The Impact of the Bhagavad Gita on R.W. Emerson’s philosophical and foundational Essay ‘The Over Soul’

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My research deals particularly with the sameness of R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘Over Soul’ with the Bhagavad Gita concept of Brahman. R.W. Emerson’s knowledge of and belief in the Bhagavad Gita concepts of Nirgun or Impersonal Brahman (God without form) and Sagun or Personal Brahman (God with form); the identity of his views with the great Vedic Hindu saint Sri Adi Shankaracharya and R.W. Emerson’s understanding and belief in the Bhagavad Gita concept of Brahman realization or Samadhi.

One of the clearest examples of the influence of the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedas, specifically, the influence of Non Dualism as propounded by the great Hindu saint, Sri Adi Shankaracharya can be found in R.W. Emerson’s essay ‘The over soul’. The ‘Over soul’ is in fact ‘Brahman’ as we shall see here.

Pg. 139 ² R.W. Emerson states, “We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE”. This is as per BG 12.2.-4, 13.13, 13.16, 13.17, 14.26.-27, 15.15. These explain Brahman and its aspects of Sagun (with form) and Nirgun (without form) as mentioned above by R.W. Emerson. R.W. Emerson calls Brahman ‘the eternal ONE’. This is as per the concept of Nirgun Brahman. R.W. Emerson also calls Brahman the ‘Universal beauty’. This is as per the concept of Sagun Brahman and Bhakti Yog wherein the Bhakta finds Brahman to be beautiful. It is covered in the Bhagavad Gita chapter 12. This also explains Emerson’s concept of ‘God within’ which we see here as an aspect of Brahman. Thus one can find all material and spiritual wisdom in oneself. R.W. Emerson explains this in ‘History’ as “I can find…the genius and creative principle of each and all eras, in my own mind”. ² This is because of the unity of the Soul with Brahman. This is as per BG 13.32, 13.16, 13.31. These Shlokas also explain that to Brahman ‘every part and particle is equally related’. R.W. Emerson thus had ‘Vision of Eternity’ as per BG 13.32. This is explained in the Vedas as ‘Sarvakilam Brahman’ meaning Brahman is all and ‘all in all’. R.W. Emerson states, “And this deep power in which we exist”. This is as per BG 15.7. R.W. Emerson states “and whose beatitude is all accessible to us”. This is as per BG 15.15. R.W. Emerson states, “is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one”. This is as per BG 13.16.,17, 14.27. R.W. Emerson states “We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul”. This is as per BG 13.16.,17, 13.31, 15.7. R.W. Emerson states “Only by the vision of that Wisdom can the horoscope of the ages be read, and by falling back on our better thoughts, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man, we can know what is saith.” This shows that God is within everything. This is the ‘God within’ concept of R.W. Emerson. This is as per BG Shlokas 13.16, 15.15. The above observations of R.W. Emerson bring out the concept of Impersonal Nirgun Brahman as ‘Over Soul’ of R.W. Emerson, also Sagun Brahman (God with form or personal God) is seen as accepted and believed by Emerson here and this has also been shown by us in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’. We also see that Brahman (the Over Soul of Emerson) is “all in all”. R.W. Emerson appreciates this attribute of Brahman in ‘Circles’ Pg. 161. We see here a direct and pious relation between the individual soul and Brahman without any intermediaries and links. This has been seen as an observation of R.W. Emerson in ‘Self Reliance’ and we see this here in the words of Emerson “by the vision of that Wisdom”. This is also as per the views of Swami Vivekananda “You have to see God in yourself.” He states “Those passages of Gita where he (Krishna) speaks with the word ‘I’ invariably indicate the Atma. “Take refuge in me alone” means “Be established in the Atman” this knowledge of the Atma is the highest aim of the Gita.” These words of his establish the position of the Atman (Soul) and Brahman according to the Bhagavad Gita and are as per the view of Emerson. Swami Vivekananda reiterates “If any religion is true, it must be able to show us the soul and God and truth in ourselves.” R.W. Emerson upholds the Soul, truth, God within and Over Soul in ‘Self Reliance’. The ‘Vision of that wisdom’ is as per the ‘Vision of Eternity’ of BG 13.32 since it shows the Soul as transcendental, eternal and beyond the modes of Nature along with the above attributes. Further the
unity of Soul with Brahman is explained in BG 13.33, 31—“man realizes the unity of his soul with Brahman and thus attains to Brahman conception”. “the wise silence; the universal beauty” explain Sagun Brahman. This is as per BG Chapter 12, 13.13, .31-.33. “the eternal ONE” explains Nirgun Brahman. This is as per BG 12.3-.4, 14.27.

Over Soul is important because of its influence on and connection with R.W.Emerson’s other essays and features. We see in R.W.Emerson’s concept of ‘Nature’ “Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of the Nature and the soul” R.W.Emerson himself summed up his central doctrine as “the infinitude of the private man”. The private man as per him does possess a soul. Infinitude as seen here is the soul’s ability to link with the over soul and hence “Achieve almost anything”. He writes in this essay, “Behold, it saith, I am born into the great the Universal mind, I the imperfect, adore my own perfect”. This means the individual soul is a part of the ‘Over Soul’ or ‘Universal Mind’. This is the relation of Soul with Brahman as explained in BG 12.2-.4, 13.13, .31-.33, 14.27. The ‘imperfect’ is the Jiva or the conditioned soul of the Bhagavad Gita which ‘adores’ Brahman which is ‘perfect’. Thus one reaches ‘better thoughts’ now revealed as this relation of Soul and Brahman. As per these Shlokas the soul can merge into the (Brahman) Universal mind. We see here R.W.Emerson’s Central Doctrine is ununderstandable without the Bhagavad Gita concept of Brahman or R.W.Emerson’s ‘Over Soul’, in fact is a facet of it. Brahman is integral to R.W. Emerson’s essays particularly ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’.

We see here the influence on R.W.Emerson of Sri Adi Shank’s Vedanta philosophy and his concept of Brahman. Sri Adi Shankaracharya’s philosophy contains Adwait Vedanta (which describes Impersonal or Nirgun Brahman) and also Vishishadvait and Dvait Vedanta (which describe Personal or Sagun Brahman). Sri Adi Shankaracharya states his belief and knowledge in both Sagun and Nirgun Brahman in a debate with Madan Mishra as per the traditional work, ‘Shankar Digvijay’. I have explained this in ‘Circles’ Pg 165. This is also seen through his works such as Soundarya Lehari and Bhaj Govindam. His famous commentary on the Bhagavad Gita helped in initially popularizing the Bhagavad Gita throughout India. In this commentary he has described Samadhi as per BG shlokas 12.2-.4, 14.26-.27. However Sri Adi Shankaracharya emphasized more on Advait Vedanta and Sri Ramanujacharya emphasized on Vishishadvait Vedanta. The following verses from the Bhagavad Gita establish the Advaita Vedanta position on Brahman.

BG 8.3 “The indestructible, transcendental living entity is called Brahman, and its eternal Nature is called Adhyatma, the self”.

BG 12.3-.4 “But those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond the perception of the senses, the all-pervading, inconceivable, indescribable, imperishable, changeless, fixed, immovable and eternal (the impersonal Brahman) by controlling the various senses and being equally disposed to everyone, and even minded everywhere such persons, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieve Me” (Brahman).

