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The Hard Light Center of Awakening is an organization founded and directed by Mark Griffin as a forum for the study of spirituality and meditation. Mark Griffin is a Meditation Master who is firmly established in the advanced Nirvikalpa Samadhi states — rare strands of consciousness that lead to remarkable perception and spiritual accomplishment.

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The Siddha Lineage

Mark Griffin is a Westerner who was born in the 1950’s in the Pacific Northwest. His early adult years were spent in the aggressive pursuit of higher knowledge and purpose.

While a young man, Mark’s studies in art and music brought him to the San Francisco Bay area. There in 1976 he met his Guru, Baba Muktananda. After years of full-time immersion in the study of meditation, Mark encountered a milestone of extreme spiritual significance – entrance into the advanced state of consciousness known as Nirvikalpa Samadhi. After Muktananda died, Mark continued to study with the great teachers of the Kagyu tradition, Kalu Rinpoche and Chogyam Trungpa, who supported the maturing and stabilizing of his abilities.

In 1989, after attracting several interested students, Mark began to teach meditation. He and his students relocated to Los Angeles and started the Hard Light Center of Awakening, an association dedicated to the art and science of awareness of the Self.

When Mark Griffin met Baba Muktananda he immediately realized that Baba was his Guru, his true teacher. Baba’s Guru was the great saint of India, Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri. It is with the blessings of these remarkable Siddhas that Mark carries on his inspiring teachings.
The Structure of the Guru Gita

The recitation of the Guru Gita is one of the practices of the Hard Light Center of Awakening for one simple reason... as Mark Griffin says: "I am teaching you this about the Guru because I believe it's your best chance for Awakening in this lifetime".

The Guru Gita is the core section of 352 sutras in the latter portion of the ancient Indian text known as the Skanda Purana. Gita means song, and indeed these sutras are a song in praise of the Guru, and in recognition of the power of contemplating the Guru's nature, especially through the vehicle of the repetition of these verses.

Mark Griffin, the founder of the Hard Light Center of Awakening, has selected 108 of these verses for the use of serious seekers - those who are sincerely interested in spiritual training. This fresh, original translation from the Sanskrit is specifically designed for the contemporary seeker.

These 108 verses focus on the universal nature of the Guru. When the word Guru is used here, it is known to be more than an individual person. Rather, it is a universal principle, a catalyst for enlightenment like no other. It is referred to in the text as the Guru Tattva; tattva translating as principle.

Let us look for a moment now at the overall structure of the text.

The text uses the classic format of a student asking a teacher a question, with the answer forming the body of the work. In verse 2, the Goddess Parvati cuts right to the heart of the matter and asks Lord Shiva that which her heart most dearly longs to know: "How can I most directly gain realization?"

Shiva begins his answer to Parvati in verse 4 with one phrase that contains the totality of the text: "The Absolute is the same as the Guru". Everything unfolds from this core truth. The elaboration of the teaching unfolds from there...

Verses 5 – 71
These verses answer: Who is the Guru? What is his essential nature? What is the method of meditation upon him? What are the benefits of this practice?

Within this large section, there are a few key specific topics to note:

14-16: The word 'Guru' as mantra

39-47: The Guru's lotus feet
The Bodhicitta, the inner essence of enlightenment within each person, which abides in the heart-mind is highlighted in verses 46-51. From this perspective, there is no question about whether to visualize the Guru in the heart or in the crown chakra - he is in both, as pointed out by the unity of the heart-mind known as the Bodhicitta:

46-48: Guru meditation in the sahasrar, the crown of the head

49-51: Guru meditation in the heart chakra

64-66: Following the path (margena) of the Guru

Verses 70 - 73
Now Shiva describes the attributes of a disciple. What is the relationship between the Guru and the disciple? How should the disciple behave? What are the benefits of discipleship?

Verses 73 - 79
Shiva goes into a more technical explanation of the aspects of realization, defining different levels of experience, and describing the ineffable experience of Unity Consciousness itself. It's interesting to note that Parvati remains an attentive student throughout the discourse that follows. In verse 73 Shiva makes reference to something she does not understand, and she is quick to interrupt him and ask for an explanation.

Verses 78 – 88
Here begins the description of the nature of a liberated person, and what his life is like based on that awakening.

Verses 89 - 103
Now Shiva begins to discuss the text of the Guru Gita itself, its nature as a mantra, its power in spiritual practices and its ability to enlighten and purify. He also explains how and where it should be recited.

Verse 104 - 108
These verses move into the summary, where Shiva again establishes his authority for expounding this knowledge and admonishing Parvati to follow his teachings.

Join Mark now in singing the praises of this profound Ocean of Consciousness... this force of Awakening – the Guru!

~ PodPublishing, Editors
I'd like to talk about the text of the Guru Gita. When you go to India you see that there is an incredible tradition of spiritual training. We have very little of that tradition here in the West. Baba Muktananda's mission to the West, which was conceived of by his Guru Bhagawan Nityananda, began a process of what I have referred to in the past as "Shaktipat on sight". In the past, the contact and impact between Guru and disciple was very much shrouded in secrecy. You entered a very secret kind of life when you came under the grace of a Siddha Guru. I believe that out of necessity, the spiritual hierarchy realized that this entire project of human awakening needed to be carried to a more aggressive level.

It was Bhagawan Nityananda, a being of unsurpassed authority in the spiritual hierarchy, who I feel was the manager on this project and put the conditions in place for the thunderbolt of awakening to move out of the relative secrecy that enshrouded it in India. Bhagawan Nityananda gave rise to the permission blessing and empowered Muktananda to come to the West and give Shaktipat on sight. In other words, no background in spiritual training was required – all you had to do was meet him and want to be awakened. It's unbelievable to say those words and know them to be true.

Muktananda was an extraordinarily powerful Siddha and a profound Master. He was a true Sadguru. There was also a side to him that was incredibly pragmatic. He realized that most of the people with whom he came into contact didn't have even the slightest idea what they were getting involved in – just like you. Most of you don't have the slightest idea what you're involved in. I see that all the time. So, faced with the idea of striking anybody with the thunderbolt, even those who had no background, Muktananda hit upon the idea of the recitation of the Shri Guru Gita every morning. It is an unbelievably profound text and you simply recite it everyday.

If I were to define my sadhana, I could find no clearer description of the awakening process that I underwent, than the Guru Gita. Step by step, idea by idea, principle by principle, it is an incredibly profound document and it has the ability to make what is very difficult and mysterious, seem available
and understandable.

In its essence, the Guru Gita is a diagram of the method by which the awakening process occurs. It describes the transmission of Shaktipat from the Guru to the disciple, which is the entire principle behind the Whispered Lineage. The Siddha Path is known as a Whisper Lineage or a Whisper Tradition. It is not written down and this very mysterious process of awakening of a human being emerges from the impact between the Guru and the disciple. The Guru Gita is essentially a mantra by and of the nature of the Guru. The mechanics of a mantra are such that the name of the mantra, the deity of the mantra, and the power of the mantra are a single thing. Therefore, the Guru Gita is a complete description of the nature of the Guru, how the Guru operates and the mysterious method by which any person can come into contact with the Guru and receive the force of the transmission.

Again, the principle is contact. The bringing together of the Guru and the disciple produces the effect of awakening. This Shaktipat transmission is authorized by Shiva himself, and so carries his full authority. Shiva is the Lord of the Guru Shakti. In this world system, at this particular time and place, he is the ruling force. The nature of Shiva is one of centrifugal dispersion, a very wrathful spinning away and decompression of all qualities into emptiness. That's why they say that Shiva is the fast path.

By comparison, the principle of God that is known as Vishnu is one of universal cohesion, with all qualities being brought together into an infinite compression. In previous times we've heard about human beings who lived incredible long life spans when the process of awakening quite literally took centuries. This was when the ruling force was Vishnu driven. Vishnu, who is said to be the true face of God, is now fourteen of sixteen parts Shiva, so it's a Shiva dominating Vishnu principle that's active right now in our world system.

Baba was a Siddha and a Shiva Guru. That's always a code. If a Guru is described as a Siddha, it means they're outside a tradition, and spontaneously arise as enlightenment. They are the manifestation of a Whisper Lineage or a Whisper Tradition, and engage in the direct transmission from the Guru to the disciple. If a Guru is described as a Shiva Guru,
that means that the path is the shortest possible way, because all qualities are dispersed instantaneously. If a Guru is described as a Siddha AND a Shiva Guru, it is code for the swiftest way one can move through the process of awakening. All of those principles are present here in Hard Light and it is how Hard Light operates.

It is extremely auspicious that the Guru Gita has emerged and is now becoming a part of the margena, the pathway of awakening here in Hard Light. The practice around Baba was very simple. Do the mantra, love God, welcome people. Simple. The practice here in Hard Light is also very simple – we do pretty much the same. Awareness of the SoHam. Constant exposure to the Kundalini. Come and see the teacher as frequently as you can. And out of that process, the awakening emerges. But I also now want to add the daily recitation of the Guru Gita.

I think it's important that the Guru Gita be recited in English, because that's our main language and more than anything, it's essential that the meaning be understood. Baba started operating inside America in 1974 and an English version of the Gita was present as a subtext, but it was principally recited in Sanskrit. In the Hard Light recitation we focus on the English translation, because the power emerges from clearly understanding the meaning.

There is something about the way we are as people, as human beings, that even the most important truths can be easily forgotten. We're faced with so much every day and we get rubbed very thin sometimes by the intensity of the maya. As a student of Hard Light, you're always being reminded to hold to your discipline and plunge inward. Now you can use the recitation of the Guru Gita as a supremely powerful tool that provides an opportunity for the Guru to speak directly to you. You can see and feel how powerful it is to align yourself with the Guru and the Guru Principle, the external Guru of cause and the internal Guru of action, within you and without. It gives you the ability to punch through the proliferating obscurations of kleisha-born afflictive emotion, which is always a very fierce opponent. There are also very specific applications for protection, empowerment, the clearing of obstacles, the renewal of the heart and the purification of body, mind and spirit.
In the recitation of the Guru Gita, you align with the Guru's force in the deepest way, across the entire spectrum of the expressions of Pinda, Pada, Rupa and Rupatita, as mentioned in verses 74-76. Those words embody principles beyond understanding, and it's why the Guru is the Guru. Your life is impacted with Pinda, the divine Kundalini Shaktipat; Pada, the SoHam, which is the coming together of the ocean of consciousness and the creation inside your own being; Rupa, the Blue Pearl, the true form of consciousness that is the recognition of the true Self; and Rupatita, emptiness beyond all qualities, the unfoldment of infinite consciousness as the individual and universal identities dissolve into each other and become forever one.

I wanted to introduce Shri Guru Gita on this celebration of Baba Muktananda's 26th anniversary of his Mahasamadhi. And I want it to become a part of your daily sadhana. It takes just 30 minutes to recite, and you can read the text out loud or silently to yourself. It's going to be recited everyday at the Hard Light retreat site, Fire Mountain in Nimboli, India.

The impact of the recitation of the Guru Gita acts as a powerful point of alignment with the Vajra Guru principle – that principle of mercy and awakening that is one and the same with God. It brings the full force of the Siddha Lineage into your life. You can be having the usual trials and tribulations and by just sitting down and reciting the Guru Gita, a wash of force will go through you that will bring you clear. This is available to you now through this daily recitation.

October 12, 2008
Lake Arrowhead, CA
Salutations to the Lord SadaShiva who is the divine source of these mantras.

The Guru, the Supreme Atman, is its deity.

_Ham_ is its seed, _Sa_ is its power and _Krom_ is the anchor that holds the syllables of the mantras together.

I recite the Guru Gita now to draw the Guru’s grace.
1) Knowing that Lord Shiva held the secret of Guru Yoga, the Goddess Parvati bowed to him with reverence on the summit of Mount Kailas and said:

2) O Great Lord, O Ruler of all the worlds, I long to know the path that will lead me to Awakening. Please have compassion on me. Show me the way, O Supreme Teacher of the Universe. I bow to your feet My Lord.

3) Lord Ishvara said:
   O Beloved, you are my very Self. Your love and devotion draw from me this secret knowledge, inspired by your longing, which is so rare.

4) Here is the secret knowledge that is difficult to attain in the three worlds. Listen to it carefully as I reveal it to you now. The Absolute is the same as the Guru. This is the truth, O beautiful One, this is the truth.

5) The Guru is the same as the Self, the same as Consciousness itself. This is the truth. This is the absolute truth. Those who seek wisdom should make every effort to find their Guru.

6) Let me explain to you how an embodied soul becomes Enlightened. By offering seva at the feet of the Guru and drawing his grace, all obscurations are purified.
I shall describe to you a form of meditation that grants boons, generates happiness, and bestows Bhukti, which is worldly fulfillment, and Mukti, which is spiritual awakening. O great Goddess, listen to this teaching with one-pointed concentration.

Think of the Guru with every action you perform. If you sprinkle water on your head while remembering the lotus feet of Shri Guru, you obtain the same benefits as bathing in all the places of pilgrimage.

Always meditate on the Guru’s form. Sip from the Guru’s water and eat from the food that he has left. Constantly repeat the mantra he has given you.

