

**\*—VIRAAT PURUSH—\***

**The cosmic, all-embracing form of the  
'SUPREME BEING'**

**(As conceived in the Upanishads, Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas,  
& Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas)**

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## **“VIRAAT PURUSH”**

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The **“VIRRAAT PURUSH”**—The phrase ‘Viraat Purush’ consists of two words, i.e. ‘Viraat’ and ‘Purush’.

The first word ‘Viraat’ means an entity that is huge, colossus, as big and extensive as the cosmos, and is all-encompassing and all-inclusive or all-embracing in its reach and extent. The second word ‘Purush’ has been defined in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being who had entered each and every body of all the creatures that came into being at the time of creation and ever since then, and had taken up his residence there, i.e. in each individual unit of creation. The word Purush consists of two parts—viz. ‘Pur’ meaning a city or an abode, and ‘Ush’ means the one who lives there.

Hence, the ‘Viraat Purush’ is the cosmic subtle body of the Supreme Consciousness known as the Parmatma (the supreme Atma or Self, also known as the ‘Brahm’) who lives in each aspect of this creation, pervading throughout it, and including in its ambit everything that exists in any form.

In this book, we shall be reading about the Viraat Purush as this concept has been visualised in the Upanishads, the Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, and the Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas, all of which give a vivid and un-confusing picture of the Supreme Being’s, the Supreme Lord’s all-embracing cosmic divine form.

It ought to be noted that all descriptions of the Viraat Purush, whether it is in the Upanishads, the Adhyatma Ramayan or the Ram Charit Manas, may slightly vary in language but essentially they are the same.

For the purpose of easy read, this book has been divided into three sections—viz. (i) Section 1 that describes the Viraat Purush in the words of the eclectic Upanishads, (ii) Section 2 that quotes the Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, and (iii) Section 3 that covers the entire gamut of the concept of the Viraat Purush as narrated in another epic Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas.

Whereas the Upanishads give a view that has a high quotient of the philosophy of metaphysics and theology because they are part of the Vedas, out of the two versions of the epic Ramayan cited here, the first one, i.e. the Adhyatma Ramayan, follows more or less the pattern of the Upanishads for the simple reason that their author is the same, i.e. sage Veda Vyas. On the other hand, the other Ramayana which we shall read here, viz. the Ram Charit Manas, is quite simple in its approach, and lays stress on devotion for Lord Ram who is none else but a personified and visible form of the Supreme Being whose cosmic form as the Viraat Purush is beyond comprehension and reach.

## **—SECTION 1—**

### **THE UPANISHADS**

The *Viraat Purush*, according to metaphysical concept as explained in the various Upanishads, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

The Viraat Purush is the subtlest form in which Brahm revealed itself when it had decided to initiate the process of creation. Though ‘subtlest’ in relation to the rest of creation, but in its self the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. It was from this Viraat Purush that the rest of the creation was moulded—refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-4; and Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2. The word ‘Viraat’ itself means colossus, huge, immense, large and vast. This manifestation of Brahm covered each minute pore of creation; it pervaded throughout the space that would eventually form the area of the cosmos or the universe. It encompassed everything; it included everything. It encircled or surrounded everything from the outside. It was called ‘Viraat’ precisely for this reason. Again, it was called ‘Purush’ because it provided the vital spark of life in the form of ‘consciousness’ and ‘Pran’ into the otherwise lifeless primordial cosmic gel so that it could become active, alive and show dynamism. It was called ‘Purush’ also because Brahm, in the form of the ‘consciousness’, lived in this creation uniformly and universally in such a way that the two were inseparable from one another, and to give life to the nascent creation as well as to control it from within. When the creation came into being, this Brahm entered in the body of the creature to take up residence in the living being’s body—refer Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 12-14.

According to the *Aiteriya Upanishad* of Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-3, and Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, Section 1, verse no. 4. Refer also to

Then were created the animals such as the horse and the cow—*Aiteriya Upanishad*, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 2. The next to be created was the human being—*Aiteriya Upanishad*, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 3. Since the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, all the Gods took up their residence in it—*Aiteriya Upanishad*, Canto 1, Section 2, verse nos. 3-5.

Finally, the supreme Brahm himself took up its residence in the body of the human being—*Aiteriya Upanishad*, Canto 1, Section 3, verse no. 12, 14; Atharva Veda’s *Mundak Upanishad*, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4-5; Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Shewatshwatar Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 7.

Thus, the body became alive and began to see the world around it—*Aiteriya Upanishad*, Canto 1, Section 3, verse no. 13;

The *Atharva-Shir Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition defines the term Purush in its Kandika (Canto) 4 as follows—“This divine entity that lives in the body is called a ‘Purush’—literally a man but actually meaning the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of Brahm that has taken up its habitat in the gross body of the individual creature. [The word ‘Purush’ means one who lives in a city or citadel. The Viraat Purush had revealed this creation from his body and created man in his own image, and then had taken up his residence in this man’s body. Being a resident of the body, the otherwise unbound Brahm became a resident bound and butted by the body. From the macrocosmic perspective, the word Purush would refer to that aspect of Brahm who lives inside the gross body of a living being, and from the cosmic

perspective at the macrocosmic level of existence, this word would refer to Brahm who pervades uniformly throughout the length and breadth of the entire creation.]”

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/36 says that it is Lord Ram who has manifested himself as the Viraat Purush. This is because, according to this Upanishad, Lord Ram is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and the Viraat is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing gross body of Brahm.

The concept of the Viraat Purush can be understood with a simple analogy. According to metaphysical doctrine, the word ‘Atma’ refers to the pure consciousness that resides inside the body of an individual creature as his ‘true self’. This Atma of the individual is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Consciousness that is universal and uniformly pervades throughout this creation. This universal Atma at the macrocosmic level of creation is known as Brahm. This Brahm therefore is the subtlest and most sublime entity in existence. When this Brahm revealed itself, it went through subtle steps in its transition from the subtlest to the grossest forms. The first step was the *Viraat Purush*, the all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-inclusive invisible macrocosmic form of Brahm which was the latter’s first gross form. The word ‘gross’ when applied to the Viraat Purush is only in terms of relativity, for both Brahm and Viraat are sublime and subtle when compared to the word ‘gross’ as is understood in the context of the visible world of material sense objects. It is easy to understand this phenomenon—we have air all around us, but do we feel it, can we survive without it? Obviously, the answer is no. But when this same air moves or shows some ‘gross’ virtues, such as its form known as the ‘wind’ which is felt when the ‘breeze’ wafts gradually or a ‘storm’ blows violently, it is then we can actually feel it bristling against our skins; but still we can’t see it. Now, when this same air has pollutants in it, like smoke or coloured gases, we can actually ‘see’ the air. The same thing applies to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. The Viraat Purush is like the ‘wind’, and the rest of the creation that evolved from this single Viraat Purush is like the various forms the same wind has taken in this world. The grosser revelation of this Viraat Purush in the form of the visible world is akin to the instance of smoke, coloured gases or other pollutants which make us see the invisible wind move. It is the grossest form of the subtlest Brahm.

According to the Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse nos. 14-16 as the form which has “thousands of heads, eyes and legs. Since the Lord is all-pervading and immanent, his hands, legs, eyes, head, mouth and ears are present everywhere. He surrounds everything in the universe from all sides, and is established within each unit of it.”

The *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

In fact, the entire Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1 of the *Mundak Upanishad* is devoted to the theme of Viraat Purush, and it says that the entire creation has been created as a manifestation of the Viraat Purush.

The *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2, clearly states the supreme Lord resides in this creation as its Atma and Pran. To quote—“We bow and pay our respects to the supreme Lord (Brahm referred to as Lord Ram here because this particular Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Ram) who lives in this world and uniformly pervades in it as its ‘Atma’ and its ‘Pran’—i.e. as the creation’s soul and life, as its essence, its fundamental basis and its core.”

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on *Kathopanishad*, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

The Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm. The counterpart of the Viraat Purush at the microcosmic level of creation is the Man or the Purush. The Man is an image of the Viraat Purush.

According to Vedanta, the Viraat is the sum total of all the gross bodies in the creation at the macrocosmic level. [Refer—The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 10-11.] The individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat, it is an image of Viraat. According to the Purans, Viraat is known as Lord Vishnu. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm.

The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner. The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless and infinite; something that is beyond all terrestrial yardsticks and measurements. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all the sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water.

At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms 'subtle and gross' are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The word Purush according to metaphysics refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word ‘Purush’ means someone who resides in a body. [Refer *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.] Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm or cosmic Consciousness took up residence at the time of creation, and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu’s passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

The word ‘Viraat’ refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms ‘subtle and gross’ are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The concepts of *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* are inter-related as the latter refers to the subtle body of Brahm and the former refers to the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. They have their origin in the supreme Brahm called ‘Adi-Narayan’. This concept has been elaborately explained in the *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14 in the context of genesis of creation.

The terms *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term ‘Viraat’ means anything of colossus dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11 of *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of Atharva Veda. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the *Hiranyagarbha*—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1 of the same *Upanishad*. The latter is so-called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb (‘Garbha’), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden (‘Hiranya’) in colour.

It was from this cosmic embryo called the *Hiranyagarbha* that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called *Brahma the creator*. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1 of *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*.

The Viraat Purush is also the *creator of this world* as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11 of *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

The *glories* and the *cosmic form of the Viraat Purush* has been described in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; and Canto 6, paragraph no. 11. Since the Viraat Purush is another name of Lord Vishnu or Narayan, the same Upanishad enumerates the glorious virtues of Vishnu in its Canto 1, paragraph no. 1, 6; Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; and Canto 8, paragraph no. 17. These together collectively present a combined picture of the grand form of the Viraat Purush.

Now, we shall quote from the Upanishads one by one, and read how they have conceived and then described this mystical and eclectic concept of the Viraat Purush in detail.

**(i) The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda defines the term “Purush” very clearly as follows in its Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18--**

“Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 = The enlightened sage who could envision what had transpired at the beginning of creation, said—‘The supreme, transcendental and almighty Brahm had first created the creatures with two legs, and then with four legs. Then that supreme Purush (Brahm) entered those bodies in the form of a ‘bird’ (or like a bird entering a cave and disappearing inside it).

That is why that supreme, transcendental, attributeless and unqualified Brahm, who hitherto had no specific abode, is called a ‘Purush’, i.e. one who resides in a ‘Pur’ meaning a city, a place, a dwelling, a body or a residence. There is no ‘body’ in this creation in which that ‘Purush’ is not present; there is no ‘place’ in this creation where ‘Brahm’ as Purush does not live’ (18).

[Note--This verse explains the meaning of the word Purush which literally means a male but actually refers to that supreme transcendental authority of creation known as Brahm who lives inside the creature as its Atma or soul. This picture is at the macro level of the creation as well as at the micro level of the individual creature that forms its unit. The creatures referred in this verse are the living beings that inhabited the planet earth—i.e. the 2-legged creatures like the man and a whole variety of birds, and the 4-legged creatures such as the animals.

It is pertinent to note why birds have two legs—it is because they display more nearness to Brahm than their 4-legged brethren who cannot fly or even their 2-legged compatriots such as the man who too cannot fly, simply because Brahm had entered the first forms of creation consisting of both the 2-legged and the 4-legged creatures in the form of a ‘bird’. It must be noted here that this ‘bird’ is the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ of the creature. When the creature dies, this ‘bird’ flies out of its body-like cage.

When the bird has not entered the cave, it can be identified as a particular type of bird such as a falcon, a kite, an eagle etc. But when it enters the cave, its independent verification is impossible as it simply vanishes in the dark recesses of the cave. Similarly, Brahm can be identified as the independent elementary units of creation such as the sky, wind, fire, water and earth, but when that Brahm takes up residence in the body of a creature as the Purush subtly residing in the body of the living being, it becomes difficult to independently verify and classify it. In this case, Brahm is identified with the body that it has assumed.

The birds can fly and go anywhere they like; the birds live freely in the sky and spend most of their time flying from place to place unhindered. No geographical

boundaries exist for them. This is also the case for Brahm—Brahm lives in the space of the cosmos, he can go anywhere he likes, and he can rest in any place he likes just like the bird which can alight upon any tree or any other place where it likes to take rest. In other words, the bird has been used as a symbol for Brahm to highlight the fact that Brahm is the only entity that has the ability to ‘rise above the ground’, which is a way of saying that Brahm can be beyond the reach of ordinary mortals even as the flying bird is beyond the catch of either the man or the animal, and at the same time this Brahm is present as one of them and lives amongst them just like the bird does.

Further, since the Atma is a personification of Brahm, it also possesses the ability to go wherever it likes like the bird, to lift itself above the mundane and the mortal world symbolised by the flying of the bird.]

(ii) The **Mundak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition describes the Viraat Purush in its Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1, and in Mundak 3, Section 1, verse nos. 4-5:**

**The Mundak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Mundak 2, section 1:--**

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 1 = Both the Brahm and this world are true just like the raging fire that produces countless sparklers and embers. [The fire is compared to Brahm, and the sparklers and embers to this colourful world showing astounding variety. The fire is the truth because it is burning right in front, and the sparklers and embers are true also because they are springing from the fire on the one hand, and on the other hand they have the same potentials as the parent fire as they can start another fire if they fall on an inflammable object. Similarly, Brahm is the powerful source from which this world of diversity and variety emerged. This world is self-sustaining—i.e. like the sparks and embers that can produce another fire independently after their origin, this world can replicate its self once it was created by Brahm. There can be no sparklers or embers without the fire, and similarly there cannot be a world without Brahm.]

Oh Saumya (a pleasant and dear person; a term of endearment)! It is from this Akshar Brahm, or the imperishable and eternal Divinity, that countless ‘Bhaavas’—i.e. the world with numerous forms and names and myriad characters—is produced. They originate in this Akshar Brahm and ultimately collapse and become one with it in the end<sup>1</sup> (1).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>This is like the Sun spreading out its radiant and bright rays at dawn, and withdrawing then into its self at sunset. Refer also to Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 7.]

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 2 = This Brahm is self-illuminated, and without any forms and attributes.

Brahm pervades inside and outside of everything in existence as it is omnipresent and all-pervading—there is no spot where Brahm is not present.

Brahm has no birth or precedent.

Brahm has no Pran or vital life sustaining factors because Pran lives in a gross body in order to keep the body alive, and since Brahm has no physical gross body there is no need of Pran for Brahm.

Brahm has no Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) because these are the subtle aspects of the gross body of a mortal creature, but Brahm is none of them.



Brahm is splendidous and radiant as it is self-illuminated.

The eternal and infinite Brahm indeed is far superior to the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the gross body of the mortal creature as his self (because the Atma is subjected to the limitations of the gross body in which it lives, and naturally influenced by the latter) (2).

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 3 = It is from this imperishable and eternal Brahm that the Pran (the vital life sustaining forces of creation such as the vital winds), the Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) and the various Indris (the sense organs—five of perception and five of action) are created.

It is from Brahm that the five primary elements Kham or Akash (sky), Vayu (air or wind), Jyoti (light, implying the fire element), Aapaha (water) and Prithivi (earth) which bears this world are created (3).

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 4 = That whose head or crown is the fire element, the sun and the moon the two eyes, the directions the ears, the famous Vedas the speech, the air or wind the Pran (the vital life sustaining winds that keep the living being alive), the entire world the heart, and from whose legs the earth has been created—verily, that supreme cosmic transcendental Brahm is established as the Atma that resides in the inner self of all living beings in creation (4).

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 5 = It is from this Purush (here referring to the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic, all-inclusive gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm) that the cosmic fire is created.

The Sun is like the Samidha (the firewood used during the fire sacrifice) of this Brahm. [This is because the Sun lights up the entire heavens with its light much like the fire sacrifice ‘lights up’ or opens the gate of heaven for the chief patron of the sacrifice.]

It is from this fire kept burning with the help of the firewood that the nectar-like Soma (the elixir of life) was created. And from this Soma was created the Parjanya or water from the heavens which comes down upon earth as rains. [This refers to the creation of rains due to the heat of the Sun. The rains are produced because the water is evaporated from the oceans due to this heat, and then in due course of time is converted into clouds that shower this evaporated water as rains back upon the earth. It is called Soma or the elixir of life because rains are very essential for crops and for taking water to distant areas of the earth where rivers and their like cannot reach. Rains bring cheer and joy to the creatures on earth who would have died for want of water, and it acts as a lubricant as well as a coolant to protect them against the unrelenting heat of the Sun. Had there been no rain, the earth would have scorched and turned into a parched dry terrain of lifeless rocks and withered shrubs. Hence, the rain is like the Soma that cheers the drinker.]

From the Parjanya (rains) was created the medicinal herbs—plants, trees, shrubs, creepers, and all other forms of vegetation that exist on earth.

These herbs create sperms in a man. When the man irrigates with the help of this sperm, the rest of the subjects (off springs) are produced. [That is, the plants when eaten as food in various forms support life in the man, providing the necessary nourishment, energy, stamina, strength and vitality to him. Even the animals depend upon plants for survival. It is the latent Pran or vital life supporting forces present in the food eaten that are extracted by the man and converted into his own life generating energy that is converted into sperms, the spark of life from which the next

generation is born. In effect, the sperm is like the liquid Soma that produces life on earth when it irrigates the latter as rain. Likewise, the sperm irrigates the earth in the form of the female when the man transplants the sperm into the female, and this creates fresh life in the form of the off spring much like the rain creating fresh crops and new generation of plants on earth.] (5).

[Note—In the context of verse nos. 5-10 of the present section, refer also to the Prashna Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4. This Upanishad is Chapter 1 of this volume.]

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 6 = It is from this Viraat Purush that all the Richas (hymns of the Rig Veda), the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda were created.

It is from him that the investiture and other religious ceremonies were created.

It is from him that the fire and other forms of religious sacrifices, all their accompanying formalities, and the obligatory charities that must accompany such exercises were created.

It is from him that the concept of Samvatsar (one full year consisting of all the seasons) originated. [That is, the entire concept of one cycle of life has its origin in the supreme Brahm. The Samvatsar is a metaphor of one cycle of origin and conclusion of the visible creation.]

It is from him that the Yajmaan (the chief patron on whose behalf the fire sacrifice is done; here also referring to the ancestors called the Prajaptis from whom this human race evolved) and the subjects of the vast kingdom, stretching as far as the rays of the moon go and the energy of the sun heats, were created. [The vast kingdom refers to the world that exists on earth because the rays of the moon are limited to lighting the earth and not the far reaches of the solar system. At the same time, it also includes all the planets of the solar system because all these planets are lighted by the energy of the sun which is transmitted in the form of sunlight. In the context of the fire sacrifice cited herein above, the vast kingdom is a metaphoric way of alluding to the numerous benefits that accrue as a result of successful completion of a fire sacrifice. When this kingdom is seen in the context of the Prajapati as the Yajmaan or the chief patron who presided over this great exercise of creation of this habitable world, it would obviously mean the off springs of Prajapati. These off springs are the living beings that inhabit every corner of this earth. In other words, whatever that exists in this visible world is a manifestation of Brahm in his macrocosmic all-pervading form known as the Viraat Purush.] (6).

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 7 = It is from this Viraat Purush that the numerous Gods as well as the special Gods who are invoked during the fire sacrifices, along with the humans, the animals, the birds, the various life supporting vital winds such as Pran and Apaana etc., and the staple cereals such as rice and oat are created.

It is from him that the glorious virtues of Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for some noble cause), Shraddha (having faith, conviction and belief), Satya (truthfulness, sincerity and honesty), Brahmacharya (self control over the sense organs; continence and abstinence), along with the various laws and regulations that govern all phases of civil life, its ethics and morality were created (7).

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 8 = It is from him (the Viraat Purush) that the seven grosser aspects of Pran were created. [These seven units of Pran are the two ears + two eyes + two nostrils + one tongue = seven. They are called ‘Pran’ because it is

through them that the man is able to perceive the existence of the world. The ears help him to hear, the eyes to see, the nose to smell, and the tongue to taste.]

It is from these sense organs of perceptions that were produced the seven tongues of fire<sup>1</sup>, the seven types of Samidhas or firewood<sup>2</sup>, and the seven types of Homa or the offerings made to the fire sacrifice which are also classified into seven types<sup>3</sup>.

It is from the Viraat Purush that the seven Lokas or places inhabited by the creatures were created<sup>4</sup>. Besides these, the seven places where the Pran (life consciousness) finds its playing field, or the places which are kept alive by the Pran and where the Pran roams<sup>5</sup> are also created from this Viraat Purush.

These seven units of creation are all established in the body of all living beings, and are created by the Purush who lives in its cave-like heart<sup>6</sup> (8).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The *tongues of fire* refer to the sense of perceptions that are generated by each of the sense organs listed in this verse. The word 'tongue' has a metaphoric implication because one tastes anything with the tongue. Here it means that the man is able to 'taste' the irresistible charm and fascinating attractions of the material world only through the sense organs of perception. These perceptions light up the world for him and make him aware of its allurements. The seven tongues of the fire have been named in Canto 1, section 2, verse no. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The *Samidha* is the firewood that helps the fire of the sacrificial pit burning. This in the present context is a metaphor for the objects of the world that are relevant to each sense perception. For instance, the smells of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called smell burning; the sights of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called sight burning, and so on and so forth.

The seven types of Samidhas are firewood from seven types of trees are that used for this purpose as follows—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.

Each stick of the firewood should not be thicker than the thickness of the thumb, must have the bark on them, and should not be eaten by wood-worms or insects, or infected by any kind of germs—i.e. should be fresh.

<sup>3</sup>The *Homa* and *Yagya*—During fire sacrifices, Havi is offered to the consecrated sacred fire. This Havi is the material that is put into the consecrated sacred fire as an oblation during fire sacrifices. The process of offering is called Homa. Since Homa and Havi are an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered.

The Havis are generally the following things—(a) barley, rice and oat. (b) milk and clarified butter. (c) Juice of the Soma plant. (d) Besides these, animals were also offered as a sacrifice in earlier times.

Classification of Fire Sacrifice or Yagya depending upon the Homa used—

(i) Since doing Homa by the offering of a Havi is an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered. If the Havi consists of rice, barley, oat, milk and clarified butter, then the seven types of fire sacrifices are called the following—Agnyaadheya, Agnihotra, Darshapuranmaas (also called the Prakriti or original fire sacrifice), Chaturmaas, Aagrayan, Niruddhapashubandha, and Sautraamani.

All these fire sacrifices are performed in the three main fires—viz. the Garhyapatya, the Dakshinagni and Aahavaniya.

(ii) If the Havi is the juice of the Soma plant, then the fire sacrifice is called the Soma Yagyas—so called because the extract or juice of the Soma plant is offered as an offering. These seven Soma Yagyas are the following—Agnisthoma, Atyagnisthoma, Ukthya, Shodashi, Vaajpeya, Atratra, and Aptoryaama.

(iii) Then there are seven special types of fire sacrifices called the seven Paak Yagyas. They are the fire sacrifices done for the purpose of worldly gains and material prosperity. They are also called Kaamyeshthi Yaga, or literally that which is done with the aim of fulfilling some specific desires or aspirations. They are performed in the Garhyapatya Agni or the fire of the household with cooked offerings such as boiled grains mixed with Ghee (clarified butter).

These seven Paak Yagyas are the following—Huta, Prahuta, Aahuta, Shulagava, Baliharana, Pratyavarohana, and Ashtakaahoma.

The Homa in the present context is the knowledge of this world and the belief that it is the reality and one that is worth acquiring. This is likened to the offering made to the fire sacrifice because when one makes such offerings to the sacred fire, he is aware of the results that would accrue to him if the sacrifice is completed successfully. He keeps in mind the objective of making such offerings while going through the elaborate rituals. He is sure that the desires would be fulfilled. Likewise, the knowledge of this world motivates the man to divert his sense organs and their efforts towards his objective—which is getting access to the charms and material benefits that have their presence in the world. He does everything with only one aim in mind, and that is the fulfillment of his desires pertaining to the specific object that he finds charming, attractive and meaningful. This diversion, concentration and putting to use of all available resources towards achieving success in the fulfillment of one's desires pertaining to this material world is like offering Homa or oblations to the fire sacrifice with great devotion and diligence. No efforts are left undone to achieve success in the fire sacrifice.

Since such fire sacrifices are done with the desire of attaining worldly successes, the reward is also commensurate with it. In other words, the reward is worldly prosperity, wealth, fame, name, glory and majesty. In the context of the genesis of creation in which the Viraat Purush was involved, the reward was the creation of the Lokas as mentioned in this verse.

<sup>4</sup>The *seven Lokas* that were created as the result of the fire sacrifice, according to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP), are the following lokas-- 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जन्ः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the view of this Upanishad as narrated above are the following—the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head—viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. These are called the 'Lokas' because it is through them that the man becomes aware of the existence of the world.

<sup>5</sup>The *seven places where the Pran or life consciousness moves* are the following—the five organs of action such as the legs, hands, mouth, excretory and genitals, the thinking mind and the emotional heart = seven units. In other words, these organs of action along with the mind and the heart help the man to carry out his desires effectively. Once the organs of perceptions find out about the world and its

charms, success in obtaining access to it would depend upon these organs of action aided and abetted by the mind and the heart.

These organs are included in the overall picture of the manifestation of Brahm as the world and its inhabitant creatures because the body of the creature is an image of the Viraat Purush, and as such to limit the existence of the vital life giving consciousness called Pran only to the organs of perception, and excluding the other organs such as the organs of action, the mind and the heart which nevertheless are equally important, would only distort the comprehensive picture of Brahm that the Upanishads attempt to depict.