BG 14.27 “And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal, eternal Dharm and absolute happiness, peace and bliss”.

The following verses from the Bhagavad Gita establish the Vishishadvait and Dvait Vedanta position on Brahman.

BG 12.2 “God said: those who devote their mind on my personal form (Sagun Brahman) and engage in worshipping me with great and transcendental faith and devotion (this is Bhakti Yog) are considered by me to be perfect Yogis”.

BG 14.26 “One who engages in full Bhakti Yog (love to personal God or Sagun Brahman), unfailling in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of nature (virtue and vice) and thus comes to the level of Brahman. This is as per R.W.Emerson’s statement above. Hence Emerson is describing both Nirgun Brahman and Sagun Brahman.

The famous work of Adi Shankaracharya ‘Aparoksh anubhuti’ and its slokas clearly state Vedanta Philosophy as – Brahman is the only truth, the world is Mithya (fleeting, temporary). These explain both the Nirgun and Sagun Brahman as described by the above Bhagavad Gita shlokas. Truth is explained as Brahman and Brahman realization later in this essay and also in ‘Self Reliance’ and covers both Nirgun and Sagun Brahman.

God as over soul is also stated in Vedic literature for example in Sveta varaha Upanishad-6.16. “Those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond perception and senses, the all – pervading, inconceivable, unchanging, fixed and immovable – the Brahman”.

BG 13.14, “The Over soul pervades everything”.

Seen along with BG 13.16 it explains that Brahman as Supreme Being is represented even in the smallest particle. This is a prominently reiterated concept of Emerson seen in Pg. 139 and in Pg.151-153 of this essay. This is also stated in the Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1. “In all circumstances Brahman (Over Soul) is with the individual soul.”

BG 13.32. “Those with vision of eternity can see that the imperishable soul is transcendental, eternal, and beyond the modes of Nature. Despite contact with the material body, O Arjun, the soul neither does anything nor is entangled".


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BG15.7. “The living entities in this world of life are my eternal fragmental parts, situated in material Nature, they are struggling very hard with the six senses including the Mind”.

Along with BG 9.7, 15.15 we see here that variety is a part of the manifestation of Brahman (Sagun Brahman) as Purush and Prakriti explained in Chapter 13 of the BG. So we see Unity and Diversity co-exists and are present in the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedas unlike Abrahamic Religions which get confounded here. Action can only take place in diversity yet as per the above shlokas of the Bhagavad Gita it can lead us to the Unity of Brahman. R.W.Emerson expresses this thought through his above statements. Swami Vivekananda explains on variety and diversity “This is the first idea on creation, variation (Vichitrata), that is to say, Jati, means creation. “I am one, I become many” (Various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity in creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active, it must throw out varieties. When it ceases and stops from breeding varieties, it dies. 9 Sri Rama Krishna states “To see many is Maya and to see oneness is knowledge”. 10 BG 15.12. “The splendour of the Sun, Moon and fire comes from me”. This concept of Unity and Diversity is evident in Emerson’s above quoted statements regarding manifestations and over soul (Brahman).

BG 15.15 “The over soul transcends the modes of Nature. It is the source of senses, unaffected by them. It is responsible for manifestation of all living beings; I am seated in everyone’s heart from me comes remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness”. This is R.W.Emerson’s “Within man is the soul of the whole”. 11 This is also as per BG 15.17 “The Supreme Personality (Over soul), the imperishable Lord himself has entered the three worlds comprising the Universe and is maintaining it”. BG 15.18 -“Because I am Transcendental, beyond both fallible and infallible, I am celebrated both in the world and the Vedas as that Supreme Person”.

BG 9.7. “At the end of ordained time span all material manifestations enter into My Nature, at the beginning of another time span, I treat them again”. BG 10.39 -“Further more O Arjun, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being – moving or unmoving- that can exist without me”.

BG 13.13- “I shall now explain that which is knowable, knowing which you will taste Amrit, Brahman (the individual soul) beginning less, subordinate to me, lies beyond cause and effect”.

BG13.16- “It (Brahman) exists outside and inside of all living beings moving and non moving. On account of being non Physical, he is unknowable to the material senses. Though very far away, he is also near to all”. This also brings out Emerson’s “within man is the soul of the whole”. 12 When Krishna states the word ‘I’ in the Bhagavad Gita, he means Brahman. This is discerned from BG 12.2-.4, 14.26-.27. This is also because as per BG 4.5 Krishna also gave this knowledge in his previous births, hence ‘I’ could have only referred then to Brahman. As per this shloka Krishna himself has taken many births hence also ‘I’ can refer not to Krishna but only to Brahman. Also as per BG 4.1-.4 this knowledge has been imparted successively among many beings, including saints and kings. Hence they and the initiator of this disciplic chain would have used ‘I’ to address not themselves but Brahman. Due to these reasons I in the Bhagavad Gita means Brahman.

We see that Brahman is beyond manifestation. Brahman is responsible for material manifestation. Hence Brahman is “The wise silence, the Universal beauty.” 13BG 13.17 “Though the Over soul appears to be divided among all beings, he is never divided. He exists as one. Though he is maintaining every living entity, understands that he devours and also develops all”.

The above Shlokas explain Brahman is ‘the eternal ONE’. 14 . This along with above Shlokas shows that Brahman is self sufficing and Brahman is unity. Thus it is the same as Emerson’s Over Soul. These Bhagavad Gita shlokas bring out R.W.Emerson’s observation in his concept of ‘Nature’ “Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of the Nature and the soul”. 15

BG 13.31 “When a sensible man ceases to see different identities, due to different material bodies and sees how beings are being expanded everywhere, he attains to the Brahman conception.”

BG 13.27 “O chief of the Bharatas, know that whatever you see in existence, both the moving and the non moving, is only a combination of the field of activities and the knower of the field”. This shows that all manifestation is the living entity and material nature. This emanates from Brahman.

BG 13.28 “One who sees the Over soul accompanying the individual soul in all bodies, and who understands that neither the soul nor the Over soul within the destructible body is ever destroyed, actually sees.” This is as per R.W.Emerson’s observations on ‘The eternal ONE’. 16BG 13.15 “The Over Soul is the original source of all the senses, yet he is without senses. He is unattached, although he is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of Nature, and at the same time he is the master of all modes of Nature”.

BG shlokas 13.31-.33, 14.26-.27, 15.12-.18, 15.32. These describe Brahman. It is clear from these that Brahman is in fact the same as the ‘Over soul’ of R.W.Emerson.

BG 9.4-.11, 9.17-.19. These along with BG 6.28-32, 10.42, 15.7 and 18.21 show that Brahman is as per Emerson’s statement, “all in all”. 17
BG shlokas 5.19, 7.2 These describe Brahman. Brahman is the same as ‘Over Soul’ of R.W. Emerson since every aspect of existence is connected to it through the concept of Purush and Prakriti explained in BG Chapter 13. Brahman is responsible for all manifestation and existence as brought out by BG 15.15, 18, 9.7, 10.39, 13.16, all stated above. Further the soul is a part of Brahman and ultimately merges into it as per Sagun Brahman concept. Soul is non different from Brahman, as per Nirgun Brahman concept. We see both these concepts are present in R.W. Emerson’s statements above.

