <i>Jeevan Mukthi</i> ).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association with the “good” – <i>Sath</i> – can also be seen as association with the “truth” (i.e.) deep and sustained analytical understanding of the subject matter such as what is life? How it should be lived? etc.</li> <li>• Such analysis, reflection and contemplation and internalizing is Sath Sangh.</li> </ul>	
10	Vayasi gate kaha kaama vikaaraha shushhke niire kaha kaasaaraha kshiine vitte kaha parivaaraha gyaate tattve kaha samsaaraha	Where is the sensual pleasure when youth has disappeared? Where is the lake when all the water has evaporated? Where are the followers when the wealth has vanished? When the True Knowledge is gained where is the family connections?
11	Maa kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam harati nimeshaath kaalah sarvam maayaa mayamidam akhilaM hitvaa brahma padaM tvaM pravisha viditvaa	Do not take pride in your wealth, youth and its beauty or the retinue of people who follow you. These material possessions can disappear in a moment. After realizing them merely as effects ( <i>Maya</i> or reflections) learn and understand the essence of Brahman (the role of the laws of nature and their eternal existence). Then enter into that state of understanding (that you are also Brahman (i.e.) mere representation of the laws of nature in all that you perceive as the material world).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above does not suggest a life of poverty, shabby manners, untidy and a life of isolation.</li> <li>Instead be aware of all these aspects of life as “icing on the cake”. They can change with time. Even our recognition of their value will change depending on our subjective outlook governed by desire, passion, duality (love/hate), etc.</li> <li>Learn to enjoy a true inner peace. Then use all of the above as a collection of flowers in the garland of life. When they change you will know how to build a new garland with whatever is available at that time.</li> </ul>	
12	Dinayaaminyau saayam praataha Shishiravasantau punar aayaataha kaalah kriidati gachchhat yaayuhu tadapi na munjati aashaa vaayuhu	The sun rises and sets; spring and winter follow each other. We see this passage of time in so many ways. Yet no one leaves behind the forces of desire which are volatile and ever changing.
13	Kaate kaantaa dhana gata chintaa vaatula kim tava naasti niyantaa trijagati sajjana samgati raikaa bhavati bhavaarnava tarane naukaa	Why do you worry about wife, wealth and all other material objects, Oh you who are distracted!? Why is there not for you the eternal and imperishable one ( <i>Brahman</i> )? Only through association with That ( <i>Sajjana Samgathi</i> ) – as the boat ( <i>Naukaa</i> )- you can cross this ocean of life (in all three worlds) and its constant ebb and flow of desires.
	One should read the above verse as encouragement to seek divinity in our daily life, through a true understanding of Spirituality (to be in union with the spirit, soul, <i>Dehinam</i> , <i>Athman</i> or <i>Brahman</i> ). It is not a prescription to abandon family life or material world and seek a monastic way of life. After such understanding one is encouraged to practice spiritual acts, emotions and thoughts in our daily life.	
	<p>Along with the first prayer song the following twelve verses are said to be composed by Swami Sankaracharya as a tribute to his teacher Govindapada. It is said that Swami Sankaracharya composed and sang these verses as an extempore while walking along the streets of Benares on the banks of the holy river Ganges. He was witnessing many people reciting scriptural verses and rules of grammar. Others were following rituals with great care but without much reflection or contemplation on their larger purpose and meaning. As one would know Adhi Sankara spent his life time against blind faith in religion and rituals. He converted many religious leaders from needless rituals to a well ordained process of worship and reflection.</p> <p>The later 18 verses are said to be composed by his 14 disciples who were following him as they were walking along as a group.</p>	
14	Jatilo mundii lujnchhita keshaha Kaashhaayaambara bahukrita veshhaha pasyannapi cha na pashyati moodaha udara nimittam bahukrita veshhaha	There are those with matted strands of hair, others with shaven head, some performing rituals of extreme pain (like pulling out their hair) and others parading in saffron robes. All these people, while proclaiming to preach religion and divinity do not truly see the all-pervading Lord ( <i>Brahman</i> ). Sadly all their efforts are disguises merely to make a living.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The verse literally translated states all these are disguises to feed their belly. But we can also read that to infer all forms of religious teaching or practice of rituals merely to satisfy the preacher’s self needs (desire) such as hunger for food, emotional or intellectual hunger.</li> <li>Every effort to teach (and learn) scriptures must be to gain the true knowledge of “What is life? How it should be lived? - in an objective manner fostering true inner peace as well as peace and harmony</li> </ul>	