The Guru is the gateway to liberation, like Varanasi, like the Ganges, and the holy banyan tree Akshaya. The Guru is himself Vishveshvara – the Shiva of Varanasi, with the Ganges at his feet. He is the Prayag, the confluence of the three holy rivers at the pilgrimage center of Gaya. Pranam to the Guru again and again.

Continually remember the Guru’s form. Repeat his name and follow his command – think of nothing but the Guru.

Letting go of all attachment to your social status, your reputation and your comforts – think of nothing but the Guru.
13) If you think of nothing else but Me, you will easily reach the highest state of Realization. Thus, focus one-pointedly on merging with the Guru.

14) The word Guru is composed of two sacred syllables. Gu, which represents the darkness and Ru, which represents light. Gu is maya and Ru is the destruction of maya. Gu is the state which is beyond the three gunas, and Ru is emptiness.

The Guru is he who gives the experience of darkness melting into light, maya dissolving into clarity and formation revealing wisdom.

15) O Devi, the supreme mantra is indeed the word ‘Guru’, and its two letters gu and ru. The essence of the Smritis and Vedas decree that the Guru is the personification of the Highest Reality.

16) This pure king of mantras is a fire blazing in the mind – burning day and night, it removes the illusion that you are this body, thus freeing you from death itself.

17) There is no truth higher than the Guru Tattva, the Guru principle. Even gods and other celestial beings cannot attain this highest of states. A sadhaka should offer the Guru a seat, a bed, clothing and other things that will please him.
18) Pranam fully to the Guru with complete abandon and let your every action, thought and word be offered to the Guru. Serve the Guru in every way and dedicate your life to him.

19) The Guru knows you inside and out. O Beautiful One, withhold no part of yourself from him, neither that which you think of as pure nor that which you think of as dark and foul – including the germs and worms of your body, and the blood, skin and flesh, all of which are finally reduced to ashes.

20) The most powerful yoga, O Noble One, is not the pranayama with its windy breathing exercises, nor hatha yoga with its challenging and difficult positions – rather, it is the Guru Yoga, the supreme yoga, which grants the spontaneous state, whereby the powerful prana becomes still of its own accord, without effort.

21) I bow to my Guru who rescued those who were sinking in the mire of samsara, the ocean of hell, and were striving for liberation by seeking to climb the tree of life.
I bow to the Guru who is Brahma, who is Vishnu, who is Lord Shiva and who is indeed Parabrahman – the Ocean of Consciousness.

I bow to my Guru who is Shiva, the prime tattva, the only bridge across the ocean of samsara. As the master of all knowledge, he knows that by which all else is known.

I bow to my Guru who opened my eyes, that were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, and revealed to me the light of knowledge.

In order to cross over the abyss of samsara, I recognize you as my father, my mother, my brother and my God. I bow to you, my beloved Sadguru.

The source of meditation is the Guru’s form.
The source of devotion is the Guru’s feet.
The source of mantra is the Guru’s word.
The source of awakening is the Guru’s grace.

I fold my hands and bow to you my Guru, the Ocean of Benevolence, for it is only by your grace that I can be freed from the wheel of cyclic existence.
28) Through the Reality of the Guru there is truth, from the Light of the Guru there is luminosity, through the Bliss of the Guru there is joy. I bow to you, O Sadguru.

29) I bow to my Guru, who exists to reveal the truth, who ceaselessly shines like the sun to light our way, and who opens our hearts to love all those who are dear to us.

30) It is the Guru who illuminates the mind, not the mind that illuminates the Guru. I bow to my Guru who is the supreme witness of waking, dreaming and deep sleep states.

31) One whose mind is filled with thought, knows not; one whose mind is silent, knows everything. I bow to the Guru, who is one with the Absolute.

32) Goddess Parvati, only the Guru can remove the fear of aging and the dread of death. The Guru offers protection to his disciples, even if they are cursed by the sages, demons or gods.

33) If Shiva is angry, the Guru protects you. If Vishnu is angry, the Guru saves you. But if the Guru is angry, there’s nowhere to hide. Therefore strive to the utmost to take refuge in the Guru's grace.
34) O Beloved, those who know say the Guru is Shiva, the witness of all, but without his three eyes; he is Vishnu, but without his four arms; he is Brahma, but without his four faces.

35) There is no difference between the contemplation of your own Guru and the contemplation of infinite Lord Shiva. Indeed, chanting the name of your own Guru is as powerful as chanting the mantra of infinite Lord Shiva.

36) The absolute form of the Guru is like nectar to those who can truly see. To those who cannot see through the veil of illusion, the true form of the Guru is shrouded, like the sunrise is to a blind man.

37) Realizing that the Guru, the Supreme Being, encompasses the entire universe, whether sentient or insentient, from a blade of grass to Lord Brahma – I honor everything, by remembering my Guru.

38) I bow to my Guru, who knows there is no second reality – only one unified field arising everywhere simultaneously. This is the truth. To see otherwise is to be fooled by the illusion of cause and effect.

39) I bow to my Guru’s two lotus feet, which destroy the painful delusion of duality and always protect me from misfortune.
40. The stream of Shakti from the Guru’s lotus feet removes all obstacles, lights the flame of knowledge and takes one across the ocean of samsara, the endless cycle of birth, decay, death and rebirth.

41. Bow to the Guru’s feet and imbibe his essence. Thus you will attain knowledge and detachment. The karmas, which are at the root of your ignorance, will be destroyed and the cycle of rebirth will be brought to an end.

42. O Beloved, pranam with love to the Guru’s feet every day, making an offering of prayers and devotion to him wherever he may be.

He is always fully awake and at one with Pure Consciousness, witnessing the drama of myriad world systems arising and dissolving.

43. I bow to the two lotus feet of my Guru, one white, embodying Shiva; one red, embodying Shakti. My speech and mind focus on the contemplation of this divine mystery.
44) Even a few particles of dust from my Guru’s feet are enough to build a bridge for me to cross over the vast ocean of samsara.

Even one-thousandth part of a single drop of water that has touched the Guru’s feet equals the boon of bathing in all of the holy waters across the seven seas. To the Guru I bow.

45) Luminous with the wisdom of Vedanta, like the sun continually radiating its light, the Guru’s lotus feet emanate the great Truths, the crest jewels of the four Vedas:

46) The Guru’s lotus feet are in the mandala of the moon in Brahmaramber, in the thousand petal chakra at the crown of the head. The cooling essence of the moon extinguishes the raging fires of worldly existence.
47) Residing in the center of the thousand petals is a divine triangle formed by the Sanskrit alphabet, with the letters A, Ka and Tha at each point. One should meditate on the Guru’s two lotus feet, which are Ham and Sa, in the center of this sacred triangle.

48) In the early morning, call on the Guru and meditate on the peace within his two eyes. See him seated in the white lotus of the sahasrar, with two arms granting boons and fearlessness.

49) In the heart is a cave the size of a thumb, which is the seat of the causal body. Listen, and I shall speak to you of the meditation on this form of consciousness.

50) Seated upon a throne in the center of the heart lotus is the Guru, effulgent and luminous like the crescent of the moon.

In one hand he holds the book of knowledge, while his other hand showers boons. One should meditate upon the Guru’s divine form.

51) The seat of the Guru resides in the center of the heart space, shining like a perfect crystal. Meditate on the Guru who eternally bestows bliss and is higher than the highest.
52) The Guru is beyond any description whatsoever. No imputed terms can describe him. Thus, the Vedas say “neti neti” – he is not this, he is not that.

Contemplate this great mystery, and continually worship him with both mind and speech.

53) Whether it moves or is stationary, whether it is sentient or insentient, it is all part of the great mandala of the Ocean of Consciousness.

I bow to you my Guru, who expresses the state of Samadhi that spontaneously knows this truth.

54) Thus the Guru reveals: “I am unborn, I am ageless, beginningless and deathless. I am smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. I move and move not. I am far as well as near. I am inside everything and outside everything all at once. I am beyond cause and effect. I am the supreme Akasha. I am consciousness and bliss, never–ending, self–luminous, imperishable and pure.“

55) I bow to my Guru, who is Absolute Consciousness, who is eternal, who is peace personified, who is completely pure, and who transcends the limits of space. He is beyond the primordial sound of Nada. He is beyond the Blue Pearl, Bindu. He is beyond the concentrated bliss of Kala.
56) I bow to my Guru, who is the embodiment of the jñāna-shakti, the power of knowledge. The thirty-six tattvas are his garland. He bestows Bhukti – worldly happiness, and Mukti – spiritual awakening.

57) I bow to my Guru, who bestows atma-jñāna, the knowledge of the Self. He burns away all the karmas carried forward from countless lifetimes.

58) I bow to my Guru, who embodies the great Guru Tattva, the universal principle of the Guru, the highest truth and the greatest austerity. There is nothing worth knowing that is more important than this.

59) My Guru is the Lord of the Universe. My Guru is the Guru of the Three Worlds. My Self is the Universal Atman. To my Guru, I bow.

60) The Guru, the first impulse of creation, is eternal and without end. He is without question the supreme of all deities. Nothing exists which is greater than he. To my Sadguru, I bow.

61) Merely recalling my Guru, knowledge arises spontaneously. Remembering him brings all attainments automatically. By meditating on the Guru in this way, the prasad of my Guru’s grace delivers me to Realization.
62. I bow to my Guru who is the infinite Ocean of Consciousness, beyond perception, beyond duality, beyond the three gunas and all formation. He is the embodiment of the bliss of Brahman and the bestower of ultimate happiness.

He is ekam – one; he is nityam – eternal; he is vimalam – free from impurities; he is achalam – steadfast. He is the abode of knowledge and bliss, and is forever omniscient, omnipresent and vast like the sky. He is the witness.

To realize the great Vedantic mahavakya “Tat Tvam Asi”, “Thou Art That”, is to become one with the Guru.

63. Just as a crystal reflected in a mirror, replicates its shining image, in the same way, when the infinite Ocean of Consciousness is seen in the Atman, the bliss of realization dawns and the awareness of SoHam arises – “I Am That”.

64. By following the Guru margena, the path of the Guru, and meditating upon him, one obtains jñāna – knowledge, as well as vijñāna – insight. There is nothing greater than the Guru.

65. By following the Guru’s path, one’s mind becomes purified. Thus one is then able to detach from the transitory objects of the world, and be free from the binding influence of false identification.
66) By following the Guru margena, one attains the highest goal – the realization of the bliss of Atman. This is generated through prasad, the gift of the Guru’s grace.

67) I remember my Shri Guru, who is the supreme Brahman.

I speak of my Shri Guru, who is the supreme Brahman.

I bow to my Shri Guru, who is the supreme Brahman.

I worship my Shri Guru, who is the supreme Brahman.

68) To the eternal Shri Guru I bow. He is bliss incarnate, exuding joy. His countenance radiates ecstasy. He is awake with knowledge of his own Self.

The yogis worship him as their Lord. With the precision of a surgeon, he extricates us from the wheel of cyclic existence.

69) I bow to the Guru, who embodies Lord Bhairava, constantly revealing the five functions of creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment and the bestowal of grace.
O great Goddess, one’s behavior with the Guru is of utmost importance. One should never behave egotistically before the Guru. Never tell a lie to the Guru or speak discourteously to him.

Never speak ill of the Guru or forsake him, even if you don’t understand his actions.

Remember the Guru for all eternity. If you ignore this teaching, in spite of hearing it, you will risk a most dreadful fate, which will last as long as the sun and moon both shine.

It is not the knowledge of ancient scriptures, such as the Vedas and Smritis, nor is the wearing of the clothing of a monk, that makes a true seeker. A genuine sadhu is a servant and disciple of his Guru.

Through the mystery of Shaktipat, the light of the Guru kindles the light within his disciple, just as one candle is used to light another candle.

The descent of grace opens the way for the disciple to realize that everything is the Ocean of Consciousness, which is beyond the perception of the senses, omnipresent, eternal, beyond imputed terms and without form.
73) A disciple becomes one with Brahman by meditating on the Guru. In this way, the stages of Samadhi undoubtedly unfold – pinda, pada and rupa.

74) Parvati asked:
O Lord Shankara, please explain these terms to me – What are pinda, pada and rupa? And is there more beyond them?

75) Lord Shiva answered:
Kundalini Shakti is pinda, the attainment of Shaktipat. Hamsa is pada, when the awareness of SoHam becomes unbroken. Bindu is rupa, the enduring vision of the Blue Pearl. And there is also rupatita, beyond rupa, known as niranjanam – merging with pure Being.

76) O my beautiful one, pinda, pada and rupa are each a specific landmark on the path of liberation, but the highest liberation is found in rupatitam, that transcendental awareness of Pure Consciousness.

77) Goddess Parvati, know Brahman, the Supreme Reality, the Great Void. It is without quality, without form, without name, without sound and beyond perception and understanding.

78) Merge into unity with Pure Consciousness and attain oneness with all. As you find everything arising simultaneously within you, you realize only this supreme principle alone exists.
79) The way the individual soul merges into universal consciousness is like the water of many rivers merging into the ocean, or like the space inside and outside a clay pot finally being perceived as the same space.