In Taittiriya Upanishad Bhasya (2.2) commentary Sri Adi Sankaracharya says “It is established that everyone has the right to knowledge alone”. The Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1 clearly states “in all circumstances, the over soul is with the individual soul”. This expresses aspects of Vedanta Philosophy of Sri Adi Shankaracharya and is the same as the views of R.W. Emerson expressed here.

Pg 138 R.W. Emerson states, “Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences.”

R.W. Emerson states “Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. The most exact calculator has no prescience that somewhat incalculable may not balk the very next moment. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine. As with events, so is it with thoughts”. This is as per BG, 15.7, 13.16. Hence ‘somewhat incalculable’, ‘higher origin’ is Brahman being more real than the material world, beyond the calculations of and higher to the material world. As ‘faith’ or Bhakti connects us to Brahman, which is the highest and final realization, as per BG Chapter 2, 12, such ‘moments’, constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences’. As per the above BG shlokas, Brahman is the source and origin of all manifestations, existence and life, hence also all ‘events’ and ‘thoughts’. Since Brahman is the highest, hence ‘higher origin’.

R.W. Emerson states “The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be,” This is the Law of Karm as described in BG 13.22 and is an aspect of Brahman. The Destiny and Karm of present life (Prarabdhi) is shaped and selected from all previous deeds (Sanchit), hence the above. R.W Emerson states “is that great nature in which we rest as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-soul. This is as per BG 9.7, 15.7. R.W Emerson states “Within every man’s particular being is contained and made one with all other;” This is as per BG 13.6, 15.7 R.W Emerson states “that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship,” (this is Bhakti Yogh of BG Chapter 12. In Bhakti Yogh through spiritual realization one converses with Personal God or Sagun Brahman. This is seen in the lives of Vedic saints such as Sri Adi Shankaracharya and Meera Bai) R.W Emerson states “to which all right action is submission;” ‘(this is Karm Yogh of BG Chapter 2, 3, 5 I have explained it in ‘Self Reliance’) R.W Emerson states “that overpowering reality”. As per BG 12.2 Brahman has to be submitted to and worshipped. This is the concept of Bhakti in BG Chapter 12. From this we come to know that faith can come only from Oversoul or Brahman. The moments of faith have a different depth as they are of a different quality than other experience within nature, ‘all right action’ leads to Brahman hence it is Dharmic action to which there has to be compulsory ‘submission’. Hence ‘that overpowering reality’, ‘that Unity, that Over-soul’ is Brahman. We see here the sameness of ‘Over Soul’ with Brahman.

Pg 139 R.W. Emerson states, “...to indicate the heaven of this deity and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendental simplicity and energy of the Highest Law”. This is as per BG Chapter 2, 12. Sagun Brahman is ‘deity, transcendental, simple’. R.W.Emerson refers to this as ‘energy of the Highest Law’. BG shlokas 13.32-.33 show this is highest law as it is eternal, beyond material manifestation and imperishable. The knowledge of Brahman is thus highest Transcendental knowledge (or Law) and truth as per both R.W. Emerson and the Bhagavad Gita. It is also as per the view of Swami Vivekananda seen above. Knowledge of Brahman is also explained in Pg.145.

Pg 140 R.W. Emerson states, “All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed.” This R.W. Emerson’s concept of Soul is contained in BG 13.32, 13.13. The soul transcends material, sensory functions and also functions of the mind and intellect. Brahman is beyond the fallible and infallible as per BG 15.18. Hence ‘an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed’.

R.W. Emerson states, “When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love.”

“From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all”. This along with the above is the same as BG 13.32, 15.7, 15.15. We see how genius, virtue and love are a part of Dharm in ‘Self Reliance’, ‘Compensation’ and ‘Circles’ respectively. We see here that Brahman is their cause as per R.W. Emerson and the Bhagavad Gita shlokas stated above. Being unaffected by the senses, the soul is the source of genius, virtue, and Love which enable us to transcend the senses and link with Brahman. ‘genius’ concept of R.W. Emerson is explained in ‘Self Reliance’ by me. I have shown there it contains the Bhagavad
Gita concepts of ‘own work’ and ‘own nature’ which are also the concepts of R.W. Emerson. These lead to Brahman and Brahman realization. ‘virtue’ seen in ‘Compensation’ leads to Brahman, vice away from it. This is as per BG Chapter 14 and 18, 13.8-12. Emerson’s concept of ‘his affection’ or ‘love’ of God is Bhakti Yog as seen in BG Chapter 12, 14, 18 and in ‘Circles’.

R.W. Emerson states, “And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself”.

Here R.W. Emerson brings out the plight and confusion of living beings interacting with intellect and will without relating with the individual soul. This is as per BG 15.7. They cannot see as described above, hence ‘blindness’ and ‘weakness’.

R.W. Emerson states, “All reform aims in some one particular to let the soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey”. As seen above, we have to obey genius, virtue and love. This is Dharm and all have to compulsorily obey it. Thus the soul can have its way through us and we can be reformed, we can rise from the state of delusion to correct knowledge.

Like above we see in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Worship’ that R.W. Emerson states we have to obey Karm Yog, Bhakti Yog and other Yogas in order to let the Soul merge in Brahman. This is as per BG Chapter 2, 3, 5, 12. The obedience referred to here leads us to the realization of the Soul as Brahman by following Dharm and various Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita. The Soul can have its way through us through merger with Brahman. This is as per Vedanta philosophy of Sri Adi Shankarcharya and is also contained in BG 9.7, 13.17, 13.32, 14.27.

R.W. Emerson states, “God comes to see us without bell;” that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie upon one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power”.

God as the cause and man as the effect (Purush and Prakriti) is explained in the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7 and 13. This shows R.W. Emerson’s ‘God’ is Brahman of the Bhagavad Gita. The attributes of God mentioned here are the same as attributes of God in the Bhagavad Gita. We see Justice in ‘Compensation’, Power in ‘Power’. Justice is covered in BG 13.22. Freedom as seen from above is knowledge of Brahman. Love is seen as the Bhagavad Gita concept of Bhakti in BG Chapter 2, 12 and in ‘Circles’ and above. Hence there is no partition and no intermediary between God and man. We can access through Dharm the attributes of God which are also deeps of spiritual nature.