	all around.	
15	Angam galitam palitam mundam dashanavihiinam jatham thundam vridhdho yaati grihiitvaa dandam tadapi na mujnchaty aashaa pindam	Through age body gets worn out, hair turns grey, teeth fall off and one has to take recourse to a walking stick to move about. Yet, the bundles of desire do not leave him.
16	Agre vahnihi prushhte bhaanuhu raatrau chubuka samarpita jaanuhu karatala bhikshaha tarutala vaasaha tadapi na mujnchaty aashaa paashaha	Even the <i>Sanyasin</i> (renunciate) – like a person sitting in front of the holy fire from dawn to dusk (when the sun in front of him travels to set at his back), sitting squatted with his knees to his chin and eating food given to him as charity, living under a tree – may not escape the tight grip of his desires.
17	Kurute gangaa saagara gamanam vrata paripaalanam athavaa daanam gyaana vihinah sarva mathena muktim na bhajati janma shathena	One may travel in pilgrimage from the beginning to the end of holy rivers ( <i>Ganga Saagaram</i> - where river Ganges ends in the ocean), observe vows and such rituals and perform acts of charity like distributing alms and gifts. But such persons lacking in knowledge (knowledge and understanding - of the Truth), according to all teachings ( <i>sarva Mathena</i> ) he does not acquire liberation even in one hundred lives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “Truth” described here is a true understanding of non-attachment.</li> <li>It is this non-attachment (<i>Karma Phala Thyagam</i>) prescribed as the minimum requirement for enlightened living in B.G. Chapter 12!</li> <li>The non-attachment arises through the comprehension of <i>Thath Thawam Asi</i> (I (or you) and the Universe are integral in each other). It is described through some vivid imagery in the next verse.</li> </ul>	
18	Sura mandira taru muula nivaasaha shayyaa bhuutalam ajinam vaasaha sarva parigraha bhoga tyagaha kasya sukham na karoti viraagaha	Living under the roof in a temple, under a tree or sleeping on the uncovered ground, wearing deer skin one lives a life of non-attachment (renouncing the sense of personal possessions and desires - thirst to enjoy). Such a person of non-attachment and dispassion ( <i>Vairagya</i> ) enjoys true inner peace and the happiness as a result of it.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above is an extreme and idealized description of non-attachment. We witness this in real world in a few like Swami Ramana Maharishi.</li> <li>One need not be constrained to such an idealized way of living. This is clarified through the next verse.</li> </ul>	
19	Yogarato vaa bhogarato vaa sangarato vaa sanga viihinaha yasya brahmani ramate chittam nandati nandati nandatyeva	Let one revel in Yoga (through internal reflection and contemplation) or live a life of active engagement in the pleasures of life (Boga); one could live in the active company of others or in solitude away from the crowd. No matter how you live, only those with a true understanding of Brahman and who remain focused (revel) on this understanding through the practice of non-attachment, truly experience inner peace and the happiness as a result of it.
	<a href="https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2017/10/27/leadership-through-spirituality-in-practice-part-2/">https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2017/10/27/leadership-through-spirituality-in-practice-part-2/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through verse 14 to 17 we see the different attempts by people to preach and practice religion and</li> </ul>	