80) This is the state of realization, when the individual embodied soul merges into the supreme Self. Having established unity consciousness, he celebrates this oneness day and night, always blissful, always tranquil, wherever he may be.

81) After attaining this solitary and tranquil state, through the grace of the Guru, all your attachments and desires dissolve into nothing.

82) He who attains the realization of Brahman, the highest knowledge, indeed becomes the Guru. Then, without a doubt, wherever he goes, he experiences the divine.

83) Then the life of a fully liberated person of wisdom becomes filled with devotion. He focuses his every effort on service to God.

84) He is free from worries, and Bhukti and Mukti are his to enjoy – worldly fulfillment and liberation.

O Parvati, his tongue is graced with Saraswati, the Goddess of speech, learning and knowledge.
85) The supreme purity and taintless quality of the Guru draw all that is holy to him – so the place where he lives naturally becomes sanctified and filled with a multitude of deities.

In these ways, O Goddess, I have described the nature of a liberated person to you.

86) O Devi, by following the path of the Guru, I have clearly shown you how to achieve this liberation through devotion to the Guru and through meditation on the Guru.

87) O Wise One, much can be accomplished through these spiritual practices. Focus your attention on service and working for the welfare of people, instead of using your accrued Shakti for self-centered worldly gain.

88) Without knowledge of Brahman, all your actions are worldly and continue to spool on more and more karma, sinking you further into the ocean of samsara. A knower of truth has unspooled all his karma, and all his subsequent actions are no longer binding and collect no further karma.
89) O Devi, this truth which I have revealed to you takes the form of the Guru Gita. Repeat it often to remove the binding influence of the wheel of cyclic existence.

90) Contemplate this Guru Gita with devotion – read it, listen to the Guru recite it, journal about it. This will yield the fruit of liberation.

91) Recite the Guru Gita. Each and every letter is an empowered mantra. Other mantras do not have the merit of even one-sixteenth part of it.

92) Bountiful rewards are obtained by repeating the Guru Gita. The recitation removes all obstacles and ends all suffering and hardship.

93) It removes the fear of time and death, and is the destroyer of all adversity, while protecting one from the influence of wild spirits, demons, ghosts and thieves.

94) It removes the disease of worldly existence. It bestows riches and siddhis, as well as the ability to influence others. Always repeat the Guru Gita.
95) Through this repetition, one becomes free from bondage, gains the favor of all the Gods and attains Lordship of the deities of Consciousness.

96) The Guru Gita brings one into direct contact with the pillar of the Siddha lineage. It brings the refined, spiritual qualities of sattva guna to the forefront. It increases good karma and dissolves bad karma.

97) Repeating the Guru Gita aligns one’s life with the Guru. It brings good dreams to fruition and curtails bad dreams. Fear of the astrological influence of the nine planets is diminished; and unfinished tasks become easy to complete.

98) It removes all obstacles and quickens the fulfillment of desires. It accomplishes the four-fold goals of life:
   - Dharma – righteous duty;
   - Artha – wealth;
   - Kama – pleasure;
   - Moksha – liberation.

99) If one’s goal is liberation, the Guru Gita should be recited regularly. The glory of liberation will be attained, as well as the fruition of worldly desire.

100) Repeat the Guru Gita and bathe in the cleansing waters of the ocean of truth, thus washing away the impurities of the world and the binding trap of samsara, the cycle of birth and death.
101) Having established inner silence of the mind, repeat the Guru Gita with detachment, in a clean and sacred place.

Now I shall speak of the places that are beneficial for this spiritual practice:

At the seashore, along a river, in all holy temples and shrines such as those to Shiva, Shakti or Vishnu, in a cowshed, by sacred trees, such as the dhatri or mango, thorn–apple or banyan, in a grove of tulsi plants, or in an ashram. O Beautiful One, it is also fruitful to repeat the Guru Gita in a cemetery or in frightening desolate places.

102) O Devi, prepare your seat well, with the proper asana. Use a white woolen blanket placed over kusha or durva grass, to reap the highest attainments. Or use a tiger skin or black deer skin, which give rise to liberation and knowledge. Other seats are not as favorable for your practice, such as cloth, wood or sitting directly on the ground.

103) How you position your seat is also important. To influence others, sit on a red seat facing east. To defeat demons, sit on a black seat facing south. To gain wealth, sit on a yellow seat facing west. But the highest outcome is achieved when you recite the Guru Gita facing north on a white seat, and realize peace.
104) Satyam. Satyam. The Guru Gita is the truth. There is nothing else like it, O Beautiful One.

I have revealed this truth to you in answer to your longing.

This is the truth.
This is the truth.

105) O Goddess, the dedication of one’s life to the Guru is extraordinary. Everything is affected by this devotion – the devotee’s mother, father, family and ancestry are all blessed. Even the earth itself rejoices.

106) Complete immersion in the Guru – Gurubhava – is the most holy pilgrimage. Going to any other place of pilgrimage is hollow and futile. O Parvati, why go somewhere else to worship, when the big toe of the Guru’s foot is the ultimate abode of all that is sacred.

107) Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing.

This is the word of Shiva.
This is the word of Shiva.
This is the word of Shiva.
This is the word of Shiva.
Indeed, the Guru Gita is Shiva.
The Guru Gita is Shiva.
The Guru Gita is indeed Shiva.
This is my supreme command.
This is my supreme command.
This is my supreme command.
This is my supreme command.

And so ends the Guru Gita – the discourse given by Lord Shiva to his consort, the Goddess Parvati, and recorded in the text of the Shri Skanda Purana.

I offer this Guru Gita at the revered lotus feet of my Guru.
Om asya shri gurugitaa stotra mantrasya
bhagavaan sadaashiva rshi. Naana vidhaani
chandaamsi shri guru paramaatmaa devataa.

ॐ. Salutations to the lord Sadaashiva who is
the divine source of these mantras. The Guru,
the Supreme Atman, is its deity.
Ham bijam sah shaktih krom kilakam shri guru prasaada siddhyarthe jape viniyogaha.

Ham is its seed, Sa is its power and Krom is the anchor that holds the syllables of the mantras together. I recite the Guru Gita now to draw the Guru's grace.

Kailaasa shikhare ramye, bhakti sandhaana naayakam; Pranamya parvati bhaktyaa, shankaram parya prchata.

Knowing that Lord Shiva held the secret of Guru Yoga, the Goddess Parvati bowed to him with reverence on the summit of Mount Kailas and said:

Shri devyuvaccha:

Om namo deva devesha, paraatpara jagad guro; Sadaashiva mahaadeva, guru dikshaam pradehi me.

Kena maargena bho svaamin, dehi brahmamayo bhavet; Twam krpaam kuru may svaamin, namaami charanau tava.

Great Lord, Ruler of all the worlds, I long to know the path that will lead me to Awakening.

Please have compassion on me. Show me the way, Supreme Teacher of the Universe. I bow to your feet, my Lord.
3)  
Ishvara uvacha:  
Mama rupaasi devi tvam, tvat prityartham vadaam yaham; Loko pakaarakah prashno, na kenaapi krtah puraa.

Lord Ishvara said:
O Beloved, you are my very Self. Your love and devotion draw from me this secret knowledge, inspired by your longing, which is so rare.

4)  
Durlabham trishu lokeshu, tach chrnushva vadaamyaham; Gurum vinaa Brahma naanyat, satyam satyam varaanane.

Here is the secret knowledge that is difficult to attain in the three worlds. Listen to it carefully as I reveal it to you now. The Absolute is the same as the Guru. This is the truth, O beautiful One, this is the truth.

5)  
Guru buddhyaat mano naanyat, satyam satyam na samshayaha; Tallaa bhaartham prayat nastu, kartavyo hi manishibhihi.

The Guru is the same as the Self, the same as Consciousness itself. This is the truth. This is the absolute truth. Those who seek wisdom should make every effort to find their Guru.

6)  
Sarva paapa vishuddhaatmaa, shri guroh paada sevanaat; Dehi brahma bhaved yasmaat, tvat krpaartha vadaami te.

Let me explain to you how an embodied soul becomes Enlightened. By offering seva at the feet of the Guru and drawing his grace, all obscurations are purified.
Dhyaanam shrnu mahaadevi, sarvaananda pradaayakam; Sarva saukhya karam nityam, bhukti mukti vidhaayakam.

I shall describe to you a form of meditation that grants boons, generates happiness, and bestows bhukti, which is worldly fulfillment, and mukti, which is spiritual awakening. O great goddess, listen to this teaching with one-pointed concentration.

Guru paadaam bujam smrtvaa, jalam shirasi dhaarayet; Sarva tirthaa vagaahasya, sampraapnoti phalam naraha.

Think of the Guru with every action you perform. If you sprinkle water on your head while remember the lotus feet of Shri Guru, you obtain the same benefits as bathing in all the places of pilgrimage.

Kaashi kshetram tannivaaso, jaahnavi charano dhaarayet; Sarva tirthaa vagaahasya, sampraapnoti phalam naraha.

Kaashi is the gateway to liberation, like Varanasi, like the Ganges, and the holy banyan tree Akshaya. The Guru is himself Vishveshvara - the Shiva of Varanasi, with the Ganges at his feet. He is the Prayag, the confluence of the three holy rivers at the pilgrimage center of Gaya. Pranam to the Guru again and again.
11

Guru murtim smarenityam, guru naama sadaa japet;
Guroraajñaam prakurvita, guror anyanna bhaavayet.

Continually remember the Guru's form. Repeat his name and follow his command – think of nothing but the Guru.

12

Svaa shramam cha svajaatim cha, sva kirti pushti
vardhanam; Etat sarvam parityajya, guror anyanna
bhaavayet.

Letting go of all attachment to your social status, your reputation and your comforts – think of nothing but the Guru.

13

Ananyaash chintayanto maam, sulabham
paramam padam; Tasmaat sarva prayatnena, guror
aaraadhanam kuru.

Ananyaash chintayanto maam, sulabham
paramam padam; Tasmaat sarva prayatnena, guror
aaraadhanam kuru.

14

Gukaaras tvandha karash cha, rukaaras teja
uchyate; Ajñaana graasakam brahma, gur eva na
samshayaha. Gukaarrah prathamo varno, mayaadi
guna bhaasakah; Rukaaro dvitiyo brahma, maayaa
bhraanti vinaashanam. Gukaarrah cha gunaa titam,
rukaararam rupa varjitam; Gunaatita svarupam cha,
yo dadyaat sa guruh smrtaah.

Gukaaras tvandha karash cha, rukaaras teja
uchyate; Ajñaana graasakam brahma, gur eva na
samshayaha. Gukaarrah prathamo varno, mayaadi
guna bhaasakah; Rukaaro dvitiyo brahma, maayaa
bhraanti vinaashanam. Gukaarrah cha gunaa titam,
rukaararam rupa varjitam; Gunaatita svarupam cha,
yo dadyaat sa guruh smrtaah.

If you think of nothing else but me, you will easily reach the highest state of realization. Thus, focus one-pointedly on merging with the Guru.

The word Guru is composed of two sacred syllables. Gu, which represents the darkness and Ru, which represents light. Gu is maya and Ru is the destruction of maya. Gu is the state which is beyond the three gunas, and Ru is emptiness. The Guru is he who gives the experience of darkness melting into light, maya dissolving into clarity and formation revealing wisdom.
15

Mantra raajam idam devi, gurur ityakshara
dvayam; Smrti vedaartha vaakyena, guruh
saakshaat param padam.

ō devi, the supreme mantra is indeed the word
‘Guru’, and its two letters gu and ru. The
essence of the śmrritis and vedas decree that
the guru is the personification of the highest
reality.

16

Agni shuddha samam taata, jvaalaa parichakaa
dhiya; Mantra raajam imam manye, harnisham
paatu mṛtyutah.

This pure king of mantras is a fire blazing in the
mind – burning day and night, it removes the
illusion that you are this body, thus freeing you
from death itself.

17

Evam guru padam shreshtham, devaanaamapi
durlabham; Haahaa huhu ganaish chaiva,
gandharvaish cha prapujyate.

Dhruvam tesham cha sarveshaam, naasti tat
tvam guruh param; Aasanam shayanan vastram,
bhushanam vaahanaa dikam.

Saadhakena pradaatavyam, guru santosha kaarakam;
Guror aaraadhanam kaaryam, sva jivitvam nivedayet.

There is no truth higher than the guru tattva,
the guru principle. Even gods and other
celestial beings cannot attain this highest of
states. A sadhaka should offer the guru a seat,
a bed, clothing and other things that will please
him.
18

Karmanaa manasaa vaachaa, nityam aaraadhayed gurum; Dirgha dandam namaskrtya, nirlajjo guru sannidhau.

Pranam fully to the guru with complete abandon and let your every action, thought and word be offered to the guru. Serve the guru in every way and dedicate your life to him.

19

Krmii kita bhasma vishthaa, durgandhi mala mutrakam; Shleshma raktam tva chaama maamsam, vañchayenna varaanane.

The guru knows you inside and out. The beautiful one, withhold no part of yourself from him, neither that which you think of as pure nor that which you think of as dark and foul - including the germs and worms of your body.

and the blood, skin and flesh, all of which are finally reduced to ashes.