R.W. Emerson was ‘a great soul’ which included being a luminary of Society. His concept of Over Soul attracted people across the religious spectrum. We have seen his tremendous influence on indigenous American religions including Christian Sects, similarly he also influenced the Platonists and Neo Platonists of his time. However this created an unwitting minor confusion to some in later times as some started to claim various influences in Emerson’s concept of Over Soul. It is only to be expected that various sects and creeds who follow or are influenced by R.W. Emerson will in later times in turn try to hoist their creeds’ influence on R.W. Emerson’s key concepts in order to increase their importance and the importance of their creed in their own eyes and those of others. This is a phenomenon much repeated in the history of sects of philosophy and religion. It can be considered a tool of Avidya Maya (see “Illusions”) which creates confusion. The truth in this case can be discerned by the fact that R.W. Emerson himself never acknowledged the influence of any of these creeds except Hinduism on his concept of Over Soul and its morality. R.W. Emerson hence in fact states in ‘Compensation’, “a plain confession of the in working of the All and of its moral aim. The Indian Theology ends in the same Ethics”. 18 Here R.W. Emerson unequivocally states that “the moral aim” of the “All” is as per Indian theology. I am showing here that Brahman is “All”. R.W. Emerson was further aware of and appreciated the personal impersonal God of the Vedas including the personal aspect (Sagun Brahman) as Krishna and Lord Vishnu and their impersonal aspect of Nirgun Brahman. This is explained in the Bhagavad Gita and Vishnupuran which he read and appreciated and believed. I have shown extensively that R.W. Emerson’s morals are as per the Bhagavad Gita. A ‘Great Soul’ and mind like R.W. Emerson would certainly have correctly grasped the concept of Brahman from the Bhagavad Gita. I have shown the concept of Brahman permeates the Bhagavad Gita and is present throughout it and also the Vedas and Puranas which constitute Indian theology. In ‘Compensation’ I have brought out the ‘in working of the all’ is actually the ways of realizing Brahman. This is the concept of Dharm and various Yogas such as Karm, Bhakti and Gyan. In this essay I have shown how various concepts of R.W. Emerson connected to Over Soul are actually concepts of the Bhagavad Gita connected to Brahman. Hence I doubtless conclude that R.W. Emerson’s Over Soul is actually Brahman. R.W. Emerson has in ‘Self Reliance’ stated the link between the ‘deity’ or personal God with devotion (Bhakti) and the Soul. This is the exact concept of the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12. The personal God is Sagun Brahman or Lord Krishna, Vishnu whereas their other aspect is impersonal (Nirgun) Brahman. This is Over Soul. The relation of Brahman to the Soul is also the same as the relation of Over Soul to soul. Hence Over Soul is actually Brahman. Moreover as per Swami Vivekananda “Every thing is bounded by that book (Vedas), nothing can go beyond that because knowledge of God- you cannot go beyond that, that is Indian orthodoxy”. 19 “You cannot bring another book as
old as the Vedas. Everything else, it was all copied after that". So we see even the ideas of other sects, creeds and religions are actually taken from the Vedas. Brahman as a concept has to be imbibed whole. Being beyond material manifestations and beyond duality, it brooks no views, opinion, partnerships or co influences. Further R.W.Emerson considers Plato himself to be under Vedic influence as seen in earlier subhead. The concept of meditation entered into Neo Platonism from the Vedas thus showing Vedic influence even in later stages. R.W.Emerson’s own statements of Vedic influence on him have already been seen earlier. Moreover the nature of Unity and non duality of impersonal Brahman brooks no external influence being an end to all externality and influence. This is seen by the salt doll anecdote of Sri Ramakrishna. A salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. However it dissolved, the ocean being the repository of salt. Here the salt represents Maya and modes of Nature which cover everything and explained in BG Chapter 7, 13, 14, 18. The Doll represents Jiva, the conditioned soul. The Ocean represents Brahman.

In the Bhagavad Purana we see the Raslila (divine sport of God) stretching for many yugas (Eternity) adjusted into a single night. This is as per the view of R.W.Emerson above. R.W. Emerson states ‘See how the deep divine thought reduces centuries and millenniaus and makes itself present through all ages’.

And so always the soul’s scale is one, the scale of the senses and the understanding is another. Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space and Nature shrink away’.

Soul being beyond time is the beyond the concept of New and old. Hence “divine thought” is equally present ‘through all ages’. This is as per BG 9.7, 15.15, 15.7, 4.1-8. We see in ‘Nature’ and also above as per the Bhagavad Gita, the soul is beyond Time, Space and Nature. Soul is essentially non different from Brahman whereas the latter are aspects of Prakriti. Hence lower and ‘shrink away’. Further the senses and sense pleasures have to be given up in order to realize the soul as per BG 6.4 and in ‘Compensation’ and also R.W.Emerson as seen here.

“And so we say that the Judgment is distant or near, that the Millennium approaches,”

Soul is beyond time. This is as per BG 9.7. Judgement is guided by the frame work of space-time since Cause and Effect and Action take place in material manifestation as per BG 13.22 and Chapter 13 respectively. This is as per the Law of Karm. Hence there is no scope for a particular Judgement day as preached by Christianity and Abrahamic religions as per both the Bhagavad Gita and R.W.Emerson. The ‘approaching’ of the ‘Millenium’ complies to the above concepts of the Bhagavad Gita and is as per BG 9.7, 13.22, 15.7. As per these Bhagavad Gita shlokas and R.W.Emerson’s statement above Judgement depends upon an individual’s thought and actions and is happening on the individual level continuously and shaping his situation. ‘Millenium’ in context of the above statements of Emerson also means and refers to consequences for the next birth after death depending upon one’s thought and actions and judgement on them and also the interim suffering in Hell or happiness in Heaven. ‘Millenium’ is thus applicable on the individual level.

PG142 R.W.Emerson states, ‘The soul knows only the soul;’ since the Soul is beyond material manifestation, modes of Nature, the fallible and infallible, (BG 15.18), ‘the web of events is the flowing robe in which she is clothed’. This is the conditioned soul or the Jiva of the Bhagavad Gita. It is conditioned as per its Karm, ‘events’ and modes of Nature (constitution of thought). It is as per BG 13.22.

R.W.Emerson states “To the well-born child all the virtues are natural, and not painfully acquired. Speak to his heart, and the man becomes suddenly virtuous.”

Here we see R.W.Emerson’s belief in transmigration of Souls and past life Karm influencing present birth and life, ‘well born’. We see this to be a part of the Bhagavad Gita in ‘Concept of Death’. ‘Virtuous’ or Satva being closest to the Soul, speaking to a man’s heart (highest feelings) makes him ‘suddenly virtuous’. Virtue is explained in “Compensation” as being closest to God. This is as per BG Chapter 14. ‘Well born’ is an aspect of judgement given by the Law of Karm.

R.W.Emerson states, “The soul requires purity. But purity is not it; requires justice, but justice is not that; requires beneficence, but is somewhat better;” Purity, Justice and beneficence are closest to the soul however the soul is beyond them. This is as per BG Chapter 2, 14, 18. However they are required to be practiced in order to reach the Soul as per the above BG Chapters and also the above words of R.W. Emerson. This is explained in ‘Compensation’ and BG Chapter 14. The Soul being beyond Virtue and Justice is explained in ‘Circles’ and is contained in Chapter 14 of the Bhagavad Gita.

R.W.Emerson states, “Within the same sentiment is the germ of intellectual growth, which obeys the same law. Those who are capable of humility, of justice, of love, of aspiration, stand already on a platform....in this moral...
We see here R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘moral beatitude’ is the same as that of the Bhagavad Gita and is actually the principle of Satva. We see in ‘Compensation’ R.W. Emerson’s ‘moral aim’ is the same as that of ‘Indian mythology’ or Vedic Dharm. We see in ‘Circles’ and also above ‘Love’ to God (Sagun Brahman) is the Vedic concept of Bhakti. ‘Aspiration’ is achieved though correct action and work which is Karm Yog of the Bhagavad Gita stated in BG Chapter 2, 3, 5, 18. We see in ‘Compensation’ justice as a part of the Law of Karm. The ‘Law’ spoken of here is Law leading to ‘moral beatitude’. This ‘law’ is Sanatan Vedic Dharm as discerned above and all are required to follow this ‘same law’. We see now this is the source of ‘intellectual growth’.