<sup>6</sup>This 'Purush' is a clear reference to the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the subtle space of the creature's heart. Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/1 affirms that the Purush is the Atma which is absolutely immaculate and sinless, and in 2/5/18 says that someone who resides in a 'Pur' or city (the 'body') is called a Purush. This resident is the Atma. See also verse nos. 9-10 below which are very clear in this. Since the Atma is the Sovereign of the body, all the organs of the body and all its activities are like the functioning of the different state organs for the purpose of administration of the kingdom whose king is the Atma. In other words, those who are wise and self-realised do not think that 'they' are the doer of any fire sacrifice or any other form of deed in this world. They firmly believe that it is their Atma that is doing these deeds in order to keep the wheel of creation turning on behalf of Brahm. Here the word 'they' is the plural for the individual person who usually is identified by the physical body in this world which recognises forms, names and attributes as the identity of the creature instead of the Atma. Refer verse no. 1 of this Canto in this context.]

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 9 = It is from the Viraat Purush that all the oceans, the mountains and the rivers of different names are created.

It is from him that all the medicinal plants (herbs) and their essence or juices are produced.

It is this Viraat Purush that lives in all the living beings as their Atma that resides in their inner self<sup>1</sup> (9).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 1, and Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 which also endorse exactly the same idea.]

“Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 10 = Oh Saumya! The entire Vishwa (universe), all the Karmas (literally meaning the deeds, but here referring to the fire sacrifices), and the Tapa (austerity, penance and suffering of hardship for some noble cause)—verily, all of them are manifestations of the supreme Brahm.

That Brahm is the 'absolute reality' of creation, and is the 'truthful essence' which is like nectar of creation.

A wise and enlightened aspirant who knows that this Brahm is established in the subtle heart of all living beings (as their Atma, their pure conscious self) is able to dismantle all the knots of ignorance in this world. [That is, he attains supreme knowledge of the Truth that is absolute and like nectar.] (10).

### **The Mundak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse nos. 4-5:--**

“Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 4 = [This verse clearly asserts that a truly wise and Brahm realised person is one who continues to do his duties in this world without

getting involved in them. This gives him honour and an exalted place amongst those who are called Brahm realised.]

The supreme Brahm is the one who is revealed in the form of Pran or life consciousness in all the living beings<sup>1</sup>. A person who knows this universal truth has no sense of Ahankar, or ego and self pride in him. [This is because he realises that whatever the body does is not as a result of his own effort but due to the fact that the Pran that lives in this body is making the body do what the latter does, and this Pran is Brahm personified. So, there is no scope of 'his' being proud of anything because 'he' is not the doer. 'He' is not the one who is empowering the body to do anything, but it is some different mystical power that is known as Brahm that empowers the body.]

Such a wise and erudite person who knows the eclectic truth about the Atma, i.e. about the supreme Brahm residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness and his true 'self', knows that it is this Brahm in the form of the Atma that drives the body and all its activities<sup>2</sup>. It is the Brahm that is the Pran or life consciousness in the body of all living beings.

Such a person is called 'Brahm realised'. He continues to do his duties in this world and acquires an exalted and honourable position in the society of learned and enlightened men who are categorized as Brahm realised<sup>3</sup>. (4).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>Some of the other Upanishads that affirm that the Pran is a manifestation of Brahm—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse no. 17; Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Valli 3, Anuvak 3.

<sup>2</sup>It is the reason why the Kosha or cell where the Atma lives in the body, i.e. the subtle heart, is called the 'causal body' because it is the 'cause' of everything in this world. Refer verse no. 9 of Canto 2, section 2 of this Upanishad above.

<sup>3</sup>That is, a wise person does not run away from the world or from doing his duties, but his attitude changes. Instead of getting neck-deep involved in the deeds and their results, he does them in a dispassionate and detached manner. He does not get hooked to the deeds and their results; he does not bother what the world says or whether or not success is attained. He does the deeds absolutely dispassionately and in a neutral fashion. This is the eclectic theory of selfless and dispassionate Karma.

This concept of *Karma* or deeds has been explained in a number of Upanishads. For instance, the Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67 describes succinctly how Karma or deeds and their consequences can be overcome. The Varaaha Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48, and Canto 4, verse no. 35 describe the relationship between the deed, the doer and the cause. The Adhyatma Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes the concept of doing deeds and its effect on the spiritual liberation or bondage of the creature in fine detail in its verse nos. 49-60.

The Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 13 asserts that the supreme transcendental Brahm or the quintessential spiritual Truth of creation as well as Mukti or liberation and deliverance is not possible by merely doing various deeds in this mortal world. This same idea is endorsed in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 35, which asserts that deeds or Karma do not provide the Atma of the creature with liberation and deliverance from this world, but it is Gyan (truthful knowledge of the spiritual truths) that does so.

The 'Karma Chakra' or the giant wheel of deeds and their consequences has been described in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6, verse no. 3. The three Paths followed by a creature according to the deeds done by him are referred to in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 4/7. The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48 describes how one can become free from the fetters created by 'deeds'. The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 11-12 describes the concept of Karma. The Sarwasaar Upanishad of

Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 6 describes the concept of how and why the creature becomes the doer of deeds

What happens to ignorant people after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1. The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26 defines what constitutes of true 'Karma Yoga'. The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 2/4/2-3 describes the philosophy of Deeds. The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67 describes succinctly how Karma or deeds and their consequences can be overcome.]

“Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 5 = That Brahm who is manifested as the pure conscious Atma (which lives in the body of the creature as his ‘true self’) can be known by regularly and consistently following the path of speaking the truth and nothing but the truth, doing Tapa (observing austerities, doing penances and suffering hardship for some noble cause), acquiring correct and comprehensive knowledge about the Truth, and observing the principles of Brahmacharya (full control over the sense organs and their wayward tendencies).

Indeed, this glorious, splendorous and magnificent Brahm lives inside the body of the creature in the form of his Atma, the pure consciousness<sup>1</sup>. [In other words, if one wishes to search for Brahm, he need not go out into the forest or numerous pilgrim sites because the Supreme Being is to be found in one’s inner self only.]

This indwelling Brahm can be seen or known or realised by only those ascetics who have cleansed themselves of all impurities and contaminations. [This is like the case of one viewing one’s face in the mirror. If the mirror is tarnished or not properly made, the picture would be hazy and distorted. Likewise, only those who inculcate the virtues enumerated herein above are qualified to experience Brahm in their inner self.] (5).

**(iii) The Atharva-Shir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition describes the ‘Viraat Purush’, also known as ‘Brahm’, in its Kandika (Canto) no. 4 as follows—**

“Kandika 4 = Why is it (i.e. Pranav or Brahm, the Supreme Being) called ‘Sarwavyaapi’ (literally meaning ‘one who is all-pervading and omnipresent’)? It is because it (Pranav/Brahm) is an integral and inseparable part of this creation, being all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, though it is not apparently visible just like oil that is inherently present in a hidden form in the sesame seed (or the mustard seed) but cannot be visibly seen or felt or known by any ordinary means from the outside.

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called ‘Anant’ (literally meaning ‘endless and infinite’)? It is called Anant because when the word OM representing it (Pranav or Brahm) is pronounced there seems no end to it in any of the directions—the top, the bottom or in any of the angular directions. [The word OM is a monosyllabic word and is hummed continuously and seamlessly without break. OM represents the cosmic background that continuously reverberates in the cosmos. In the higher stages of Yoga or meditation, this sound reverberates in the entire being of the practitioner of Yoga. In the context of the creation and the cosmos, this sound of OM completely fills the entire space of the sky. Since each individual unit of creation is envisioned as having its origin in this sky, developing and growing in the sky, and finally collapsing and disappearing in the same sky, it follows that they have their origin, development and end in OM. In other words, the sound and reverberation of OM both precedes and follows this creation. Everything has its origin in OM—refer Mandukya Upanishad,

verse no. 8-12 which is Chapter no. 3 of this volume. Being the filler of the space of the sky element, OM is infinite, endless and measureless as the fathomless bowls of the sky. It is like a circle which has no end. That is to say, Brahm, the principal entity represented by OM, is also without an end. There is no direction of creation where there is no Brahm. Hence it is endless and seamless or 'Anant'. Brahm is Anant because it is characterized, inter alia, with the virtues of being endless, infinite, measureless, fathomless, imperishable etc.]

Why is it (OM) called 'Tarak' (literally meaning 'one that delivers or takes across')? It (OM representing Pranav/Brahm) is called Tarak because it has the mystical and overriding authority, ability and potentials, like the principal Brahm it represents, to deliver or give fearlessness to a creature from the numerous horrors, torments, pains and fears that makes him suffer in a mother's womb, or during and after birth, or while suffering from various diseases and other bodily problems that are a part of his worldly life, or during his old age when the body declines, becomes infirm and the strength wanes, or at the time of his death. [In other words, this divine word Mantra OM can give him final liberation from the cycle of birth and death so that he would not have to take a new birth and enter a mother's womb in the process, followed by a new cycle of torments that he was fed up with in his previous life. This is because by meditating and doing contemplation with the help of OM as a tool to attain self and Brahm realisation, the spiritual aspirant would be able to find permanent liberation from the fetters of this gross body and achieve deliverance of his 'self' from the bondage of this world. Constant practice would help him find enlightenment and realisation of his spiritual goal, and this would naturally free him from such fears because, for one, he would have realised that the Atma or soul which is his 'true self' never suffers, and that it is distinct from the gross body which is the entity that actually suffers. With this wisdom 'he' (the true self, the Atma, the soul) would not be involved in doing any deeds as they are done by the body and not the soul. This would have a natural liberating effect, because now 'he' would be freed from having to bear the consequences of doing deeds as 'he' has not done them at all, and therefore he would not have to either suffer from the consequences of the deeds or have to take a new birth again. Further, a wise man would not have any desires left unfulfilled in him, and so would have no cause for taking a new birth again to fulfill them. According to the adage 'one becomes what one thinks or the company one keeps', such an enlightened aspirant would have found Brahm, the Supreme Being, because constant remembrance of OM would draw him closer and closer to Brahm till the time he merges in and becomes one with Brahm. At the height of meditation, the sound of OM and its accompanying vibrations reverberate through each pore and nerve of the practitioner's body so much so that he virtually drowns in the waves of this cosmic sound overflowing his inner being. It titillates his nerves to such an extreme end that he feels ecstasy and exhilaration of the highest and purest form. The practitioner experiences a surge of emotions that are described as bliss and ecstasy that have an indescribable dimension to them. This eclectic state of existence of the consciousness is tantamount to Brahm-realisation. From the broader perspective, this is also tantamount to 'self-realisation' and enlightenment as well as to Mukti or liberation and deliverance.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Shukla' (literally meaning 'white, bright, illuminated, lighted, radiant, splendorous')? It is called Shukla because it is self-illuminated and self-radiant. Not only this, it lights others with its own splendorous light. [The word 'light' is not restricted to the physical aspect of light but implies such glorious virtues as wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment. Anything that



removes the darkness of spiritual ignorance and delusions, anything that gives the light of knowledge and makes the aspirant aware of the 'truth' is Shukla.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Sukshma' (literally meaning 'subtle, microcosmic, microscopic, minutest, atomic and fine', and therefore invisible and indiscernible)? It is so-called because it resides in a microscopic or atomic form in the body of all living beings in creation (as their Atma, the pure consciousness that keeps the gross body alive, and which gives the creature his identity).

This divine entity that lives in the body is called a 'Purush'—literally a man but actually meaning the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of Brahm that has taken up its habitat in the gross body of the individual creature. [The word 'Purush' means one who lives in a city or citadel. The Viraat Purush had revealed this creation from his body and created man in his own image, and then had taken up his residence in this man's body. Being a resident of the body, the otherwise unbound Brahm became a resident bound and butted by the body. From the macrocosmic perspective, the word Purush would refer to that aspect of Brahm who lives inside the gross body of a living being, and from the cosmic perspective at the macrocosmic level of existence, this word would refer to Brahm who pervades uniformly throughout the length and breadth of the entire creation. This word has been explicitly defined in the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, and the Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) known as 'Vidyut' (literally meaning 'electric' and implying the stupendous dynamic powers and potentials that electric possesses)? It is because even when the aspirant is surrounded by grave darkness of ignorance when there is no hope of his salvation, the word OM, when constantly and persistently repeated by him as a symbol for the supreme Brahm, enlightens him about the latter. When the aspirant has accessed this eternal fount of brilliance and light, darkness obviously cannot survive. When the spiritual aspirant uses the method of constant repetition of OM as a means to attain Brahm who is self-illuminated and an eternal fount of light that lights up its surroundings much like the Sun in the heaven illuminating everything in this world, it is natural that this light would also light up the inner self of the aspirant by the virtue of the light of enlightenment about Brahm that is kindled by being constantly and persistently associated with OM. When this happens, when the aspirant attains self and Brahm realisation, i.e. when he becomes 'enlightened', his body begins to radiate a divine halo of light much like the glass covering of the lantern which begins to glow when the wick inside it is lighted. [Brahm has the power, shine and dynamism that are the inherent virtues of 'electric'. There is no other single entity in this creation that has the blinding dazzle and splendour of raw electric, so Brahm is likened to electric as the former possesses all these virtues besides countless others. This is also why Brahm is honoured by the other aspect of electric, i.e. 'Tej', which means energy, dynamism and heat as well as radiance, splendour, glow and brilliance. Brahm in brief displays all the virtues so characteristic of electric, but Brahm is not electric. Since Brahm displays the radiance so synonymous with electric, it explains why a divine halo surrounds a self and Brahm realised man who is 'enlightened', or 'empowered with the light of Brahm', even though he might not have been formally educated in the scriptures and be otherwise like other ordinary men having a gross body and an ordinary life. This is because a 'Brahm-realised' person understands that his 'truthful self' is not the external or internal gross aspect of the body, but the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is none other than Brahm personified. It means that Brahm lives inside

his inner-self, and therefore the light of the self-illuminated and radiant Brahm effuses out of a Brahm-realised person much like the light shining from a wick of a lighted lamp or a lantern here on earth, or from the disc of the self-illuminated Sun in the sky. In other words, even though an aspirant might not have been fortunate to have studied the Vedas and other scriptures to remove the darkness of spiritual ignorance that submerges him and his other brethren in this humdrum world, but if he has taken refuge of OM as a tool for Brahm-realisation, then in due course of time the light of spiritual enlightenment that is synonymous with Brahm, and which has the potential to dispel darkness of spiritual ignorance, would automatically dawn upon his mental horizon much like the celestial Sun rising at dawn over the earth's horizon. This ability of OM to give enlightenment and help the aspirant in self and Brahm realisation is like the stupendous power inherent in the 'electric' to light the environment around it. In fact OM is compared to 'electric' because of its stupendous powers and potentials which are as powerful, dynamic, effective and strong as the electric. A Brahm realised person becomes very powerful and authoritative even though he might look thin and physically famished. It is his inner soul that shines with the glory of Brahm and becomes as powerful as the Lord of creation himself.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Param Brahm' (literally meaning the 'supreme Brahm')? This is because there is nothing superior to Brahm, nothing that transcends Brahm, nothing that goes beyond the parameters of Brahm. In fact, Brahm is the divine entity that is not only enigmatic and mystical but is also all-encompassing and all-pervading in this creation. Nothing exists in this creation which is devoid of Brahm, nor is there anything that is outside the ambit of Brahm.

It is a paradoxical entity because on the one hand it is known as the 'Paraa', and on the other hand it is also known as the 'A-paraa'. The term 'Paraa' refers to an enigmatic and esoteric entity which is beyond knowledge, beyond perception and beyond comprehension, that which is invisible and cannot be grasped, and that which is not revealed and clear. The term 'A-paraa' however applies to an entity which can be known, that which is revealed, that which can be understood by applying the mind and intellect, and that which is within reach, that which can be accessed, known, researched and analyzed, such as the knowledge contained in the Vedas and other scriptures, or as perceived in physical terms in this visible world and therefore can be witnessed, researched, analyzed and understood. These two aspects of Brahm, i.e. Paraa and A-paraa, are complimentary to each other—for the latter helps one to know the former, and the former is the supreme Authority that is attempted to be known by the latter. It is the supreme Brahm that is transcendental and beyond ordinary comprehension which is the object of teaching of all the scriptures, and it is these scriptures that establish the greatness and divinity of Brahm who would have remain obscured and unknown had it not been for them<sup>1</sup>.

Since Brahm is very much involved in this creation right from its conception through its birth, development, growth and right up to its conclusion, Brahm is also called 'Paraayan'—that which is fully involved in something and devoted to it<sup>2</sup>. It is because Brahm is the 'Prajaapti', the supreme caretaker of this world. Brahm is responsible for everything and every aspect of creation, being the Supreme Being and the supreme Regulator of this creation. In other words, Brahm is the 'supreme commander and Lord' of this creation; he is the supreme Authority and Emperor of this creation; there is nothing that goes beyond Brahm or nothing that can supersede him. Hence, Brahm is honoured by the epithet of being 'Param'.

Why is it (Brahm) known as 'Ek' (literally meaning 'one and non-dual')? This Brahm is called 'Ek' because while it remains one, immutable, constant, unchanging

and steady itself, it constantly and continuously devours all things in creation and creates them anew. [That is, unlike everything else in creation that has a beginning and an end, things that constantly go through different phases of change, this Brahm remains unchanging, immutable and constant under all circumstances and phases of time such as the past, the present and the future. Not even a minute trace of change ever occurs in Brahm.]

This 'Ek' principle known as the divine Brahm is present in all the pilgrim sites. People go to different pilgrim sites located in the north, the south, the east and the west, but in all these places it is this same Divinity which is known by the title of 'Ek' that gives them the power to bestow spiritual solace and succour to the pilgrim<sup>3</sup>. [In other words, a wise man is one who would not require going to many pilgrim sites for finding emancipation and salvation because he would have realised that the divine entity which he hopes to experience there is present in his own inner self. Merely by roaming in different pilgrim sites one cannot ever hope to find emancipation and salvation. The underlying idea is that the Supreme Being is present everywhere in equal measure. There is not a single place that he is not present in. It is not that, say, a site 'A' has more powerful presence of Brahm as compared to the site 'B'. Therefore, according to the philosophy of the Upanishads, there is no actual need to go on pilgrimage if one does not understand who or what Brahm is; such visits devoid of this knowledge are no more than picnics. A wise man should be able to see his Lord everywhere, and not only limited to a holy pilgrim site. Visiting religious sites in the hope of finding emancipation and salvation is an exercise in futility—refer Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 75, Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38, 42, and Canto 7, verse no. 1. This Upanishad is Chapter 8 of the present volume.]

Why is he (Brahm) called 'Rudra'? [Kandika 5 of this Upanishad elaborately explains this particular question.] It is because the esoteric and secret form and nature of Brahm which is most enigmatic and difficult to understand is easily known by enlightened and self-realised Rishis who are exalted and wise sages, seers and ascetics; the knowledge of Brahm as Rudra is within their easy reach and grasp. On the other hand, this knowledge is very difficult for others to access. [It must be noted here that the difference between the two terms 'Brahm' and 'Rudra' lies in the degree of subtlety. While Brahm is the neutral divinity, its active and dynamic manifestation, or its dynamic and active principle is known as Rudra. Brahm in itself does not do anything, and being a neutral entity is best addressed by the pronoun 'it' just as we would address light, electric, sky, air, water, fire, earth etc. with the pronoun 'it'. On the other hand, when this Brahm lost its neutrality and got engaged in activity of creating this world and regulating it, Brahm's manifestation as 'Rudra' came into being. This Rudra is the dynamic form of Brahm. Rudra is less subtle as compared to Brahm, but otherwise they refer to the same divine Being who is supreme and transcendental in creation. Since Rudra is deemed to be 'male' aspect of creation—not because of any gender superiority or gender bias but because the initial 'spark' of life in the form of a 'sperm' can only be provided by a male—he is addressed as 'he' and not as 'it'. Rudra is one of the names of Shiva, and this Lord is the patron God of Rishis who do meditation. Shiva is the greatest moral preacher, teacher and preceptor of spiritual knowledge<sup>4</sup>. Shiva is an exemplary renunciate and he himself remains eternally engrossed in meditation and contemplation. He teaches the Rishis who spend their time in meditation and contemplation about the Truth of Brahm. These Rishis repeat the Mantras of Brahm known as OM while meditating, and this brings them closer to the principal entity that this OM represents. They are totally immune to and

free from all sorts of spiritual contaminations and hurdles that an ordinary man faces while remaining engrossed in the affairs of the material world and the temptations proffered by its sense objects which are hard, if not impossible, to resist. That is why the term ‘difficult’ is used for ordinary creatures when it comes to their realising the truth of Brahm—i.e. though it is not impossible it is nevertheless hard and difficult.]

Why is he (Brahm in the form of Rudra) known as ‘Ishan’ (literally meaning the ‘Lord’ and his ‘insignia or authority’)? It is because he (Rudra) has full control over all the Gods, and over their powers and authority. Ishan signifies the Lord’s overriding authority and complete control over all the aspects of creation that are individually controlled by these Gods who actually act on behalf of Rudra representing the dynamic form of Brahm. These Gods are nothing but the different forces of Nature personified. But the supreme Authority is Brahm in its dynamic form known as Rudra to whom all the Gods are subservient, whom all the Gods obey, and who is the most senior God in creation.

Therefore, oh Lord Rudra, we pay our obeisance to you and attempt to please you just like one attempts to please the cow before milking it. [In other words, we plead with you to bless us and show grace upon us. We are all dependent upon you and your benevolence.]

It is you who controls this entire creation as Indra, the king of Gods; it is you who controls the organs of the creature’s body over which these Gods rule. That is also why you are called ‘Ishan’. [Refer Kandika 5, stanza no. 2.]

Why are you (i.e. Rudra, who is a manifestation of Brahm) called ‘Maheshwar’ (literally meaning ‘the great Lord’)? It is because you show your benevolence and grace upon those devotees who worship you selflessly in order to attain Gyan or true knowledge. [As the greatest teacher and preacher in creation, it is you who alone can give the knowledge of the Truth. This knowledge is known only to you. Hence, you are great amongst even the Gods who are supposed to be wiser and more knowledgeable than ordinary mortals. When the other Gods need clarification on some thing, they approach you, thereby proving that your knowledge and wisdom is superior to theirs, and that you are senior to them as well because one would go to his senior when in doubt. This is precisely the reason why you are honoured by the epithet ‘Maheshwar’—the great God, or ‘Ishwar’—the supreme God himself.] It is you who empowers the faculty of speech to speak and express this Truth. It is you who inspires the mind and the intellect towards acquisition and use of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and skills. It is you who provides enlightenment to all the Gods as well as the rest of the fortunate creatures who have known who you actually are. Indeed, you are the patron deity for the grand virtues that are compositely known as ‘Gyan’. You have forsaken all sorts of delusions and overcome all ignorance, and instead remain steady and unwavering in the knowledge of Truth that you have acquired. You are self realised and most wise and enlightened. This gives you immense fame and honour; it establishes you as the greatest enlightened One in creation. This is why you are called Maheshwar.

This is how the divine characters and virtues of Rudra have been outlined here in this Upanishad.

[Note—<sup>1</sup>References: for the two terms ‘Para’ and ‘Aparaa’—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 28-30; Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, sections 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>For the term ‘Parayaan’—Kandika 3, verse no. 1 of the present Atharvashir Upanishad.

<sup>3</sup>The concept that the body is the best site to find Brahm, and it is futile and waste of time searching for Brahm in external places, including in temples and idols, has

been endorsed in a number of other Upanishads as well—viz. Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97.

External forms of worship have been literally prohibited in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13.

The Body as a Holy City or Pilgrim Site or Temple has been proclaimed in numerous Upanishads as follows—

As an *abode of Lord Shiva*—(i) The Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, and Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16; Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; and Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (ii) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-59.

*Body as an abode of Shakti* (Goddess) and *4 Peeths*—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 6-12.

*Body as an abode of Shiva and Shakti*—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 75; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4.

*Body as a city*—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165; Canto 5, verse no. 2. (b) Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 3.

Importance of the *body as a medium of obtaining Siddhis* (mystical powers)—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4.

Importance of the *body as a Linga* (symbol of Brahm and the Atma)—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10.

Body as a *pilgrim site* called 'Triveni Sangam'—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 30.

The body has *four Peeths* symbolising the abode of divine Shaktis or Goddesses—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 170-175, and Canto 5, verse nos. 3, 8-12.

<sup>4</sup>The fact that Lord Shiva is the greatest teacher of spiritual knowledge is affirmed in Dakshin Murti/Mukhi Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

**(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition's Shwetashwatar Upanishad describes the glorious form of the 'Viraat Purush' vividly in its Canto 3, verse nos. 7-17 as follows—**

“Canto 3, verse no. 7 = That great, transcendental and supreme Brahm is beyond the purview of the mortal world inhabited by living creatures, and who is even superior to and more exalted than the immortal world represented by Hiranyagarbha (i.e. Brahma the creator).

He is subtly present in a hidden but integral form in all the living creatures (as their pure consciousness called Atma and life called Pran), assuming as many forms as there are number and varieties of creatures because he is omnipresent and all-pervading.

He surrounds the entire creation from all sides because he is all-encompassing and all-incorporating by nature. A wise and erudite person who comes to know of this Brahm (with these unique virtues) becomes immortal<sup>1</sup> (7).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>It has been repeatedly stressed that by knowing this Brahm the creature becomes immortal, but how? The creature would know about Brahm when he has withdrawn himself from this artificial world which is perishable and instead diverts his mind to contemplation and meditation to find out the 'truth' which is immortal.