20

Abhyastaih sakalaih sudir ghamanilair, vyadhi pradair dushkaraih, pranaayaama shatair aneka karanair, duhkhaatmakair durjayaihi;

Yasminn abhyudite vinashyati bali, vaayuh svayam tat kshanaat, praptum tat sahajam svabhaavam anisham, sevadhvam ekam gurum.

The most powerful yoga, O noble one, is not the pranayama with its windy breathing exercises, nor hatha yoga with its challenging and difficult positions - rather, it is the guru yoga, the supreme yoga, which grants the spontaneous state, whereby the powerful prana becomes still of its own accord, without effort.
21. Samsaara vrksham aarudhaah, patanto narakaarnave; Yena chaivo ddhrtaaah sarve, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

I bow to my Guru who rescued those who were sinking in the mire of samsara, the ocean of hell, and were striving for liberation by seeking to climb the tree of life.

22. Gurur brahmaa gurur vishnu, gurur devo maheshvararah; Gurur eva para brahma, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

I bow to the Guru who is Brahma, who is Vishnu, who is Lord Shiva and who is indeed Parabrahman - the ocean of consciousness.

23. Hetave jagataam eva, samsaarar nava setave; Prabhave sarva vidyaanaam, shambhave gurave namaha.

I bow to my Guru who is Shiva, the prime tattva, the only bridge across the ocean of samsara. As the master of all knowledge, he knows that by which all else is known.

24. Ajñaana timir aandhasya, jñaanaañ jana shalaakayaa; Chakshur unmilitam yena, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

I bow to my Guru who opened my eyes, that were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, and revealed to me the light of knowledge.
Tvam pitaa tvam cha me maataa, tvam bandhus
tvam cha devataa; Samsaara prati bodhaarthaam,
tasmai shri gurave namaha.

In order to cross over the abyss of samsara,
I recognize you as my father, my mother, my
brother and my God. I bow to you, my beloved
Sadguru.

Dhyaana mulam guror murtih, pujaa mulam guroh
padam; Mantra mulam guror vaakyam, moksha
mulam guroh krpa.

The source of meditation is the Guru's form.
The source of devotion is the Guru's feet.
The source of mantra is the Guru's word.
The source of awakening is the Guru's grace.

Ayam mayaañ jalir baddho, dayaa saagara
vrddhaye; Yad anugrahato jantush, chitra samsaara
muktibhaak.

I fold my hands and bow to you my Guru, the
Ocean of Benevolence, for it is only by your
grace that I can be freed from the wheel of
cyclic existence.

Yat satyena jagat satyam, yat prakaashena bhaati
tat; Yad aanandena nandanti, tasmai shri gurave
namaha.

Through the reality of the Guru there is truth,
from the light of the Guru there is luminosity,
through the bliss of the Guru there is joy. I bow
to you, Sadguru.
29) Yasya sthithyaa satyam idam, yad bhaati bhaanu rupatah; Priyam putraadi yat prityaa, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

I bow to my guru, who exists to reveal the truth, who ceaselessly shines like the sun to light our way, and who opens our hearts to love all those who are dear to us.

30) Yena chetayate hidam, chittam chetayate na yam; Jaagrata svapna sushuptyaadi, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

It is the guru who illuminates the mind, not the mind that illuminates the guru. I bow to my guru, who is the supreme witness of waking, dreaming and deep sleep states.

31) Yasyaa matam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda saha; Ananya bhaava bhaavaaya, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

One whose mind is filled with thought, knows not; one whose mind is silent, knows everything. I bow to the guru, who is one with the Absolute.

32) Munibhih pannagair vaapi, surairvaa shaapito yadi; Kaala mrtyu bhayaad vaapi, guru rakshati paarvati.

Goddess Parvati, only the guru can remove the fear of aging and the dread of death. The guru offers protection to his disciples, even if they are cursed by the sages, demons or gods.
33) **O Beloved, those who know say the Guru is Shiva, the witness of all, but without his three eyes; he is Vishnu, but without his four arms; he is Brahma, but without his four faces.**

Sva deshika syaiva sharira chintanam,
bhaved anantasya shivasya chintanam;
Sva deshika syaiva cha naama kirtanam,
bhaved anantasya shivasya kirtanam.

There is no difference between the contemplation of your own Guru and the contemplation of infinite Lord Shiva. Indeed, chanting the name of your own Guru is as powerful as chanting the mantra of infinite Lord Shiva.
36) Shri guruh paramam rupam, viveka
cchakshusho mrtam; Manda bhaagyaa na
pashyanti, andhah suryo dayam yathaa.

The absolute form of the guru is like nectar to
those who can truly see. To those who cannot
see through the veil of illusion, the true form
of the guru is shrouded, like the sunrise is to a
blind man.

37) Aabrahma stamba paryantam, paramaatma
svarupakam; Sthaavaram jangamam chaiva,
pranamaami jagan mayam.

Realizing that the guru, the supreme being,
embraces the entire universe, whether
sentient or insentient, from a blade of grass
to lord brahma - I honor everything, by
remembering my guru.

38) Naanaa rupam idam sarvam, na kena pyasti
bhinnataa; Kaarya kaaranaataa chaiva, tasmai shri
gurave namaha.

I bow to my guru, who knows there is no
second reality - only one unified field arising
everywhere simultaneously. This is the truth.
To see otherwise is to be fooled by the illusion
of cause and effect.

39) Yad anghri kamala dvandvam, dvandva taapa
nivaarakam; Taarakam sarvadaa padbhyyah, shri
gurum pranamaamyaham.

I bow to my guru's two lotus feet, which
destroy the painful delusion of duality and
always protect me from misfortune.
40) शोषणं पापपद्वस्य दीपं ज्ञातेजसाम्।
गुरुपादोदकं सम्यक् संसारार्थवतार्कम्॥

Shoshanam paapa pankasya, deepanam jñaana tejasaaam; Guru paado dakam samyak, samsaarar nava taarakam.

The stream of Shakti from the Guru’s lotus feet removes all obstacles, lights the flame of knowledge and takes one across the ocean of samsara, the endless cycle of birth, decay, death and rebirth.

41) अज्ञानमूलं हरणं जन्मं-कर्मं-तिवारणम्।
ज्ञानेवैराग्यसिद्धवर्धयं गुरुपादोदकेऽपिवे॥

Ajñaana mula haranam, janma karma nivaaranam; Jñaana vairagya siddyartham, guru paado dakam pipet.

Ajñaana mula haranam, janma karma nivaaranam; Jñaana vairagya siddyartham, guru paado dakam pipet.

bow to the Guru’s feet and imbibe his essence. Thus you will attain knowledge and detachment. The karmas, which are at the root of your ignorance, will be destroyed and the cycle of rebirth will be brought to an end.

42) श्रिनाथा-चरणद्राणं सयस्यां दिशि विराजते।
तस्य दिशे नमस्कुर्यादि भक्त्या प्रतिदिनं पिये।
तस्य दिशे सतताय्नाच्चिरः आयोप्रक्षिप्यते।
गुरुप्रियो मतुपुवृत्षिधु जागर्तित्यथे भागवान्।
गुरुप्रक्षिप्तर्वीविश्वयोधप्रलयानांकतन्तव्याक्षी॥

Shrinaatha charana dvandvam, yasyaam dishi virajaajate; Tasyai dishe nams kuryaad, bhaktyaa prati dinam priye.

Tasyai dishe satatam ańjaliresha aarye, prakshipyate mukharito madhupair budhaish cha; Jaagarti yatra bhagavaan guru chakra varti, vishvodaya pralaya naataka nitya saakshi.

O Beloved, pranam with love to the Guru’s feet every day, making an offering of prayers and devotion to him wherever he may be.

he is always fully awake and at one with Pure Consciousness, witnessing the drama of myriad world systems arising and dissolving.
Even a few particles of dust from my guru's feet are enough to build a bridge for me to cross over the vast ocean of samsara.

Even one-thousandth part of a single drop of water that has touched the guru's feet equals the boon of bathing in all of the holy waters across the seven seas. To the guru I bow.

Sarva shruti shiroratna, viraajita padaambujah; Vedaantaam buja suryo yas, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

Luminous with the wisdom of Vedanta, like the sun continually radiating its light, the guru's lotus feet emanate the great Truths, the crest jewels of the four Vedas:

- Tat Tvam Asi – I Am That,
- Prajñanam Brahman – Consciousness is brahman,
- Aham brahmaasmi – I am brahman,
- Aham ātma brahman – The Self is brahman.
Paadaabjam sarva samsaara, daavaanala vinaashakam; Brahma randhre sitaambhoja, madhyaastham chandra mandale.

The Guru's lotus feet are in the mandala of the moon in brahmaranadha, in the thousand petal chakra at the crown of the head. The cooling essence of the moon extinguishes the raging fires of worldly existence.

Akathaadi trirekhaabje, sahasra dala mandale; Hamsa paarshva trikone cha, smaret tan madhyagam gurum.

Residing in the center of the thousand petals is a divine triangle formed by the Sanskrit alphabet, with the letters A, Ka and Tha at each point. One should meditate on the Guru's two lotus feet, which are Ham and Sa, in the center of this sacred triangle.
The seat of the guru resides in the center of the heart space, shining like a perfect crystal. Meditate on the guru who eternally bestows bliss and is higher than the highest.

Yasmaat para taram naasti, neti netiti vai shrutihi; Manasaa vachasaa chaiva, nityam aaraadhayed gurum.

The guru is beyond any description whatsoever. No imputed terms can describe him. Thus, the Vedas say "neti neti" - he is not this, he is not that. Contemplate this great mystery, and continually worship him with both mind and speech.
53

Akhanda mandala kaaram, vyaaaptam yena charaacharam; Tat padam darshitam yena, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

Sthaavaram jangamam chaiva, tatha chaiva charaacharam; Vyaaaptam yena jagat sarvam, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

Thus the Guru reveals: “I am unborn, I am ageless, beginningless and deathless. I am smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. I move and move not. I am far as well as near. I am inside everything and outside everything all at once. I am beyond cause and effect. I am the supreme Akasha.”

54

M

Tadejati tannajati, tad dure tat samipake; Tad antarasya sarvasya, tadu sarvasya baahyataha.

Ajo hamajaro ham cha, anaadini dhanah svayam; Avikaarash chidaananda, aniyaan mahato mahaan.

Apurvaanaam param nityam, svayam jyotir niraamayam; Virajam paramaakasham, dhruvam aananda mavyayam.

Thus the Guru reveals: “I am unborn, I am ageless, beginningless and deathless, I am smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. I move and move not. I am far as well as near, I am inside everything and outside everything all at once. I am beyond cause and effect. I am the supreme Akasha.”

I am consciousness and bliss, never-ending, self-luminous, imperishable and pure.”
55) चैतन्यं शाश्वतं शांतं योमातीतं निरञ्जनम्।
नादबिन्दुकलातीतं तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

Chaitanyam shaashvatam shaantam, vyomaatitam nirañjanam; Naada bindu kalaatitam, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

56) ज्ञानशक्तिसमारूढसं तत्त्वमालाविभूषितः।
भूतिकर्मिन्त्रप्रदाता यस्तस्मे श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

Jñaana shakti samaarudhas, tattva maalaa vibhushitaha; Bhukti mukti pradaataa yas, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

57) अनेकजन्मसम्प्राप्तं र्वर्तकम् - विदाहिने।
स्वात्मज्ञानस्प्रभावेन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

Aneka janma sampraapta, sarva karma vidaahine; Svaatma jñaana prabhaavena, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

58) न गुरोरधिकं तत्त्वं न गुरोरधिकं तपः।
तत्त्वं ज्ञानात्मरू नास्ति तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

Na guror adhikam tat tvam, na guror adhikam tapaha; Tat tvam jñaanaat param naasti, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

I bow to my guru, who is Absolute Consciousness, who is eternal, who is peace personified, who is completely pure, and who transcends the limits of space. He is beyond the primordial sound of Nada. He is beyond the blue pearl, bindu. He is beyond the concentrated bliss of kala.

I bow to my guru, who bestows atma-jñana, the knowledge of the Self. He burns away all the karmas carried forward from countless lifetimes.

I bow to my guru, who embodies the great guru Tattva, the universal principle of the guru, the highest truth and the greatest austerity. There is nothing worth knowing that is more important than this.
Mannaathah shri jagan naatho, madgurus trijagad guruhu; Mamaatmaa sarva bhutaatmaa, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

Merely recalling my Guru, knowledge arises spontaneously. Remembering him brings all attainments automatically.

Gurur aadir anaadhish cha, guruh parama daivatam; Guroh parataram naasti, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

The Guru, the first impulse of creation, is eternal and without end. he is without question the supreme of all deities. Nothing exists which is greater than he. To my Sadguru, i bow.

Yasya smarana maatrena, jñaanam utpadyate svayam; Ya eva sarva sampraaptis, tasmai shri gurave namaha.

Evam vidham gurum dhyaatvaa, jñaanam utpadyate svayam; Tat sadguru prasaadena, mukto hamiti bhaavayet.