PG 143: R.W. Emerson states, “and the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind” This is realization of Brahman knowledge and realization of Brahman by the Soul as stated in BG 12.2, 13.13, 14.26. ‘finds itself related to all its works’, as it realizes the above relation, this is also as per BG 13.17 and also explained in Pg. 139 as ‘Sarvakilam Brahman’. This statement also brings out Bhakti, Karm and Gyan Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita stated in BG Chapter 2, 3, 5, 14, 18. R.W. Emerson states ‘and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers. In ascending to this primary and aboriginal sentiment’ Hence we see “this primary and aboriginal sentiment” is actually Brahman of the Bhagavad Gita. R.W. Emerson states “we have come from our remote station on the circumference instantaneously to the centre of the world, where, as in the closet of God, we see causes, and anticipate the universe, which is but a slow effect”. This is as per BG 10.39, 15.7. R.W. Emerson states ‘One mode of the divine teaching is the incarnation of the spirit in a form,—in forms, like my own’. This concept of “Incarnation” or “the incarnation of the spirit in a form” is explained in BG 15.8-11. R.W. Emerson could see this hence he was a Yogi as per BG 15.11. The concept of ‘Great Soul’ is seen in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’. A great Soul is a special incarnation of God different from the ordinary incarnation of beings enmeshed in the modes of Nature. This is as per BG 4.7-8, 10.41. We see here R.W. Emerson specifically this as ‘Divine teaching’. This means Vedic teaching of the above BG shlokas. The concept of incarnation is integral to the Bhagavad Gita and Vedic thought. We also see it in ‘Circles’.

R.W. Emerson states ‘But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. This is as per BG 13.16, 15.15, 17. Persons themselves acquaint us with the impersonal. In all conversation between two persons tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; is God”. We see here the influence of impersonal Brahman concept of Adi Sankaracharya on R.W. Emerson. We see here R.W. Emerson’s ‘God’ in context of the above statements is impersonal Brahman of the Bhagavad Gita and stated in BG 12.3-4, 13.16, 13.17, 15.18, this is ‘common nature’ of R.W. Emerson.

R.W. Emerson states, ‘The mind is one, and the best minds, who love truth for its own sake, think much less of property in truth. They accept it thankfully everywhere, and do not label or stamp it with any man’s name, for it is theirs long beforehand, and from eternity.’ Truth is ‘from Eternity’ as it is a path to Brahman as per the Bhagavad Gita concept of Nirgun Brahman. ‘Truth’ is a state of existence. This is Brahman realization. ‘Truth’ is also Dharm as Dharm is path to Brahman realization. This is as per BG 4.34, 10.4, 13.12, 16.1-2, 17.23. Hence ‘the best minds, who love truth for its own sake’, the best persons follow Dharm and the Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita for its own sake and love of Brahman. ‘Truth’ ‘is theirs long beforehand, and from eternity’ because the individual soul is always connected to Brahman and this relation is beyond cause and effect as per BG 13.13. Hence ‘truth’ is Brahman. I have also explained these aspects of R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘truth’ in ‘Self Reliance’ as aspect of the Bhagavad Gita. Hence R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘truth’ is not just fact or objective. This is also understood from Emerson’s statements below. ‘Best minds’ is the same as concept of Satva in the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 14 which follows Dharm where truth should be loved for its own sake and is also connected with the Yoga of Karm where one has to discharge his duties and perform his work without desire for the fruit, thus duty for duty’s sake.

Pg 144: R.W. Emerson states, “The action of the soul is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid than in that which is said in any conversation. It broods over every society, and they unconsciously seek for it in each other”. This is as per Brahman concept as stated by Sri Adi Shankaracharya and the Bhagavad Gita. It is beyond speech. It is present over all society for all time as per BG 9.7 and 15.15-18.

R.W. Emerson states, “In my dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my accomplishments and my money steal me nothing; but as much soul as I have avails. If I am willful, he sets his will against mine, one for one, and leaves me, if I please, the degradation of beating him by my superiority of strength. But if I renounce my will and act for the soul, setting that up as umpire between us two, out of his young eyes looks the same soul; he reveres and loves with me”. This brings out Universality of the soul as per the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, 12, 14, 18. It shows that the same Soul is present everywhere. This is as per BG 13.16. ‘setting that up as umpire between us two’ hence means we interact correctly by setting up the standard of Brahman, this includes Dharm and Bhakti and Karm (which includes virtue) yogas of the Bhagavad Gita. This is for the true benefit of the ‘child’ hence ‘he reveres and loves with me’.

R.W. Emerson states “The soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth”. This is as per BG 4.34, 10.4, 13.12, 13.16, 16.1-2. This reveals Brahman as ‘truth’ concept of Emerson. We realize here ‘truth’ is not fact. ‘Truth’ is Dharm and the yogas as they are path to Brahman. ‘truth’ is also Brahman realization, being
‘revealed’. This is as per BG 12.2.-4, 13.13, 13.32, 14.26.-27. Hence the conditioned soul is ‘the perceiver and revealer of truth’.

R.W. Emerson states “We know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake”. This is because truth is self existent as seen above, being Brahman. This is as per the above BG shlokas.

R.W. Emerson states, “It is no proof of a man’s understanding to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false, - this is the mark and character of intelligence”. To know truth is a very high state of evolution, development, realization of man. We see the above BG shlokas revealing Brahman as ‘truth’ concept of R.W. Emerson. In addition in the BG 10.4 we see truth is created by Brahman. BG 16.1-2 mention that practice of truth leads to Brahman hence to ‘discern’ truth correctly is the ‘mark and character of intelligence’. This is as per the views of R.W. Emerson. As per BG 14.17, real and correct knowledge develops from Satva or ‘character of intelligence’. This is Dharm and the Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita. Such a person can discern ‘what is true is true’. Truth is revealed as Dharm which is realized correctly by Satva as per BG Chapter 14.

R.W. Emerson states, “In the book I read, the good thought returns to me, as every truth will, the image of the whole soul. To the bad thought which I find in it, the same soul becomes a discerning, separating sword, and lops it away.” This is the Satvic view of the Bhagavad Gita. So we conclude that R.W. Emerson was Satvic. This is as per the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 14, Virtue leads to God and Vice away from it. The wise thus discard ‘bad thought’ with the help of Satva. BG 14.17 states “from Satva (virtue or ‘good thought’) correct knowledge (of Dharm) develops, from Rajas (passion) greed develops, from Tamas (vice or ‘bad thought’) ignorance, foolishness and madness develops (leading away from Dharma)”. This is also as per BG 18.30–32.

R.W. Emerson states, “For the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us and casts his dread omniscience through us over things”. This establishes the relation between Soul, Over soul and Material existence which is the same as the Bhagavad Gita relation between Brahman, Soul and Prakriti that we see in BG Chapter 7, 13, 15, 17–20.

R.W. Emerson states, “For the soul’s communication of truth is the highest event in nature, since it then does not give somewhat from itself, but it gives itself, or passes into and becomes that man whom it enlightens; or, in proportion to that truth he receives, it takes him to itself”. This is the Soul realizing itself as Brahman and enlightening the man within whom this happens and this is ‘truth’ and hence ‘the soul’s communication of truth’. It is as per realization of self as in the Bhagavad Gita 12.2.-4, 14.26.-27 and as described by Sri Adi Shankaracharya and seen below. R.W. Emerson here speaks of ‘truth’ as an aspect of soul or Brahman and Brahman realization, this is as per the Bhagavad Gita shlokas quoted above.