He then discovers his true self as a radiant consciousness hidden inside himself as his Atma. Then he discovers, by being guided by the teaching of the Upanishads, that this Atma of his is none other than the supreme Brahm personified as is indicated in this verse when it says that Brahm resides inside each and every single creature. The creature then realises that his ‘true self’ is his Atma representing Brahm who is immortal rather than the body which is mortal. Therein lies the obvious key to becoming ‘immortal’. The realisation that the entity known as ‘I’ is the Atma, and not the body, makes the creature immortal.

There is one very interesting observation to be made here by analyzing the word *immortal*. The word ‘immortal’ starts with the letter ‘I’ signifying the eternal bond between that which is immortal (Brahm) and the truthful identity of the creature which is represented by the letter ‘I’. When this single letter ‘I’ is removed, the rest of the creation becomes ‘mortal’ and no longer remains ‘immortal’.]

“Canto 3, verse no. 8 = When the enlightened creature comes to realise and experience the presence of Brahm, he exults—‘I know this great, divine, holy, radiant and splendorous Purush (Supreme Being) who is beyond the touch of darkness (representing delusions, ignorance and all other forms of taints and corruptions that are so characteristic of this mortal creation). He is shining like the glorious Sun in the sky (dispelling darkness all around).

It is only by knowing this Supreme Being that a person can cross the whirlpool of death, and there is no other way out of it’ (8).

“Canto 3, verse no. 9 = There is nothing better, nothing superior and more exalted than him (the Supreme Being), and neither is there anything smaller or bigger than him. He is standing alone like a huge tree in the grounds of the heaven (sky), and pervades in the entire creation much like the shadow of the tree covering the ground around it (9).

[Note—This verse refers to the Viraat Purush by referring to the huge tree, because the ‘tree’ harbours life in the form of birds and insects that find their abode on it, it casts shadow, it shows movement when its leaves move in the wind, and it is a metaphor for life as it produces fruits that sustain other creatures, and seeds which create a new tree. A tree has a physical body and therefore it is like the Viraat Purush that is the gross body of Brahm. It is said that the entire creation has been revealed from the body of this Viraat Purush much like the tree creating an entire world revolving around its existence.

But it is to be noted that though a tree produces another tree through its seeds, its own body is however mortal because it would die one day. This is in sharp contrast to the supreme Brahm who is immortal and therefore there is no question of it ever dying and leaving any seed behind. This distinguishes the Viraat Purush from Brahm. The Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm and a metaphor for the entire creation just like the huge tree in this verse. The ‘supreme transcendental’ Brahm is far more superior to this Viraat Purush because it is from Brahm that the Viraat Purush derives his glory and authority. This observation is borne by the next verse no. 10 as well as verse no. 20 of this Canto. The unique characteristics of Brahm are outlined in Canto 6 also.]

“Canto 3, verse no. 10 = There is a divine entity that is beyond the one described above as having such and such attributes or not having them (as described in verse no. 9). ‘That’ entity is better, superior to, and more exalted than the entity mentioned above. It has no forms and attributes. It is beyond any kind of taints or faults that are inherent in everything that has an existential name, form and designation<sup>1</sup>.

A wise and learned person who knows this Supreme Being obtains immortality, whereas all others obtain sorrows and agonies (because they would not have found the ‘real and truthful’ Brahm, and instead be deceived by images of Brahm such as the Trinity Gods as well as other Gods who personify one or the other dynamic powers of Brahm, etc.) (10).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The Supreme Being referred to in this verse is the ultimate Authority of creation known as Brahm. This Brahm is the cause of coming into being even of the Hiranyagarbha of verse no. 7 as well as the Viraat Purush of verse no. 9. Briefly, Hiranyagarbha is the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, the Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and Ishwar is the macrocosmic causal body of Brahm. Brahm itself is the universal cosmic Consciousness that prevails uniformly throughout this creation as its Principal and Absolute Truth. A separate appendix of this volume explains the difference between these three. Hiranyagarbha has been described as being of a golden colour like the Sun, while Viraat Purush is like the tree or the macrocosmic form of the individual creature such as the man specially, whereas the ‘real’ Brahm has no colours in him, he has no definite forms and attributes. So the former are definitely different from the Supreme Being known as Brahm.]

“Canto 3, verse no. 11 = That supreme Lord (Brahm) has mouth, head and neck in all the directions. He is subtly established in the secret chambers of the bosom or inner self of all living beings, and is all-pervading and omnipresent. He is therefore everywhere in the creation. He is auspicious, truthful, holy and divine (11).

“Canto 3, verse no. 12 = That supreme Lord is great, almighty, capable of doing everything, controller of all, an embodiment of brilliant light, eternal and imperishable, as well as most divine, holy and pure. He is called ‘Ishan’ because he is the Lord of all. He inspires the creature so that it can have a vision of that splendid Ishan (Brahm) in its own bosom or inner self (12).

“Canto 3, verse no. 13 = That supreme transcendental Being (Brahm) lives secretly in a subtle form in the inner chambers of the inner self of the creature in his heart as his Atma. This Atma lives in the subtle space of the heart (called the Hridya Akash) measuring the size of the thumb. The Atma is the Lord of the Mana or mind as well as the heart (i.e. it controls both the thoughts as well as the emotions). Those wise ones who know this Lord as such become immortal (because they would have realised that their true self is the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is characterised by being eternal and imperishable) (13).

“Canto 3, verse no. 14 = That supreme transcendental Brahm has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes and thousands of legs<sup>1</sup>. These numbers do not put a limit to his majesty and magnificence (but are only symbolisms for his greatness) for he is one complete whole, encompassing and enclosing the entire creation from all the sides like a girdle but still remaining at a distance of ten fingers away from it<sup>2</sup>. Or in other words, he is subtly present in the heart located at a distance of ten finger width from the navel (which is like the epicenter of the universe)<sup>3</sup> (14).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>Earlier, verse no. 3 has affirmed that Brahm has as many eyes, hands and legs as there are directions, and verse no. 11 asserts that Brahm has his mouth, head and neck in all the directions. This fact has been repeated in verse no. 16 also for the purpose of re-assertion and re-affirmation. Refer also to Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 3 of the Atharva Veda tradition.

This current verse no. 14 is simply an extension of these verses. The word ‘thousands’ is just a figure of speech to indicate that the heads, mouths, hands, legs etc. of the Lord are present in every place of this creation in a gross form as their counterparts in the body of the countless creatures that inhabit this creation, and in their subtle form as the various perceptions and functions that these individual organs stand for—such as the eye which stands for the function of seeing, hand which indicates the ability to do anything, leg signifies the ability to move from place to place, the mouth is a symbol of speech and the ability to express oneself and to eat, and the neck shows the ability to rotate the instruments of observation located in the head, i.e. the ear, eye, nose and tongue, in any direction one wishes much like the rotating turret of a battle tank or the rotating dish of a radar.

<sup>2</sup>The allusion here is of the wall of the fort which surrounds the city represented by this creation inhabited by living beings who are its citizens, or even to the moat around this wall which encircles the wall. Brahm is neutral and so vast that even if it were possible to measure the circumference of this wall or moat, Brahm would still surpass this measurement by ten times. This is a figure of speech to indicate the vastness and all-enclosing nature of the Supreme Being. Refer verse no. 7 in this context.

<sup>3</sup>Earlier verse no. 2, 7 and 11 specially assert that Brahm lives inside the bosom of the creature in the subtle space of its heart called the Hridaya Akash. This space measures eight fingers in width (verse no. 13), and the heart itself lies about ten fingers-width above the navel.

The shape of the navel resembles the crater formed on the ground at the time of an underground nuclear test. The burst of nuclear energy is similar to the forces of creation which result in the creation of new life in the form of the embryo which traps this energy for growth and development, and finally emerges as a creature which would, in this scenario, resemble the nuclear reactor or bomb made to harness the results of the successful underground testing. It has now been almost established that the universe came into existence due to a cosmic ‘Big Bang’ millions of years ago. This Big Bang was the virtual ‘underground testing’ done in the cosmic ground represented by the vast and deep recesses of the space of the sky at the very start of creation by Brahm to unfold the energy trapped in the cosmic Atom, the pure conscious cosmic Atma, to unravel its secret potentials and eventually showcase it in the form of this creation. This ‘crater-like navel’ remained as the only visible sign of the original beginning of creation. It should be noted in this context that the embryo derives its nourishment through the placenta which is a tubular duct attached to the mother at one end and to the embryo at the other at its ‘navel’. When the child is born, this placenta is severed, but the hole, reminding one of that original cosmic plan, remains forever.]

“Canto 3, verse no. 15 = All that was in the past and would be in the future, and all that is dependant on food that is the source of nourishment, sustenance and development—all of them are nothing but one or the other manifestation of that Supreme Being. This divine Lord is the one who provides the nectar or ambrosia of eternity and salvation called Amrit, and he is the Lord of this Amrit as well. [That is, this Amrit is in his custody.] (15).

“Canto 3, verse no. 16 = That Supreme Being lives everywhere. He has his hands and legs everywhere; his eyes, head, mouth and ears are everywhere. [Refer to verse no. 3, 11 and 14 in this context.] He indeed uniformly pervades and remains universally present in all the forms that this creation has taken, being omnipresent and all-pervading (16).



“Canto 3, verse no. 17 = In spite of the fact that the Supreme Being (Brahm) has no physical attributes such as having organs of perceptions and actions, he still possesses and displays the individual virtues and characteristic features of these organs individually and jointly. He is the unquestioned Lord of everything that exists, is the supreme controller and regulator as well as the grand shelter of all that exists (17).”

**(v) The Kath Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tells us about the Viraat Purush in its Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11, and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse nos. 12-13:**

“Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 = From this glorious and majestic Atma honoured by the epithet of ‘Mahat’ (i.e. one that is great and majestic), the invisible dynamic forces of creation called ‘Avyakta’ i.e. that which is not visible; that which is not manifest) is superior and subtler. [This invisible cosmic dynamic force of creation is the primary ‘Nature’ from which the rest of creation has come into being.]

The ‘Purush’ (i.e. the Virrat Purush) is superior and subtler than this Avyakta (invisible cosmic Nature)<sup>2</sup>.

There is nothing superior to the Purush. He is the ultimate and final Authority in creation. That Purush is the final frontier, so to say, and he is the final abode for the soul of the creature (11).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The individual Atma is the microcosm of the colossus cosmic Consciousness. When Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is the ‘cause’ of this creation coming into being, decided to initiate the process of creation, its dynamic forces revealed themselves first. These forces at the cosmic level are collectively called ‘primary Prakriti or Nature’. It was from them that the rest of the process rolled forward. These forces were subtle, invisible and infinite just like the capabilities of the mind and intellect in the case of the individual creature.

<sup>2</sup>The supreme Brahm metamorphosed as the Viraat Purush once the process of creation started. This Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and is therefore also called ‘Ishwar’ or the supreme Lord. Since the man is an image of this Purush at the microcosmic plane of creation, he is called the de facto ‘lord’ of the mortal world because he is the most powerful and intelligent of all the species on earth.

It is from the Viraat Purush that the creator Brahma was born atop the divine lotus that emerged from his navel. In this role, the Viraat Purush is called Vishnu. Since this Purush is the original ‘creator or cause’ of this creation, he is actually the ‘real father’ who loves his off springs very dearly. This is why Vishnu or Viraat Purush is called the sustainer and protector of creation.

Being the cause of the entire creation, the Viraat Purush is the apex of the triangle-like creation which has the visible world on this earth of which the individual creature is a unit as the base and the Purush as its apex. The Purush shines from the top like the Sun in the sky. That supreme entity is called a ‘Purush’ because it uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. (Refer reverend Adi Sankracharya’s commentary on this Upanishad. This definition of Purush has been affirmed in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 2/5/18. )

The question arises that when a creature goes to the abode of Vishnu, why does he not return to this world? The answer is that when the creature finds a better environment for himself, when he finds that he has obtained an eternal fount of bliss and happiness, obviously he would not wish to return to the miserable existence from which he had tried to flee and reach this exalted stature. This is the thinking of the wise soul, whereas those who are under delusions come back because they get distracted midway as they are not sufficiently enlightened about the real goal of life. They find it hard to believe that there even exists a sublime state where there is eternal bliss and happiness, an exalted stature that is invisible but nevertheless true,

because they are accustomed to believing in only those things that they can physically see and touch. So they believe that the world of material charm that is physically seen and experienced by them is more truthful and tangible than the abstract state of self-realisation and ethereal existence.]

“Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12 = The supreme transcendental Being known as the ‘Purush’ (i.e. one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place; here referring to Brahm) resides in the thumb-sized subtle space or sky (known as the ‘Hirdya-Akash’) present in the heart of the living being as his Atma or pure consciousness. This supreme Lord known as Ishan is the omniscient one who knows about the past and the future (as well as the present), and is the Lord who rules over all time zones (refer verse no. 5)<sup>1</sup>.

A wise, self-realised and enlightened person who has become acquainted with that Supreme Being as described above has no cause of fear from any quarter; he does not worry for his own self and protection of his gross body. [This is because he has understood the eclectic truth about his truthful identity, that ‘he’ is not the gross body but the Atma, and that no one can ever harm the Atma as it is eternal, imperishable, ethereal and most powerful entity in this creation. At the same time, he does not have any malice towards and hatred for anyone; he does not speak ill of anyone because the same Atma that resides in his body also resides in the body of the other person.]<sup>2</sup>.

Verily, that most exalted, supreme and transcendental Being described in this verse is indeed Brahm (12).

[Note--<sup>1</sup>That is, being eternal and the all-knowing almighty Lord of creation, he commands everything in existence, whether it belonged in some time in the past, would belong to the future, or belongs to the present time. As he is eternal, he outlives all mortal creation and its creatures, and therefore he precedes and follows everything that has a physical existence in this creation. Refer Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 19; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 3/13.

<sup>2</sup>A person who has become wisened to the great and irrefutable truth about the Atma which is his truthful ‘self’ realises that the Lord of creation is residing very near to him. In fact, the Lord is protecting the person from within him by residing in his own heart, as well as from the outside by being omnipresent everywhere and ready to reveal himself whenever needed. Further, erudition and enlightenment about the all-pervading nature of Brahm also ensures that the wise man begins to see the same Brahm in all the creatures uniformly, and therefore he treats all of them with the same respect and love which he would reserve for his dear Lord. This outlook, whereby he stops criticizing others and hating them, preempts all ill-wills, and with it all causes of fear of being harmed by one’s enemy are eliminated. Now there are no enemies but all are brothers having the same Lord as their parent.

A wise man realises that his soul is immortal and is distinct from the gross body. It is this body that becomes old and dies; it is this body that is hurt and suffers from injuries. The Atma can neither be hurt nor can it die as it is blessed by the divine virtue of eternity and imperishability. Once this wisdom dawn upon him, all reason of fear of death vanish.]

“Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 13 = That supreme transcendental Being residing as the Atma in the thumb-sized subtle space of the heart of the creature is like a flame with no smoke. [That is, it is like a brilliantly burning fire which has no smoke. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the Atma or the supreme Brahm have no taints or faults that can taint or tarnish their exalted stature.]

That Lord is the ruler who rules over all that exists—whether it relates to anything that existed in the past or would be exist in the future (or pertains to the present).

Verily, that supreme, transcendental, esoteric, unique and majestic entity is indeed Brahm (13).”

(vi) The **Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad** of the Atharva Veda tradition elaborately describes the Viraat Purush as another name of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, in its various verses, all of which shall read now one by one--

**The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph nos. 1, 6:--**

“Canto 1, Paragraph no. 1 = In order to learn about the secrets of the enigmatic ‘Param Tattva’ (meaning the supreme principle of creation, the essence and fundamental basis of everything in creation, the eclectic and divine entity that is the irrefutable absolute Truth of existence, and its sublime knowledge), the creator Brahma did severe Tapa (penance and austerity) for one thousand years according to the measurement of time based on the scale used by the Gods.

The great Lord ‘Maha Vishnu’ was very pleased with Brahma’s great Tapa and felt obliged to appear before him at the end of one thousand years.

Brahma said to him—‘Oh Lord! Please tell me the secrets of the Param Tattva. This is because you are the only one who is competent enough to enlighten about it, and there is no one else who can do it.

Why is it so? [That is, if you ask me why I’ve said that ‘you are the only one who can tell me about it’, I’ll let you now. It is because—]

You are the only one who is omniscient and all-knowing. You are the only one who is almighty and all-powerful.

You are the support, the base and cause of everything.

It is you who has revealed yourself in all imaginable forms and all imaginable things that exist.

It is you who are the Lord of all.

You are the inspirer and the cause of all deeds and actions.

You are the sustainer, the nourisher, the caretaker and the protector of all.

You are even the one who brings everything to an end.

It is you who shows the paradoxical and mysterious characteristic of being both the ‘truth’ or ‘reality’, and the ‘un-truth’ or ‘falsehood’ at the same time on the one hand, and being beyond this paradox or confusion by being neither the truth nor the falsehood, remaining untouched by this controversy on the other hand.

It is you who uniformly pervades every unit of creation, present in its inside and covering it from the outside. [This is because you are all-encompassing and all-pervading. You warp and waft throughout everything, engulf or surround it from all directions, and encircle or girdle everything from the outside.]

On the one hand you are smaller than the smallest, and on the other hand you are larger than the largest.

One the one hand it is you who is the destroyer or eliminator of ‘Mool Avidya’—the primary or fundamental ignorance and its basis or cause, and on the other hand you move around in and are a native of Avidya (ignorance) itself. You are even the foundation upon which Avidya rests; you bear this Avidya (though you are also the one who destroys ignorance). [In other words, you are very mysterious and

enigmatic. You destroy Avidya, and at the same time you foster Avidya. The former form of yours as the destroyer of Avidya represents your grand auspicious aspect known as 'Gyan' (wisdom, erudition, realisation, enlightenment), while your form as the sustainer of Avidya represents your 'Maya' (delusions) that breeds Avidya.]

It is you who is known by Vidya or knowledge; you are the subject that is studied and the object of pursuing that study; you are knowledge itself personified as well as the object of acquiring of any knowledge. At the same time, the irony is that you are beyond the reach of Vidya—i.e. it is not possible to learn about you or know you by acquiring any kind of knowledge.

You are the primary cause of all causes. You are also the collective of all causes. You are even the each individual cause which is distinct and separate from all other causes.

It is you who is an embodiment of eternal and immutable Anand (bliss, happiness, joy, cheerfulness, beatitude and felicity). You are complete Anand. You are even the fraction of Anand or the residual form of Anand.

You are the one who has attained the state of consciousness known as Turiya. [This is the fourth state of existence of consciousness that is transcendental in nature.] You are even the one who goes beyond it and is established in the Turiyateet state. [The Turiyateet state, as the name suggests, is the fifth state which is higher than the Turiya state.]

The eternal scriptures known as the eclectic Upanishads teach about you; you are the objective of their teaching; it is you who is being researched upon and searched by studying the Upanishads. Indeed, it is you who is worthy to be researched upon and searched by studying of all the scriptures.

It is you who is worthy to be researched upon and searched by the great Gods such as Brahma (i.e. by me), Shiva (the concluder) and Indra (the chief God) along with all the other Gods, besides the scriptures (as noted above).

It is you who is to be sought by all those who are known as 'Mumuksha'—i.e. by those people who wish to attain liberation and deliverance. [That is, you are the destination of those who wish to find freedom for their souls from this entrapping material world.]

It is you who are the object of constant research by even those who have already tasted the Amrit or nectar (of bliss and happiness). [This is because there is no end to you, and one should not be contented by whatever one knows about you, for you are like a vast and fathomless ocean.]

Indeed, you are an embodiment of Amrit. You are indeed Amrit personified. You are Amrit itself! [Amrit is the sublime and divine nectar or ambrosia or elixir of eternity, bliss, happiness, contentedness, beatitude and felicity.]

Indeed, you are 'Sarwa-Roop'. You are indeed Sarwa Roop. You are Sarwa Roop! [The word Sarwa Roop means one who has revealed himself in all known and unknown forms and shapes that exist in this creation. Or in other words, all forms or units of existence are basically the same Lord who assumes the form of these individual separate units of creation.]

You are a personification of the grand destiny of all the creatures that is known as 'Moksha' (emancipation and salvation). You are also the one who bestows Moksha to all. And you are also the one who personifies all the ways and means by which Moksha is (or can be) attained or achieved.

There is nothing besides you (in this creation). Anything that might appear to have any existence sans you is therefore an illusion and a falsehood. This is a

certainty. [In other words, if you are removed from this creation, it would cease to exist and have any meaning.]

Hence, you are the speaker and narrator, you are the Guru (teacher and preceptor), you are the 'Niyantaa' of all (i.e. you are the regulator of all), you are Sarwa-Roop (i.e. it is you who lives in all forms), and it is always you (and nobody else) who is worthy to be meditated and contemplated upon—this is certain.' (1).

“Canto 1, Paragraph no. 6 = It is he (i.e. the divine Being who has been described in paragraph 4-5 above) who is Turiya Brahm (or is the transcendental Divinity known as Brahm). It is he who is also Turiyateet (i.e. the higher echelons of transcendental Consciousness). It is he who is known as Vishnu. [That is, Lord Vishnu and Brahm are the same divine entities. This statement establishes the non-duality between Vishnu and Brahm, and by inference between all the other units of creation, because each of these units is a manifestation of Brahm or Vishnu, depending upon the philosophy one follows. In this connection it would be interesting to note that Vishnu is also the Viraat Purush, the invisible, all-pervading and all-encompassing cosmic form of Brahm, the form which is regarded as the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation, and from which the rest of gross bodies of creation emerged and evolved. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11.]

It is Vishnu who is a synonym for Brahm, and these two terms are interchangeable as they indicate the same Divine Being.

It is he (Vishnu) who is the personification of sublime 'light'. [Here, 'light' refers to enlightenment, knowledge, wisdom, erudition and such other auspicious virtues that remove the darkness of ignorance and delusions.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is beyond the purview and reach of Maya (delusions), Gunas (attributes, qualifications and specified characteristics), and Kaal (time and eras), all the Karmas (deeds and actions, and their causes and consequences). [That is, Maya, Gunas and Kaal have no affect on Vishnu, the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is the ultimate Truth, and he has no attributes, epithets, titles and honours. [That is, Vishnu is the Absolute Truth known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. The Lord cannot be defined or lauded by any known epithets and honours. No titles or names would be able to bring the glory of Vishnu to the fore because of one simple reason that Brahm is unimaginably beyond the purview of mind and speech.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as Parmeshwar—the supreme Lord. [This is because he is the supreme regulator and controller of everything in existence.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as Puran Purush—the ancient Lord lauded and extolled in the Purans. [The Purans are ancient Hindu scriptures that narrate the various stories pertaining to manifestations of Brahm as different Gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma etc.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is expressed or revealed by means of all the Mantras and letters or words of the language. [Since Brahm is consciousness and the very basis of life, all the spoken words, such as the Mantras, are expressions of this Brahm.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is without a beginning and an end (as he is eternal, infinite and imperishable).

It is he (Vishnu) who is revealed in all dimensions or phases of time, space and eras pertaining to the past, the present and the future, as well as in all things that exist in them.

It is he (Vishnu) who is expressed and meant by the term Turiya (which is the transcendental state of existence of consciousness).

It is he (Vishnu) who is unchanging, steady and complete in all respects.

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of Truth, and an upholder of Truth.

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as 'Atma Ram'—the Divinity that provides liberation and deliverance to the creature when the latter realises that this Divinity is present in his own bosom as his Atma which is pure consciousness. [The word 'Ram' refers to the divine Lord who provides one with Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his soul. The word 'Atma' refers to the soul which is pure and sublime consciousness that resides in the heart of the aspirant. This Atma is the 'true self' of a living being. Hence, the term 'Atma Ram' refers to the eclectic state of self-realisation and enlightenment when the aspirant realises that the Lord who is a provider of Mukti is the one who resides in his own inner being as the Atma or soul. This Lord lives nowhere else but in the creature's own bosom as his Atma, as his 'self'. This realisation itself frees him from all fetters of ignorance that had tied him down to the gross body as well as the equally gross world.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is not hemmed in by or bound by or subject to any limitations imposed by time and circumstance in their three dimensions—such as the past, the present and the future, or the good, the bad and the routine.

It is he (Vishnu) who is personified 'light' and its illumination, and hence is self-illuminated. ['Light' is a term used to indicate any virtue or factor or quality that removes darkness.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is incomparable and unique in every respect because he is one of his only kind.

What more can be said of the Lord's immutability, uniformity and indivisibility in creation than the fact that there is no division in Vishnu like a day being arbitrarily divided into two parts consisting of a lighted half called the 'day' and the dark part called the 'night', or like one year being divided arbitrarily into various seasons, months and days. [The terms 'day' and 'night' are artificial partition of time created by man based on whether or not the sun is visible in the sky. Actually the sun never sets or rises in the sky, and what one calls a 'day' may be a 'night' on some other part of the earth. Similarly, Lord Vishnu, who is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the Consciousness that pervades uniformly and universally in the entire living creation, is also indivisible. The many forms and names of Vishnu are artificially assigned to the same Lord.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of self-generated bliss; he remains submerged in eternal beatitude and felicity that springs out or effuses out of him spontaneously.

It is he (Vishnu) who possesses magnificence, majesty and greatness of stupendous magnitude, of dimensions that are beyond anyone's imagination and thoughts.

It is he (Vishnu) who is at the core of the 'Atma' of all creatures. [That is, Vishnu is the primary Consciousness that has revealed itself in myriad forms, and that is why he is called 'Atma-Ram'—the basis of the Atma and its most refined and sublime form known as consciousness.]