Merely recalling my Guru, knowledge arises spontaneously. Remembering him brings all attainments automatically.

by meditating on the Guru in this way, the prasad of my Guru's grace delivers me to Realization.
Brahmaanandam parama sukhadam, kevalam
jñaana murtim, dvandvaatitam gagana sadrsham,
tat tvam asyaadi lakshyam; Ekam nityam vimalam
achalam, sarvadhi saakshi bhutam, bhaavaatitam
triguna rahitam, sad gurum tam namaami.
Nityam shuddham niraabhaasam, niraakaaram
nirañjanam; Nitya bodham chidaanandam, gurum
brahma namaamyaham.

I bow to my Guru who is the infinite Ocean of
Consciousness, beyond perception, beyond
duality, beyond the three gunas and all
formation. He is the embodiment of the bliss
of brahman and the bestower of ultimate
happiness. He is ekam – one; he is nityam –
eternal; he is vimalam – free from impurities;
he is achalam – steadfast. He is the abode of
knowledge and bliss, and is forever omniscient,
omnipresent and vast like the sky. He is
the witness. To realize the great Vedantic
mahavakya “Tat Evam Asi”, “Thou Art That”, is to
become one with the Guru.

Sphatika pratimaa rupam, drshyate darpane
yathaa; Tathaatmani chidaakaaram, aanandam so
hamityuta.

Just as a crystal reflected in a mirror,
replicates its shining image, in the same way,
when the infinite Ocean of Consciousness is seen
in the Atman, the bliss of realization dawns and
the awareness of SoHam arises – “I Am That”.

Jñaanam vijñaana sahitam, labhyate guru
bhaktitaha; Guroh parataram naasti, dhyeyo sau
guru maargibhihi.

by following the Guru margena, the path of
the Guru, and meditating upon him, one obtains
jñana – knowledge, as well as vijñana – insight.
There is nothing greater than the Guru.
65) गुरुदर्शिता-मार्गना, मनःशुद्धि तु कारवेत्।
अनित्यं खण्डवेदस्य यत्किलिङ्गितमात्मगौचरम्॥

Guru darshita maargena, manah shuddhim tu kaarayet; Anityam khandayet sarvam, yatkiñchid aatma gocharam.

by following the Guru's path, one's mind becomes purified. Thus one is then able to detach from the transitory objects of the world, and be free from the binding influence of false identification.

66) गुरोऽक्रप्य्यासादेन आत्मार्पां निरीक्षयेत्।
अनेन गुरुमार्गेण स्वात्मज्ञानं प्रवर्तित॥

Guroh krpaasadena, atmaaraamam nirikshayet; Anena guru maargena, svatamajñaanam pravartate.

by following the Guru margena, one attains the highest goal - the realization of the bliss of Atman. This is generated through prasad, the gift of the Guru's grace.

67) श्रीमतंत्रब्रह्मं गुरृं स्मरामि श्रीमतंत्रब्रह्मं गुरृं वदामि।
श्रीमतंत्रब्रह्मं गुरृं नामामि श्रीमतंत्रब्रह्मं गुरृं भजामि॥

Shrimat parabrahma gurum smaraami,
Shrimat parabrahma gurum vadaami,
Shrimat parabrahma gurum namaami,
Shrimat parabrahma gurum bhajaami.

i remember my Śrī Gūra, who is the supreme brahman.

i speak of my Śrī Gūra, who is the supreme brahman.

i bow to my Śrī Gūra, who is the supreme brahman.

i worship my Śrī Gūra, who is the supreme brahman.
Aananda maananda karam prasannam, jñaana
svarupam nijabodha yuktam; Yogindra midyam bhava
roga vaidyam, shrimad gurum nitya maham namaami.

To the eternal Shri Guru I bow. He is bliss incarnate, exuding joy. His countenance radiates ecstasy. He is awake with knowledge of his own Self. The yogis worship him as their lord. With the precision of a surgeon, he extricates us from the wheel of cyclic existence.

Yasmin srshti sthiti dhvamsa, nigrahaanugrahaat makam; Krtyam pañcha vidham shaashvad, bhaasate tam namaamyaham.

I bow to the Guru, who embodies Lord Bhairava, constantly revealing the five functions of creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment and the bestowal of grace.

Evam shrutvaa mahaadevi, guru nindaam karoti yah; Sa yaati narakam ghoram, yaavach chandra divaakarau. Yaavat kalpaantako dehas, taavadeva gurum smaret; Guru lopo na kartavyah, svachchando yadi vaa bhavet. Hunkaarena na vaktavyam, praajñaish shishyaih kathañchana; Guror agre na vaktavyam, asatyam cha kadaachana.
71) Shruti smrti avijñaaya, kevalam guru sevakaaha; Te vai sannyasinah proktaa, itare vesha dhaarinaha.

It is not the knowledge of ancient scriptures, such as the Vedas and śāstras, nor is the wearing of the clothing of a monk, that makes a true seeker. A genuine sadhu is a servant and disciple of his guru.

72) Nityam brahma niraakaaram, nirgunam bodhayet param; Sarvam brahma niraabhaasam, dipo dipaantaram yathaa.

Through the mystery of Shaktipat, the light of the guru kindles the light within his disciple, just as one candle is used to light another candle. The descent of grace opens the way for the disciple to realize that everything is the Ocean of Consciousness, which is beyond the perception of the senses, omnipresent, eternal, beyond imputed terms and without form.

73) Guru dhyaanam tathaa krtvaa, svayam brahma mayo bhavet; Pinde pade tathaa rupe, mukto sau naatra samshayah.

A disciple becomes one with brahman by meditating on the guru. In this way, the stages of samadhi undoubtedly unfold - pinda, pada and rupa.

74) Shri Paarvati-uvaacha:

Shri Paarvati-uvaacha:
Pindam kim tu mahaadeva, padam kim samudaahrtam; Rupaatitam cha rupam kim, etadaakhyaahi shankara.

Parvati asked:
Lord Shankara, please explain these terms to me - what are pinda, pada and rupa? And is there more beyond them?
Shri Mahaadeva uvaacha:  Pindam kundalinisaktih, padam hamsa mudaah rtam; Rupam binduriti jñeyam, rupaatitam nirañjanam.

Lord Shiva answered:
Kundalini Shakti is pinda, the attainment of Shaktipat. Hansa is pada, when the awareness of SoHam becomes unbroken. Bindu is rupa, the enduring vision of the blue Pearl. And there is also rupatita, beyond rupa, known as nirañjanam – merging with pure Being.

Pinde muktaa pade muktaa, rupe muktaa varaanane; Rupaatite tu ye muktaas, te muktaa naatra samshayaha.

My beautiful one, pinda, pada and rupa are each a specific landmark on the path of liberation, but the highest liberation is found in rupatitam, that transcendental awareness of pure Consciousness.

Agocharam tathaa gamyam, naama rupa vivar jitm; Nihshabdham tad vijaaniyaat, svabhaavam brahma paarvati.

Goddess Parvati, know brahman, the Supreme Reality, the Great Void. It is without quality, without form, without name, without sound and beyond perception and understanding.

Svayam sarva mayo bhutvaan, param tat tvaam vilokayet; Parat parataram naanyat, sarvametan niraalayam.

Merge into unity with pure Consciousness and attain oneness with all. As you find everything arising simultaneously within you, you realize only this supreme principle alone exists.
79) समुद्रे च यथा तोयं क्षीरे क्षीरं गृह्ते गृहतम्।
भिमे कुम्भे यथाकाशस्तत्वामा परमात्मनि॥

Samudre cha yathaa toyam, kshire kshiram
ghrte ghrtam; Bhinne kumbhe yathaa kaashas,
tathaataamaa paramaataamani.

The way the individual soul merges into universal consciousness is like the water of many rivers merging into the ocean, or like the space inside and outside a clay pot finally being perceived as the same space.

80) सर्वज्ञ - पदमित्याहूहे शर्मयो बुधा:।
सदानन्द: सदा शालो रमते यत्र कृतविश्व।
तथैव ज्ञानी जीवात्मा परमात्मनि लीयते।
ऐक्येन रमते ज्ञानी यत्र तत्र दिवानिशाम्॥

Sarvajña padam ityaahur, dehi sarva mayo budhaha;
Sadaananda sadaa shaanto, ramate yatra kutra chit.
Tathaiva jñaani jivaatmaa, paramaatmani liyate;
Aikyena ramate jñaani, yatra tatra divaanisham.

This is the state of realization, when the individual embodied soul merges into the supreme Self. Having established unity consciousness, he celebrates this oneness day and night, always blissful, always tranquil, wherever he may be.

81) तस्याबस्तोक्रन्त प्राप्य सर्वसंक्षिप्तविवर्जितः।
एकाकी नि:सृः शान्तिसिद्धाते सत्त्रादात्॥

Tasyaa valokanam praapya, sarva sanga
vivarjitaaha; Ekaaki nishpriha shaantas, tishthaaset
tat prasaadadataha.

After attaining this solitary and tranquil state, through the grace of the Guru, all your attachments and desires dissolve into nothing.

82) स एव च गुरु: साक्षात् सदा सद्रूपां विविधतिम:।
तस्य स्थानानि सर्वाणि पवित्राणि न संशय:॥

Sa eva cha guruh saakshaat, sadaa sadbrahma
vittamaha; Tasya staanaani sarvaani, pavitraani na
samshayaha.

he who attains the realization of brahman, the highest knowledge, indeed becomes the guru. Then, without a doubt, wherever he goes, he experiences the divine.
Evam vidho mahaamuktah, sarvadaa vartate budhaha; Tasya sarva prayatnena, bhaava bhaktim karoti yah.

Then the life of a fully liberated person of wisdom becomes filled with devotion. He focuses his every effort on service to God.

Sarva sandeha rahito, mukto bhavati paarvati; Bhukti mukti dvayam tasya, jihvaagre cha Sarasvati.

He is free from worries, and bhukti and mukti are his to enjoy – worldly fulfillment and liberation. Parvati, his tongue is graced with Saraswati, the goddess of speech, learning and knowledge.

Yatraiva tishthate so pi, sa deshah punya bhaajanam; Muktasya lakshanam devi, tavaagre kathitam mayaa.

Sarva shuddhah pavitro sau, svabhaavaad yatra tishthati; Tatra deva ganaah sarve, kshetre pithe vasanti hi.

The supreme purity and taintless quality of the guru draw all that is holy to him – so the place where he lives naturally becomes sanctified and filled with a multitude of deities.

In these ways, O goddess, I have described the nature of a liberated person to you.
86) उपदेशस्तथा देवी गुरुमार्गं मुक्तिद।
गुरुभक्तिस्तथा ध्यानं सकलं तव कीर्तितम्॥

Upadeshas tatha devi, guru maargena muktidaha;
Guru bhaktis tathaah dhyaanam, sakalam tava kirtitam.

O Devi, by following the path of the Guru, I have clearly shown you how to achieve this liberation through devotion to the Guru and through meditation on the Guru.

87) अनेन यद्भवेत्कार्य तददामि महामाते।
लोककारकं देवि लोकिकं तु न भावयेत्॥

Anena yad bhavet kaaryam, tad vadaami mahaamate; Loko pakaarakam devi, laukikam tu na bhaavayet.

O Wise One, much can be accomplished through these spiritual practices. Focus your attention on service and working for the welfare of people, instead of using your accrued shakti for self-centered worldly gain.

88) लोकिकाकार्यं याति जानहीना भवार्थवम्।
जानी तु भावयेत्तर्व कर्म निष्कर्म यत्कर्तम्॥

Laukikaat karmano yaanti, jñaana hinaa bhavaarnavam; Jñaani tu bhaavayet sarvam, karma nishkarma yatkrtam.

Without knowledge of brahman, all your actions are worldly and continue to spool on more and more karma, sinking you further into the ocean of samsara. A knower of truth has unspooled all his karma, and all his subsequent actions are no longer binding and collect no further karma.

89) गुरुगीतात्मकं देवि शुद्धतवं मयोदितम्।
भववाधिविनाशशार्य स्वयमेव जपेतसदा॥

Guru gitaat makam devi, shuddha tat tvam mayoditam; Bhava vyaadi vinaashaartham, svayam eva japet sadaa.

O Devi, this truth which I have revealed to you takes the form of the Guru Gita. Repeat it often to remove the binding influence of the wheel of cyclic existence.
90)

Idam tu bhakti bhaavena, pathate shrunute yadi;
Likhitvaa tat pradaatavyam, tat sarvam saphalam bhavet.

Contemplate this Guru Gita with devotion – read it, listen to the Guru recite it, journal about it. This will yield the fruit of liberation.

91)

Guru gitaak sharaikam tu, mantra raajam imam japet; Anye cha vividhaa mantraah, kalaam naarhanti shodashim.

Recite the Guru Gita. Each and every letter is an empowered mantra. Other mantras do not have the merit of even one-sixteenth part of it.

92)

Ananta phalam aapnoti, guru gitaajapena tu; Sarva paapa prashamanam, sarva daaridrya naashanam.

Bountiful rewards are obtained by repeating the Guru Gita. The recitation removes all obstacles and ends all suffering and hardship.