PG145 R.W. Emerson states, “We distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature, by the term Revelation”. Similarly in the Bhagavad Gita this is the ability to see the Atman or Soul or Self as per BG 12.3-4, 13.31, 14.27. R.W. Emerson states “These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime”. This is transcendental emotion or Samadhi as per BG 5.21, 6.20-23. R.W. Emerson states “For this communication is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind”. This is as per BG 12.2, 13.13, 14.26. This can happen only in a pure mind and mind of a ‘Great Soul’ like R.W. Emerson (see ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’ for the explanation of ‘great soul’). This is the definition of Samadhi. Samadhi is the influx of Divine Brahman into the Conditioned Soul or the individual within Maya. R.W. Emerson states “It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life. Every distinct apprehension of this central commandment agitates men with awe and delight”. This gives transcendental happiness as described in BG 6.20.-23. This is R.W. Emerson’s ‘awe and delight’ being merger in Brahman as per BG 12.2-4, 14.26–27, the individual material identity is lost and transcended hence it is ‘an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life’. R.W. Emerson states ‘A thrill passes through all men at the reception of new truth, or at the performance of a great action, which comes out of the heart of nature. In these communications the power to see is not separated from the will to do’, This is as truth is Brahman as per BG 4.34, 10.4, 13.12. We see now R.W. Emerson’s ‘truth’ here is Samadhi concept of the Bhagavad Gita. Correct action as part of Dharm leads to Brahman. This is as per BG Chapter 2 and 3. This insight and the will to perform it are both Karm Yog which connects us to Brahman. Hence Brahman is R.W. Emerson’s ‘heart of nature’. ‘but the insight proceeds from obedience, and the obedience proceeds from a joyful perception’. Obedience here hence means performing correct action as per Karm Yog covered in BG Chapter 2, 3 and ‘receiving’ ‘truth’ through following Dharm, Karm and Bhakti Yogas as per BG Chapter 2, 3, 5, 12 and 18, thus one develops ‘insight’, ‘a joyful perception’, ‘obedience’ is of Dharm, Bhakti and Karm Yogas and thus reaching Brahman. “Every moment when the individual feels himself invaded by it is memorable. By the necessity of our constitution a certain enthusiasm attends the individual’s consciousness of that divine presence”. This is Samadhi. It is explained in BG 5.21, 6.20-23, 14.26–27. “The character and duration of this enthusiasm varies with the state of the individual, from an ecstasy and trance and prophetic inspiration”. R.W. Emerson was so well versed and understood so well the concept of Samadhi (and also in fact experienced it), that he could assess and comment on its duration, character and level or quality as per the state of the individual. We similarly see Sri Rama Krishna giving a detailed description of Samadhi, and different kinds of Samadhi. Sri Rama Krishna discusses the different levels.
and quality of Samadhi. comparing it to the light of the lamp, light of various kinds of fire, light of the moon and the sun and their combined light. This is similar to the view of R.W.Emerson. R.W.Emerson explains here the state of Samadhi. R.W.Emerson understood this ultimate stage of Union of Soul and Over Soul. Samadhi has been stated in the BG 5.20–5.21, 6.18, 6.20–6.23, 6.25, 12.2–4, 13.13, .131, 14.26, .27. Samadhi has been completely explained by Sri Adi Shankaracharya and Ramanuja in their Bhashyas (commentaries) of these shlokas of the BG. Some of these explain Samadhi as the individual soul realizing itself as Brahman ‘its manifestations of its own nature’. This is Advait philosophy of Sri Shankaracharya, the ability to see the Atman or Soul or Self as all (Nirgun Brahman). Some of the above Bhagavad Gita shlokas explain ‘and influx of the Divine mind into our mind’ as Vishistadvait philosophy as delineated by Sri Ramanuja or the Dvait philosophy, as per both of these minute (anu) individual soul entering into a permanent relation with Brahman as Sagun Brahman, Brahman entering into the conditioned soul’s mind thus attaining Salvation and also Samadhi. These are as per the views of R.W.Emerson expressed above. Samadhi is the highest spiritual experience of the soul as per the above Bhagavad Gita shlokas. R.W.Emerson too considers similarly; ‘the announcements of the soul’. R.W.Emerson states, ‘Which is its rarer appearance,—to the faintest glow of virtuous emotion, in which form it warms, like our household fires, all the families and associations of men, and makes society possible. This is social life achieved through Dharm which is a path to Brahman. I have explained Dharm in ‘Self Reliance’ through the Bhagavad Gita and statements of saints. As brought out there Dharm is the realization of material and spiritual worlds as manifestation of Brahman. It is the realization that through following Karm and Bhakti yogas one can attain Brahman realization. Dharm includes correct duties towards God and the World, which includes duties towards country, society and family. This is as per BG Chapters 2, 3, 5, 12, 14, 18. Hence the Vedic concepts of family and family values have to be upheld. Thus all acts which violate family life have to be discarded. This is the view of Emerson through his statement. Pg 146 R.W.Emerson states “A certain tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in men, as if they had been “blasted with excess of light.” The trances of Socrates, the “union” of Plotinus, the vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and his Quakers, the illumination of Swedenborg, are of this kind”. We see here ‘Great Souls’ were made and perfected by experiencing Samadhi. ‘Insanity’ in this context means accompanying symptoms and qualities. R.W.Emerson states “What was in the case of these remarkable persons ravishment, has, in innumerable instances in common life, been exhibited in less striking manner. Everywhere the history of religion betrays a tendency to enthusiasm”. It is also present ‘in less striking manner’ in history of religion everywhere. Samadhi is religion. R.W.Emerson states “The rapture of the Moravian and Quietist; the opening of the internal sense of the Word, in the language of the New Jerusalem Church; the revival of the Calvinistic churches; the experiences of the Methodists, are varying forms of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul”. R.W.Emerson explains the above as various forms, and manifestation of Samadhi; of the individual Soul mingling with the Universal Soul which is the same as the merger of Soul in Brahman, divine unity. This is Samadhi as per the above Bhagavad Gita shlokas. We see R.W.Emerson agrees totally with the BG concept of “the individual soul always mingles with the Universal soul”. Shudder of awe and delight is revealed as the ‘emotion’ of Samadhi.

R.W.Emerson states, “The nature of these revelations is the same; they are perceptions of the absolute law. They are solutions of the soul’s own questions”. From the above context, R.W.Emerson’s ‘Absolute Law’ is the requirement for Samadhi and ‘revelation’. Hence it is the same as ‘Dharm’ and various Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita, particularly Karm Yog (BG Chapter 2,3,5,18) Bhakti Yog (BG Chapter 2, 12, 14, 18) Gyan Yog (BG Chapter 6,12) . Thus this is also ‘solutions of the soul’s own questions’. R.W.Emerson states, “To truth, justice, love, the attributes of the soul, the idea of immutableness is essentially associated”. We have seen earlier ‘truth’ is path to Brahman (this is Dharm) ‘truth’ is also Brahman realization. This is also explained in ‘Self Reliance’. We see in the Kathopanishad “He who desires God will get love, unto him God gives Himself”. We further see Love in connection with soul as devotion to Personal God (Sagun Brahman) in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’ and also above. This is Bhakti Yog. Justice is a part of the Law of Karm and Karm Yog as seen in ‘Compensation’ and ‘Fate’ and in BG 13.22. Since Dharm and the yogas lead to Brahman realization, hence all these are ‘the attributes of the soul’ and are also ‘immutable’ as per the Bhagavad Gita Chapters quoted above describing the Yogas and also as per Emerson.