Indeed, it is he (Vishnu) who is known as 'Parmatma' (the supreme Atma), Gyan-Atma (the enlightened Atma, the enlightened soul), Turiya-Atma (the consciousness that exists in the transcendental state), and so on. It is he who is the divinity implied in all these terms.

It is he (Vishnu) who is Advaitya or a non-dual universal entity in creation.

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of the highest degree of bliss, beatitude and felicity collectively known as 'Anand'.

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as ‘Vibhu’—one who is the almighty, universal, uniform, all-pervading and all-encompassing Lord in creation.

It is he (Vishnu) who is ‘Nitya’—always present everywhere with the same intensity and dimension, one who is omnipresent, constant, steady, uniform and universal.

It is he (Vishnu) who is ‘Nishkalank’ and ‘Niranjan’—one who is without any blemishes, aspersions, shame, slander, spot, slur, ignominy, taint, infamy, disgrace and other moral, ethical and spiritual faults of any kind; to have no scars to mar one’s immaculacy.

It is he (Vishnu) who has no definitions and attributes; no adjectives or epithets can describe him.

In fact, it is he (Vishnu) who is the only immaculate, un-corrupted and undisputed supreme Lord God of all, called Lord Narayan. There is no one else as exalted and divine as him to be honoured by this name of ‘Narayan’.

A wise and learned aspirant who is well aware of the above-described facts and who adores and worships Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu with this wisdom and perspective is able to obtain Sayujya form of Mukti—i.e. he is able to obtain nearness with his revered Lord. There is no doubt in this statement (6).

**The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12:--**

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 9 = [This paragraph narrates the process of creation from the perspective of metaphysics, and likens it symbolically to the opening and closing of the eyes of the Supreme Being known as the Virrat Purush. In this context, refer Canto 3, paragraphs 1-6 of the present Upanishad, and Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51 of Vishnu Puran.]

The origin, the development and growth, and the conclusion of the ‘Mool Avidya’, i.e. the primary ignorance that is the cause of all delusions and their horrendous consequences that not only create a web known as the world but also keep the creature trapped in it, corresponds to the opening and closing of the eyes of the cosmic Lord known as Adi-Narayan (the primordial Lord Vishnu who is also known as the Viraat Purush, the Primal Purush). [That is, when the Lord opens his eyes it corresponds to the initiation of creation, when he closes his eyes it corresponds to the conclusion of creation, and the period when he keeps the eyes open corresponds to the intermediary phase of development and growth.]

When the universal Lord Adi-Narayan, who is blissful in his true self and self-contented in every way (‘Atmaram’), so wishes and lifts his eyelids, it is then that the ‘Avyakta’ (the un-manifest, imperceptible and invisible) aspect of creation, called the ‘Mool Prakriti’ (the primary Nature), is created. This Avyakta represents the lower feet of the supreme transcendental Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness) which is the primary cause of all things that have come into existence, and which is expressed in the form of this existence in myriad of ways.

From the Avyakta or Mool Prakriti comes into being the ‘Mool Avidya’ or primary ignorance or the cause of falsehood. [The reason behind calling the entire creation as ‘falsehood’ is that it is an imagination of the mind of the Lord Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush. It is the latter’s ‘wishful thinking’ so to say, and therefore the creation has no actual existence. The world came into being (existence) because the Supreme Being desired or wished that it be so. If he had not so desired or wished, the creation wouldn’t have been in existence at all. But even the Lord himself

was so fascinated and charmed by his own creation once it came into being that for a moment he forgot that it is an imaginary thing created out of his own wishful thinking, and instead began to regard it as the real thing. Hence, the rising of 'Mool Avidya' or the primary form of ignorance is regarded as having its base in this imaginary thinking that has its origin in the mind. Once it came into being, it acted as the breeding ground for 'Maya' or delusions. This tendency to first imagine something and then treat it as the real thing is known as 'Mool Prakriti' or the primary nature of all creatures. This explains why 'Mool Prakriti' gave rise to 'Mool Avidya'—because this 'primary or basic nature' to imagine things that do not have substance and any truth in them as the real thing having a truthful form and existence is being 'ignorant of the reality and the truth'.]

It is from the same 'Avyakta' and influenced by the 'Avidya' created by it that the entity referred to as 'Sat', i.e. an entity that is 'truthful' (Sat) but tainted by 'ignorance' (Avidya), was produced. This 'Sat' is that form of Brahm which is undeniably true but is tainted and corrupted by the influence of Avidya. [This refers to the next step of creation when Avidya, or lack of knowledge, led to the primarily 'truthful' ('Sat') Brahm that is characterised by being without any attributes and qualifications to acquire certain attributes and qualifications as narrated below. The importance of 'Sat' in this context lies in the fact that though the creation that would now follow as a manifestation of Brahm is outwardly false but it must always be remembered that hidden in this external façade of falsehood is the immortal and immutable 'truth' of creation that is known as 'Brahm'. This Brahm is 'Avyakta' because it is the pure consciousness that is hidden and secretly present in this creation. It is not visible from the outside like the rest of the creation's physical body. The aspect of creation that is visible is the 'Vyakta' form of Brahm, while its invisible aspect is the 'Avyakta' form of Brahm. Since the world is marked by falsehoods and other impurities called the various 'Vikaars' which become imposed or transposed on Brahm for the simple reason that whatever that exists is nothing but Brahm, it logically follows that Brahm itself becomes tainted with the impurities so synonymous with this artificial creation. This creation is riddled with ignorance and artificiality because it is an 'imaginary creation of the mind' in the first place as outlined above. Therefore we conclude that the primary truthful and sublime form of Brahm becomes tainted and corrupted when it gets associated with this gross world and identified in its form.]

From the Avyakta were further created the 'Mahatattva'—the essential virtues ('Tattvas') that granted greatness and magnificence to this creation, and imparted glory ('Mahat') to it and its creator.

From 'Mahat' was created 'Ahankar', or the sense of ego, pride and vanity (which created arrogance and haughtiness). [The link is obvious. When one has some 'Mahat' or a sense of grandeur, majesty or greatness, it is natural that 'Ahankar' would be produced in its wake, and this would eventually subdue him.]

From Ahankar was created the five 'Tanmatras' or the five sense perceptions. [The five Tanmatras are the perceptions of sound or words, touch, smell, taste and sight. When the primary consciousness representing the creature felt 'proud', or had Ahankar in it that it is enabled and empowered to live a life independently and has been given a body that has magnificent capabilities, it decided that it can hear, touch, smell, taste and see various things and interpret them or make sense of them. Thus were created the five Tanmatras of the creature's body in which the Atma or the pure consciousness lived as his true 'self'.]



From the five Tanmatras were created the five Bhuts such as the sky etc. [The five Bhuts are the five primary elements of creation such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth. This is because to 'hear' there must be a sound, and sound needs 'sky or space' to travel and the medium of 'air' to be transported in the form of waves. Further, it was in the cosmic ether that the first waves were created that produced 'sound'. Similarly for example, 'water' was needed to 'taste' something as the chemicals present in anything tasted needed a medium to dissolve and interact with each other to generate the sense of taste. And so on and so forth.]

From these five Bhuts or primary elements there came into being an 'Anda'—or the 'cosmic egg'. [This 'Anda' or the cosmic egg represented a grosser form that resulted when all these primary elements of creation interacted with each other; the Anda was a result of this interaction. It is like the case of the male sperm fertilising the female ova to produce the egg from which develops the embryo which in turn metamorphoses into a complex creature with a gross, visible and physical body that has no resemblance to the original inputs of the sperm and the ova which are in themselves very microscopic in form.]

This primary form of creation represents one Paad or feet or aspect of the supreme Brahm. [Therefore, the embryo and the visible world that develops from this cosmic Anda or egg is only one Paad of Brahm. And this Paad is the lower feet of Brahm as already said in stanza 2 of this paragraph. The other Paads of Brahm would therefore represent the vast creation much beyond the known world.] (9).

[Note—It ought to be noted here that paragraphs 9-10 describe the 18 Tattvas or essential elements of creation. They are as follows—Avyakta, Mool Prakriti, Mool Avidya, Sat, Mahatattva, Ahankar, the five Tanmatras, the five Bhuts, Anda or Hiranyagarbh, and Viraat.]

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 10 = This cosmic egg ('Anda') has the primary Lord known as Narayan as its basic empowering Authority as well as its essential ingredient. This Lord Narayan is primarily beyond all Gunas (i.e. who has no specific attributes and is beyond conventional definitions), is immaculate and pure Truth personified, and is eternally blissful, but he has assumed a form that has attributes and willingly allows himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) because he so wishes and wants to display his maverick powers in a playful manner.

In other words, the fact that the primarily formless and attributeless Lord Narayan has allowed himself to be mired by Avidya (ignorance) and Maya (delusions) that led the formation of the cosmic Anda (egg) that would eventually create the Brahmaand (universe) is so because the Lord had willingly wished it to be so. He wanted a little fun and play, and therefore sportingly created this world and its accompanying delusions. [This paragraph describes the cause of this creation coming into being. The cause is the Lord's desire to do something magical and out of the ordinary; it was due to his 'wish'. When this happened, the first thing was the appearance of the cosmic 'egg' which was the future universe in its primitive, basic and miniature form. This cosmic egg was the 'causal body' of Brahm because it contained or harboured 'the spark of life in the form of consciousness'. It was 'causal' because it acted as the 'cause' of the universe taking shape and coming into being. Hence, Brahm resided in this cosmic Anda as its Atma or soul. Had it not been for the presence of Brahm in it, the cosmic egg would be like any other 'unfertilised egg' which does 'not' harbour life. And even if this 'unfertilised egg' grew and somehow matured into the shape of the universe, the latter would not have harboured life either

because of the absence of Brahm or consciousness in it. This lifeless universe would be without an Atma.]

Lord Narayan is none else but Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is behind everything in existence. Since the cosmic 'Anda' or egg harbours the future world in its bosom, it is sure to have the spark of 'life and consciousness' in it, for otherwise it would be inane and dead. So it is said that Narayan (symbolising 'life' and 'consciousness') is uniformly present in this cosmic egg as its vital ingredient; this cosmic egg is completely soaked in life and consciousness which are manifestations of Adi-Narayan; the cosmic egg is therefore a manifestation of Adi-Narayan. [This 'Adi-Narayan' is a term used to imply the Primal Purush from whom the entire gamut of creation has emerged. He is variously regarded as being the supreme Brahm who is un-manifest cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing and beyond any limitations imposed by definitions, as well as Lord Vishnu who resides in Vaikunth, and who is variously named as Narayan, Parmatma, Viraat Purush and Hiranyagarbha. Refer Canto 1, paragraph 5-6.]

The egg therefore has the supreme Lord concealed in it in a subtle form. This Lord is the cause of countless universes coming into being, their sustenance and their conclusion. He is the primary cause of all causes, i.e. he is personified Prakriti or Nature. He is beyond the reach and purview of Maya or delusions, though Maya is created by him and he has allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya in order to create this creation. He is a personified state of consciousness known as Turiya, which is the state of existence which is transcendental in form and nature. It is this supreme and majestic Lord who resides subtly and imperceptibly in the cosmic egg (Anda) described here. [According to Vedanta, this form of Brahm is known as 'Hiranyagarbha', and is also called 'Brahma, the creator'. It is so because from this egg the rest of the creation would eventually evolve. So, Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of Brahm at the cosmic level of creation. The subtle body consists of the twin instruments of the mind and the intellect which are required to undertake the complex task of creation. This is symbolised by Brahma, the creator, as he is said to have pronounced the Vedas which are the eternal repositories of knowledge and wisdom. It was the creative and imaginative aspect of the cosmic 'mind' that visualised what shape this universe would take, and it was the intelligent and sharp cosmic 'intellect' that actually researched and gave effect to the imaginary conceptions of the mind. Hence, Brahma the creator is regarded as the macrocosmic 'subtle body' of creation. He is also like the cosmic egg because it was he who had given this creation its shape just like the body of a creature is given its shape inside the shell of the egg even before it hatches.]

From this evolves the 'Viraat Purush' which is the 'gross body' of the supreme transcendental Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. It is this Viraat Purush from which the rest of creation has emerged. Only a body that has 'life' and 'consciousness' in it is adored and shown attention by all; it is such a body that does not decay and perish. Once the factors of life and consciousness leave the body, it begins to decay and perish rapidly. Hence, this shows that the 'imperishable and eternal' Brahm in the form of the 'cosmic Consciousness' has himself revealed in the form of the Viraat Purush at the macrocosmic level of creation, and by extension in the form of the individual creature that this Viraat transforms into at the microcosmic level of creation. [The Viraat Purush is the sum-total of all the gross bodies in creation. All things that have a shape and form are created from the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush. In other words, what the individual creature is to Brahm at the microcosmic level of creation, the Viraat Purush bears the

same relationship with Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The ‘gross body’ has various sense organs or perceptions and actions—so when this Viraat transformed himself as a living being, the latter also depicted these sense organs. They are his five organs of perception such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin, and the five organs of action such as the hand, the leg, the mouth, the genitals and the excretory.]

Therefore we conclude that it is the same Brahm in the form of the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of life and creation at all levels of its evolution, such as the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body (10).

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 11 = [Paragraph no. 11 describes the majestic form and glories of the Viraat Purush.]

The Viraat Purush<sup>1</sup>, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being, has countless heads, eyes, hands and legs. [Refer also to This is a symbolic way to highlight the fact that the Viraat is the sum-total of all the gross bodies that live in this creation. The Viraat Purush is a metaphor for the all-inclusive form and all-encompassing nature of the supreme Brahm, as the former represents all living organisms in this creation. According to the theory of Genesis of Creation as outlined in the Upanishads, it is from the Viraat Purush that the whole creation has been moulded; the creation is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush. Since the Viraat is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm as outlined in the forgoing paragraphs, it follows that the creation moulded out of this Viraat is also a manifestation of the Brahm. Therefore, this creation represents the gross body of Brahm. It is this Viraat Purush who created the creature in his own image. Since there are uncountable forms and varieties of creatures or living beings in this creation, from the single cell organisms to the most complex human, and each individual is an image of the Viraat, it is easy to understand the meaning and import of the statement that the Viraat has thousands of hands, mouths etc. as stated above. Besides this point, another interpretation is that Brahm in the form of the Viraat lives in all the places of this creation at the same time. This is in consonance with the eclectic virtue of Brahm as being omnipresent all-encompassing and all-pervading.]

The Viraat Purush, having countless ears<sup>2</sup>, surrounds the entire creation from all sides and uniformly pervades in it. He is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing.

He (the Viraat Purush) is both Saguna and Nirguna. [That is, the Lord has revealed himself in numerous forms, thereby becoming ‘Saguna’—or the one with discernible characteristics, definable attributes and specific qualities. At the same time, the Lord has no visible form as his primary nature is formless and without attributes—i.e. he is ‘Nirguna’. This concept has been elaborately described earlier in paragraphs 2-8 of this present Canto 2.]

He (the Viraat Purush) is a personification of the grand virtues of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), Bal (strength, valour, vitality and potent), Aishwarya (fame, majesty, grandeur, magnificence, glory), Shakti (power, dynamism, energy, punch and vitality), and Tej (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism, agility and speed).

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of innumerable worlds of diverse varieties and forms.

It is he (the Viraat Purush) who is the supreme Lord of creation known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or soul of creation. He is an embodiment of eternal and

unbound bliss, as well as is endowed with all the noble and auspicious virtues and glories that exist in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is absolutely independent (because he is supreme and not subservient to anything). He is all-knowing and omniscient. He is almighty and all-powerful. He is the ultimate controller of everything in existence. And he is an image of all the most auspicious virtues that ensure all-round well being in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of a majestic fount of immense 'Tej' (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism etc.) that cannot be described, is endless, and is most divine.

This Supreme Being having the above grand and magnificent virtues pervades throughout the cosmic Anda created from the Avyakta due to Avidya (as narrated in paragraph no. 9). This Anda or the cosmic egg is the basis of Maha-Maya that has surrounded the Supreme Being (i.e. it is the basis of creation of the great delusion because it is in this form of the cosmic egg that the Supreme Being had allowed himself to assume a form which is not in consonance with his primary nature of being formless).

[As is clear by now, the Supreme Being that is referred to here is the cosmic Consciousness that infuses life in the cosmic egg. The egg has been literally 'fertilised' by Brahm, the Supreme Being, who has passed on to it his 'genes' in the form of 'consciousness' possessing all the virtues enumerated herein above. Therefore, these virtues of Brahm would naturally be passed on to the 'embryo' that developed in this egg, and the subsequent 'creation' that would emerge from this cosmic egg upon its maturity. It follows that this is the evident proof why Brahma known as Hiranyagarbha representing the 'embryo', and Vishnu known as the Viraat Purush representing the 'creation' would be an image or a 'gene-bearer' of Brahm, the Supreme Being. Now, once the 'formless' (or Nirguna and Avyakta) Brahm assumes the 'formed' shape of an egg (becomes Saguna and Vyakta) he is bound to be affected by the characteristics of something that has a 'form', something that is 'Saguna' (one that has various Gunas or qualities) and 'Vyakta' (expressed, revealed). In other words, the Brahm which was without any Maya (delusions) prior to the entire process of creation rolling out has now become surrounded by it, or tainted and affected by it.]

Therefore, the 'Maha-Maya' is the gross body created out of delusions of the almighty Lord God known as Brahm who is naturally and inherently almighty, all-powerful, universal, uniform, non-dual, and an embodiment of un-bound bliss and beatitude.

It is in each pore of the macrocosmic form of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush that numerous universes or worlds and their gross things are born or created. Each one of them is a revelation of the same Lord Narayan; they are images of the same Brahm. [It is because, as has been explained above, they carry the genes of their parent known as Brahm. In this context, refer to Canto 3, paragraph nos. 11-12 which will make it clear that the 'Viraat Purush' meant here is not the one which is regarded as being synonymous with Vishnu, but is the 'Adi-Viraat Purush' that precedes Vishnu and from whom even Vishnu, the commonly known form of Viraat, was created. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be discussed in Canto 6.] (11).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The *Viraat Purush* is the subtlest form in which Brahm revealed itself when it had decided to initiate the process of creation. Though 'subtlest' in relation to the rest of creation, but in its self the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of

Brahm. It was from this Viraat Purush that the rest of the creation was moulded—refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-4; and Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2. The word ‘Viraat’ itself means colossus, huge, immense, large and vast. This manifestation of Brahm covered each minute pore of creation; it pervaded throughout the space that would eventually form the area of the cosmos or the universe. It encompassed everything; it included everything. It encircled or surrounded everything from the outside. It was called ‘Viraat’ precisely for this reason. Again, it was called ‘Purush’ because it provided the vital spark of life in the form of ‘consciousness’ and ‘Pran’ into the otherwise lifeless primordial cosmic gel so that it could become active, alive and show dynamism. It was called ‘Purush’ also because Brahm, in the form of the ‘consciousness’, lived in this creation uniformly and universally in such a way that the two were inseparable from one another, and to give life to the nascent creation as well as to control it from within. When the creation came into being, this Brahm entered in the body of the creature to take up residence in the living being’s body—refer Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 12-14.

The word *Purush* has been defined in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. The word Purush consists of two parts—viz. ‘Pur’ meaning a city or an abode, and ‘Ush’ means the one who lives there. Hence, the ‘Viraat Purush’ is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that lives in each aspect of this creation, pervading throughout it, and including in its ambit everything that exists in any form.

The entire creation was produced by Brahm—refer Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 1-8; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 4.

Brahm resides in the subtle space of the heart of the creature—refer Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.

Brahm resides in the gross body of the creature—refer Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4-5; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7.

Brahm is the controller of the entire creation—refer Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 7; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 1, 7.

<sup>2</sup>The phrase ‘having countless ears’ simply means that Brahm, in the form of the Viraat Purush, assumed as many forms as there were creatures who could hear. It also means that Brahm, as the living being’s consciousness, heard or became aware of everything that was happening in this creation.

The fact that the Viraat Purush has countless ears and as many eyes and mouths has been also stressed in the present Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph no. 11, as well as in Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 11, 14, 16.

It is a metaphoric way of saying that a wise man who knows the truth of Brahm is also one who is well aware of everything in this creation; nothing is hidden from his knowledge; he is wise, erudite, knowledgeable, enlightened, omniscient and all-knowing. He receives all information and knowledge, but then picks and chooses what is auspicious and righteous. He is not ‘deaf’ to the teaching of the scriptures. It ought to be noted here that the creature, the living being, especially the human being, is said to be replica of the Viraat Purush. Refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 3.]

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 12 = [This paragraph describes the concept of uniformity in creation, the eclectic principle of non-duality, in the context of genesis of creation at two levels—one at the macrocosmic and invisible level of the vast creation that consists of Brahma and Viraat (Vishnu), and the other at the microcosmic level of the visible creation consisting of the Prajapati who is the first male on earth and who produced off springs who would eventually populate it. While the cosmic entities such as the sun, the moon and the stars along with everything else in this creation are the off springs of the Viraat Purush, the visible world where humans live, i.e. the earth and its inhabitants were the off springs of Brahma the creator in his manifested form as the Prajapati—literally meaning the Lord of his subjects. By extension, all the Gods, all the creatures and all other entities in this creation, both at the macro as well as the micro level of creation, are manifestations of the same Brahm known as Narayan.]

It is from Narayan, or the Supreme Being known as Brahm, that Hiranyagarbha (the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, also known as Brahma the creator) was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Prajapati was born. It was this Prajapati who is the one who produced off springs who in turn would populate this world. [Hence, he is the first Male from whom the rest of the creatures who eventually populated and ruled over this earth were born. He is the ‘first born’ on this earth, and therefore is regarded as a manifestation of the cosmic creator of the physical world known as Brahma. Hence, Brahma, the cosmic creator of this physical world, is often also called ‘Prajapati Brahma’. The word ‘Prajapati’ literally means one who is the Lord of his subjects and is responsible for their care and welfare.]

It is from Narayan that the eleven Rudras (the various cosmic forms or aspects of Lord Shiva, the concluder and one of the Gods of the Trinity) were born or created. [The 11 *Rudras* have been enumerated in note no. 2 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

It is from Narayan that the entire creation and its numerous worlds were born or created.

It is from Narayan that Indra (the chief of Gods) was born or created. [The word ‘Indra’ is derived from the root ‘Indri’ meaning sense organs. Hence, he represents the controlling power of Brahm that helps the creature to remain in control of his sense organs, and through them over the world.]

It is from Narayan that all the rest of the Gods were born or created. [These ‘Gods’ represent the various forces of Nature and the numerous powers of Brahm that are necessary to regulate the creation and keep it functioning properly. Hence, they are personifications of these universal forces and powers of Brahm; they are metaphors for various stupendous abilities, the powerful authority and the dynamism of Brahm at the cosmic level.]

It is from Narayan that the twelve Adityas or the Sun Gods are born or created. [The 12 *Adityas* have been enumerated in note no. 3 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

In fact, it is from Narayan that all the eight Vasus (the patron deities who preside over the various forms of wealth created in order to sustain this creation and meet its needs), all the Rishis (the exalted and wise sages and seers), all the living beings, and all the Chandas (the innumerable hymns that constitute the body of all the

scriptures that are regarded as repositories of knowledge and wisdom) were born or created. [The 8 *Vasus* have been enumerated in note no. 1 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

It is from Narayan that each one of them are born and derive their abilities to live, act and do anything, and it is in Narayan in whom they all dissolve in the end.

Hence, it is Narayan who is deemed to be eternal, infinite, unchanging, uniform, universal, imperishable and constant. It is Narayan who is deemed to be the most exalted and supreme. It is Narayan who is deemed to be self-illuminated.

Indeed, everything and everyone in creation is none but Narayan.

It is Narayan who is Brahma the creator.

It is Narayan who is Shiva the concluder.

It is Narayan who is Indra, the chief God.

It is Narayan who has manifested himself as all the chief directions of the compass as well as the corners of these directions (i.e. he is omnipresent and all-pervading in this creation; there is no spot where Narayan is not present).

It is Narayan who is Kaal (time and circumstance in all dimensions).

It is Narayan who is revealed in the form of all deeds and actions.

It is Narayan who is both the formed aspect of creation, called the 'Murta' or Saguna creation, as well as the unformed aspect, called the 'Amurta' or Nirguna creation.

It is Narayan who is a personified form of all causes that lead to consequences, as well as these consequences themselves. It is Narayan who is both the cause and the action that results from this cause. Indeed, Narayan even goes beyond the concept of a cause and its effect to transcend them and remain neutral and unaffected. [That is, inspite of the fact that it is Narayan who is at the root of all deeds and actions in this world, being their cause as he is the supreme inspirer or motivator, he himself remains detached and non-involved in either the deeds or their results.]

It is Narayan who is the only God or Authority that possesses and exhibits such auspicious and noble divine virtues as being the supreme fount of eternal illumination and light because he is self-illuminated, as being a personification of eternal and profound bliss and happiness that comes with Brahm-realisation, as being constant, uniform and eternal, as being unique because he is without an alternative and parallel, as being faultless, taintless, without any blemishes and corruptions, as being indescribable and indefinable, and as being the only absolutely immaculate, holy, pure and divine Lord of creation.

Narayan is so divine, majestic, magnificent, great, glorious and exalted that he is comparable to none. At the same time, he exhibits exemplary humility and remarkable simplicity by not being, or pretending to be, greater than anyone or anything in this creation.