93)

Kaala mrtyu bhaya haram, sarva sankata naashanam; Yaksha raakshaas haathaa, chora vyaaaghaa bhayaapaham.

It removes the fear of time and death, and is the destroyer of all adversity, while protecting one from the influence of wild spirits, demons, ghosts and thieves.
Mahaa vyaadhi haram sarvam, vibhuti siddhidam bhavet; Athavaa mohanam vashyam, svayam eva japet sadaa.

It removes the disease of worldly existence. It bestows riches and siddhis, as well as the ability to influence others. Always repeat the Guru Gita.

Mohanam sarva bhutaanaam, bandha moksha karam bhavet; Deva raaja priya karam, sarva loka vasham bhavet.

Through this repetition, one becomes free from bondage, gains the favor of all the gods and attains lordship of the deities of consciousness.

Sarveshaam stambhana karam, gunaanaam cha vivardhanam; Dushkarma naashhanam chaiva, sukarma siddhidam bhavet.

The Guru Gita brings one into direct contact with the pillar of the siddha lineage. It brings the refined, spiritual qualities of sattva guna to the forefront. It increases good karma and dissolves bad karma.

Asiddham saadhayet kaaryam, navagraha bhayaapaham; Duhsvapna naashhanam chaiva, susvapna phala daayakam.

Repeating the Guru Gita aligns one's life with the Guru. It brings good dreams to fruition and curtails bad dreams. Fear of the astrological influence of the nine planets is diminished; and unfinished tasks become easy to complete.
If one's goal is liberation, the Guru Gita should be recited regularly. The glory of liberation will be attained, as well as the fruition of worldly desire.

Samsaara mala naashaartham, bhava paasha nivrttaye; Guru gitaam bhasi snaanam, tat tvajñah kurute sadaa.

It removes all obstacles and quickens the fulfillment of desires. It accomplishes the four-fold goals of life:

- dharma – righteous duty;
- artha – wealth;
- kama – pleasure;
- moksha – liberation.

Moksha hetur japen nityam, moksha shriyam avaapnuyaat; Bhoga kaamo japed yo vai, tasya kaama phala pradam.
or banyan, in a grove of tulsi plants, or in an ashram. O Beautiful One, it is also fruitful to repeat the Guru Gita in a cemetery or in frightening desolate places.

Vastrasane cha daardinryam, paashaane roga sambhavaha; Medinyaam duhkhham aapnoti, kaashthe bhavati nishphalam. Krshnaajine jñaana siddhir, mokshashrir vyaghra charmani; Kushaasane jñaana siddhih, sarva siddhistu kambale.

O Devi, prepare your seat well, with the proper asana. Use a white woolen blanket placed over kusha or durva grass, to reap the highest attainments. Or use a tiger skin or black deer skin, which give rise to liberation and knowledge. Other seats are not as favorable for your practice, such as cloth, wood or sitting directly on the ground.

Atha kaamya jape sthaanam, katha yaami varaanane; Saagare vaa sarittire, thavaa hari haraalaye. Shakti devaalaye goshte, sarva devaalaye shubhe; Vate cha dhaatri mule vaa, mate vrndaavane tathaa. Pavitre nirmale sthaane, nityaa nushthaanato pi vaa; Nirvedanena maunena, japam etam samaacharet. Smashaane bhaya bhumau tu, vata mulaantike tathaa; Siddhyanti dhauttare mule, chuta vrkshasya sannidhau.

having established inner silence of the mind, repeat the Guru Gita with detachment, in a clean and sacred place. Now I shall speak of the places that are beneficial for this spiritual practice: At the seashore, along a river, in all holy temples and shrines such as those to Shiva, Shakti or Vishnu, in a cowshed, by sacred trees, such as the dhatri or mango, thorn-apple
Kushairvaa durvayaa devi, aasane shubhra kambale; Upavishya tato devi, japed ekaagra maanasaha. Dhyeyam shuklam cha shaantyartham, vashye raktasam priye; Abhichaare krsha varnam, pita varnam dhanaa game.

Satyam, Satyam, the Guru Gita is the truth. There is nothing else like it, O beautiful one. I have revealed this truth to you in answer to your longing. This is the truth. This is the truth.

Maataa dhanyaa pitaa dhanyo, dhanyo vamshah kulam tathaa; Dhanyaa cha vasudhaa devi, guru bhaktih sudurlabhaa.

Goddess, the dedication of one's life to the Guru is extraordinary. Everything is affected by this devotion - the devotee's mother, father, family and ancestry are all blessed. Even the earth itself rejoices.

Satyam saytam punah satyam, dharmyam saankhyam mayo ditam; Gurugitaas samam naasti, satyam satyam varaanane.
Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing. Beyond the Guru there is nothing.

This is the word of Shiva. This is the word of Shiva. This is the word of Shiva. This is the word of Shiva.

Complete immersion in the Guru – Guru bhava – is the most holy pilgrimage. Going to any other place of pilgrimage is hollow and futile. O Parvati, why go somewhere else to worship, when the big toe of the Guru’s foot is the ultimate abode of all that is sacred.

Idameva shivam tvidameva shivam, tvidameva shivam tvidameva shivam; Mama shaasanatō Mama shaasanatō Mama shaasanatō Mama shaasanatō: ||

Indeed, the Guru Gita is Shiva. The Guru Gita is Shiva. The Guru Gita is Shiva. The Guru Gita is indeed Shiva.

This is my supreme command. This is my supreme command. This is my supreme command. This is my supreme command.

Na guror adhikam, na guror adhikam, na guror adhikam, na guror adhikam;
Shiva shaasanatā, shiva shaasanatā, shiva shaasanatā, shiva shaasanatā, shiva shaasanatāha.
And so ends the Guru Gita - the discourse given by Lord Shiva to his consort, the Goddess Parvati, and recorded in the text of the Shri Skanda Purana.

I offer this Guru Gita at the revered lotus feet of my Guru.

ॐ
Pronunciation Guide for Sanskrit Transliteration

There are no exact matches for several Sanskrit sounds in English, so some approximations have been given. Use this guide to help you with the proper pronunciation of the Guru Gita in Sanskrit, as you read the transliteration below the Devanagari Sanskrit text on the preceding pages.

One of the greatest differences between Sanskrit and English is the pronunciation of vowel sounds. English has only one variety of a, e, i, o, u – and it is through experience that we know they are pronounced differently depending on the word they are found in.

In contrast, Sanskrit has sixteen vowels, including two a sounds, two i sounds and two u sounds, etc. The difference between one and the other is only whether it is short or long.

The vowel that is the most important for a Westerner to understand is a. To differentiate it, we have shown the short a as a single a, and the long a as a double aa.

To the Westerner, the difference between the short and long e, i, u and o sounds are not so strongly different. For strict pronunciation, the difference is simply how long the sound is held. This is a subtlety we have decided not to emphasize in this translation, so we have shown these vowels as though they are the same, regardless of whether they are short or long.

a ~ pronounced like a short u, like duh, but

aa ~ pronounced with a long a, as in awl, law, saw, arm, harm

i ~ pronounced like tee, see

u ~ pronounced like boo, who, what's new?

e ~ pronounced like hay, okay

o ~ pronounced like oh no!

r ~ in Sanskrit, there is an 'r' sound that is actually a vowel. When you see an 'r' before another consonant (ex: krtam), give the 'r' a little roll of the tongue to lead it into the letters that follow. Sometimes it helps to imagine an invisible short 'i' after the 'r' sound, to help you say it.

There are a couple Sanskrit vowels that are diphthongs; their sound changes from the
when we see a $p$ and an $h$ together, we always want to pronounce it with the sound of $f$, like fit. In Sanskrit, there is no 'f' sound like that. The way to pronounce it is like a $p$ with air coming after it, like the word 'power' or 'pound'. As an example, in verse 8, the word *phalam* is pronounced more like palam. Technically, it is a $p$ sound with air or aspiration after it, as though you were saying "p (h)alam", making the 'ha' sound very gentle and soft.

**kh, gh, jh, dh, bh ~ similar to 'th' and 'ph' above, these consonant combinations mean there is a slight aspiration, as though you have extra air following the pronunciation of each consonant.** For instance, gh is pronounced like 'doghouse'; rh is pronounced like 'roadhouse'; bh is pronounced like 'abhor', etc.

** nâ ~ pronounced like 'nya'**

**jñ ~ there are several correct ways to say this.**

*It's acceptable to pronounce it like 'gnya' or as 'jnya', or even better yet, somewhere between 'gnya' and 'jnya'.*
GLOSSARY

A – Ka – Tha ~ Within the cerebrum of the brain are many aspects of the subtle body. The triangle referred to in the Guru Gita is a formation that is in the physical brain as well as the subtle body. Inside this triangle is absolute void, infinite black consciousness, without form and without quality. This triangle is located in the center of the Brahmrandhra and is formed by the Sanskrit alphabet. Each of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are understood to be sacred mantras. The first letter of the alphabet is "A" (pronounced ah). It and the next 15 letters form the first side of the triangle. The next set of letters beginning with "Ka" form the second side of the triangle and the last set of letters beginning with "Tha" (pronounced ta) form the third side. A, Ka and Tha are at each of the three points. The Guru's two lotus feet, which are Ham and Sa are in the center of this sacred triangle.

Akasha ~ ("not visible") Space, ether or sky. It is the fifth element along with the other four elements of earth (prithivi), air (vayu), fire (agni) and water (apa). It is also the most subtle element.

It permeates all dimensions and represents all spaces – the inner, outer, physical and spiritual.

Asana ~ ("seat") The name for the cloth or skin that one sits on for meditation. By using the same asana over and over, it is thought that the vibrations of the meditation permeate the cloth and accumulate, thereby enhancing the experience. Shiva is usually pictured sitting on a tiger skin, which symbolizes lust. He thus shows his complete control over all passion.

Atman ~ (from the Sanskrit root at = "to breathe") The transcendental Self or Spirit. It is the eternal, superconscious, Supreme Soul, and Divine Self within each individual. The spiritual essence of all individual human beings.

Bhairava ~ The fierce manifestation of Shiva that is associated with the simultaneous expression of creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment and the bestowal of grace. (see Five Acts)

Bhukti ~ Worldly fulfillment and enjoyment, acknowledged to be an important component of a balanced life.

Blue Pearl ~ A scintillating blue light or bindu, the size of a tiny seed that can appear during
meditation. It is said to be the doorway to the inner Self and contains the entire universe.

**Bodhicitta** ~ ("the essence of enlightenment") Formed by the heart/mind connection, it represents the union of formation and emptiness. Bodhicitta reflects the truth of enlightenment, which does not come from an outside agency, but comes from within you as you. Alignment with the Bodhicitta produces an irresistible force for awakening.

**Brahma** ~ One of the three gods of the Hindu trinity: Brahma (the Creator of the Universe), Vishnu (the Preserver) and Shiva (the Destroyer). He is often depicted with four heads, four faces and four arms, representing the four directions of east, west, north and south. He continually recites the four Vedas with each of his four heads. (see Vedas)

**Brahman** ~ (from the root brh = "to expand, greater than the greatest") The supreme all-pervading spiritual essence of the universe. Known in Vedic philosophy as Absolute Consciousness. The ultimate reality that is the principle behind the origin of the universe and of the gods. Brahma is THAT, the all inclusive. Described as sat-chit-ananda: being-consciousness-bliss.

**Brahmarandra** ~ ("the hole of Brahman") Located in the thousand-petaled chakra at the crown of the head, it is the soft spot at the brain found in infants; the point where the infusion of life takes place in the human being. It is just underneath the skull embedded in the upper layer of the cerebrum, which is the part of the brain that is dedicated to the highest brain functions. This is also the seat of the Guru. It is the superior place to exit the body upon death. (See the concept of "phowa" in The Bardo Thodol by Mark Griffin).

**Causal Body** ~ Refers to one of the four bodies: physical, subtle physical, causal and supra causal. It is a body without physical form. It is mind itself and encompasses the mental faculties of manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), ahamkara (ego) and infinitely more levels that become revealed upon awakening.

**Devi** ~ (from the Sanskrit root div = "to shine") Goddess, the embodiment of female energy and the universal great divine mother, who is Shakti. Represented in the Guru Gita in her benign aspect as Parvati, the beloved of Shiva. The
fierce aspect of the Goddess is Kali or Durga, though any manifestation of the Goddess is known as devi, which is the feminine word for God. Deva is the masculine word for God and is used in the Sanskrit version of the Guru Gita when referring to Shiva.

**Dharma ~** (from the Sanskrit root dhr = "to uphold, to sustain, to carry") That which supports or sustains the universe. The ultimate law, the essential duty, the righteous way. To say that one performs one's dharma means that one is acting from total alignment with one's own life's highest purpose. It is the basic principle of divine law and the basis of all social and moral order.

**Duality ~** The understanding that the universe is composed of binary oppositions, such as male and female, light and dark, good and evil, etc. It often refers to the opposition of Self and other, or form and emptiness. The Upanishads say, "Fear is born from duality". In the Guru Gita, when it is said that the Guru is beyond duality, it means that the Guru, because he lives in unity consciousness – Nirvikalpa Samadhi – knows that state of awareness that perceives all phenomenon as manifesting simultaneously.