	<p>Vedantha. But that is not adequate if non-attachment is not at the core. Through verse 18 we see one example of the life on a non-attached person. But that may not be the way of living for all. In verse 19 we are reminded that the physical aspects of how you live, think or preach are not the determinant. Instead your personal comprehension of the Brahman (laws of nature at work) and your focused effort to live with this knowledge is the only true and permanent source of lasting peace and joy. Practice of such knowledge can be observed through objectivity and the non-attachment that comes with it in all your life activities – Spirituality in practice.</p>	
20	<p>Bhagavad giita kijinchida dhiitaa gangaa jalalava kanikaa piitaa sakridapi yena muraari samarchaa kriyate tasya yamena na charchaa</p>	<p>For one who has studied Bhagawath Geetha (and internalized its inner concepts and guidance on non-attachment) even a little bit, one who has sipped even a drop of the holy Ganges water, one who has worshipped the Lord even once, for him there is no quarrel with the Lord of death (Yama).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of Bhagawath Geetha, even a lit bit --- <i>Gnana Yoga</i></li> <li>• Sipping a drop of Ganges water --- <i>Karma Yoga</i></li> <li>• Worship of the Lord, even once --- <i>Bhakthi Yoga</i></li> </ul> <p>Recall our discussion that these three pathways are inter-related with non-attachment as the core in all of them: <a href="https://wordpress.com/post/sipractce.wordpress.com/1575">https://wordpress.com/post/sipractce.wordpress.com/1575</a></p> <div data-bbox="745 852 987 1085" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no quarrel with the Lord of death: Death being determined and controlled by a god (Lord Yama) are mythologies. Such mythology is for one who does not understand, comprehend or accept the reality that birth and death are merely aspects of biological process governed by Laws of Nature. In other words birth and death are fearful only in our mind and the emotions it creates (<i>Katha Upanishad</i>).</li> </ul>	
21	<p>Punarapi jananam punarapi maraNAM punarapi jananii jaTare shayanam iha saMsaare bahu dustaare kRipayaa paare paahi muraare</p>	<p>The cycles of birth and death follow endlessly; this journey of life for every person starts with the resting in the mother's womb. This journey of life is difficult to cross over. Save me Oh Lord through your infinite kindness.</p>
22	<p>Rathyaa charpaTa virachitha kanthaha puNyaa apuNya vivarjita panthaha yogii yoga niyojita chitto ramate baalo unmattava deva</p>	<p>The enlightened person (Yogi) wearing minimum of cloth (<i>Godhadhi</i> -- a covering stitched together from the cloth discarded by others) walks the path that is beyond merit (<i>punyam</i>) or blemishes (<i>Apunyama</i>) , with his mind fixed on the state beyond Guna (<i>Nirgunathvam</i> or total objectivity), revels in his God Consciousness (<i>Yoga Niyojitha Chiththaha</i>). Such manner of living is indistinguishable between the new born child and a mad person lost in his thoughts.</p>
	<p><a href="https://sipractce.wordpress.com/2017/06/16/do-you-dare-to-be-a-spiritual-person/">https://sipractce.wordpress.com/2017/06/16/do-you-dare-to-be-a-spiritual-person/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In verse 18, the man of highest enlightenment was described as a person of non-attachment identifiable through few examples. The same non-attachment is described here through few other</li> </ul>	



	<p>examples. The child is non-attached since it knows no difference with limited experience in life. Mad person also knows no difference but due to a faulty or malfunctioning brain. The enlightened person knows the difference between the two but recognizes both as states of mind without attachment. Hence through constant awareness and control of his mind (and hence thoughts, emotions and actions) he lives like a child. His indifference may appear like the life of a mad man for all others who are engulfed in their self-driven thoughts, sentiments and actions (Subjective way of life).</p>	
23	<p>Kaha tvaM ko ahaM kuta aayaataha kaa me jananii ko me thaataha iti paribhaavaya sarvam asaaram vishvaM tyaktvaa svapna vichaaram</p>	<p>Ask yourself: Who am I? Who are you (others)? Where did I come from? Who is my mother? Father? Pursue such inquiry (<i>paribhaavaya</i>) to find the separation between the essential (enabler or the driving force : Brahman or the Laws of nature) and the non-essential (world of experiences; a land of dreams) ---- This verse is very much like verse 8, above.</p>
24	<p>Tvayi mayi cha anyatra eko vishhnuhu vyartham kupyasi mayi asahishnuhu bhava samachittaha sarvatra tvam vaanchhasi yadi achiraath vishhnutvam</p>	<p>In you, in me and in everyone and everything, there is but one eternal Truth, the all-pervading Reality (<i>Vishnu or Brahman</i>). Not recognizing this basic principle and being impatient (<i>asahishnuhu</i>) you are getting angry with me. If you want to attain the status of Vishnu (If you want to acquire divine qualities) remain equal minded (<i>Sama Chittaha</i>) at all times.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equal minded – equanimity – is an outcome of non-attachment, which is the outcome of objectivity. We acquire objectivity – and move away from subjective behavior (of unbridled desire, passion, duality (like/dislike), etc.) – through analysis (<i>Vignanam</i>) of <i>Guna</i> and their inter-play.</li> <li>This evolution to non-duality as a natural aspect of daily life is explained in the next verse. <a href="https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/anatomy-of-our-experiences-objectivity-the-end-result/">https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/anatomy-of-our-experiences-objectivity-the-end-result/</a></li> </ul>	
25	<p>Shatrau mitre putre bandhau maa kuru yatnam vigraha sandhau sarvasmin api pashyaatha athmaanam sarvatra utsrija bheda agyaanam</p>	<p>Do not strive and waste your energy in dualities like friend/enemy, son, relatives (near and dear vs. far removed). See yourself in all others. Rise – lift yourself - above the cloud of such dualities. See yourself in everything. Lift away (<i>Utsrija</i>) your ignorance of dualities (<i>bheda agyaanam</i>) everywhere (<i>Sarvatra</i> - in all places and situations).</p>
26	<p>Kaamam krodham lobham moham tyaktvaa atmaanam bhaavaya ko aham aatmagyaana vihiinaa muudhaaha te paschyante Naraka niguudhaaha</p>	<p>Relinquish your desire, anger, vanity and delusion (<i>Kamam, Krodham, Lobham, Moham</i>). Then you will see the truth about who you are (I am this: <i>Saha Aham</i>) (i.e.) Self as the representation of Brahman (<i>Aham Brahman</i>). Those who are foolish without this knowledge of the self (<i>Athma Gnanam</i>) torture themselves like living in hell.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recall that all three Guna (<i>Sathvikam, Rajasam, Thaamasam</i>: Knowledge, Bias and Ignorance) co-exist all the time. It is by focusing on Bias and ignorance (within each of us) we enhance the role of Sathvikam which in turn leads to objectivity. Higher the objectivity, greater the non-attachment, which decreases desire, anger, vanity and delusion (<i>Kamam, Krodham, Lobham, Moham</i>).</li> <li>Without such process and pathway of self-control (Yoga) any attempt to minimize these negative tendencies is like dog chasing its tail ! ☹</li> <li>It is a self-evident truth (for one who can see it) that anything and everything is governed by the laws</li> </ul>	