Indeed, those wise and enlightened souls who come to grips with this majestic and mystical divine truth about Narayan by overcoming all forms of doubts and confusions are able to pierce or overcome all fetters (representing ignorance and delusions), and as a consequence they find freedom and deliverance for themselves. They do find freedom and deliverance, and there is no doubt in it!

Those who realise this truth and worship Lord Narayan with this wisdom and erudition are able to not only attain the Lord but also become one with him. Verily, such a man becomes a personification of Narayan himself (12)."

**The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14:--**

“Canto 3, paragraph no. 7 = The disciple asked again—‘If it is true that the creation is impermanent and changes constantly, coming to an end at a certain given time, then what is the sequence in which this conclusion or end happens?’<sup>1</sup> (7).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The world or creation that would now be described represents the fourth Paad of Brahm. This Paad is called ‘Bhut’ as it is perishable and transient. These Bhuts are the basic constituents that make up this world and are the primary elements of creation in varying degrees of subtlety and grossness. The word ‘Bhut’ itself literally means one that is like a ‘ghost’—i.e. one that is imagined and is not the real thing! It is an apparition. Hence, the world representing the fourth Paad of Brahm, the Supreme Being, is due to the dominance of ignorance of the real truth and lack of truthful knowledge of the reality of Brahm which is actually represented by the other three Paads. This concept is made absolutely clear in Canto 4, especially its paragraph nos. 3-6.]

“Canto 3, paragraph no. 8 = [In order to understand what is being described here in paragraph no. 8 and subsequent paragraph nos. 10-15, it will be fit to have a clear conception of the imagery that is employed for the narration.

The creation started from a point known as Brahm and then spread out in concentric circles just like ripples spreading out from a focal point on the surface of the water of a calm lake. The creation has been envisioned as a structure consisting of many concentric rings of increasing diameter and circumference. These circles or rings are drawn around a central hub or core which is the focal point of these rings.

Now, the first circle represents the domain of Brahma, the creator (paragraph no. 8); the second circle stands for Vishnu, the sustainer, also known as the Viraat Purush (paragraph nos. 10-11); the third circle for the Adi-Viraat, the parent of the Viraat Purush (paragraph no. 12); the fourth for Adi-Narayan (paragraph nos. 13-15); and the fifth circle represents Lord Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan to whom this Upanishad is dedicated. This Lord is the Supreme Being from whom the rest of the Gods have been born (paragraph no. 15).

The above narration of ever-increasing circles of greater diameters symbolises the expansion of creation. The circumference of any given circle would mark the end of a particular layer or strata or plane of existence. But as any bubble bursts when it has reached its outer limit, this creation also collapses—and this event is metaphorically depicted in paragraph nos. 9 and 16.]

The wise teacher was very pleased, and he respectfully explained—‘One day-time of Brahma (the creator) consists of one thousand cycles of creation and destruction, with each cycle consisting of the 4-Yug period<sup>1</sup> according to the Hindu tradition.

One night of Brahma has the same duration as his daytime.

Therefore, the complete ‘day’ of Brahma as we humans understand this term to mean (i.e. one full cycle of day-time + night-time) would be equal to the total time taken for one day-time and one night-time according to Brahma’s measurement of time at the cosmic level<sup>2</sup>.

During this one day of Brahma, the world known as the Satya Loka (the truthful heaven where Brahma and the other senior Gods such as Vishnu live) is created and destroyed once. [That is, one cycle of creation and destruction of heaven would be equal to one thousand such cycles on earth where mortal creatures live.]

With this cosmic scale of measuring time, fifteen such days of Brahma would be his one ‘Paksha’ or fortnight.

Two such fortnights would be Brahma’s one month.



Two such months would be Brahma's one season.

Three such seasons would be one solstice in the year of Brahma.

Two such solstices (i.e. the summer and the winter solstices) would make up one year of Brahma.

According to this celestial measurement of time, Brahma's one life consists of one hundred such years.

This is said to be one life-span of Brahma the creator (8).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The four Yugs are the following four eras or phases of one cycle of creation and destruction—the first is the Sat-yug, the second is the Treta-yug, the third is the Dwapar-yug, and the fourth is the current Kali-yug.

The Satayug which was the great Vedic period of fire sacrifices, the Tretayug culminated with the incarnation of Lord Ram, the Dwaparyug ended with Lord Krishna's incarnation, and the Kaliyug would end with the great deluge or Doomsday when the entire world would be drowned in water. The next Kalpa would come after that in a cyclic form. This happens because at the fag end of Kaliyug, sins and evils would have reached such a crescendo that the Supreme Being no longer is able to tolerate it though he is most tolerant, magnanimous and forgiving, and decides to finally wind up the whole thing by punishing the world by clean sweeping the slate. Only the righteous and auspicious few survive who would become the progenitors of the next cycle.

The Satayug is also called Krityug because elaborate fire sacrifices were done during this phase. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

The Tretayug is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years.

The Dwaparyug is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years.

The Kaliyug is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years.

<sup>2</sup>The days and nights of Brahma are much far extensive than what we understand them to be. The unit of time used to measure one day or life of Brahma is much like we use the term 'light years' when measuring distances of various stars and galaxies in the universe. They are so wide apart and distanced from earth and each other that to measure their distances in terms of earth units such as miles and kilometres would be nothing but madness. The same logic and reason is used to set a separate scale for Brahma and other deities as narrated below.]

“Canto 3, paragraph no. 9 = [The following paragraphs describe the cosmic process of regression or withdrawal or collapse or end of creation. Its creation and expansion has already been narrated in Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12.]

At the end of his life the Viraat Purush<sup>1</sup> (i.e. the macrocosmic form of the creator known as Brahma) finds rest in, or withdraws himself into, his primary form known as the Hiranyagarbha. [This Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of the Supreme Being, also called Brahm, from which the Viraat Purush had emerged earlier. Therefore, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the cosmic embryo that is nourished in the cosmic Anda, the cosmic egg, which was referred to in the last stanza of paragraph no. 9 of Canto 2. The egg laid by birds has a shell enclosing it, and similarly an embryo of humans too has an enclosing membrane to give it protection inside the womb of the mother. This outer shell or membrane symbolises the outer periphery of creation. Everything and all forms of life are within its walls. The womb of the mother where the embryo is

lodged and where it develops would then be like Brahm that harbours this embryo in its cosmic womb. Meanwhile, the chick of the bird or the unborn infant of a man remains in complete darkness till the time it is inside the shell or the womb respectively. It is only when it comes out that it is able to see the light of day and become aware of the presence of the world of colourful charms. In other words, it is only when one breaks free from his old habits and chucks his old habitat that he can hope to find something new and exciting. As long as the chick or the infant remained cocooned in the shell or the mother's womb, it had its eyes closed, but as soon as they emerged outside they opened their eyes and observed the colourful and charming world of countless opportunities and forms. Thus, it is only when one employs one's mind and intellect to 'see around' that he is able to see beyond the darkness of ignorance and see the light of Truth.]

The Hiranyagarbha retires or finds rest by retracting or withdrawing itself further into its primary form which is the cosmic causal body where the cosmic Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, lives.

This state of restful existence and no activity of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of the supreme creator, when the former has withdrawn himself, when he has retracted all his tentacles and decided to take rest for some time by remaining comfortably ensconced in the shell of the causal body in his primary form as the cosmic Atma or Consciousness, is called the period of 'Pralaya' or the cosmic doomsday when everything ends, when everything is dissolved, when everything comes to a rest. During this time there is nothing but void and no activity of any kind. Everything comes to a naught then; it's a state of absolute neutrality and inertness<sup>2</sup> (9).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The terms *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term 'Viraat' means anything of colossal dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1. The latter is so-called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb ('Garbha'), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden ('Hiranya') in colour.

It was from this cosmic embryo called the Hiranyagarbha that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called 'Brahma the creator'. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1.

The Viraat Purush is also the creator of this world as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg, deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one radiating out from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Maartand.

There are different versions regarding this Hiranyagarbha. According to the concept of Vedanta, Brahm is the cosmic supreme and transcendental Consciousness residing in the macrocosmic causal body called the Ishwar. In this context, when Brahm decided to reveal or unfold this creation, first the causal body known as a Ishwar developed the macrocosmic subtle body called the Hiranyagarbha, and from this evolved the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm called the Viraat Purush. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. All these three sublime bodies of Brahm at the cosmic level—viz. Ishwar, Hiranyagarbha and Viraat Purush—were invisible, subtle,

unqualified, without any attributes, all-inclusive and all-pervading. It was the unrevealed form of Brahm. But that was just the beginning.

When this visible world was created, which had attributes and qualifications, the same macrocosmic units of Brahm metamorphosed themselves into their respective counterparts in the individual creature's body. Hence, Ishwar is represented by the Pragma or the individual's causal body, Hiranyagarbha is represented by the Taijas or the individual's subtle body, and the Viraat Purush is represented by the Vishwa or the individual's gross body.

These three bodies are the three states in which consciousness exists, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. At the microcosmic level, the Pragma relates to the deep sleeper state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, the Taijas relates to the dreamer state of consciousness called Swapna state, and the Vishwa relates to the waking state of consciousness called Jagrat state. The three corresponding states at the macrocosmic level are the Ishwar which relates to the cosmic deep sleep state of Consciousness called cosmic Sushupta, the Hiranyagarbha which relates to the cosmic dreamer state of Consciousness called cosmic Swapna, and the Viraat Purushh which relates to the cosmic waking state of Consciousness called cosmic Jagrat. A separate appendix of this volume explains these and other related matters with the help of sketches in detail.

According to Purans, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the Brahma the creator, as well as to the Viraat Purush because Brahma was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu who is no one else but the Viraat Purush. If the word 'Hiranyagarbha' is to indicate the cosmic egg, then it was from this egg, lodged in the womb-like navel of Vishnu, that Brahma emerged. Hence, the 'original creator' was not Brahma but the Viraat Purush as Vishnu, and therefore the latter is the Hiranyagarbha—the golden cosmic egg. So we conclude that Hiranyagarbha essentially refers to the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation evolved. Since Brahma is said to be the great grandfather of this creation, he is aptly named Hiranyagarbha, i.e. the cosmic egg from which this visible and gross form of creation evolved.

This entire concept of Hiranyagarbha being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in Mahopanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition.

The Hiranyagarbha is very subtle like the mind-intellect of the creature. The mind-intellect is also called the subtle body because it is through this mind-intellect that the Atma of the individual creature creates this world by using the mind's stupendous ability to imagine, envision and conceptualise things, and then using the intellect to justify it to be true, real and logical. But this instrument of the mind-intellect is invisible, is so subtle and hidden from view that its presence is only deduced by its astounding potentials which are manifested in the form of the gross body and its own stupendous capabilities. Whatever the mind wishes to do, it gets it done by the body.

This Hiranyagarbha is like the musk present in the body of the musk deer. The deer is not able to see the musk but is nevertheless maddened by its perfume, running mad in search of the source of the perfume not knowing that it is hidden well inside its own body. Similarly, the creature is unaware that the supreme Brahm is residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness called the Atma while he spends his entire life searching for it everywhere in the outside world.

There is another connotation to this observation. Since the mind is the creator of the world by its power of imagination, and then sustaining or perpetuating its own creation by believing in the truthfulness and reality of the world, it is therefore the mind itself that can conclude this world. So, while it is like Brahma the creator, it is also like Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. If the same mind can assume three roles, it is not incongruous to believe that the same Hiranyagarbha is Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously. Since Shiva is a synonym used

for the supreme transcendental Brahm—because the word ‘Shiva’ stands for an entity that is truthful, beautiful, auspicious, divine and holy as affirmed by a number of Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the ‘Shiva Tattwa’, this Hiranyagarbha is also Shiva.

Hiranyagarbha is also called Maartanda, the Sun, because of its golden colour and brilliance like the golden yellow and brilliant disc of the sun in the sky. Like the light of the sun illuminates the world and brings everything in it to light or knowledge, the Hiranyagarbha too brings to the fore the intentions of Brahm by revealing this vast creation. The Hiranyagarbha had spread the sacred divinity, the stupendous glory, the dazzling radiance and the brilliant splendour through the length and breath of the vast realm of the cosmos like the sun spreading its glory on the earth by way of its energy, light, heat and warmth.

The word ‘Hiranyam’ also refers to ‘Amrit or elixir or nectar of eternity and bliss’; it also means ‘green’. That is why greenery is associated with fertility, vibrancy, life and abundance of food and plentiful vegetation. The trees are green, and their precursor, the algae and moss, were also green. Indeed the food is the elixir of life in the world—nothing can ever survive without food and water. So, ‘Hiranyagarbha’ first created these to initiate the process of creation, and then sustained them once the process got under way. The ‘Viraat Purush’ as well as the ‘Hiranyagarbha’ are both used often synonymously to indicate the macrocosmic forms of the Male aspect of creation whose female counterpart is called ‘Nature’ or Shakti. The Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Brahm’s creative powers and an effective method of displaying the Lord’s cosmic authority.

The *Viraat Purush*, according to metaphysics, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

*Purush* has been defined in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures created.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

In fact, the entire Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1 of the Mundak Upanishad is devoted to the theme of Viraat Purush, and it says that the entire creation has been created as a manifestation of the Viraat Purush.

According to reverend Sankracharya’s commentary on Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation.

That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

According to Vedanta therefore, the word Purush refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word ‘Purush’ means someone who resides in a body. Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm took up residence at the time of creation and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu’s passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

The word ‘Viraat’ refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms ‘subtle and gross’ are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

<sup>2</sup>This *Pralaya* or dooms-day of Brahm is separate from the dooms-day of this mortal world on earth which is only one day of Brahma. It should be remembered that the entire creation is depicted as being in layers or in concentric circles with increasing distance from the center. Refer Canto 6, paragraph nos. 2-9 in this context.]

“Canto 3, paragraph no. 10 = One day-time and one night-time of Lord Vishnu, who is the protector, nourisher and sustainer of the cosmic egg or the ‘Anda’ (i.e. the entire Universe) created out of a fraction (‘genes’ or ‘sperm’) of the Supreme Being known as Adi-Narayan (or the supreme Brahm), is equivalent to one life-time (or life-span) and one sleeping time (or the ‘Pralaya’ time) of Brahma the creator respectively. That is, one full ‘day’ in the life of Vishnu is equivalent in length and duration to one cosmic cycle of birth and dissolution of Brahma the creator of this physical world. [One full ‘day’ of Vishnu implies both the waking phase and the sleeping phase of Vishnu just like our human days are measured which includes the day time when

there is sunlight and the ordinary man is usually awake, and the night time when there is darkness in the absence of sunlight. The 'life-span of Brahma' and the 'duration of Pralaya' have been narrated in paragraph no. 9 above. This means that one hundred years in the life of Brahma is equal to one day-time of Lord Vishnu when he is awake, and one hundred such long years of Pralaya when Brahma, in his subtle form as the Hiranyagarbha, rests in the causal body of Brahm, is equal to one night-time of Vishnu when he retires. Therefore, one full 'day' of Lord Vishnu = one full cycle of creation done by Brahma, starting from his current birth, ending in his dissolution, and extending to the point of time just prior to his re-birth in the next phase of creation.]

With this scale of measurement, Lord Vishnu's fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years are measured.

Hence, one full life-span Vishnu consists of one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to Vishnu as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of Vishnu = 100 x 10 million years according to the measurement of time on Vishnu's scale.] (10).

"Canto 3, paragraph no. 11 = At the end of his life-span, Vishnu reverts back into his primary form as the Viraat Purush. This marks the 'end' or the dissolution of Vishnu.

When this comes to happen, the universe ends along with all its different formations and layers. This eventuality when the universe dissolves into nothing is the primary form of Vishnu as the Viraat Purush. It marks the beginning of the great Pralaya or dooms-day of the universe, or the resting phase or the sleeping phase of Vishnu<sup>1</sup>.

The resting or sleeping period of Vishnu is of the same duration as his life-span. This is the great 'Pralaya of Vishnu' when everything comes to a naught, when there is complete stillness and inactivity, when nothing exists and moves, when nothing shows signs of life and activity. [The 'resting or sleeping time of Vishnu' is when the Lord rests or sleeps peacefully, and depicted in the Purans as the Viraat Purush reclining on the bedstead made of the coiled body of the celestial serpent known as Seshnath who floats on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir-sagar, and which corresponds to the dissolution of creation at the cosmic level or the circle or plane in which Vishnu resides in the broader perspective of the entire creation. This period is equivalent to one crore years also. This concept of measurement is explained in paragraph 10.] (11).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The ordinary waking phase of Vishnu represents the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness. It is during this phase that a creature (a living being) gets actively aware and involved in the gross external world.

On the other hand, the ordinary sleeping phase of Vishnu marks the Swapna or the dreaming state as well as the Sushupta or the deep-sleep state of consciousness when the sleeping creature is neither aware of the outside world nor does he get involved in this external world for the simple reason that his gross body and its sense organs are totally inactive during this state.

This phase leads to the next higher state known as the Turiya state, or the transcendental state of consciousness. This is of a much longer duration than the Sushupta state, and is a perpetual state of bliss when nothing matters. It is during this state that self-realised ascetics find Samadhi, which is a state of trance. While the Sushupta is only momentary and transient because sooner than later the consciousness reverts back to the dreaming and the waking states, the Turiya state is more steady and long-lasting. Once this state is reached, there is no reversal. This is

equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' which means that the existence of the gross aspect of creation has been completely done away with.

It must be kept in mind that Vishnu represents that aspect of creation that has already taken birth or already has come into being after it was created by Brahma, the creator, and till the time it is concluded by Shiva or Rudra as its concluder. The entire living world passes through these phases—it sleeps for a certain time and keeps awake for certain duration of time. This rhythm of ordinary humdrum life is represented by Vishnu. An ordinary creature remains involved neck-deep in the affairs of the world around him. He takes care of his possessions and his subjects, desires to possess more and still more, and devise better ways to improve his own living as well as those dependent upon him. He protects his own assets and his body to the best of his abilities. All efforts of his are directed towards attaining happiness, deriving joy and pleasures from his surroundings, and generally taking care of his all-round well-being. This is obviously the role of Vishnu as the caretaker, the sustainer and the protector of creation.

However, there are some rare people who realise the futility of this wild-geese chase, and having had the opportunity to study the Upanishads and other scriptures they realise that true happiness and bliss lies somewhere else, that this world is perishable and therefore the joys and happiness that it provides are also transient. So they decide for themselves to pursue the source of eternal and truthful happiness and joy, which they find in realisation of the truth about themselves, and about the 'pure consciousness' that forms their true 'self'. With this realisation they taste the eternal source of Amrit or nectar that they prefer to remain submerged in its ecstasy and keep suckling it. Then they would have nothing to do with this gross external world.

Therefore, for all practical purposes this world has come to a naught for them, it has ceased to exist, it has dissolved. This is equivalent to the 'Pralaya' or the end of the world for them. Since the living being is an image of Vishnu in his form as the Viraat Purush, it follows that this is also equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' when the world dissolves around him. A lot of imagery and metaphors are used to explain these grand philosophies of the Upanishads.]

"Canto 3, paragraph no. 12 = The one life time and one Pralaya time of Vishnu (i.e. one full life cycle of Vishnu) is equivalent to one day-time and one night-time of the 'Adi-Viraat Purush'. [The word 'Adi' means one that was present at the beginning; the primary and the original entity from which the present has come into being. Hence, the term 'Adi-Viraat' would refer to the higher and subtler form of the Viraat Purush from whom Vishnu has been born or created during the very primary stages of evolution of creation. Vishnu is the grosser aspect or the revealed form of the Viraat Purush. Vishnu represents that aspect or quality or dynamism or power of the Supreme Being which helps to sustain, nourish and protect the creation, including the creator Brahma himself. Applying the logic used for Brahma the creator while describing the process of creation and dissolution, it follows that Lord Vishnu, who is more often than not treated as being synonymous with the Viraat Purush, is like Brahma the creator in the higher echelons of creation. Vishnu is the Brahma of the third layer of the cosmic matrix, the third circle of creation called the Vishnu Loka. The first circle is the mortal world where ordinary creatures live—it is called the Bhu Loka. The second circle is the world where Brahma lives—called the 'Brahma Loka'.

The 'Adi-Viraat' is the subtler and more sublime form of the Viraat Purush from whom this universe in which we live is created. The 'Adi-Viraat' is the form of the Supreme Being that is referred to in Canto 2, paragraph 11 which says that millions of universes are born from each pore of the body of the Viraat. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be further discussed in Canto 6.]

Hence, one 'full day' in the entire life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush would obviously consist of one life cycle of Vishnu as stated above. [One 'full day' implies a complete circle of one sunlight time and one night time according to our earth terminology. In cosmic terms it implies one full life-span of Vishnu and one full Pralaya of Vishnu as narrated in previous paragraph nos. 10-11.]

With this cosmic scale of measurement of time, the fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years of the 'Adi-Viraat' are measured.

Therefore, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush is equivalent to one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to the Adi-Viraat as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat =  $100 \times 10$  million years according to the measurement of time on Adi-Viraat's scale.] (12).

"Canto 3, paragraph no. 13 = At the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat Purush withdraws himself into his primary form known as the 'Adi-Narayan', who is adorned by the Maha Maya and is the primary cause of the Adi-Viraat's existence.

That is, at the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat dissolves into the Adi-Narayan, the supreme Brahm, from whom the former had been born, or who was the primary cause of the former's coming into being.

[The Adi-Narayan would be the fourth concentric circle, the higher echelon of creation. He is the more subtle form of the Supreme Being that transcends the Adi-Viraat form. It would be noted that the differences between all these cosmic entities is very fine and subtle. It can be illustrated with an ordinary example. The air element is the same within the earth's atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth's surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the percentage or density of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up and away from the surface of the earth, the ingredients of the air and the characteristics of the space around the earth change, but primarily they will always remain the air and the sky elements, retaining their intrinsic qualities and virtues. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change miraculously and exhibit different characteristics at different points of time and dimensions of creation which are much divergent and not related to the original characters of Brahm as outlined in this Upanishad is an evident form of the stupendous ability of the Supreme Being to create delusions. And this is called 'Maha Maya'—or, the Great Delusion.]

The time during which the Adi-Viraat remains at rest or dissolved is called the period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat and the dissolution of the level of creation which is associated with him. This period is equivalent to the one life-span of the Adi-Viraat (as outlined in paragraph no. 12 above). [That is, the duration of the period of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, or the time when he sleeps or lies in rest, which is equal to the period of his one life-span, would be another one hundred crore years or a 100 million years.]

During this phase of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, everything comes to a naught; there is absolute stillness and no activity whatsoever.

[Therefore, one full cycle of existence and dissolution of the cosmos at the level of the Adi-Viraat Purush, which is higher than that related to Vishnu, would



consist of one full life-span and one full length of Pralaya or resting phase of the Adi-Viraat.] (13).

“Canto 3, paragraph no. 14 = The one day-time of the parent Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush, is equivalent to one full life-span of the off spring known as the Adi-Viraat. Similarly, one night-time of Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat. [The ‘Adi-Narayan’ is the fifth level of creation in the order of increasing subtlety and sublimity.]

Hence, one ‘full day’ in the life of the Adi-Narayan consists of one such day-time and one such night-time as measured according to the cosmic scale of Adi-Narayan.

Extended further, his fortnight, month, season, solstice and one year is also measured with this cosmic time scale.

Thus, one full life-span of the Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one hundred crore such years as measured according to the scale of cosmic time that is applicable to the Adi-Narayan (14).

### **The Tripadvibhūt Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 6, paragraph no. 11:--**

“Canto 6, paragraph no. 11 = [The disciple asked—] ‘What is the form and shape of the ‘Adi-Viraat’ (i.e. the most ancient form of the Viraat Purush0?’

[The learned teacher answered—] ‘The whole gamut of creation that comes within the ambit of ‘Avidya Paad’ (which is the fourth Paad or limb or aspect of Brahm) is Virrat.

[The ‘Avidya Paad’ is the entire range of creation that forms the fourth limb or Paad of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. It consists of that aspect of creation that has a birth and an end, the creation extending from the single-cell organism right up to the various Gods including the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder. It has been described in full in Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-11, Canto 3, paragraph nos. 1-15, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 3, 6, 10-13.]

[Since Viraat is the cosmic gross body of Brahm, since the entire creation is said to be a manifestation or revelation of this Brahm who permeates each single pore of it in the form of cosmic Consciousness, and since this creation is of astonishingly stupendous variety and astounding number of forms, it follows that—] The Viraat has his eyes, mouth (head), hands and legs in all the directions. [Refer also to Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11, 14, 16.]

[That is, Brahm is present everywhere and in as many forms as there are number and types of creatures. The phrase ‘eyes in all the directions’ refers to the fact that the Supreme Being sees everything everywhere; nothing is hidden or secret from him. He therefore is all-knowing and omniscient as well as a witness to all. Similarly, he is the one who speaks in all the tongues (languages) spoken in this mortal creation; he is the one who forms all the creatures who have a gross body with a head that sees (has eyes), hears (has ears), smells (has a nose), tastes (has a tongue) and thinks (has a mind). It is this Viraat that accepts everything and does anything with his hands; it is the same Lord who goes anywhere and takes the world where it is headed by his legs.]

He gives hands to those creatures who need it; he gives wings to those who need it to fly.

This almighty and all-competent Lord God creates the heaven and the earth alone, without any help of any kind.

His divine form is so esoteric and mysterious that it cannot be viewed in any form by the eyes, whether physical and actual, or imaginary and illusionary.