**Emptiness ~** Mentioned in the Guru Gita as a state which is beyond all imputed terms (see imputed terms below). It has nothing to do with an empty or lonely feeling or an empty glass of water. It is the state of void, containing nothing and yet containing everything. There is nothing similar to it and nothing different from it.

**Five Acts ~** (In Sanskrit, pañchakritya = "five fold activity") Creation, maintenance, concealment, destruction and the bestowal of grace. The often seen statue of Shiva Nataraj symbolizes these five acts. In this statue Shiva is shown having four arms. His right hand holds a small drum, where the sound of creation is born. His other right hand is raised in the traditional mudra or position granting protection, which represents sustenance in his function as the maintainer. His left hand holds fire, which symbolizes destruction. His other left hand turns inward, shielding, signifying concealment. His raised left foot signifies the bestowal of grace. His balanced and serene posture shows that he remains the eternal witness even while performing all of these acts simultaneously. Another great text of Kashmir Shaivism, the Pratyabhijñahrdayam, states that as human beings, we perform these five acts every moment and it is only because of our ignorance and delusion, that we are not fully
aware of this power. Gaining the awareness that we do indeed initiate the same five acts as Shiva does, allows the mind to rise to the state of pure consciousness and attain union with Shiva.

**Ganges** ~ ("the one who goes swiftly") The most sacred river of the Hindus that flows east through northern India. Revered throughout India, it is worshipped in its personified form as the goddess Ganga. Pilgrimages to its holy waters are done in the belief that bathing in it brings about the forgiveness of sins and helps one attain salvation. Dying close to it or having your cremated ashes scattered in it are considered extremely auspicious.

**Gaya** ~ One of the seven sacred cities in Bihar, India and a place of pilgrimage.

**Gita** ~ ("song") Usually refers to a sacred text. Guru Gita - Song of the Guru, describes the Guru/disciple relationship, the nature of the Guru as a force of awakening, and how to meditate upon him.

**Gunas** ~ ("strand, thread or quality") The three basic qualities or attributes of nature which underlie all manifestation: sattva, rajas and tamas. All manifest creation is made up of a combination of these three gunas. Sattva is ruled by Vishnu, is of the nature of integration, and is characterized as white. It is the highest frequency and is buoyant with light. Sattva is knowledge, happiness, integration and infinite existence without differentiation. Rajas is ruled by Brahma and characterized as red. The nature of rajas is cyclic revolution – passion, churning and violent spinning – that which is spinning towards the center and that which is spinning out into infinite expansion. Tamas is ruled by Shiva. It is characterized as the abysmal, infinite black. It is a quality that is so dense that it is thought of as a black hole. Nothing emerges from it. It is absolute, dense, infinite blackness, with no light emerging and all qualities crushed into a compression so deep that nothing can be discerned. It is the origin of creation. To say that the Guru is beyond the three gunas means that he is the source of creation even before creation itself came into manifestation.

**Gurubhava** ~ (from the Sanskrit root bhuu ="to exist, to become") The expression or attitude of becoming one with, or becoming absorbed in the Guru. Being totally immersed in the Guru, or identified with him. In many sacred texts, this concept is referred to as "becoming of equal
taste" with the Guru. One of Baba Muktananda's favorite meditation practices involved the identification of each part of his body, mind and spirit with his Guru, Bhagawan Nityananda, and in this way he experienced Gurubhava to the fullest.

**Guru Yoga** ~ The basis of the Guru Gita. View the 108 verses together as a whole to understand this profound concept of achieving enlightenment through the relationship developed between the Guru and the devotee. (see margena)

**Hamsa** ~ (see SoHam)

**Hari** ~ another name for Vishnu. (see Vishnu)

**Hatha** ~ (from the Sanskrit roots ha = "sun/solar"; tha = "moon/lunar") Balance between the sun and the moon. This symbolically means the connection of the soul to the body. Hatha Yoga is the third limb of the eight limbs of yoga as expounded by the great sage Patanjali, and involves physical postures designed to prepare the body for sitting for meditation and to enliven kundalini. Yoga means yoke or union and is used in the context of uniting the individual soul with the universal soul to achieve unity consciousness.

**Imputed Terms** ~ To attribute a quality to something. The ocean of consciousness that is referred to in the Guru Gita is beyond all qualities. Notice that even when you call something holy or sacred, it sets up a relationship with other things. If something is holy, there must be something that is more holy or less holy, and on and on it goes. To say something is beyond imputed terms is to understand that there is nothing to compare it to, nothing to match it up against. It also means that it is the same for everyone who experiences it. Normally when we experience something, we each have a unique perception of it. For example, smelling a rose brings up different impressions for each person and an entirely different impression for a honeybee. This is not the case with that which is beyond imputed terms. Thus, that which is beyond imputed terms is referred to as empty, devoid of all relative qualities.

**Ishvara** ~ (from the Sanskrit root ish = "to rule") The Supreme Lord. The Eternal One. All that humanity can know of God, both transcendent and immanent. The fourth tattva, supreme divinity. (see tattva)

**Jñana** ~ (from the Sanskrit root jña - "to know, to
philosophy of non-dualism, espoused by Kashmiri sages, that recognizes the entire creation as the manifestation of Shiva, a singular, divine consciousness, or chitti. Followers of Kashmir Shaivism believe that all of Creation is divine. The philosophy considers everything to be a part of the ongoing creative activity of pure infinite consciousness. It explains how the unmanifest supreme can manifest as the universe. The central texts include the Shiva Sutras, the Pratyabhijñahrdayam, the Spanda Karikas, the Vijñana Bhairava and the Kularnava Tantra; and it could be said that the Guru Gita is also part of this tradition.

Kundalini ~ ("coiled one") The primordial Shakti lies dormant, coiled like a serpent, three and a half times at the base of the spine in the muladhara chakra. Once this mystical energy or life force is awakened, it then ignites the quest for spiritual knowledge in the seeker. Through shaktipat, a Siddha master is able to activate this divine cosmic energy so that it can arise and expand consciousness through the purification that it brings about.

Lotus ~ A plant from the water lily family that grows in muddy waters and produces majestic experience, to learn") Spiritual sacred knowledge and the highest form of wisdom beyond dualistic thought. Transcendent knowledge of the Absolute.

Kailas ~ ("crystalline") A sacred mountain in the Himalayas, thought to be the abode of Lord Shiva, where Parvati begins her discourse with Shiva on the Guru Gita. As well as giving a setting for this discourse, it symbolizes the Guru Gita as coming from the highest, most lofty authority. It is also symbolic of this teaching being secret knowledge, coming from a rarefied, pure and difficult to access place. It speaks to this being part of the "Whisper Tradition,” where, through oral transmission, the highest knowledge was bestowed.

Kala ~ An aspect of Shakti and the manifestation of the world.

Karma ~ ("action") The universal law of cause and effect governing the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The concept that the accumulated effect of every action performed, whether good or bad, comes back to impact a person's destiny, lifetime after lifetime.

Kashmir Shaivism ~ An 8th or 9th century
pure blossoms. Therefore it is thought to be a symbol of the recognition of pure consciousness emerging from the mire of illusion. The term lotus is also used as an honorific as in "bowing to a Guru's lotus feet", which is one of the ways that a devotee shows great respect for his teacher. The word lotus is also used to represent the chakras or energy centers in the subtle body, in that each chakra has a certain number of petals, like a flower. As the chakras are enlivened through spiritual training, their petals literally open like a lotus flower.

**Mahasamadhi** ~ (maha = "powerful, noble"; samadhi = "the great union") This symbolizes a state of consciously leaving one's physical body at death. It is also a celebration of the anniversary of such a passing. Baba Muktananda's solar mahasamadhi is October 2nd, 1982.

**Mahavakya** ~ (maha = "great"; vakya = "saying") Our English word "vocal" comes from the Sanskrit root "vak". These are the great sayings that most clearly express reality and are self-born proclamations arising from realization. They are known as the crest jewels of the Vedas and are: "I Am That" from the Chandogya Upanishad of the Saama Veda; "Consciousness is Brahman" from the Aitareya Upanishad of the Rig Veda; "I Am Brahman" from the Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad of the Yajur Veda; and "The Self is Brahman" from the Chandogya Upanishad of the Saama Veda. (see Veda)

**Mandala** ~ ("circle" or "center") Symbolizes the wholeness of creation.

**Mantra** ~ ("from the Sanskrit root man = "to think") A series of sacred syllables or divine sounds that form a word or phrase that can be repeated during meditation or at any time to experience transformation. These syllables and sounds are saturated with the power to protect, transform and purify anyone who consistently repeats them. When a mantra is transmitted to a devotee from his enlightened Master, it is filled with Shakti and the intention of the Master, and is then said to be "chaitanya" or enlivened.

**Margena** ~ (from the Sanskrit root maarg "to seek, to strive") Means the way or the path and is used here in conjunction with Guru, as in Guru margena, to denote the path of the Guru. The path of the Guru really has two meanings: One – the instructions given by the Guru for the specific practices of spiritual training that he recommends. Two – the connotation that Guru
Yoga itself is the swiftest road to realization. In verse 2 of the Guru Gita, Parvati asks Shiva, "kena margena" – which path shall I take to awaken?

**Maya** ~ (from the Sanskrit root maa = "to limit, to give form") The power of obscuration or the veil of illusion that makes it seem as though the world is separate from absolute consciousness, which ultimately is seen to not be true. Maya emerges as the sixth tattva, and is actually the divisive limiting power of the Divine, which is built into creation to bring mind and matter into being. It is the filter through which the infinite becomes finite and the formless takes form.

**Muktananda** ~ (mukta = "freedom" and ananda = "bliss") Baba Muktananda was a Shiva Guru from the Siddha lineage in India. He was a perfected master who was instructed by his guru, Bhagawan Nityananda, to come to America in the early 70's and introduce devotees to meditation through the gift of shaktipat (see shaktipat). Mark Griffin is part of the Siddha lineage and was a student of Baba Muktananda's.

**Mukti** ~ ("liberation") A release from the bondage of birth, death, and rebirth. Same as moksha, freedom from the awareness of duality. Also referred to as enlightenment.

**Nada** ~ ("sound") The spontaneous inner sounds that connect the spirit with its origin. The mystic vibrations of the eternal. The primal sound from which all creation has emanated. The celestial sounds that are heard in higher states of meditation.

**Neti Neti** ~ (na = "not"; iti = thus) Literally translates as 'not this, not this', and carries the larger implication that there are no qualities or terms that may be imputed or attributed to absolute reality. (see imputed terms)

**Nityananda** ~ (nitya = "eternal" and ananda = "bliss") Bhagawan Nityananda is a revered saint from India who was the Guru of Baba Muktananda from Ganeshpuri, India. Nityananda was an Avadhut, meaning that he was a fully enlightened being from birth. He took mahasamadhi in 1961.

**Pada** ~ ("foot") In Hindu tradition, the feet of the Guru, both the literal feet of the outer Guru and the subtle spiritual feet of the inner Guru, are considered to be very sacred and are worshipped with great devotion.
**Parvati** ~ The powerful Goddess and second consort of the Lord Shiva. Mother of Ganesha, the elephant God, she is the representation of spiritual beauty. She is considered to be Shakti. The spiritual significance of Shiva's consort is the idea of the union of Shiva and Shakti. This refers to the dawn of full realization or enlightenment when Shakti, in the form of kundalini, rises from her position at the base of the spine and moves up through the sushumna, the central channel, awakening all the chakras and merging with the principle of Shiva at the crown of the head in the sahasrar.

**Pinda** ~ ("body") Kundalini shakti, the attainment of shaktipat – a pivotal event in the arc of a person's many incarnations. (see Kundalini/Shaktipat)

**Pranam** ~ Bowing with reference. Greeting with respect. Prostrating, lying in a reverentially prone position before a great being.

**Pranayama** ~ (prana = "the life force or the vital energy that sustains the body"; yama = "control") The fourth limb of the eight limbs of yoga as expounded by the great sage Patanjali that refers to disciplined yogic breathing exercises. Yama also means death, and in this sense it carries the connotation of bringing the breath to a standstill at the still point in the space between each breath. It is in this silence that awareness of pure consciousness can be realized.

**Prasad** ~ A sacred offering or a blessed or divine gift given by the Guru. The bestowal of grace or divine help. Anything that the Guru blesses carries his shakti or divine energy, and a disciple is then able to partake of this energy through this offering.

**Prayag** ~ ("place of sacrifice") A city in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh located at the confluence of the three holy rivers: Ganges, Yamuna and the invisible river, Sarasvati. It is believed to be the place where Brahma offered his first sacrifice after creating the world. The term "the three rivers" also symbolizes ida, pingala and sushumna, the three most important nadis or currents of the subtle body.

**Puranas** ~ ("belonging to ancient times") There are eighteen major Puranas that originate from the sacred scriptural texts ascribed to the compiler Vyasa. They are supplements to the Vedas. They contain stories of the incarnations of God and the history of the Universe from creation to destruction, as well as the instructions of various deities. The Guru Gita was originally 352 verses...
and recorded in the text of the Shri Skanda Purana. Skanda means a group or aggregate.