of Nature. The sum total of all laws of nature – known and unknown – is defined as Brahman.

- In that understanding life is a biological process and all life experiences are also reflections of the laws of nature at work.
- For one with such understanding of the reality, there is no fear or concerns about birth and death (No quarrel with Yama, Lord of death).
- Hell, heaven, reincarnation and the many lives – are they all merely imaginary creations to satisfy those without the above knowledge and understanding?
- Do we create our own hell and heaven on this earth – here and now – through subjective outlook, the dualities they create and their effects?

<https://sipractice.wordpress.com/2017/10/10/desire-anger-and-passion-the-forces-that-we-need-to-contend-with/>

As long as we see the world through material objects and experiences it is difficult to see the mere existence of everything as influenced by and as witness to the effects of laws of nature (Brahman). This is the essence of non-duality. This is the answer to the question “Who am I?”

No matter how much one is told about this simple truth, it has to become self-evident in one’s own mind. The existence of gravitational field is a well understood concept for Physicists. All others accept it as a matter of belief. Such intrinsic and personal understanding of the basic laws in any field is the highest learning. May be that is why we are given Ph.D degree as the highest degree in every subject?

Over the centuries to comprehend the above simple reality of our existence as stated through great pronouncements (Maha Vakya (i.e.) *Thath Thwam Asi, Aham Brahman*), a series of models have been constructed under various pathways such as:

- Non-duality (Adhvaitham): Fully embrace the idea that we are mere effect and evidences of laws of nature (I am Brahman),
- Duality (Dhvaitham): Can’t see it that way but respect and seek such understanding (life as a means to serve Brahman) or
- Limited or qualified Duality (Vishishta Dhwaitham): Can see such perspective only to a certain extent (and through our way of life of service to Brahman) with the hope such comprehension may happen someday.
- With the view that Brahman as the God to be worshipped, further set of pathways have evolved:
  - Brahman willed and created Gods, who created heaven, hell and earth
  - Reincarnation and many lives (since one life may not be enough to learn the self-evident truth)
  - God as an idealized person (Embodiment of divinity)
  - Purana, Ithihasa, Bhagawatham and other writings to represent God and His ways of life – pathways to emulate.
  - Worship services (as means to manage our mind and its emotions to channel our thinking and for faith in the basic Truth (Maha Vakya)

Now all of the above – based on religion and theology - dominate our teaching materials, tools and methods of enquiry on what is life? How it should be lived?