[That is, the Supreme Being is invisible to the gross organ of sight, i.e. the eye. The eye cannot see him either in actual, physical terms like it sees other things in this world, or even imagine his ethereal form in the way it sees imaginary things such as ghosts and phantoms, or other illusions such as the one seen in the mirage formed in a desert or the scene created by a magician. The mirage as well as the magical scene has no real existence, but for all practical purposes the eye sees them and cannot deny that they do exist. Brahm or the Viraat Purush or the Supreme Creator of this world is so mysterious that the same eye that has the astonishing ability to see physical forms as well as imaginary forms fails to 'see' this Lord.]

The Lord is experienced and witnessed (or, seen, visualised, his presence felt) only by meditation and contemplation using the subtle organs of the body such as the heart, mind and intellect. [That is, the Lord is beyond the reach of the gross organs of the body. He can only be known in a subtle manner through the subtle organs.]

Those wise, erudite and enlightened ones who understand this and have known this mystical fact are the ones who obtain the Amrit (ambrosia, elixir) of eternity and bliss. They become an embodiment of Amrit themselves (i.e. they become eternal and blissful) (11).

(vii) The **Aiteriyo Upanishad** of the Rig Veda tradition describes how this Viraat Purush had first created this creation, and then took up his residence in it. Let us read how this came to happen—

### **The Aiteriyo Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-4—**

“Verse no. 1 = The supreme Soul (Parmatma) desires to create the cosmos or the universe. He creates the various Lokas (worlds) as well as their patron Gods or guardians to look after them. From ‘Hiranyagarbha’ is first created the ‘Viraat Purush’, and from the latter’s body are created the various Gods.

At the very beginning of the creation or even prior to it, there was only the supreme Soul in a primordial form. Besides it, there was nothing that can be called conscious or live (i.e., there was no life or any efforts towards producing it as such). Then, that entity (the supreme Soul) thought that it should create the myriad, fascinating world and the vast cosmos (i.e., it decided to ‘create’, it thought of ‘doing something’ and the cosmos was a result of his decision or determination to do so) (1).

—  
“Verse no. 2 = Deciding thus, the supreme Soul first created the four ‘Lokas’ (i.e. 4 levels of abodes for different types of creatures that would eventually inhabit and populate them when the creation come into existence). These 4 Lokas were the following:—

(i) Ambha—the area of the vast space or cosmos lying between the Devaloka (the abode of Gods) and the Swarloka (i.e. the heaven, the place where exalted souls will find rest after their liberation and ultimate salvation from this world; the deep recesses of space, millions of light years away from earth and from where no visible stars etc. are seen).

(ii) Marichi—that area of the open and vast space where all the stars, planets, the Sun, the Moon etc. are the present (i.e. the visible galaxy).

(iii) Martyaloka—the earth where mortals would eventually live.

And (iv) Apaha—the space below the surface of the earth, i.e. the subterranean world or the netherworld where water is present. [According to this theory, the earth is supposed to be flat] (2).

—  
“Verse no. 3 = Having created the various abodes or Lokas, the supreme Soul (Brahm) thought that now he should create the various ‘Lokpals, i.e. the custodians or guardians of these Lokas to look after and take care of them (i.e. to protect, sustain them).

Thus, from the undefined, shapeless, primordial fluid or jelly-like egg, he first created the very first signs of life in the form of an embryo-like entity called ‘Hiranyagarbha’, and it was eventually given a shape (or was moulded into an image) of a ‘Purush’ (a male form and he was called ‘Viraat’) (3).

[Note :- Hence, ‘Viraat Purush’ was the first living entity created by the supreme soul called Brahm or Ishwar (or Eshwar); it had a definitive macrocosmic form and shape; he was the first male that appeared in creation. We must note that the ‘Viraat Purush’ was the gross form of Brahm. It was the macrocosmic body of the cosmos. This ‘Viraat’ body had the macrocosmic subtle body which was called ‘Hiranyagarbha’ and Brahm who was the soul of the ‘Viraat Purush’ was called Ishwar.

—  
“Verse no. 4 = As a next step, the supreme Soul (Brahm, Parmatma, Ishwar or the macrocosmic soul or consciousness) did severe Tapa (i.e., did penances and made a firm resolve) to finally give shape to various organs of ‘Hiranyagarbha’ so that it can lead a ‘life’.

[That is, the supreme Soul thought that it must shape the newly formed image of ‘Hiranyagarbha’ in such a way that it can sustain itself independently and lead an independent life. It also ensured that ‘Hiranyagarbh’ will lead a life which will ultimately come to an end at the end of its tenure; this was done to maintain the equilibrium of Nature and to prevent it from superseding the supreme Brahm in some distant time in future and usurping the latter’s ultimate supremacy in creation.]

As a result of that strong resolve (Tapa), a rounded hole appeared in ‘Hiranyagarbha’ which was to become his mouth. From the mouth emerged the organ of speech (tongue), and from the speech evolved the ‘Fire God’ who is the patron God of speech. Then the holes representing the nostrils appeared, and from these nostrils emerged ‘Pran’, i.e., the vital wind or breath which is synonymous with life. Its patron guardian was the ‘Wind God’. After that emerged the eyes, and from the eyes came the power to see and observe. Thence emerged their patron God, the Aditya (the Sun God). Ears came next, followed by the power to hear as well as the various directions of the universe. After the ears, appeared the skin (to enclose or sack the already produced organs and give them a definite shape). From the latter appeared the hairs which in turn produced the various vegetations and herbs.

Next in the sequence of evolution came the heart; from the heart came the mind, and from the latter emerged the ‘Moon God’. The navel made its appearance next, followed by ‘Apan’ (the wind force pressing down the intestines). From the latter appeared death or the ‘Death God’.

Finally came the genitals, and from them the semen, and from the latter came the vital spark of life represented by the sperms (i.e., the fluid semen contained sperms which were infused and empowered with the divine and magical powers to create new life) (4).

[Note :- (i) The last sentence is very important. The ‘Hiranyagarbha’ or the macrocosmic subtle body of the ‘Viraat’ was created from the primordial fluid (verse no. 3) and now it has been empowered to create fresh life on its own and thereby set-off the chain reaction through its own life-creating fluid called semen— the fluid which left to itself is nothing but a shapeless mass or globule of mucous, but has the magical and stupendous potential to recreate its parent body. The initial spark of life provided by the supreme Soul or Brahma in order to initiate the process of creation as in verse no. 1-4 is carried further on endlessly till the time everything merges back into the original primordial entity as in verse no. 1.

For all practical purposes, the role of the supreme Brahma ends with the creation of ‘Hiranyagarbha’ or Brahma. Now henceforth, the propagation of this vast and myriad creation is the job of ‘Hiranyagarbha’ or Brahma. The word ‘Brahma’ means ‘the one who is the result of a wish made by Brahma, the parent’. The fully formed ‘Hiranyagarbha’ is also called the ‘Viraat Purush’ or the vast, macrocosmic Male who is the male-parent aspect of the creation. The concepts of ‘Hiranyagarbha’, ‘Viraat Purush’ etc. are explained with the aid of diagrams in appendix no. 8 of this book.

(ii) Water is the basic and the first requirement for life to evolve. Scientists search for traces of water molecules as an indication of life in the cosmos. This Upanishad also supports this theory.

(iii) The jelly-like, viscous, primordial globule-like mass from which the first signs of the forthcoming creation became apparent has a nearest analogue in the zoological kingdom— and it is the single cell creature called ‘Amoeba’ or other microbes. Any student of biology knows how an Amoeba reproduces— it simply splits into two and the second Amoeba is an exact replica of the first so much so that it is impossible to differentiate between the two. This allegory will explain how and why Brahma and its creation are synonymous and identical with each other.

### **The Aiteriyo Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 2, verse nos. 1-5—**

“Verse no. 1 = The human body was created as a symbolic abode for various Gods. Food etc. were created for quenching hunger, thirst etc., or to sustain those Gods.

The various Gods (such as fire, moon etc. described previously in section 1) created by the supreme Soul (Brahma) fell into this vast and fathomless great ocean symbolising the cosmos. They were provided with basic traits of life such as having hunger and thirst. They asked their creator (Brahma) to create and provide them with a habitat from where they can get their meals to survive or can acquire such things that can satisfy their basic needs of food and drink to satisfy their natural and inherent tendency of being hungry and thirsty (1).

“Verse no. 2 = On their request, the supreme Lord created the body of the cow. The Gods said, ‘It is not sufficient or appropriate for us’. Then the Lord created the body of the horse. Seeing it, they said, ‘This is also not sufficient or appropriate for us’ (2).

—  
“Verse no. 3 = Then the supreme Lord created the human body and showed it to them. The God expressed their pleasure at it and observed that it was very beautiful. Verily, the human being is the best in the entire creation. The supreme Lord said to the Gods, ‘All of you enter this human body at your designated places and make it your abode’ (3).

[Note :- Though not explicitly mentioned, the human body must have been made from the same fluid which was used to create 'Viraat Purush' because that was the only 'raw material' available with Brahm at the time of creation. He even created food from it—see section 3 verse no. 2.]

“Verse no. 4 = The Fire God assumed the form of speech and entered the mouth; the Wind God became vital wind forces of life called 'Pran' and entered through the nostrils. The Sun God transformed into sight (light) and entered the human body through the eye-balls; the various directions entered the hole of the ears in the form of powers to hear; the vegetations and herbs assumed the shape of hairs and took abode on the skin (or they planted themselves on the soil represented by the skin of the body); the Moon God became 'Mana' (the mind and its inclinations, tendencies, ideas, dispositions, attractions etc.) and entered the heart; the Death God became the wind force called 'Apan' (that wind which passes through the intestines and the anus) and entered through the hole of the navel; the Lord's creative, generative, vital energy representing the Lord himself (and his vitality, his stupendous creative powers and unimaginable potential which are maverick and magical, unique and stupendous, fascinating and unprecedented in nature) entered through the genitals in the form of semen (4).

[Note :- (i) This semen was physically like the viscous primordial fluid from which the cosmos originally evolved. Hence, the semen is symbolically synonymous with the primordial cosmic fluid which had the stupendous and magnificent powers to generate and regenerate itself again and again. The sperm in the semen is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Lord's creative energy, the so-called vital spark of life that ignited the chain reaction leading to the unfolding of this myriad vast cosmos. Whether that unfolding was a consequence of a single huge cosmic explosion, the big bang theory of creation, or was a gradual, subtle, imperceptible process like the slow development of an embryo in a mother's womb, is besides the point. The fact is that the initial process was started by the 'cosmic sperm' that floated in the 'cosmic semen' or the 'cosmic gel' and infused some life into it by its mere movement which represented the 'desire or wish' of the supreme Soul to create, and to show signs of life by its mere movement.

(ii) It is to be noted here that the various Gods that emerged from the various parts of the body of the 'Viraat Purush' as described in section 1 of this Canto made their abodes in a corresponding part of the body of the human being as described in this section. For example, the Fire God emerged from 'Viraat Purush's' mouth and he found abode in the mouth of the man. If we extend this corollary further, we conclude that the human body is also nothing else but an image of the 'Viraat Purush'.]

—  
“Verse no. 5 = Then 'hunger' and 'thirst' said to the supreme Lord, 'Make arrangements for our shelter also as you have done for the other Gods'. The Lord replied, 'I shall bestow you with your share from amongst that of the Gods. Whatever offering is ever made to the Gods in the form of food, water, oblations during the fire sacrifice etc., both of you (hunger and thirst) shall have a share in them.'

[That is why, when the body gets nourishment in the form of food and drink, these two entities are also satisfied, though hunger and thirst are very necessary for the body because it enables it to desire to eat or drink at all in the first place. Another noteworthy point here is that the hunger and thirst were not assigned any specific organs. They were present as a natural phenomenon in all the organs of the creature.

All the organs and tissues require nourishment, they feel the need for food, and this feeling of the need to replenish energy is manifested in the form of hunger and thirst.] (5).

[Note :- ‘Who in the rainbow can draw the line where the violet tint ends and the orange tint begins? Distinctly we see the difference of colours, but where exactly does the first one blindingly enters into the other?’— Herman Melville.

How true! Though the Gods were assigned separate shelters in specific organs of the human body as their abode and domain, but a drawn line demarcating their areas of operation is impossible for they are blurred and overlapped at their fringes. For example, the Fire God entered the mouth, but it is the fire that digests the food, keeps the body warm and ignites the functioning of the ‘Pran’. It is essential for the body as a whole to live. Any foolish utterance from the mouth can create a backlash which makes the whole body suffer. Nevertheless, we assign separate duties to the Gods and their habitats that are the different organs of the body just for the sake of convenience of understanding. The Gods do not function in water tight, separate compartments. Their functions overlap and coalesce with each other, and they are interdependent and work in concert for the proper functioning of the body.]

### **The Aiteriyo Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2, 12, 14—**

“Verse no. 1 = The life forces are sustained by the intake of food; the entry of the supreme Brahm (the macro cosmic Soul) himself inside the human body; the query of the man about his true identity and his experiencing of the true nature of his pure self leading to contentedness and bliss—all these are described in this section.

The supreme Lord thought to himself, ‘The entire cosmos (here referring to the habitat world) and its guardian patron Gods have been created (or established) by me. Now it is necessary to create food for them (for their sustenance)’ (1).

“Verse no. 2 = Deciding thus, the supreme Lord heated the primordial fluid (literally, ‘water’) consisting of the 5 basic (nutritional) elements present in its viscous jelly like form. The heating process activated these elements, and from the formless/shapeless fluid took shape what was to become the food for the Gods. This food had a physical, gross and tangible form (2).

[Note :- (i) It is to be noted here that the first creation made by the supreme Soul was also out of the shapeless and formless jelly-like primordial viscous fluid which was injected with the cosmic life-providing energy. It gradually condensed or coagulated to form the macrocosmic subtle body of the first embryonic cosmic male called ‘Hiranyagarbha’ who later developed various parts of the macrocosmic gross body called ‘Viraat Purush’. Here it is evident that both the man and the food were created by the supreme Lord out of the same primordial fluid which was used by him to create ‘Hiranyagarbha’ and ‘Viraat Purush’. Hence, the basic ingredients of the vast cosmos (the macrocosm) as well as the individual man and the food on which he survives (the microcosm) are absolutely the same and identical.

(ii) To understand and visualise the basic physical process involved in what might have happened in the beginning, a layman can take the example of the water which is the very first requirement of life. When the stagnant water is heated, it shows signs of activity because the water molecule nearer to the source of heat rise up and the colder portion of the water sinks to the bottom; these are the convection currents

in water on being heated. This will help explain the initial process as described in the verses which refer to the heating of the primordial fluid. Next, when the water is cooled towards the freezing point, it begins to become more viscous and thicker in its texture, and ultimately it solidifies as ice which symbolically represents the gross body of the creature. By extension, when ice melts, it reverts back into its primary form of water. Similarly, upon death, the gross body of the creature disintegrates into the 5 basic elements from which it was formed. Again, even as further analysis of water shows that it basically consists of 2 atoms of hydrogen and 1 atom of oxygen (H<sub>2</sub>O), the primordial cosmic fluid also consisted of the 5 basic elements such as earth, fire, water, wind and space.]

“Verse no. 12 = the supreme Lord (Brahma) decided to enter the body of the man through his head (skull) at a point call Brahma-randhra by splitting it into two to create a hair-line crevice for his entry. It is therefore called the ‘Vidriti’, literally meaning to rupture or split to make an entry-point.

It is this part of the body of a man which enables him to experience the supreme bliss of God-realisation. This is the place where the supreme Brahm resides. In other words, Brahm is to be found no where else besides the very body of the creature itself (i.e. the man himself). The location of Brahm’s habitat on the top of the head (i.e. the top of brain) indicates that he (Brahm) is like a crown of the body of a man—the glory, majesty, exalted stature, importance and intellectual reach and prowess of a man is due to the presence of the supreme Brahm in his head like a crown on the head of a king, and this differentiates an enlightened, wise, sagacious, adroit and erudite man from a morally depraved, mentally pervert and intellectually bankrupt and degenerate man who is nothing less than a monster, a beast, as it were. This factor also differentiates a wise man from an animal (12).

[Note :- The metaphysical habitat where the supreme Brahm can be symbolically found are the following— (i) The navel representing the physical body of the creature because it is here that the umbilical cord of an embryo is attached to its mother at the time of its creation in the womb. (ii) The heart representing the pulsating, vibrant cosmos; also called the ‘Mana’. (iii) The mind or the brain representing the casual body of the creature. (iv) The top of the head which represents the heavens, or the fathomless space of the cosmos.

We must also note that the residence of Brahm in the heart is in a divine lotus whose filament is bent like an inverted ‘U’, while that in the top of the head is in the shape of a cloud which fills the whole space available to it. These are the various approaches to understand the same entity depending upon the mental calibre of the student/aspirant/seeker. Those who are more emotional than rational see Brahm in their heart, while those who have an opposite tendency, i.e. who apply their logic and rationale to judge anything, see Brahma in the head.

Further, the creature has three levels of existence—(i) The waking state in which the Atma/soul interacts with the external world through the gross body of the creature, (ii) The dream state in which the Atma interacts with the mind-intellect complex of the creature called the subtle body while the external world ceases to exist for all practical purposes, and (iii) The deep sleep state where the Atma withdraws itself even from the mind-intellect apparatus and remains secluded within its own confines called the causal body of the creature.]

“Verse no. 14 = Thus, the conscious soul, which had assumed the form/body of a human being, was able to realise who the supreme Brahma was (i.e., it realised its true identity, nature and origin). Hence, the first man (or man-like entity) was called ‘Idandra’ meaning ‘I have seen and observed it’. [That is, I have realised the truth.] But the ‘Gods’ began calling him Indra for the sake of convenience because they prefer to remain subtle and hidden from view (14).

[Note :- This verse indicates that the first God who would be Lord of all other Gods and to whom all of them would be subordinate, was called Indra. The man was called Indra because he was the most evolved of the entire creation that the Lord had created.]

**(viii) Atharva Veda’s Ram Tapini Upanishad is dedicated to expounding and elucidating upon the divinity of Lord Ram. It describes the primary form of the Lord as the Supreme Being known as the Viraat Purush in its Uttar Tapini, Canto 5, verse no. 4/36, and in Purva Tapini, Canto 3, verse no. 2.**

Now, let us read both these verses—

“Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4/36 = OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram, in his form as the Viraat Purush<sup>1</sup>, who pervades uniformly throughout this universe and encloses it from all sides. He is present inside as well as outside this creation, being all-pervading, omnipresent and all-encompassing.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/36).

“Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2 = We bow and pay our respects to the supreme Lord Ram (who is none else but Brahm manifested) who lives in this world and uniformly pervades in it as its ‘Atma’ and its ‘Pran’—i.e. as the creation’s soul and its life, as its essence, as its fundamental basis and its core. [This is the reason why Brahm is called a ‘Purush’—it is because Brahm lives inside every individual creature as his Atma or consciousness, and as his Pran or vital life factors such as his vital winds. In other words, the body of the creature is the divine abode where this Brahm lives. In fact, the word ‘Purush’ means one who lives inside a ‘Pur’ or a city or a dwelling.]<sup>1</sup>’

The spiritual aspirant should think of Lord Ram as the Supreme Being called Brahm himself personified. Brahm is the primary and primordial cosmic Consciousness that prevailed even before this creation came into being or was even conceptualized. This form of the Lord (Ram) transcends even the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) that helped to determine the nature and texture of the would-be creation. It is this form of the Divinity that is worthy of adoration and paying respects to, and the worshipper should bow his head to it.

He should endeavour to establish oneness between his own ‘self’, i.e. his own Atma, and this supreme Lord, i.e. the supreme Atma. This is called ‘self-realisation’ and attainment of Brahm-hood. When this is achieved, the spiritual aspirant exclaims



in ecstasy of having discovered the greatest truth of creation as well as of himself—he says ‘I am Lord Ram who is Brahm’; or ‘There is no difference between me and Ram’. This is the highest level of spiritual attainment and marks the pinnacle of enlightenment and realisation<sup>2</sup> (2).

[Note—<sup>1</sup>Having created this world, the Supreme Lord entered it in the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness. This Atma is the soul, the essence of this creation, for if the core is removed the outer structure would collapse as it would have nothing to support it, or nothing to stand on. In other words, the genes of the supreme Father were transferred to his off spring, the creature at the micro level and the creation at the macro level, in the form of ‘Consciousness’, because Brahm is nothing but cosmic Consciousness. Again, since Brahm is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, it follows that this Atma representing the supreme Lord is also the Truth in this whole setup. This Atma is the ‘true self’ of the creature because it represents the supreme Lord, Brahm or Ram, and just like the supreme Lord had allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) willingly, and thereby got sucked in the vortex of numerous duties pertaining to his own creation—such as its sustenance, protection, nourishment and regulation etc.—a man also gets sucked in this world if he allows his Atma to be surrounded by delusions and ignorance of its exalted heritage.

Another important component of this creation that infuses ‘life’ in it is the ‘Pran’. The word ‘Pran’ means ‘life that is marked by conscious awareness and activity’. In practical terms, both the terms ‘Atma’ and ‘Pran’ co-exist because both are like the two sides of the same coin.

While the word ‘Atma’ means the soul and the consciousness, the word ‘Pran’ means the vital winds that govern the vital signs of life in the gross body and its functioning. In practice, both are synonymous with each other. This is because a creature is alive only as long as his body as the Atma as well as the Pran in it. If one leaves the body, the other becomes automatically defunct.

The importance and interdependence of the Atma and Pran on each other can be easily visualized. The Atma in the form of consciousness is said to have its residence in the heart of the creature. It is common knowledge that life remains in the creature and his organs are kept conscious only as long as the heart beats and supplies blood to the different organs of the body. But say how can the heart beat and keep the creature alive if the Pran or the vital winds decide to call it quits and paralyse the rest of the body, preventing the organs to perform their basic functions, such as the blood vessels to carry blood to the heart, and the tissues to produce energy by digesting food?

Similarly, the Pran, in the form of the vital airs or winds, controls all the signs of life in the creature, and keeps all the organs of the body, the external as well as the internal, alive and active. But say how can it do so if the heart stops beating?]

## —SECTION 2—

### **ADHYATMA RAMAYAN** (of Veda Vyas)

In section 2 we shall read a classical composition by sage Veda Vyas, known as the **Adhyatma Ramayan** which is the re-telling of the epic story of Lord Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who had slayed the demon king of Lanka, Ravana, and whose acts, deeds and life has been immortalised in many versions of the story that is universally known as the ‘Ramayana’. This Adhyatma Ramayan stands out for its metaphysical concepts and stress on that form of Lord Ram which is the Supreme

Being known as the Parmatma or the Viraat Purush rather than a historical figure as the king of Ayodhya.

Veda Vyas was the renowned legendary sage who had classified the Vedas and segregated the Upanishads from them, classifying the latter separately according to the Vedas in which they appeared and giving them their independent spiritual identity and importance, and had also written the Purans.

In this epic book **Adhyatma Ramayan**, the cosmic, all-pervasive, all-encompassing and almighty form of Lord Ram as the ‘Viraat Purush’ has been described in its **Aranya Kand (Chapter 3), Canto (Sarga) 9, from verse nos. 30-54.**

It is in the form of a prayer that a Gandharva, a type of semi-god who is said to be a musician in the heaven, and who was unfortunately transformed into a demon named Kabandha due to some curse, was liberated from this cursed body to revert back to his divine heavenly form. In this hymn, the Gandharva describes the cosmic form of the Supreme Being known as the Viraat Purush—literally meaning the huge and all-emcompassing macrocosmic form of the Lord God known as Brahm.

गन्धर्व उवाच\_

स्तोतुमुत्सहते\_मेऽद्य\_मनो\_रामातिसम्भ्रमात्\_त्वामनन्तमनाद्यन्तं\_\_\_मनोवाचामगोचरम्॥३०॥

30. The Kabandh-turned-Gandharva said (prayed) to Sri Ram, 'Oh Sri Ram! Today my mind is very eager to say your prayers in the form of a Stotra (a devotional hymn). You are eternal, without a beginning or end, and are not the subject matter within the reach of the mind or speech (i.e. the mind and intellect cannot fathom you, they cannot comprehend and understand you; similarly the speech cannot define you, it is unable to articulate about you in any way) (30).

सूक्ष्मं\_ते\_रूपमव्यक्तं\_देहद्वयविलक्षणम्\_दृगूपमितरत्सर्वं\_दृश्यं\_जडमनात्मकम्\_तत्कथं\_त्वां\_विजानीयादव्यतिरिक्तं\_मनः\_प्रभो॥३१॥

31. Oh Lord! Your real/true self (form), encompassing both the subtle and the minute as well as gross and the vast forms of the creation (in the form of Hiranyagarbh and the Viraat respectively), is very strange, mysterious, fascinating, spectacular and wondrous so much so that even the ones who can peer into the minutest of things by their mystical powers of deep insight and penetrating intellect (such as the wise and enlightened Yogis or ascetics) are unable to understand and comprehend that form which has no attributes, no name and no form. That glorious form is an embodiment of supreme Gyan (or enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge of the truth, realisation of the hidden truth). Whatever is there except (or besides) you is par se dead, lifeless, inane, meaningless and gross, it is an imaginary sight like a mirage which appears true but is not in reality, and it is ‘non-Atma’ (that is, not the reality, is not truthful, is not conscious, is not eternal, is not blissful, in short does not possess any of the characters of the Atma). Hence, since the Mana (the mind-intellect-heart complex which governs the thoughts and emotions of a creature) is separate from you as it constitutes the subtle body of a creature—how can it even endeavour to know or comprehend you? (31).