Pg 147: R.W.Emerson states, “Jesus, living in these moral sentiments, heedless of sensual fortunes, heeding only the manifestations of these, never made the separation of the idea of duration from the essence of these attributes, nor uttered a syllable concerning the duration of the soul. It was left to his disciples to sever duration from the moral elements, and to teach the immortality of the soul as a doctrine, and maintain it by evidences. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen.” R.W.Emerson here appreciates the ‘Heeding and living in these moral sentiments’ by Jesus in contrast to his disciples who distorted or mutated his teachings leading to a ‘fallen’ state of Man. Here R.W.Emerson shows further development of Christianity after Jesus by his disciples though leading to detiroration. We see above ‘moral elements’ are
'attributes' of the soul as per the Bhagavad Gita and R.W. Emerson and these cannot be separated and taught as a separate doctrine maintained by 'evidences'.

R.W. Emerson states “For the soul is true to itself, and the man in whom it is shed abroad cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which would be finite”. In Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita Krishna exhorts Arjun to act in the present; his actions could not have been postponed. Thus acting in the present is a compulsory unavoidable part of Karm Yog. Thus only one reaches Brahman which is ‘infinite’. This is referred to here by R.W. Emerson. Similarly Bhakti and Gyan Yog have also to be practiced in the present. This is examined also in “Self Reliance”. The “soul” following the yogas of the Bhagavad Gita is being ‘true to itself’, as seen above.

R.W. Emerson states, “It is not in an arbitrary “decree of God,” but in the nature of man, that a veil shuts down on the facts of to-morrow; for the soul will not have as read any other cipher than that of cause and effect”. In Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita Krishna mentions various scenarios as per the decision of Arjun whether to fight or not in the present. These include Arjun’s death in War or his survival. Hence the future is unknowable within Prakriti or ‘Nature’ by man and anything else. However through our actions or correct action (Karm Yog) the future is shaped. Karm Yog has to be practiced in the present. Thus the soul is ‘true to itself’. This brings out the compulsory necessity of acting in the present. The above views of the Bhagavad Gita and R.W. Emerson are similar. Cause and effect are seen as a part of Karm Yog in ‘Self Reliance’. As per Vedic Dharshan the present life is the prarabdha karm. This is selected out of the sum total of the actions (causes) of all the past life times of a conditioned soul called sanchit karm. Prarabdha Karm is thus the ‘cipher of cause and effect’. Prarabdha Karm can take us to Brahman realization through Dharms. Hence this can be considered the correct ‘nature of man’ as it shuts down ‘the facts of to-morrow’. For these reasons Vedic saints advise aspirants to depend on Prarabdha and not run after desires. As per BG 13.22, cause and effect govern all and judge all hence too all have to ‘read’ this ‘cipher’.

R.W. Emerson states, ‘The only mode of obtaining an answer to these questions of the senses is to forego all low curiosity, and, accepting the tide of being which floats us into the secret of nature, work and live, work and live, and all unawares the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are ne’. This is the same as R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘own work’. This is as per ‘Swadharm and Jati Dharm’ and through these Karm Yog is practiced as stated in the Bhagavad Gita. One does ‘work and live’ foregoing ‘all low curiosity’. This implies things other than Karm Yog and includes sense gratification from the context. Sense gratification is to be rejected as per BG 2.44, 67, 5.21, 7.13, 18.51. Additionally things other than Karm Yog can mean Adharm which has to be rejected. We see Karm Yog in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Compensation’. This is R.W. Emerson’s ‘secret of nature’. Questions and Answers are thus transcended and become irrelevant, ‘are ne’. The concept of ‘own work’ takes us to Brahman as per Karm Yog. Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita also states the ideal of work for work’s sake. Hence one has to ‘work and live, work and live’.

PG 148. R.W. Emerson states, “No; the wisdom of the wise man consists herein, that he does not judge them; he lets them judge themselves and merely reads and records their own verdict.” Here we see a man is judged by ‘himself’ or ‘God within’ and passes his own verdict. This is only possible if man has an indwelling soul which is not different from Brahman. This is as per BG 13.13, 13.16, 15.15. This also indicates the incorrectness of the Christian concept of a final judgment day for which all have to wait dead in their graves. To understand thus is ‘the wisdom of the wise man’.

PG 149 R.W. Emerson states, “By virtue of this inevitable nature, private will is overpowered, and, maugre our efforts or our imperfections, your genius will speak from you, and mine from me.” Thus genius is ‘own nature’. This overcomes ‘private will’, ‘private will’ here from the context means subjects and things other than the yogas of the Bhagavad Gita and including sense gratification and ignorance. ‘Own nature’ is a part of Swadharm and stated in BG 3.33, 11.51, 18.59, 60. BG 11.51 shows that on having vision of the universal form the ‘private will’ of Arjun is over powered and his own nature (‘genius’ of Emerson) speaks or is manifested. Hence as R.W. Emerson states “The same Omniscience flows into the intellect, and makes what we call genius”. “But geniuses are religious. It is a larger imbibing of the common heart”. In ‘Self Reliance’ we see R.W. Emerson’s ‘genius’ is actually ‘own nature’ of the Bhagavad Gita and that no one can overcome his ‘own nature’, this is as per the Bhagavad Gita 3.33. Following ‘own nature’ is essential for Karm Yog. This is as per R.W. Emerson’s thought that ‘genius is religious’. Hence R.W. Emerson considers ‘religion’ to be Dharm, Karm Yog and ‘own nature’ concepts of the Bhagavad Gita. Dharm includes well being of all living beings as per BG 5.25. Hence Genius ‘is a larger imbibing of the common heart’.

PG151 R.W. Emerson states, “Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. This is the concept of Samadhi in Vishistadvait and Dvait philosophy of the Vedas as seen earlier. This is as per BG 12.2, 13.13, 14.26. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; This is the concept of Samadhi in Advait philosophy. This is as per BG 12.3-, 13.31, 14.27. ‘yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self’- this is seen above on Page 145 as Samadhi. is new and unsearchable”. This shows that all can merge in God. The Universal self is new and unsearchable. These are expressed in BG 8.3, 5.21. Brahman is
ever 'new' being above the concept of time. This is as per BG 2.20, 9.7-8, 10.30, 10.33, 11.32. Brahman is 'unsearchable' being beyond material nature, the fallible and the infallible. This is as per BG 13.13, 13.16-17, 14.27, and 15.15.