At times the ordained processes and rituals leave the elders (and often the children) confused. That



	<p>is like a spider building a cobweb to catch its prey (food for survival). But, are we all now caught up in this cobweb and believe that religion is a mere literal following of rituals and Philosophy itself is too deep and confusing?</p> <p>In the next verse we see some basic tools to foster objectivity and overcome the pangs of duality</p>	
27	<p>Geyam giitaa naama sahasram dhyeyam shriipati ruupamajasram neyam sajjana sange chittam deyam diinajanaaya cha vittam</p>	<p>Chant the scriptures (Bhagawath Geetha) and the 1000 names of the Lord (<i>Sahasra namam</i>); Always reflect on the image of the Lord (Vishnu in the company of Goddess Lakshmi); Seek out the company of the truth seekers and their reflection on Reality; engage in charitable acts by distributing your wealth (possessions) for those in need.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recall our discussion that Bhakthi, Karma and Gnana Yoga are inter – related. One leads to the other. Hence the suggestion to start with some basic prayer singing.</li> <li>“Possession” here need not refer to wealth alone! Anything we claim as belonging to us are possessions. This includes our physical strength, lessons learned from our experiences, knowledge gained through study, analysis and reflection.</li> <li>Charity can be through donation of money and materials; it can also be through service, hosting people as guests, sharing your time and that of others in your family to help those in need, etc.</li> <li>The Hindu Puja service and prayers – mentioned above - is literally a process to share all one has - time, materials, service, emotions and thoughts – as dedication for larger common good.</li> </ul>	
28	<p>Sukhatah kriyate raamaa bhogaha pashchaad hanta shariire rogaha yadyapi loke maranam sharanam tadapi na mujnchatu papa aacharanam</p>	<p>Only for the sake of physical pleasures one indulges in many activities. But they merely lead to disease and decay. Even after being aware that all these come to end at death, people still do not give up such sinful pleasures.</p>
29	<p>Artham anartham bhaavaya nityam naasti tatah sukhaleshaha satyam putraadapi dhanabhaajaam bhiitihi sarvatra eshaa vihitaa riitihi</p>	<p>Reflect constantly that wealth – merely as a matter of possession – only leads to calamity. There is no happiness to be gained from such personal attachment to possessions. They breed fear from one’s own son. That is the nature of wealth and all matters of personal pride everywhere.</p>
30	<p>Praanaayaamam pratyahaaram nitya anitya viveka vichaaram japa sameta samaadhi vidhaanam kuru avadhaanam mahadh avadhaanam</p>	<p>Perform the following with great care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voluntary and conscious control of all activities of life (like breathing, eating, physical activities, emotions and thoughts) (<i>Pranaayamam</i>)</li> <li>Conscious and voluntary control of all sense organs and their functions (<i>Pratyahaaram</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Above are aspects of Yoga (union with the self).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Reflection or discrimination between permanent (Objective - <i>Nitya</i>) and impermanent (Subjective - <i>Anitya</i>) that change with time, mood, circumstances, etc.</li> <li>Prayer and meditation leading to State of true inner peace (<i>Samadhi</i>).</li> </ul> <p>“Perform with great care” (<i>Kuru avadhaanam</i>) is repeated twice in this verse to communicate emphasis.</p>

31	Gurucharanaambuja nirbhara bhakataha samsaaraad achiraad bhava muktaha saha indriya maanasa niyamaadevam drakshyasi nija hridayastham devam	You, the devotee worshipping at the lotus feet of the teacher (Govinda Gurupada), blessings to you. Through your discriminative use of your body (sense organs), mind and intellect may you become liberated soon from the world of dualities ( <i>Samsaara</i> ) and the challenges they pose. May you experience (witness) the joy of true inner peace through your union with the Lord who lives eternally inside of you (in your own heart).
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Reference: Bhaja Govindam Translation by Swami Chinmayananda.

Verse 1, 2, 5, 11, 18, 20, 21, 27, 29 and 31 (in that order) are recited in the popular singing recorded by Smt. M.S. Subbalakshmi.