बुद्ध्यात्माभासयोरैक्यं\_जीव\_इत्यभिधीयते\_बुद्ध्यादि\_साक्षी\_ब्रह्मैव\_तस्मिन्निर्विषयेऽखिलम्॥३२॥

32. Jiva (living creature) is the combined form or the resultant product of the intellect interacting with the pure consciousness present in the body of a creature. In other words, the body becomes alive when the subtle body consisting of both the mind-intellect apparatus works in conjunction with the causal body in which the illuminated entity called the pure conscious Atma lives; the existence of a living entity depends on these two (mind-intellect and consciousness) working together. The orchestra played by them creates an entity called a 'Jiva'.

Brahm (the supreme, transcendental, conscious Soul) is the only witness to Buddhi (the mind-intellect complex; the faculty of reasoning and thought) etc. It is not the subject matter to be comprehended, understood or grasped and discussed, debated or articulated by either the mind or the speech respectively (32).

[Note—The mind and intellect are akin to the north and south poles of a magnet, because both work in unison and together they ascribe the magnet its characteristic virtues and qualities. But the value of the magnet is its power to attract which cannot be seen and touched; it can be experienced and witnessed by observing the magnet at work. This inherent power of the magnet is like the Atma, for without this power of attracting iron, the magnet would be useless. Similarly, while the mind and intellect rely on proof, experimentation and logic, the Lord can be experienced in the heart of the creature, but he cannot be proved as such by physical touch and sight. The inherent quality of the magnet to attract is on display openly, but if one tries to break that piece of magnet open and see where the hidden power is, he is a fool of the highest order. Likewise, a Jiva or a living entity shows all the signs of life and powers to act intelligently, but the authority to do so comes from the Brahm present in its bosom as its pure consciousness Atma. In this example, the magnet is the gross body of the creature, the north and the south poles are the mind and intellect, while the powers to attract iron inherent in the magnet is the Atma.]

आरोप्यतेऽज्ञानवशान्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि । हिरण्यगर्भस्ते सूक्ष्मं देहं स्थूलं विराट् स्मृतम् ॥३३॥

33. Due to ignorance and lack of correct and truthful knowledge, this whole animate as well as inanimate world is imposed on him who is faultless, eternal and changeless as well as without any form, name and attributes. He is the supreme Soul of the creation that is all pervading and all encompassing. Your subtle, minute, macrocosmic form is called Hiranyagarbh, while your gross macrocosmic form is called Viraat (33).

[Note—When the creation began to take shape, the cosmic egg that was formed was called Hiranyagarbh. When the cosmic body developed and emerged from it upon its maturity, it was called Viraat, literally meaning huge, colossus, vast and all enveloping. From this Viraat emerged the rest of the creation just like branches of a tree branch out from a single stem called its trunk. The creation resembled its parent to the dot, even as the branches of a tree replicate the main tree complete with its side branches and tender leaves. The Hiranyagarbh and Viraat were the macro level of the body of Brahm, while the visible creation was its micro counterpart. The Brahm itself was like the Atma or soul of the creature. Without the soul no one survives, and so no creation has any existence without Brahm. The process of evolution of the creation from Brahm has been extensively described in various Upanishads.]

भावनाविषयो राम सूक्ष्मं ते ध्यातुमङ्गलम् । भूतं भव्यं भविष्यच्च यत्रेदं दृश्यते जगत् ॥३४॥

34. Your subtle, ethereal, sublime, esoteric and minute form— which is inherent in one's heart as 'consciousness' can only be experienced by deeply concentrating upon it as during meditation and contemplation. This form subtly and imperceptibly resides

in the heart of a creature as its Atma. Awareness of this ethereal form empowers the person with mystical powers so that he can reflect about the past, present and future of the existence. This realisation can nevertheless provide auspiciousness and welfare to those who meditate and contemplate upon you. [In other words, those who try to visualise or concentrate upon you in their hearts get all the benefits arising out of 'actual' realisation. Such persons become aware of the past, the present and the future of this existence.] (34)

स्थूलेऽण्डकोशे\_देहे\_ते\_महदोदिभिरावृते\_। सप्तभिरुत्तरगुणैर्वैराजो\_धारणाश्रयः॥३५॥  
त्वमेव\_सर्वकैवल्यं\_लोकास्तेऽवयवाः\_स्मृताः\_। पातालं\_ते\_पादमूलं\_पार्णिस्तव\_महातलम्॥३६॥

35-36. [Kabandh now describes both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic form of the supreme Lord from whom the whole creation has evolved.] Your cosmic gross body called the Viraat evolved from the cosmic egg (called Hiranyagarbha, which represented the cosmic subtle body), which had seven basic elements surrounding its core (Brahm, represented by the cosmic causal body in which was ensconced the conscious Soul) in the form of seven subtle layers. These seven were the fundamentals elements created at the beginning of creation and which formed the basic ingredients that, in various permutations and combinations, formed the entire cosmos as it is known today. Therefore, the whole world is conceptualized and visualised in your Viraat form; it is believed firmly with conviction that the Viraat is inherently and integrally present in your body, because it is from you that he ultimately evolved (35).

You are the only one the attainment of whom is called 'Moksha' (i.e. liberation and deliverance of the soul from the cycle of transmigration, which leads to its final emancipation and salvation. All the various Lokas (worlds) are but your fractional parts; they are only one or the other part of your vast colossus form represented by Viraat. The 'Patal' (the nether world) is the sole of your feet; the 'Mahaatal' (the 5th region under the surface of the earth) is your heel (36).

[Note :- (i) According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self created in the sense that he had no father or ancestor), created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Buhvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively ( भूः, भुवः, स्वः, महः, जनः, तपः, सत्यमः ) which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water' (जल), 'energy' called 'Tej' (तेज), 'wind or air' (वायु), 'sky or space' (आकाश), the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar' (अहंकार), and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva' (महत्तत्त्व). Each of them was ten times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The word 'Dharnaa-sraya' (धारणाश्रयः) simply means to have certain beliefs that form the base for all thoughts and emotions. It is to concentrate on anything or believing and having faith in any concept by making the mind stable and grouted in a set of convictions, without getting confused or embroiled in debates, diversionary and confusing discussions as well as myriad schools of thought and paths. So, put in a simple language, verse no. 35 means this—the world consists of five elements—earth, water, energy (fire), wind (air), sky (space) combined in different permutations and combinations. A wise person is one who does not get distracted or confused by the various myriad shapes this combination produces or presents before the eye of the beholder, but instead he tries to see the basic elements as being one and the same in

this vast diverse universe. And since all the creatures are products of these fundamentals consisting of these five elements, which in turn were produced by a single entity called Brahm, the other name of whom is the Atma or soul, there is no difference between the creature and the cosmos. The egg from which the individual creature is born is an exact replica of the cosmic egg from which the whole cosmos evolved. The Brahm of the cosmos is the Atma of the individual creature; conversely, the microcosmic soul of the creature is the same as the macrocosmic soul of the universe. The consciousness which is the 'essential principal' supporting an individual in the microcosmic form (Viswa + Taijasa + Pragna) is the same as the one which pervades the universe in macrocosmic form (Viraat + Hirnyagarbha + Eswara) respectively.]

रसातलं\_ते\_गुल्फौ\_तु\_तलातलमितीर्यते\_।\_जानुनी\_सुतलं\_राम\_ऊरू\_ते\_वितलं\_तथा\_॥३७॥

37. Oh Sri Ram! The 'Rasaatal' (the 6th lower world; hell, the Hades; the underworld) is your ankle joint, the 'Talaatal' (the 5th layer which is filled with molten plasma) is your knee joint, the 'Sutal' (the 4th layer forming the rocks etc) is your thigh, and the 'Veetal' (the 3rd strata of the earth's crust) represents your two large buttocks (37). \_

अतलं\_च\_मही\_राम\_जघनं\_नाभिगं\_नभः\_।\_उरःस्थलं\_ते\_ज्योतींषि\_ग्रीवा\_ते\_मह\_उच्यते\_॥३८॥

38. 'Atal' and earth (the 2nd and 1st upper crusts respectively) are your two pelvic girdles (or the waist area), the 'Bhurlok' (the empty space, sky above the surface of the earth stretching upto the upper layers of the earth's atmosphere) is your navel, the brilliant 'Swarlok' (the divine heaven or abode of Gods represented by the vast space of the solar system lighted by the splendourous sun) is your chest region, while the 'Maharlok' (the great Loka where the great and exalted saints, sages, ascetics and other exalted ones reside in the upper heavens) is your neck (38).

वदनं\_जनलोकस्ते\_तपस्ते\_शङ्खदेशगम्\_।\_सत्यलोको\_रघुश्रेष्ठ\_शीर्षण्यास्ते\_सदा\_प्रभो\_॥३९॥

39. Oh Lord who is the most exalted in king Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram)! The 'Janlok' (the world inhabited by, or consisting of, ordinary living beings) is your face, the 'Tapalok' (the world where people who do severe Tapa or austerities and penances reside) is your forehead, while the 'Satyalok' (the salvation providing truthful abode of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord, and from where there is no return) is your head (crown) (39).

इन्द्रादयो\_लोकपाला\_बाहवस्ते\_दिशः\_श्रुती\_।\_अश्विनौ\_नासिके\_राम\_वक्त्रं\_ते\_ऽग्निरुदाहृतः\_॥४०॥

40. Oh Sri Ram! Indra and other Lokpals (custodians of the world) are your arms, the different 'directions' are your ears, and the two Ashwini Kumars are the two nostrils, while the 'fire' has been called your mouth (40).

चक्षुस्ते\_सविता\_राम\_मनश्चन्द्र\_उदाहृतः\_।\_भूभङ्ग\_एव\_कालस्ते\_बुद्धिस्ते\_वाक्पतिर्भवेत्\_॥४१॥

41. The 'Sun' is your eye, the Moon is likened to your mind and heart, the Kaal (representing end of anything) is your eyebrow, and Vrihaspati (the Guru of Gods; the planet Jupiter) is your intellect and discriminatory powers (41).

—  
रुद्रोऽहङ्काररूपस्ते वाचश्छन्दांसि तेऽव्यय । यमस्ते दंष्ट्रदेशस्थो नक्षत्राणि द्विजालयः ॥४२॥

42. The Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Lord Shiva; a symbol of retribution, anger, wrath, vengeance, tempest) is a personified form that Ahankar (a reflection of the notions of ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and vanity which incites anger, wrath, vengeance, ill-will and malice) takes, the Vedas are your voice, your talks and your speech, Yam (patron God of death and the final judgment) is your jaw (because it spares none), while the Nakshatras (stars, planets, constellations) are the two rows of your teeth (42).

—  
हासो मोहकरी माया सृष्टिस्तेऽपाङ्गमोक्षणम् । धर्मः पुरस्तेऽधर्मश्च पृष्ठभाग उदीरितः ॥४३॥

43. Maya (your magnificently stupendous deluding powers), which enchants and captivates all in its magical spell, is your sweet, bewitching, charming and enchanting smile that stuns and hypnotizes everyone; the creation, both the animate as well as the inanimate, is your side ways, oblique, askance glance; Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct) is your fore (front) part, while Adharama (the reverse of Dharma) is your hind (back, rear) part (43).

—  
निमिषोन्मेषणे रात्रिर्दिवा चैव रघूत्तम । समुद्राः सप्त ते कुक्षिर्नाड्यो नद्यस्तव प्रभो ॥४४॥

44. Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Night and day are like the blinks of your eyes. Oh Lord! The seven seas are your stomach or abdomen, while the rivers are your veins and nerves (44).

—  
रोमाणि वृक्षौषधयो रेतो वृष्टिस्तव प्रभो । महिमा ज्ञानशक्तिस्ते एवं स्थूलं वपुस्तव ॥४५॥

45. Oh Lord! The trees and medicinal herbs (i.e. the plant kingdom) are your body-hairs, the rain is your sperm, and the stupendous strength of wisdom and knowledge is your magnificent glory, marvelous fame and astounding majesty. This is your gross (vast, bulky, massive, macrocosmic, all inclusive and colossus) body (45).

—  
यदस्मिन् स्थूलरूपे ते मनः सन्धार्यते नरैः । अनायासेन मुक्तिः स्यादतोऽन्यत्र हि किञ्चन ॥४६॥

46. If a person concentrates his mind and attention in your vast form incorporating this vast expanse of the universe, he gets delivered (i.e. finds freedom and liberation from the shackles that tie him to the illusions and limitations of this mundane, artificial, deluding and ensnaring world) without any effort. There is no substance or any thing in existence which is distinct or separate or independent or extraneous from this (vast, all-encompassing, massive, grand, majestic and macrocosmic) form of yours (46).

—  
अतोऽहं राम रूपं ते स्थूलमेवानुभावये । यस्मिन्ध्याते प्रेमरसः सरोमपुलको भवेत् ॥४७॥

47. Hence, oh Sri Ram, I always remember and concentrate my attention upon that vast, all-inclusive and macrocosmic form of yours, the mere remembrance of which thrills the body, and the nectar of devotional affection surges in the heart (47).

तदैव मुक्तिः स्याद्राम यदा ते स्थूलभावकः । तदप्यास्तां तवैवाहमेतद्रूपं विचिन्तये ॥४८॥

48. When any Jiva (living creature) remembers or concentrates upon this Viraat form of yours, he gets instant liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [Here meaning that this realisation provides enlightenment and wisdom to the person about your divine, ethereal, all-encompassing form as described by the Vedas and the Upanishads, and this realisation fills him with great devotion for you, which in turn paves for his liberation from the fetters that limit him to this transient, deluding, illusionary and mundane world and provides emancipation and ultimate salvation for his soul. Such a person is called a 'Gyani' or the realised and enlightened one'.]

Inspite of this fact, I do not have the need of it (and I do not wish to become a Gyani as such). Instead, I would prefer to concentrate on your divine form in the way I behold it now in your present form as Ram who is standing personally in front of me (i.e. your Sagun form) (48).

धनुर्बाणधरं श्यामं जटावल्कलभूषितम् । अपीच्यवयसं सीतां विचिन्वन्तं सलक्ष्मणम् ॥४९॥  
इदमेव सदा मे स्यान्मानसे रघुनन्दन । सर्वज्ञः शङ्करः साक्षात्पार्वत्या सहितः सदा ॥५०॥  
त्वद्रूपमेवं सततं ध्यायन्नास्ते रघूत्तम । मुमूर्षूणां तदा काश्यां तारकं ब्रह्मवाचकम् ॥५१॥

49-51. It is my earnest prayer that this visible divine form of yours holding a bow and arrow, dark complexioned, adorned with matted lock of hairs and clothes made of birch, of a youthful body as an young adult, and going out with Laxman in search of Sita (49), oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram), should always reside (remain enshrined) in my heart.

Oh the most exalted one in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram)! The wise and omniscient Lord Shiva along with Parvati (50) always concentrates and meditates upon, remembers and thinks about, and remains engrossed in this divine, radiant, marvelous and majestic form of yours. He perennially and constantly preaches the unique emancipation and salvation providing divine Mantra called 'Tarak'—which consists of your divine name 'Ram' and which is synonymous with and equivalent to Brahm (the supreme Soul of the creation; the pure consciousness of the creation that is the ultimate Truth and the absolute Reality in creation; the supreme transcendental Lord God)—to those dying at Kashi (Varanasi) to provide them with easy means of salvation (51).

रामरामेत्युपदिशन्सदा सन्तुष्टमानसः । अतस्त्वं जानकीनाथ परमात्मा सुनिश्चितः ॥५२॥

52. While doing so, he always remains contented in his heart, as well as submerged and intoxicated mentally in supreme and undiluted bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility obtained by constantly remembering you and having devotion for you.

Hence, oh the Lord of Janki, you are verily the Parmatma (supreme Soul, the supreme transcendental Lord) himself (52).

सर्वे ते मायया मूढास्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः । नमस्ते रामभद्राय वेधसे परमात्मने ॥५३॥

53. Your actual, real, essential and truthful nature and form is not easily known, understood, comprehended, grasped or realised by all because they are enchanted,

captivated, entangled, deluded and held under the magical spell by your delusion creating powers called Maya.

Oh the honourable Parmatma (supreme, cosmic, universal Soul) Sri Ram who is the creator of the world (universe, cosmos, the entire creation)! I bow most reverentially before you (53).

अयोध्याधिपते\_तुभ्यं\_नमः\_सौमित्रिसेवित\_।\_त्राहि\_त्राहि\_जगन्नाथ\_मां\_माया\_नावृणोतु\_ते\_॥५४॥

54. Oh the Lord of Ayodhya who is served by the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman)! I most reverentially bow before you. Oh Jagannath (i.e. the Lord of the universe)! Save me, save me! Let your Maya not cast its deluding spell or shadow on me (i.e. let me be free from its evil effects so that I can observe and realise the absolute truth about you)' (54)."

### —SECTION 3—

#### RAM CHARIT MANAS (of Goswami Tulsidas)

In this section 3, we shall read extracts from another classical story of Lord Ram written by one of the most revered saints of India, known as Goswami Tulsidas. His epic '**Ram Charit Manas**' is an extremely popular and revered holy text. This version of the Ramayana stresses, inter alia, on the concept of Bhakti or having unwavering devotion, faith and love for Lord God in the personified form of Lord Ram.

In this book loved by infinite number of devotees of the Lord, the concept of 'Viraat Purush' has been described at a number of places, spread across the length of the book in its different chapters and in different contexts. Now we shall read all of them one by one to get a comprehensive idea of what constitutes the Viraat Purush, and what his form is.

This description is given in this book, the Ram Charit Manas, at the following places—(i) Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 55 where Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva, has seen the Virrat form of Lord Ram; (ii) Baal Kand, from Doha no. 201—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 202 where Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, has seen the Virrat form of the Lord; (iii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 242 where the wise kings allude to this Viraat form of the Lord while advising pervert kings to desist from attempting to break the bow and marrying Sita as it would be a futile exercise; (iv) Lanka Kand, from Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15 where Mandadori, the wife of Ravana, the demon king, has tried to persuade her belligerent, egoist and stubborn husband not to fight Lord Ram as he is not an ordinary human being but the Virrat form himself in the form of Lord Ram; and (v) Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 81 where Kaagbhusund, the saintly crow, has seen the Virrat form of Lord Ram.

Now, let us quote each of these verses from Ram Charit Manas and see what they have to say on this all-encompassing and all-pervading cosmic form of the Supreme Being who had manifested in the person of Lord Ram, the king of Ayodhya.



**(i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 55:**

Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, was very skeptical of Lord Ram's divinity when she saw the latter wandering on foot in the forest, accompanied by his younger brother Laxman, searching for his wife Sita who had been abducted the demon king Ravana. Parvati could not understand that if Lord Ram was a divine Being as Lord Shiva claimed him to be, then why was Lord Ram wandering on foot like a helpless ordinary human being searching for his lost wife? She had just seen Lord Shiva bowing before Lord Ram and feeling extremely ecstatic so much so that he immediately went into a trance-like of extreme bliss that is obtained during the higher states of meditation. Shiva can't be wrong, but what was so obvious about Lord Ram's worldly behaviour also could not be denied. Hence, to find out the truth, Parvati decided to test the divinity of Lord Ram herself.

She assumed the form of Sita and started walking in front of Lord Ram, thinking that the Lord would not recognize her and mistake her for his wife Sita. If that happens then it would be clear that he has no mystical powers or divine qualities, and was just a pretender masquerading as a divine Being and has managed to fool her husband Shiva.

But Lord Ram smiled at the foolishness of Parvati, immediately recognized her and asked where Lord Shiva was, and why was she wandering alone in the wild forest without Shiva's company. This dumbfounded Parvati and she was full of shame and regret.

It was at that time that Lord Ram had shown Parvati his 'Viraat' form which prevailed everywhere in creation. It was a miracle-like development, a mirage-like happening when Parvati could see Lord Ram along with Laxman everywhere she looked. This sight completely confused her as if she was hallucinating.

सतीं दीख कौतुकु मग जाता । आगें रामु सहित श्री भ्राता ॥ ४ ॥

फिरि चितवा पाछें प्रभु देखा । सहित बंधु सिय सुंदर बेषा ॥ ५ ॥

Sati (goddess Parvati) saw a miracle in her front—she saw that Lord Ram was walking ahead of her, and was accompanied by Sita, his wife, and Laxman, his younger brother. (4)

Flabbergasted, she (Parvati) looked behind her, and to her astonishment she saw the same sight there also. She saw the wonderful sight of the Lord (Ram) along with his brother and Sita attired in magnificent clothes befitting her divine stature. (5)

जहँ चितवहिं तहँ प्रभु आसीना । सेवहिं सिद्ध मुनीस प्रबीना ॥ ६ ॥

Wherever Parvati glanced, she could see that Lord Ram was enthroned on a divine seat, and was being served most reverentially by Siddha (mystics), sages and hermits who were wise and acclaimed in their own right. (6)

देखे सिव बिधि बिष्णु अनेका । अमित प्रभाउ एक तें एका ॥ ७ ॥

बंदत चरन करत प्रभु सेवा । बिबिध बेष देखे सब देवा ॥ ८ ॥

She also saw that countless sets of Shivas (Parvati's own husband), Brahmas (creators), and Vishnus (sustainers of creation), all of whom not only had infinite glories and authority but one set of these gods was greater in magnificence and splendour than the other [7], was serving and paying their homage at the revered feet

of the Lord (Ram). Not only these primary gods of the Trinity, she also saw numerous other gods of various denominations and in countless forms and attires also serving the holy feet of the Lord [8]. (7-8)

दो०. सती बिधात्री इंदिरा देखीं अमित अनूप ।

जेहिं जेहिं बेष अजादि सुर तेहि तेहि तन अनुरूप ॥ ५४ ॥

Further, she (Parvati) also saw countless sets of goddesses—such as Satis (divine consorts of Shiva; her own countless forms), Bidhaatris (the consort of Brahma, the creator) and Indiras (the consort of Indra, the king of gods; it also may mean goddess Laxmi as Lord Vishnu, her divine husband, is regarded as the chief amongst the gods)—in different forms and attires, all looking more glorious than their next companion.

All these numerous goddesses matched their counterparts, the divine gods, in their splendour, majesty and magnificence in which all of them appeared simultaneously and served Lord Ram in myriad forms. (Doha no. 54)

देखे जहँ तहँ रघुपति जेते । सक्तिन्ह सहित सकल सुर तेते ॥ १ ॥

जीव चराचर जो संसारा । देखे सकल अनेक प्रकारा ॥ २ ॥

Parvati saw as many numbers of gods and their respective Shaktis (divine consorts of gods) as there were images of Raghupati (Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghu dynasty of Ayodhya), and all of them were serving the Lord. (1)

She also saw all the Jivas (living beings) of every imaginable denomination and form that exist in this creation (alongside the gods and goddesses). [In other words, she saw the subtle world as well as the gross world and their inhabitants serving the Lord. The first was represented by the heavenly gods and goddesses who existed in subtle and invisible form, and the second was represented by ordinary Jivas who lived in the gross and visible world and had gross bodies.] (2)

पूजहिं प्रभुहि देव बहु बेषा । राम रूप दूसर नहिं देखा ॥ ३ ॥

She saw the miraculous and stunning sight of countless gods (and their consorts, the Shaktis, the goddesses), who had myriad forms, serving the same Lord, Sri Ram, who had a uniform, single form (unlike these gods and goddesses having countless forms, each different from the other). (3)

अवलोके रघुपति बहुतेरे । सीता सहित न बेष घनेरे ॥ ४ ॥

Though she (Parvati) saw countless images of Lord Ram wherever she glanced, but she saw the same image of the Lord alongside Sita; all the images were exactly the same (unlike the images of the gods and goddesses which all varied from one site to another). (4)

सोइ रघुबर सोइ लछिमनु सीता । देखि सती अति भई सभीता ॥ ५ ॥

When Sati (Parvati) saw this wonderful and magical phenomenon of the same image of Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita wherever she glanced (as opposed to countless forms of different gods and goddesses greatly varying from one another), she was not only dumbstruck but terrified<sup>1</sup> also. (5)

[Note—<sup>1</sup>Parvati was dumbstruck because she found herself suddenly surrounded by a vast array of dynamic images so dazzling and out of this world that she got an impression that she was inside a crystal ball which is constantly rotating, making her lose her mental bearing and sense of direction like a person who is drugged, begins to hallucinate, and is then thrown into a world of zero gravity. Being alone and caught in a mysterious world of unimaginable phantom-like images of which she had no experience made her extremely terrified because she thought she was seeing phantoms and ghosts. This stunning sight threw her out of her wits, leaving her reeling under the tremendous mental shock that it created as if a lightening had struck her.

Another reason for her getting extremely afraid was that she did not know what answer she would now give to Shiva when he asks her what she had discovered. Remember: She had defied her husband, disobeyed him and decided to test the truth about Lord Ram, implying that Shiva was not wise enough to know the reality of things, which in itself is unacceptable for a devoted and obedient wife which Parvati was supposed to be. She was regarded in high esteem by the gods and the world, and if she had the audacity to defy her husband, who himself was not an ordinary husband but a 'Maha-Deva', the Great God of creation who was the most revered of all the gods, then this disobedient behaviour would send a wrong signal down the line to the rest of the world. She realized that she had committed a grave sin, and was sure that Shiva would punish her severely.]

**(ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 201—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 202:**

This incident relates to the birth of Lord Ram who was Lord Vishnu's, the Viraat Purush's incarnation.