**Rupa** ~ ("form") The bindu, the enduring vision of the Blue Pearl that is the true form of the Universe. (see Blue Pearl).

**Rupatita** ~ Beyond rupa, known as nirajanam; merging with pure Being.

**Sadashiva** ~ (sada = "ever, eternally") Sadashiva is the term for Supreme Being, the eternal Lord Shiva. In Kaishmir Shaivite philosphy, the third tattva is Sadashiva, the level where Shiva has begun to stir and come into relationship with the universe.

**Sadguru** ~ (from the Sanskrit root sad = "truth and purity") Means "true Guru" or divine Master. The great Master or perfect Guru is one who knows the way to liberation through personal experience.

**Sadhana** ~ (from the Sanskrit root saadh = "to go straight to the goal") Spiritual practices or disciplines designed to lead to enlightenment.

**Sadhu** ~ A spiritual seeker in search of liberation. Any person who is practicing sadhana. The Guru Gita points out that a genuine sadhu is a servant and disciple of his Guru.

**Sahasrar** ~ ("thousand") The thousand-petaled spiritual chakra at the crown of the head. This seventh chakra is the gateway to the highest states of consciousness and is considered to be the abode of Shiva.

**Samadhi** ~ (from the Sanskrit root sam = "completely together"; and dhaa = "to hold") To hold completely together, as in one-pointed concentration or absorption. The eighth and final limb of yoga as expounded by the great sage Patanjali. The union of oneness and the highest state of super-consciousness, which occurs through the full awakening and unfoldment of the kundalini shakti. There are four states of samadhi: laya samadhi, savikalpa samadhi, nirvikalpa samadhi and sahaj samadhi.

**Samsara** ~ ("continual movement") The cyclic existence of reincarnation: birth, death and rebirth or transmigration. This word points to the idea of being stuck in the relative ever-changing aspect of creation without experience of the absolute non-changing reality. The conditioned endless karmic cycle of worldly existence that is transcended once one achieves the highest state of enlightenment. (see The Wheel of Cyclic
Existence)

Saraswati ~ (from the Sanskrit saras = "flowing" and vati = "having") The Goddess of speech, learning, music and wisdom who also bestows knowledge of the fine arts and all that is refined.

Sattva ~ (see gunas)

Satyam ~ (sat = "real, pure, true") Universal truth. That which exists and is real, beyond illusion.

Seva ~ Selfless service, the desire to offer service for a greater cause without expecting recognition or acknowledgment.

Shakti ~ ("energy" or "power") Often referred to as the Goddess Shakti, the consort of Shiva. The second tattva, it is the life giving force, the potency of the female energy, the creative principle and its expression. Through training with a true Guru, one's spiritual energy or shakti builds up or accumulates, gradually empowering the seeker with the ability to realize the truth. Daily recitation of the Guru Gita builds up a storehouse of shakti.

Shaktipat ~ (shakti = "energy" and pat = "descent or falling down") The transmission or descent of grace from a Guru to his disciple through touch, sight, sacred word or thought. Shaktipat activates the dormant kundalini in a person who is open to receiving it. This transference of energy from the Guru to the disciple is known as the bestowal of grace. Shaktipat is a gift given by the Guru.

Shiva ~ ("good or auspicious") The ruling force in our contemporary (or current) world system; the dominant law and the primordial Guru. The God of creation, regeneration and rejuvenation as well as destruction and annihilation, Shiva is often represented sitting on a tiger skin, holding a trident with snakes coiled around his neck and arms. He is shown sitting in meditation with his third eye open, hence the reference in the Guru Gita to Shiva with his three eyes. There are two aspects to Shiva: the Shiva who is transcendent and pervades everything, known as para-Shiva; and the Shiva who is immanent and exists in this world – the apara-Shiva. It is the para-Shiva, the transcendent Shiva, who is the author of the five acts. In order to perform the first three of these acts, he expresses himself as Brahma, Vishnu and the apara-Shiva. Brahma is responsible for the creative impulse; Vishnu is responsible for sustaining creation; and Shiva is responsible for destruction, bringing each phase of creation to a
close. Kashmir Shaivism holds Shiva to be the pre-eminent God of all Gods. In his capacity as supreme Godhead, Shiva is recognized as the author of the Guru Gita. Mark Griffin is in the Siddha Lineage, which is a Shiva lineage that has its roots in the mystical tradition of Kashmir Shaivism. The Guru Gita springs from this tradition as well.

**Shri** ~ (from the Sanskrit root shri = "to flame, diffuse light") A term of respect or endearment that encompasses auspiciousness, grace, holiness, beauty and the sacred, all in one word.

**Siddha** ~ ("one who is accomplished") A perfected being who has realized embodied liberation. One who has attained the state of uninterrupted unity-consciousness and has perfect and permanent identity with the Source of all. Baba Muktananda and Bhagawan Nityananda are examples of Siddhas.

**Siddhi** ~ ("accomplishment") This refers to the highest accomplishment, which is the attainment of liberation. It is also sometimes used to refer to specific paranormal powers, which are the natural by-products of complete realization. These siddhis include astral travel, clairvoyance, invisibility, levitation, the power of attraction, the power to realize one's every desire, knowledge of the cosmos, the ability to expand, possessing the strength of an elephant, the ability to manifest one's will, knowledge of the organization of the body, omniscience, as well as many others.

**Smritis** ~ (from the Sanskrit root smr = "to remember") That which is remembered. A body of religious scriptures composed after the Vedic period, around 500 BC.

**SoHam** ~ (So = "That"; Ham = "I") A mantra that comes from the natural sound of the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. Thus with each breath the reality is stated "That Am I" – "I am Pure Consciousness". SoHam is equivalent to the mantra Hamsa, "I Am That". The use of the mantra SoHam or Hamsa is known as 'ajapa japa'. Japa means the repetition of a mantra. When 'a' is placed before a Sanskrit word, it creates the opposite meaning. So ajapa means non-repeating. In other words, this is the mantra that is repeated without doing the practice of repetition, because it is naturally being done for us by the breath itself. SO has its root at the first chakra at the base of the spine, while HAM has its root at the crown of the head at the sahasrar. SO represents all of manifest creation, while HAM
represents the ocean of pure consciousness.

**Tattva** ~ ("principle") There are three uses of this word in the Guru Gita. One: Its first use is Guru Tattva. Here it means the principle of the Guru, and points to the idea that the Guru is more than just a person; it is also a universal concept – a force of awakening. Two: There are also references in the Guru Gita to the thirty-six tattvas. This concept originating from Kashmir Shaivism, states that all of reality can be viewed as thirty-six levels of different principles. The progression of tattvas continues from most abstract and subtle to progressively more manifest principles of creation. The first and most subtle layer is the principle known as Shiva, representing pure transcendence without any object. The second principle is Shakti and represents the first stirring of manifestation. The third tattva is Sadashiva, the level where Shiva has begun to stir and come into relationship with the universe. The fourth tattva is Ishvara, and is a level of supreme divinity. The fifth tattva is shudda vidya, which is pure knowledge. Maya is the sixth tattva and generates the next five tattvas, known as the five kanchukas ("jackets"), which are mixed values of purity and impurity. They represent omnipotence and a sense of limited power (kalaa); omniscience and a sense of limited knowledge (vidyaa); perfection and a sense of limitation of desire (raaga); eternity and a sense of limitation based on time (kaala); and omnipresence and a sense of limitation of space (niyati). The next five tattvas are the individual soul (purusha), the basic matter of the universe composed of the three gunas (prakriti), and the aspects of mind: the intellect (buddhi), the ego (ahamkara) and the mind itself (manas). The next five tattvas are the sense organs: the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. The next five are the organs of action: speech, locomotion, sexual organs, organs of excretion, etc. The next five are the essence of what is experienced by the senses: sound, touch, form, taste and smell. The last five tattvas are the five elements of the material world: ether, air, fire, water and earth. When the Guru Gita speaks of the thirty-six tattvas as a garland for the Guru, it is understood to mean that the Guru is the Lord of the principles of all manifest and unmanifest reality. Three: Lastly, the Guru Gita refers to the Guru as the 'prime tattva': the Guru as the first or highest principle, Shiva himself.

**Tree of Life** ~ An ancient mystical concept used in cultures throughout the world symbolic of
knowledge, ascension, the cycle of life and eternity. With its branches reaching up and its roots reaching down, the tree of life symbolizes the link between the three worlds: heaven, earth and the underworld. It is that which unites them all. It is also often shown as an inverted tree superimposed on the figure of the human body, with its root system in the sahasrar and the space over the crown of the head, and the branches spreading throughout the nadis of the subtle body of the human form.

**Vajra** ~ ("thunder" or "diamond") Thought of as a thunderbolt, the weapon of Indra represents adamantine strength. In Tibetan and Buddhist culture the vajra, the "diamond" scepter, is used by deities as a ritual tool and represents the Bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment. (see Bodhicitta)

**Varanasi** ~ the modern name for the Indian city of Benares, or as it was historically known, Kashi, one of the Wonders of the World. This is Shiva's city, one of the most holy cities in India, and is sacred to both Hinduism and Buddhism. It is said that Shiva dove into the world in the Himalayas, and resurfaced, like a diver coming up for air, in Kashi. Varanasi is said to be over 12,000 years old, with a population living there on the banks of the Ganges throughout that time period, making it the oldest continually inhabited city on earth. Varanasi itself is considered a gateway to liberation, in that many believe that simply dying in Shiva's city is powerful enough to break the cycle of rebirth.

**Vedanta** ~ ("end of the Vedas") A principal branch of Hindu philosophy that originated from Vedic oral traditions and scriptures and focuses on moksha, liberation. They are the core teachings of the holy texts, the Upanishads, which are commentaries on the Vedas and are devoted to the nature of God.

**Vedas** ~ ("knowledge, wisdom") The oldest sacred scriptures of Hinduism comprised of four ancient texts - Rigveda (the original work, which are the hymns of wisdom), followed by Yajurveda (sacrificial rites), Samaveda (hymns and music) and Artharvaveda (rituals designed to counteract disease and other specific practical applications). The whole body of them are known as 'Sruti', "what was heard". The Vedas are believed to have been directly cognized by the ancient seers,
who spoke of the fundamental truths of reality, which they recognized while in the highest states of samadhi. The Vedas represent the mystic teachings, beliefs, hymns and prayers of the ancient sages, the Indo-Aryans of Northern India.

**Vijñana ~** (from the Sanskrit root vi = "apart"; jñaa = "to know") Insight, discrimination, cognition, wisdom – the ability to distinguish the real from the unreal.

**Vishnu ~** ("to pervade") Vishnu is one of the Gods of the Hindu triad with Brahma (the Creator) and Shiva (the Destroyer). He is known as the preserver and maintainer of the Universe. He is thought of as a manifestation of the One Supreme God. His wife is the Goddess Lakshmi. He is frequently depicted with four arms holding a discus, mace, conch shell and lotus. He holds a discus in his upper right hand, which represents the purified mandala of the universal mind. He holds a mace in his lower left hand, symbolizing the life force. He holds a conch shell in his upper left hand, the symbol of creation. He holds a lotus flower in his lower right hand, representing purity, liberation and perfection. It is Vishnu who descends from time to time to take incarnation as an avatar to restore dharma or righteousness. Some of the incarnations of Vishnu include: Rama, Krishna, the Buddha, Jesus, Zoroaster and Meher Baba.

**Wheel of Cyclic Existence ~** The Twelve Spokes of Dependent Origin which describe the journey from birth through death to rebirth. The cycle goes from ignorance > dispositions > consciousness > name and form > six sense fields > contact > feeling > desire > appropriation > becoming > rebirth > aging and dying. Ignorance results from believing you are the body and knowing only the three states of relative consciousness: waking, dreaming and deep sleep, with complete ignorance of the fourth state of consciousness, the transcendental ocean of consciousness. This ignorance gives rise to the condition of dispositions, which is interdependent cause and compound effect. This in turn gives rise to consciousness, which is a sense of singular identity and the beginning of the ego. As identity is formed, we then see the development of name and form, which represents a separation of "I" and "That" and we begin to define ourselves as separate perceivers. This perception occurs through the development of the six sense fields (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and intuition).
With the development of the six sense fields, we then begin to reach out and touch the universe. This is the quality of contact. As soon as contact is generated, it gives rise to a condition of feeling and this produces a psychic imprint of sensation. These in turn lead to desire or grasping. Having experienced something, we try to hold on to it. This gives rise to the condition of appropriation, which is the process of saying, "This is my experience". It is attachment. The cumulative effect of all this emotion, desire and grasping, leads to a large collection of "baggage", which we have become and are now identified with. The fruit of this mass of identity consciousness seeks a form dedicated to repeating those experiences again and again, and thus we have rebirth. As soon as we are born, we immediately begin aging, decaying and dying. We experience this death as suffering, but the Wheel of Cyclic Existence shows us that it is really just a result of one condition having led to the next condition, which leads to the next condition, and so on. The intervention of the Guru allows this cycle to be broken at any number of spokes of this wheel, which frees us from the cyclic nature of samsara.
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