Questions:

1. What is “mind?” *Mathi*
2. What is a foolish mind? *Mooda Mathi Buddhi Heenam*
3. What is a brilliant mind? *Sathvika Mathi PrakashaBuddhi*
4. Who is Govindha?
5. What should we pray for?
6. What is the difference between “ritual” and “engagement”?
7. What is “death”?
8. Is “death” frequent or happens once in a life time?
9. What are the impermanent or variable aspects of life?
10. What is the permanent or invariable aspect of life?
11. What are the ways we witness duality in life?
  - a. At young age? Being playful (without a genuine sense of purpose)
  - b. During youth? Subjected to sensual pleasures (and a constant increase in desires and the resulting 0)duality
  - c. During old age? Anxiety, concern and loneliness
12. Who are you? Where do you come from?
13. What are the five layers (Sheaths) of our existence?
14. What is liberation (*Jeevan Mukthi*)?
15. Can you experience “Liberation” here and now?
16. What are the steps leading up to liberation? Verse 9
17. What is the risk of “preaching”? Verse 14
18. What is the true knowledge? The knowledge of non-attachment through internalizing the meaning of the Maha Vakya
19. What is necessary to become liberated? Verse 19, 27, 30
20. How are the three Guna illustrated in Bhaja Govindham Verse 20
21. Why is an enlightened person like a child as well as like a mad person? Verse 23.
22. Why does one live “a life in hell” on this earth? Verse 26
23. What is heaven and hell in philosophy Vs. Theology?
24. What are three pathways to relate to non-attachment? Adhvaitham, Dhavitham, Visishtaath dhvaitham
25. What is the unique role of Adi Sankara – in Hindu Scriptures?

## Bhaja Govindham --- Questions and Answers:

### 1. What is “mind?”

*Mathi*

Mind is the seat or place of residence for all our experiences. It is not the brain, organs of the body. Mind exists at the intersection or the connection between our physical and tangible person (*Deham*) and our soul or consciousness (*Dehinam*)

### 2. What is a foolish mind?

*Mooda Mathi Buddhi Heenam*

Mind that is governed by the influences of the three *Guna* (Knowledge, Bias and Ignorance: *Sathvikam*, *Rajasam* and *Thaamasam*) involuntarily. Such a mind is like the brilliant glow of fire subdued and covered by a layer of ashes. In this case the ash is our subjectivity as evidenced through duality such as love/hate, friend/foe, angry/calm, etc.

### 3. What is a brilliant mind?

*Sathvika Mathi PrakashaBuddhi*

Mind that is constantly analytical and reflective on the *Guna* and their inter-play.

Mind which recognizes dualities and why they exist like that.

Mind that understand duality: why someone is a friend / enemy; love/hate, angry/calm, fear/brave, strong/weak, etc.

Mind that is comfortable and open to change – Objective – based on observations and not fixated based on previous experiences or conditioning.

Mind that is comfortable in accepting evidences as they are (living in the moment).

Mind that is changeless as it exists merely as an observer – of evidences and the role of the Laws on Nature (*Brahman*) at work - at all times

### 4. Who is Govindha?

*Vishnu, Shiva, Yoga Ishwara*

Embodiment of knowledge to be learned from Vedas and other scriptures.

Knowledge of *Brahman*

Ideal state of living with Objectivity; Endowed with Divine qualities (B.G. Ch. 12 and 13).

Who lives, participates, enjoys and yet actively objective all the time (*Bhaktha*, *Bhoktha*, *Maheshwaraha*)

### 5. What should we pray for?

Seeking knowledge and understanding of:

*Guna* and their inter-play, *Sagunathvam* (Objectivity) leading to *Nirgunathvam* (*Brahman*)

Seeking knowledge and understanding of the Great Pronouncements (*Maha Vakya*):

*Thath Thwam Asi* ( You and the Universe are integral in each other)

*Aham Braman* ( I am *Brahman*)

### 6. What is the difference between “ritual” and “engagement”?

Ritual is what you do as a routine, follow others in what they do, without any understanding of the reason or purpose. Blind allegiance.

Engagement is what you do, which may be routine or non-routine with an open mind and a curiosity to learn the reason and purpose of that activity.

Rituals are necessary to inculcate discipline and focus. But without engagement rituals over a period of time tend to defeat the very purpose of the rituals.

Bhaja Govindham teaches us about this pit fall through vivid examples and encourages everyone to pray to Govindha as an effort to avoid such pitfalls. Then the prayer itself is explained as the stepping stone towards better learning of the essentials of Vedas as summarized in the *Maha Vakya*.

### 7. What is “death”?

Death can be (in a subjective mind) the feared end of life. It can also be seen as another biological event of nature, just as the birth is also a biological event.

### 8. Is “death” frequent or happens once in a life time?

If death is seen as the end and birth as the beginning, then every thought that changes has a birth and death! An objective mind – that is changeless over long horizons – experiences less frequent birth and death? Then objectivity is a means for longer eternal life (*Jeevan Mukthi*) here and now?