Once it so happened that mother Kaushalya placed the child Ram on a couch to sleep and then went to her personal worship room to offer prayers to the deity. There she found Ram eating sweets meant as offerings to the deity. Stunned and unable to understand what she saw, the mother rushed back to the place where she had put Ram on the couch to sleep. She found, to her utter astonishment, that Ram was sleeping peacefully on it. She again rushed to the worship room and saw Ram enjoying the sweets. This was the moment when the Lord of the world revealed his cosmic form of the 'Viraat Purush' to enlighten Kaushalya not to be deluded to think that Ram is her son in the ordinary sense of the meaning of the word as the mortal world understands it.

दो०. देखरावा मातहि निज अद्भुत रूप अखंड ।

रोम रोम प्रति लागे कोटि कोटि ब्रह्मंड ॥ २०१ ॥

The Lord (Ram) showed the mother his original, wonderful and mysterious cosmic form that encompassed the entire creation within its ambit.

Not only one creation but this all-encompassing, all-inclusive vast and colossus form of the Supreme Lord had countless universes (known as 'Brahmaand') embedded in each of the hairs on his cosmic body. (Doha no. 201)

चौ०. अगनित रवि ससि सिव चतुरानन । बहु गिरि सरित सिंधु महि कानन ॥ १ ॥

She saw uncountable suns, moons, Shivas and Brahmas ('Chaturaans') (in the sky of these universes), along with innumerable earths (mortal worlds) with as many mountains, rivers, oceans and forests on it. (1)

**काल कर्म गुन ग्यान सुभाऊ । सोउ देखा जो सुना न काऊ ॥ २ ॥**

Similarly, she saw countless Kaals (phases of time; periods, eras and epochs), Karma (deeds done by living beings), Gunas (qualities and virtues that exist in the world, and which combine in countless permutations and combinations to determine the kaleidoscopic nature of the character of this mysterious world), Gyan (knowledge which so infinite that the more one seems to learn the more he has yet to know), Swabhaav (a creature's nature, instincts and inclinations)—the sight she saw was so mysterious and magical like no one has ever seen it or heard of it. (2)

**देखी माया सब बिधि गाढ़ी । अति सभित जों कर ठाढ़ी ॥ ३ ॥**

She saw that 'Maya' (the personified form of the Supreme Being's Shakti or powers that create delusions)—which assumes a grave and uncompromising attitude in its dealings with the world, is fearless and reckless in her demeanours, and is an undeniably invincible force to reckon with in this creation (because it is directly empowered by the Supreme Being, because it has direct access to the Lord, and is so powerful and effective that it keeps even the most able gods and the wisest of living beings such as great sages, seers and hermits held captive in its vice-like grip of delusions)—was standing before the Lord obediently and humbly with joined hands (as a token of submissiveness and ready to take orders from the Lord). (3)

**देखा जीव नचावड़ जाही । देखी भगति जो छोरड़ ताही ॥ ४ ॥**

She saw that countless 'Jivas' (living beings) are being made to dance to the tune of (i.e. obey the dictates of) this Maya. Only those Jivas who have 'Bhakti' in them (i.e. have devotion for the Lord God in their hearts; here obviously referring to those who have Bhakti for Lord Ram as he is a personified form of the Supreme Being whose Viraat or cosmic form is being described here) are spared by this Maya. [That is, though the entire living world is under the spell of Maya, those who have devotion for the Lord God are free from its grip.] (4)

**तन पुलकित मुख बचन न आवा । नयन मूढ़ि चरननि सिरु नावा ॥ ५ ॥**

When Kaushalya saw this magical and marvelous sight, her body was thrilled, and she was completely dumbfounded, being unable to utter a single word. So dazed was she that she closed her eyes and bowed her head before this divine cosmic form of the Supreme Lord. (5)

**(iii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 242:**

This view of the Viraat Purush relates to the occasion of Sita's marriage when Lord Ram and Laxman had gone, along with sage Vishwamitra, to attend it.

Countless kings and princes had been invited by Sita's father, king Janak, to participate in this ceremony. It was declared that anyone who could break an old bow,

that originally belonged to Lord Shiva but was presently kept with Janak, would marry Sita.

Out of this motley crowd of great kings and princes all of whom were restless and eager to break the bow and get Sita as the trophy, were some wise kings who were devotees of Lord Vishnu. When they saw Lord Ram at the venue of the bow breaking ceremony, they had a vision of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram. So they decided not to oppose the Lord. The present verse relates to the sight that they saw—of the Viraat Purush in the form and person of Lord Ram.

**चौ०. बिदुषन्ह प्रभु बिराटमय दीसा । बहु मुख कर पग लोचन सीसा ॥ १ ॥**

Those who were learned, enlightened and well-versed in the philosophy of metaphysics as envisioned in the scriptures saw the Lord in his ‘Viraat’ form that had many mouths, hands, legs, eyes and heads. (1)

**(iv) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15:**

Here, Mandodari, the wife of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka who had stolen Lord Ram’s wife Sita, tries to persuade her stubborn and haughty husband to abandon his belligerence and send Sita back to Ram. She tells Ravana that he must understand that Lord Ram is not an ordinary human prince whose wife he has brought home. The Lord was the cosmic Lord of creation, and therefore Ravana stands no chance of overcoming him or defeating him in any war. It is then she narrates the ‘Viraat’ form of Lord Ram.

**दो०. बिस्वरूप रघुबंस मनि करहु बचन बिस्वासु ।**

**लोक कल्पना बेद कर अंग अंग प्रति जासु ॥ १४ ॥**

‘Believe me when I say that the gem of the Raghu dynasty (‘Raghukul Mani’; Lord Ram) is a manifested form of the invisible cosmic form of the Supreme Being of whom this entire world is an image. In other words, the original form of Lord Ram is the ‘Viraat Purush’ who has revealed himself as this vast myriad world, pervading intrinsically everywhere in it, present in every pore of it. In fact, this world is a gross visible form of subtle cosmic primary form of Lord Ram known as the ‘Viraat Purush’.

The Vedas (the primary scriptures) conceive that each limb and part of the body of this cosmic all-inclusive form of the Lord is the habitat of one or the other world that are known to exist in this creation. [That is, there are different worlds that exist at different levels in creation at different points of time. All of them are lodged at some point on the cosmic body of the Lord like so many tiny pearls stitched and embroidered on a vast length of cloth.] (Doha no. 14)

**चौ०. पद पाताल सीस अज धामा । अपर लोक अंग अंग बिश्रामा ॥ १ ॥**

This cosmic Lord’s feet are represented by the ‘Patal’ (the nether or subterranean world), and his head consists of the heavens where Brahma, the creator, lives. The rest of the world that lies between these to extremes is located in all other parts of the Lord’s cosmic body. (1)

**भृकुटि बिलास भयंकर काला । नयन दिवाकर कच घन माला ॥ २ ॥**

The formidable power of 'Kaal' (death; the powerful forces of time that bring about epochal changes in this world, including destruction) is represented by the movement of the Lord's eyebrows. His eyes are represented by the Sun, and the dense dark clouds are his thick lock of black hairs. (2)

**जासु घान अस्विनीकुमारा । निसि अरु दिवस निमेष अपारा ॥ ३ ॥**

The twin gods known as 'Aswini-kumars' (who are the physicians of the gods) are the Lord's two nostrils. The day and the night are representatives of the winking of the eyes of the Lord, with the day representing the open eyes, and the night standing for the closed eye. (3)

**श्रवन दिसा दस बेद बखानी । मारुत स्वास निगम निज बानी ॥ ४ ॥**

The Vedas have declared (asserted) that the Lord's ears is represented by the ten directions or quarters of this world<sup>1</sup>. His breath is the wind, the Vedas (primary scriptures; the treasury of knowledge) are the Lord's words. (4)

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The ten directions or quarters of the world are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

**अधर लोभ जम दसन कराला । माया हास बाहु दिगपाला ॥ ५ ॥**

'Lobha' (greed) represents the Lord's lips; the ferocious 'Yam' (god of death) represents his sharp teeth; 'Maya' (delusions) stands for the Lord's laughter or smile (because the Lord laughs at the way the world begins to hallucinate under its influence); and the 'Digpals'<sup>1</sup> (the powerful semi-gods who support the world and prevent it from collapsing) are representatives of the Lord's strong arms (that sustain and protect the entire creation). (5)

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The Digpals:— There are believed to be eight Digpals as follows:

Indra who is the king of Gods and who has a thousand eyes on his body, and is therefore called 'Sahastraaksha', Agni or the Fire God, Yam or the God of Dharma (i.e. the God responsible to ensure that the great tenets of righteousness and proper conduct are observed by the creatures, and to punish those who violate these laws), Nirritiya (also known as Nairritya/Nirriti), Varun or the Water God, Anil or the Wind God, Indu or the Moon God (often replaced by Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods), Ishan or Lord Shiva, Brahma the creator, and Anant who is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation (or Lord Seshnath, the legendary serpent who holds the earth on its hoods in a symbolic gesture to indicate that Lord Vishnu is responsible for taking care of this creation).

The eight Digpals are the divine forces of creation in a personified form of various Gods who are assigned the task of taking care of the entire creation. They are the following—(i) Indra who is the king of Gods and responsible for production of rain as well as to control all other Gods who are said to be represented by the various independent forces of Nature; (ii) Agni is the personified form of the fire element responsible for providing heat, energy, light, vitality, strength, vigour and vibrancy to creation; (iii) Yam is the personified form of death as well as assigned the duty to uphold the laws of Dharma (or the auspicious virtues of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity etc.), and to punish those who violate it; (iv) Nirriti or Nairritya who is the God responsible for the actual death and punishment of the sinful and unholy creatures in creation; (v) Varun is the personified form of the most essential ambrosia of life known as the water element that provides nourishment and lubrication to this

creation, and is regarded as the basic element that harbours life in all its forms in its bosom; (vi) Anil is the personified form of the life-giving air or wind element which is also called Pran—literally meaning ‘life’ which is a proof of its importance and significance vis-à-vis this creation; (vii) Kuber is the treasurer of Gods and responsible to provide all the necessities of life to the inhabitants of this world; the Moon God is the custodian of the Amrit, the ambrosia of life and eternity which is a priceless asset for the creation; (viii) Ishan is Lord Shiva who is also known as Mahadev, the Great Lord, as well as the one who is responsible for maintain balance in this creation by controlling death, and hence is called the ‘concluder’; (ix) Brahma is the creator of the physical world as well as the body of knowledge known as the Vedas, and therefore assumes the role of a grand old patriarch of the family known as the world; and (x) Anant or Lord Vishnu who is so-called because he is eternal, infinite and endless, has infinite responsibilities, and is assigned the multi-prong duty of taking good care of the world in all respects. He is also called Anant as he is none but the eternal Brahm himself in the form of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing and almighty Lord of creation. In fact, even Brahma and Shiva are said to be born from this Viraat Purush. [Refer Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 38.]

These Dignals are responsible for the eight directions where they are worshipped as follows—

- (1) Indra (इन्द्र—the king of Gods) is the custodian or guardian of the east direction.
- (2) Agni (अग्नि—the fire-God) is the custodian or guardian of the south-east direction.
- (3) Yama (यम—the death-God) is the custodian or guardian of the south direction.
- (4) Nirriti or Nairitya (निर्ऋति) is the custodian or guardian of the south-west direction.
- (5) Varun (वरुण—the Water God) is the custodian or guardian of the west direction.
- (6) Vayu (वायु—the Wind God) is the custodian or guardian of the north-west direction.
- (7) Kuber (कुबेर—the treasurer of Gods) is the custodian or guardian of the north direction.
- (8) Ish (ईश—Lord Shiva; the chief Lord) is the custodian or guardian of the north-east direction. ]

### आनन अनल अंबुपति जीहा । उत्पति पालन प्रलय समीहा ॥ ६ ॥

The Lord’s tongue is represented by ‘Anal’ (fire), [And that is why we use the phrase ‘the tongue of fire’.]

‘Ambupati’ (the patron god of water) is represented by his tongue. [That is why the tongue is always moist. It is a medical necessity because all food that we eat is moistened and softened by the saliva which is water-based. Besides this physical softening to make the food easy on the stomach, the enzymes that start the chemical process of digestion in the tongue itself work only when they are diluted with water. This is the reason why hastily eaten food that is gulped down directly into the throat without being properly chewed in the mouth and made into a semi-fluid form with the help of the water contents of the saliva secreted by the tongue that helps the food to be mixed with digestive enzymes that would help the stomach to further the process of digestion and extraction of the nutrients present in the food lies like a load in the abdomen and ruins health.]

Creation, sustenance and conclusion or destruction of this creation are his mere acts done effortlessly and causally; they are his gestures. [The Lord can effect such great changes such as creating this world from virtually nothing, then sustaining it on such a huge and grand scale, and finally winding it up like one closing a book, needs no special effort or exertion to be done by the Supreme Lord. He merely gestures or wishes that it be so, and it happens to his liking.] (6)

**रोम राजि अष्टादस भारा । अस्थि सैल सरिता नस जारा ॥ ७ ॥**

The eighteen principle species of the vegetable (botanical) kingdom having countless members of different types in each are like the hairs on the body of the Viraat. The lofty mountains are its bones, and the many rivers and countless streams are the network of veins, arterioles and capillaries of this cosmic body. (7)

**उदर उदधि अधगो जातना । जगमय प्रभु का बहु कल्पना ॥ ८ ॥**

The measureless ocean is its stomach and abdomen, while the organs present in the lower part of this cosmic body (i.e. the excretory and genital organs) are represented by the hell (which is hot and tormenting; is an eternal inferno where everything is hot and burning).

In brief, this entire creation (universe) is a manifestation of the Lord (here referring to Lord Ram in his primary form as the Viraat Purush), and therefore it is futile to attempt to describe it or go into the details of this form and its mind-boggling revealed variations in the form of the creation in which no two units are alike though all of them are the revelation of the same Supreme Lord.' (8)

**(v) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 81:**

The story goes that once the saintly crow named 'Kaagbhusund' had gone to Ayodhya to see Lord Ram and be in the Lord's company for some time. This was the period when Lord Ram was still a child. So, like any other child of his age, when the Lord saw a crow hopping around in the courtyard of his home, the royal palace, he started playing around with Kaagbhusund, even feeding the latter with his own hands. Since this crow was primarily an ardent devotee of the Lord and had to suffer due to this steadfastness of devotion by being cursed to become a crow, Lord Ram wished to oblige him by showering his love and affection on Kaagbhusund. Since the latter was in the physical form of a crow, no one in the royal household suspected anything and Kaagbhusund had unhindered access to the Lord whom he adored so much.

Lord Ram wished to show Kaagbhusund his true cosmic divine form as the 'Viraat Purush'. So the Lord smiled and opened his mouth, and the crow flew into it. What Kaagbhusund saw then was narrated by him to Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu who was sent by Lord Shiva to the saintly crow so that Garud can hear the divine story of Lord Ram, which Kaagbhusund used to say daily atop a mountain, and remove his own doubts about the holiness and divinity of Lord Ram.

In the following verses, Kaagbhusund describes what he saw after entering the mouth of Lord Ram:--

**मोहि बिलोकि राम मुसुकाहीं । बिहँसत तुरत गयउँ मुख माहीं ॥ २ ॥**

'Lord Ram smiled on seeing me. As soon he opened his mouth to laugh, I (Kaagbhusund) entered it (the opened mouth). (2)



**उदर माझ सुनु अंडज राया । देखेऊं बहु ब्रह्मांड निकाया ॥ ३ ॥**

Listen oh the king of birds! Inside the Lord's stomach I could see multiples of Brahmaands (universes) in existence. (3)

[Note—This is a description of the cosmic form of the Supreme Being. It incorporates the entire creation, and not only the universe in which we live. There are many such universes as the one in which our earth exists.]

**अति बिचित्र तहें लोक अनेका । रचना अधिक एक ते एका ॥ ४ ॥**

These universes were of myriad forms, sizes and shapes. They were populated by many worlds which varied from one another so much so that any one of them was more fascinating and wonderful than the next one. (4)

**कोटिन्ह चतुरानन गौरीसा । अगनित उडगन रबि रजनीसा ॥ ५ ॥**

There were millions of Brahmas ('Chaturaanan') and Shivas ('Gaurisaa') in existence in these universes. Likewise, there were countless stars, suns and moons. (5)

**अगनित लोकपाल जम काला । अगनित भूधर भूमि बिसाला ॥ ६ ॥**

Similarly, there were countless Lokpaals (custodians of the worlds), Yams (god of death) and Kaals (death itself). There were countless huge mountains and large earths. (6)

**सागर सरि सर बिपिन अपारा । नाना भाँति सृष्टि बिस्तारा ॥ ७ ॥**

Thousands of oceans, rivers, lakes and ponds as well as forests and gardens that could not be counted or measured existed there. Huge creations in different stages of development, evolution and expansion, each varying in form, shape, size and characteristics than the other existed there. (7)

**सुर मुनि सिद्ध नाग नर किंनर । चारि प्रकार जीव सचराचर ॥ ८ ॥**

I could see the gods (representing divine beings who live a subtle form of life as Spirits in the heavens), the sages, seers and the mystics (representing human beings who live on earth), the serpents (representing subterranean creatures), and Kinnars (creatures who are sexually neutral). There were creatures of all the four categories (such as the ones born from seeds, e.g. the plants, those born from an embryo, e.g. animals, those born from eggs, i.e. the birds, and those born from heat and sweat, i.e. lice and fungus). I could also see movable as well as immovable entities in the different worlds I witnessed in the fathomless pit of the Lord's stomach. (8)

**दो०. जो नहिं देखा नहिं सुना जो मनहूँ न समाइ ।**

**सो सब अद्भुत देखेऊं बरनि कवनि बिधि जाइ ॥ ८० ( क ) ॥**

I had seen such marvelous sights of wonder that I had never seen or ever heard of before, and which cannot be even imagined by the wildest of minds. Say then, how

can I describe them in words (i.e. how is it possible to find proper words to express something, even a fraction of it, that boggled the mind and failed its imagination). (Doha 80 Ka)

एक एक ब्रह्मांड महुँ रहउँ बरष सत एक ।

एहि बिधि देखत फिरउँ मैं अंड कटाह अनेक ॥ ८० ( ख ) ॥

I had stayed in each of these (countless) Brahmaands (universes) for one hundred years. In this way I had to opportunity to go around all the universes to see them all, and I found them to be shaped like an egg. (Doha no. 80 Kha)

[Note—The word “Brahmaand” has two parts—viz. ‘Brahm’ = the Supreme Being; and “Anda” = an egg. Even modern science has accepted that due to the forces of gravity and other physical phenomena, the ‘world’—whether we mean our earth or any other heavenly body such as the moon, the sun, the planets etc., or on a larger scale the entire universe in which we live—is shaped like a ball, a sphere. The plain and simple reason is that this is the most stable shape for an entity that is dynamic and continuously evolving, for otherwise its constituent parts would fly away in different directions to no one can say where, thereby thinning the core and eventually leading to the literal evaporation of the main entity into nothingness. Brahm, the supreme Creator, did not plan to create and then let his creation evaporate like water on a hot day; he wanted his creation to perpetuate until the time he himself decides to wind it up.

Brahm loved his creation very much, and in order to protect it from any sort of intruders or invaders attacking from the outside, he decided to surround his creation from all sides like a mother tightly hugging her infant child and covering it with her arms so that no one can cause any harm. This also ensured that the creation retained its warmth in the background of cosmic chill which would have certainly killed the cosmic embryo.

All the universes that existed at the time Kaagbhusund visited them were in different stages of development, and each was a sphere that was completely self-sustaining by its own self. Like a female serpent encircling countless eggs from which small snakes hatch and wriggle out, Brahm surrounded this cosmos in which there were countless such egg-shaped universes developing or already developed. Each such universe shaped like a sphere had its own eco-system with its own gods, living beings, planets, and movable and immovable things.

In olden days when castles and forts were constructed, the general plan resembled this view of the Brahmaand—they had circular outer walls around which was a broad moat filled with water to stop intruders or attackers from easy approach to the main building where the sovereign lived. Only those who were friendly were let in. In the present case, the Supreme Being opened the outer gates of his huge cluster of Brahmaands to let sage Kaagbhusund in so that he can see all of them as an honoured guest.

Again, just like the access to the castle is through a huge doorway from which a draw-bridge is lowered across the moat, the Lord opened his mouth (the doorway) which had a long tongue (the draw-bridge) through which Kaagbhusund got entrance to the interior of the mysterious world of the Brahmaands.]

चौ०. लोक लोक प्रति भिन्न बिधाता । भिन्न बिष्णु सिव मनु दिसित्राता ॥ १ ॥

नर गंधर्ब भूत बेताला । किंनर निसिचर पसु खग ब्याला ॥ २ ॥  
देव दनुज गन नाना जाती । सकल जीव तहँ आनहि भाँती ॥ ३ ॥

Each of these countless worlds I saw had its own Brahma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer, protector), Shiva (concluder), Manu (the first human from whom the rest of the human race sprung forth), Dikpaals (custodians of the various directions) [1], Nars (human beings), Gandharvas (semi-gods; heavenly singers), Bhoots and Betaals (ghosts; spirits, phantoms), Kinnars (semi-gods who are custodians of the god's treasure; dancers and those who are sexual neutral), Nisichars (those who move in the night; nocturnal creatures; demons and ghosts), Pashus (animals), Khags (birds), Byaals (serpents and other reptiles) [2], and Devtas (gods) and Daityas (demons), each unique to that particular world. All of them had unique forms and characteristic features which varied from world to world (i.e. from one world to another) so much so that those of any particular world (universe) differed from those of any other world. [That is, each world or universe that I saw had its unique set of above entities, and there were, therefore, as many different varieties of creatures as there were worlds or universes.] [3] (1-3)

महि सरि सागर सर गिरि नाना । सब प्रपंच तहँ आनइ आना ॥ ४ ॥

Similarly, there were countless Mahis (earths), Saris (rivers), Saagars (oceans), Sars (lakes and ponds), and Giris (mountains) of many varieties. All the creations that I could see varied so much from one another that they seemed to be most magical and deluding for the senses; each universe had its own characters and no two universes were alike! [That is, I was absolutely dumbfounded and stunned by what I saw; I began to hallucinate and lost my mental bearing. I literally began to swoon, and my eyes popped out in utter amazement and wonder; my mind and intellect stopped functioning, and my senses were numbed.] (4)

अंडकोस प्रति प्रति निज रूपा । देखेउँ जिनस अनेक अनूपा ॥ ५ ॥

The wonder of all this was that I could see myself in each of these Brahmaands (universes). But the miracle was that each form of myself that I saw was unique in its self, with one form of a particular world differing from my image in another world. [That is, I could see as many Kaagbhusunds as there were universes, and it created an impression that I was trapped in an illusion created by a house with walls made of mirrors that produced countless images of the same thing.]

I found many wonderful things that were unique in themselves, and all of them were most fascinating and awe-inspiring (so much so that they defy narration). (5)

अवधपुरी प्रति भुवन निनारी । सरजू भिन्न भिन्न नर नारी ॥ ६ ॥

In each of these worlds there was a unique Ayodhya with its magnificent buildings, river Saryu, and men and women. All of them differed from one world (universe; Brahmaand) to another. (6)

दसरथ कौसल्या सुनु ताता । बिबिध रूप भरतादिक भ्राता ॥ ७ ॥

Oh dear, listen. Even Dasrath (king of Ayodhya, and worldly father of Lord Ram), Kaushalya (queen of Dasrath and worldly mother of Lord Ram), and brothers

of Lord Ram such as Bharat (others being Laxman and Shatrughan) looked different from one world to another. [That is, each world not only had its own set of Ayodhya, river Saryu, citizens, king Dasrath and mother Kaushalya, but even the three brothers of Lord Ram differed from one world to another. It was absolutely unbelievable and incredulous to behold this sight.] (7)

### प्रति ब्रह्मांड राम अवतारा । देखउँ बालबिनोद अपारा ॥ ८ ॥

Each Brahmaand (universe) had its own event of Lord Ram taking birth, and my (Kaagbhusund's) watching and greatly enjoying the Lord's infinite sports, pranks and other playful activities as a (human) child. (8)

[Note—To sum up this fantastic and mind-boggling array of sights which Kaagbhusund saw, we must remember that he is seeing the 'Viraat' form of the Supreme Being which encompasses whatever that exists in creation. Nothing in existence is beyond the Viraat's existence.

The universe which we know of is only one tiny unit or fraction of the vast and infinite cosmic body of the Lord. There are infinite numbers of other universes like our own universe in this un-describable body of the Viraat Purush.

Remember: The creation is merely a manifestation or revelation of the Viraat Purush. There are infinite numbers of universes in different stages of evolvement or development, and each of them has its own unique form and shape, each having its constituent units which exhibit its own characteristic features and qualities, but they all add together to form a mosaic that constitutes the cosmic gross body of the Viraat Purush.

Remember: Creation is a gross form of the Viraat Purush; the Lord's subtle and sublime form, however, is the 'Supreme Consciousness'. This cosmic Supreme Consciousness is the 'Parmatma' or the supreme Atma of creation. The visible or invisible world is the 'gross body' of this Parmatma.

Lord Ram, as we know him from the reading of the Ramayan, is a visible manifestation of the Parmatma in a human form. This is the grossest form of the body of the Parmatma, the subtler form being Lord Vishnu. Hence, the Parmatma or the Viraat Purush has two levels of existence—the subtle form as Lord Vishnu, and the grosser form as Lord Ram. But they are essentially and fundamentally different forms of the same Parmatma.

To understand this concept easily we may take a simple example. Water molecules in steam or vapour have the same chemical formula ( $H_2O$ ) as liquid water which we drink. Their physical form of existence differs, but not the essential, basic form which is  $H_2O$ —two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen.]

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