R.W. Emerson states, “The soul gives itself, alone, original and pure, to the Lonely. Original and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young and nimble.” This is concept of Samadhi (merger of soul and over soul) as seen above. The Soul is young being original and beyond time. The soul is ‘alone, original and pure’ as per BG Chapter 2, 18, 13.13. R.W. Emerson states “It is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not called religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature”. This is as per BG Chapter 2, 3, 7, 13. Material Laws are inferior to Spiritual Laws as per BG 9.7, 13.13, 13.15. Further BG 7.4 states that the material world is constituted out of Brahman. BG 7.5 states that Life is ‘over them’ or superior to the material world, all being dependent upon Brahman or, as Emerson states, ‘a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature’.  "nature" here is the nature of Soul or Brahman seen above. All Laws are connected to and emanate from the Soul as per BG Chapter 7, 13, 15.15. The soul is not ‘religious’ being beyond the modes of nature (which include virtue and vice) as per BG 15.15 and being beyond Dharm and Adharm. However as per BG Chapter 14, in existence and life virtue has to be practiced and vice discarded as path to the soul. The soul is ‘innocent’ because it is beyond the modes of nature (constitution of thought) hence beyond Karm and action and its consequence.

PG 153: R.W. Emerson states, ‘Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect.’ This is how through Advait Philosophy of Sri Adi Shankaracharya and also mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita the imperfect conditioned Soul which is the limited being within Material manifestation can adore its own perfect self as the Over Soul and impersonal Brahman. This is as per the relation of Brahman and soul as explained earlier. This is as per BG 12.3-4, 13.31, 14.27. ‘This is Samadhi as per Advait philosophy. Arjun in the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is considered to be a deluded soul hence imperfect who receives knowledge of Brahman from Krishna which includes Advait knowledge and realizes that he is one with Brahman which is to be adored as perfect. This is an aspect of Samadhi explained in Page 145. We see that R.W. Emerson’s views on Brahman (Pg 139, 145) Samadhi (Pg 145) Advait, Vishistadvait and Dvait philosophies (Pg 139, 145, 151, 153) are as per the philosophy of Adi Shankaracharya seen in Pg 139. Hence Emerson can be considered to be a spiritual disciple of Sri Adi Shankaracharya.

R.W. Emerson states, “I am somehow receptive of the great soul”, This is the condition of Samadhi and influx of Brahman seen above. R.W. Emerson states “and thereby I do Overlook the sun and the stars and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass”. Being in Samadhi R.W. Emerson feels as per Brahman. This is as per BG 13.13, 15.15. This is above material manifestations. R.W. Emerson states ‘More and more the surges of everlasting nature’. This is the nature of Brahman as per BG 13.13, .32. We see here R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘everlasting nature’ is Brahman. R.W. Emerson states ‘enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So come I to live in thoughts and act with energies which are immortal’. The action of those who have achieved Samadhi will be in accordance with immortality of the soul seen in BG 13.13, and truth, virtue and Dharm seen above. Dharm includes ‘public and human ideals’ as per BG 5.25 and BG Chapter 2. We see as per R.W. Emerson Dharm is the correct ‘public and human in my regards and actions’. ‘Thus revering the soul’, this is the concept of Karm and Bhakti Yogas as per the Bhagavad Gita and seen in ‘Self Reliance’ and ‘Circles’. Bhakti Yog is explained by Visistadvait and Dvait philosophies covered in BG 12.2, 13.13, 14.26, BG Chapter 2, 12. Karm Yog is covered in BG Chapter 2, 3, 5, 18. ‘and learning, as the ancient said, that “its beauty is immense”, R.W. Emerson considers beauty to be according to Brahman. This is a part of Bhakti Yog. R.W. Emerson states “man will come to see that the world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh, this is as per BG 9.7, 10.39, 15.17 and be less astonished at particular wonders; he will learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred;” history is ‘sacred’ as it contains these concepts of material manifestations and life being aspects of soul and the concept of Samadhi or Brahman realization. R.W. Emerson states “that the universe is represented in an atom”, BG 13.14, 13.16 explain that the Supreme Being or Brahman is represented even in the smallest particle. This is reaffirmed by Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1 as seen above. BG shlokas 10.30, 10.33 and 11.32 state that God has become Time. So God is both Universe and Time hence the Universe is present ‘in a moment of time’. R.W. Emerson’s concept of ‘beauty’ is hence Brahman realization. From the above meanings and contexts it is evident R.W. Emerson refers to Brahman as ‘great soul’ here. This is different from his usage of ‘great soul’ elsewhere in his works where he refers it for a saint or an incarnation of god as per BG 4.1-8.

R.W. Emerson states, “He will weave no longer a spotted life of shreds and patches, but he will live with a divine unity. This is the unity of Soul and Brahman as seen in BG 12.2-4, 13.13, 14.26-27 and achieved through Karm, Bhakti and the other Yogas of the Bhagavad Gita and ‘live’ thus. This is the concept of Samadhi explained above in Page 145 and 151. “He will cease from what is base and frivolous in his life and be content with all places and with any service he can render.” This is the concept of being content with Prarabdha karm (seen in Pg 147) and thus not running after uncontrolled desires and acting as per the situation and render any
service possible of him, This is as per BG 4.13, 18.41-44. This service has to be rendered keeping in mind 'justice' as seen on Pg 142,146. This is as per BG 13.22 as seen on Pg 146. 'Base and frivolous' includes sense gratification, delusion and laziness which is thus rejected by both R.W. Emerson and also the Bhagavad Gita in 2.67, 3.34, 18.38.39 and elsewhere. This also refers to 'own work' and 'own nature' concepts of both the Bhagavad Gita and R.W. Emerson. He will calmly front the morrow in the negligency of that trust which carries God with it and so hath already the whole future in the bottom of the heart'. This brings out that physical nature, events and results and their consequences are inconsequential to those following the Yogas and Dharm, here stated as 'trust which carries God with it'. This is due to their taking the correct action irrespective of the desire for fruit as per the Dharma and Karm Yog in BG Chapter 2 Krishna asks Arjun to fight the War irrespective of the consequences of victory, defeat of death, as a concept of duty. Thus one reaches beatitude or peace. Thus one has 'already the whole future in the bottom of the heart' since one is not bound by the desire for fruits of one's actions. 'Everlasting nature' is here explained as reached through the merger of Brahman and soul, Brahman realization. Since Brahman pervades everything and everything attains to Brahman at the end of the time span of the yogs, this is as per BG 9.7, 10.39, 13.14...16, "the Universe is represented in an atom". 'Divine unity' in a person makes him act as per Satva or virtue which is the last step towards Brahman realization, (this is as per BG Chapter 14, 18) and abhor Tamas or vice and sense gratification which leads to 'base and frivolous in life'. Thus being in 'trust which carries God with it', which includes also being united with God, such a person will already have the 'whole future in the bottom of his heart', as he has overcome desire for fruit of action and sense gratification which exists in time and he is going to act as per Dharma and the yogs. Time is also an aspect of God. All these thoughts of R.W. Emerson are as per the relation of soul and Brahman and the definition of Brahman in the Bhagavad Gita.

References

[1] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291 Over Soul, Pg.138-154. Emerson’s quotations from this reference are in italics after the relevant page No. as per this reference.
[8] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Over Soul, Pg 153.
[12] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Over Soul, Pg.139.
[13] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Over Soul, Pg.139.
[14] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Over Soul, Pg.139.
[16] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Over Soul, Pg.139.
[17] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Circles, Pg.161.
[18] Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics series, Jim Manis, Faculty Editor. Hazelton: PA 16201-1291, Compensation, Pg.58.