### 9. What are the impermanent or variable aspects of life?

Everything that we experience through our opinions, preferences, bias, taste, etc. – all that are subjective – are variable aspects of life. We see many examples of such impermanent aspects of life described in Bhaja Govindham.

### 10. What is the permanent or invariable aspect of life?

The *Maha Vakya* - *Thath Thwam Asi* ( You and the Universe are integral in each other); *Aham Braman* ( I am *Brahman*) – are the permanent and invariable aspect of life; indeed invariable for any object and any life in this universe.

Can you envision yourself or anything you perceive as being not part of the Universe?

Can you envision yourself or anything you perceive as not being enabled by the Laws of Nature (known and unknown).

The Laws of Nature (*Brahman*) merely exist. We are enabled by and witness to that *Brahman*.

	Body	Mind	Intellect
	<b>Focused</b> (with discipline and bound by duty)	<b>Stable</b> (Fearless, with a stable frame work based on Faith in a larger order)	<b>Objective</b> (Equally disposed to Knowledge, Ignorance and Bias); Consistent reasoning and logic Absence of duality
	<b>Unfocused</b> (No discipline, lacking in sense of purpose or duty)	<b>Unstable</b> (Consumed by fear, anxiety and uncertainty). Duality (love/hate, friend/foe, happiness /sorrow dominate.	<b>Subjective</b> (Governed by dominant role of bias and ignorance; knowledge is subdued) Inconsistent reasoning / logic
<p><b>Philosophy:</b> Analytical reasoning on what is life? How it should be lived? Why?</p> <p><b>Theology:</b> Approach to life and answers to the above questions based on “Faith”</p> <p>Human mind serves two functions – Reasoning and Emotions – simultaneously and in an inseparable manner. Philosophy and Theology are also like two sides of the coin that support the above two functions of the mind. Hindu scriptures (and Veda) treat Philosophy and theology as intertwined capabilities. <b>Spirituality</b> is the willful and conscious engagement of the body (and in all its activities) in harmony with our emotions and reasoning. <b>Spirituality in Practice</b> requires a is a clear knowledge and understanding of the two (emotions/reasoning as well as Philosophy / Theology).</p>			
Philosophy (Yoga: Union with the Self; Clarity of understanding between the Self as tangible person ( <i>Deham</i> ) and the driving force ( <i>Dehinam</i> ) and the connection between the two	Karma Yoga: Conscious awareness of Body and its functions.	Bhakthi Yoga: Conscious awareness of the faith in a larger order and the stability It fosters	Gnana Yoga: Clear understanding of Objective Vs. Subjective and the difference between the two.
	Duty: The activities which one is required to do at a given moment based on objective reasoning	Faith: that one feels at heart (based on objective reasoning) leading to emotional comfort and the courage to do the right thing;  Prayer and Meditation: Seeking emotional strength (through meditation) to feel united within as well as with everyone and everything limitlessly.	Wisdom: Knowledge and understanding of the great pronouncements ( <i>Maha Vakya</i> ):  <i>Thath Thwam Asi</i> (You and the Universe are integral in each other  <i>Aham Brahman</i> (I am Brahman) <i>Brahman: Sum total of all Laws of Nature, known and unknown.</i>
Theology Based on faith	Karma Yoga: Practice of rituals and activities (duty) as ordained in the scriptures / traditions	Bhakthi Yoga: Implicit and relentless faith in God ( <i>Isvaro Rakshathu</i> )	Gnana Yoga: Focused mind that fosters Bhakthi and Karma
	Karma: pre-ordained activity (duty) Faith in Karma  Nitya Karma: Daily rituals Naimitya karma: Rituals for the long term welfare Kamya Karma: Rituals focused on specific end results	God: The Supreme being; Faith in God as the protector  Law of Karma: Life and its activities are pre-ordained by His well.  Prayer services and Puja: Worship of the God; Starting with seeking specific desires to be full filled, ending with seeking welfare for all.	Brahman: The all-pervading Supreme Being, who willed and created the Universe.  Faith in Creation.  Meditation ( <i>Dhyanam</i> ) as a means to channel the mind to Bhakthi (Devotion) and Karma (Duty)



## **Sath Sangh**

(A class dedicated to the Discussion on Basics  
of Hindu Philosophy and its Application / Use in Daily Life)

@

New Hampshire Hindu Temple (NHHT)  
Bala Gurukulam

