

॥ आत्मबोधः ॥

ATMA BODHA

Knowledge of the Supreme Self

“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”

TEXT

03

Reflections by
SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA



Sandeepany's Vedanta Course

List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:

Text No.	TITLE OF TEXT	Text No.	TITLE OF TEXT
1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
3	<i>Atma Bodha</i>	26	<i>Advaita Makaranda</i>
4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
5	<i>Manisha Panchakam</i>	28	<i>Bhagavad Geeta (Discourse --)</i>
6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
7	<i>Upadesha Sara</i>	30	<i>Amritabindu Upanishad</i>
8	<i>Prashna Upanishad</i>	31	<i>Mukunda Mala (Bhakti Text)</i>
9	<i>Dhanyashtakam</i>	32	<i>Tapovan Shatkam</i>
10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
18	<i>"Nataka Deepa" – Panchadasi 10</i>	41	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>
19	<i>Isavasya Upanishad</i>	42	<i>Dakshinamurty Ashtakam</i>
20	<i>Katha Upanishad</i>	43	<i>Shad Darshanaah</i>
21	<i>"Sara Sangrah" – Yoga Vasishtha</i>	44	<i>Brahma Sootras</i>
22	<i>Vedanta Sara</i>	45	<i>Jivanmuktananda Lahari</i>
23	<i>Mahabharata + Geeta Dhyanam</i>	46	<i>Chinmaya Pledge</i>

A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

– The Editor, 1st June 2017, Sannyasa Day of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
03



॥ आत्मबोधः ॥

ATMA BODHA

"Knowledge of the Self"

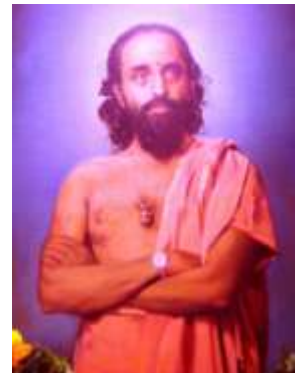
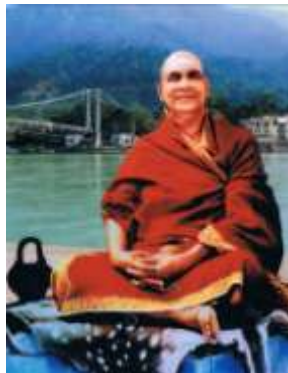
Composed by

Sri Adi Shankaracharyaji

Reflections

by SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA

*on the 35 Lectures delivered by Swami Advayananda,
Acharyaji, 15th Batch Vedanta Course
AT SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA, POWAI, MUMBAI
November 19th to December 24th, 2011*



Adi Shankaracharya

Swami Sivananda

Swami Tapovanji

Swami Chinmayananda

SERVE • LOVE • GIVE • PURIFY • MEDITATE • REALISE

Copyright & Author's Details

Author: *Swami Gurubhaktananda, ex Krishna Chaitanya, born Bipin R. Kapitan of Durban, South Africa.*

Residence: *Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India.*

Email: gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com

© 2017 All Rights Reserved. Copyright held by Chinmaya International Foundation, Kerala.

About This Edition:

Web Edition: 1st June 2017 Sannyasa Day of Sri Swami Sivananda

Website: Chinmaya International Foundation: www.chinfo.org

Series Title : **The Sandeepany Experience**

Series Subject: Vedanta & supportive subsidiary texts.

Declaration by the Author: *The material in this series is under inspiration of the Sandeepany Vedanta Course, but largely consists of the Author's reflections on the Course. He is deeply indebted to the Chinmaya Mission for its excellent presentation of the Course by their renowned and dedicated Acharyas.*

Personal Dedication

1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan

who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;

2. To Puja Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj

the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;

3. To Puja Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)

for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;

4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji

my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.

॥ आत्मबोधः ॥

ATMA BODHA

“Knowledge of the Self”

FOR SAMSKRIT TEXT WITH SANDHEES

Guide to Splitting Sandhees

Conventional Samskrit Format is used in the body of the book.

Split-Sandhee Samskrit Format is given at the end of the book, for the benefit of *beginners*. Word-combinations (Sandhees) are highlighted in bold underline (as shown in the table below) to help indicate the splitting of words. This is an original feature.

Purpose: To assist new students who are just finding their way in Samskrit to break up the words (Pada Chheda). It is not intended for those already proficient in Samskrit.

How it Works: 1. Enables normal chanting. The bold underlined letters are Sandhees, not words, and are needed only to join words for correct chanting.

2. Indicates splitting of words. To determine the words on either side of the Sandhee, the following table may be used. [The table has been applied in the transliteration within the body of the book, where individual words are used.]

Add to End of Prior Word	SANDHEE	Add to Front of Posterior Word
अ (a)	- <u>आ</u> - (aa)	अ (a)
इ (i)	- <u>ई</u> - (ee)	इ (i)
उ (u)	- <u>ऊ</u> - (oo)	उ (u)
elongated vowel	- <u>"x</u> -	short vowel
short vowel	- <u>x"</u> -	elongated vowel
elongated vowel	- <u>"x"</u> -	elongated vowel
अ (a)	- <u>ए</u> - (e)	इ (i)
अ (a)	- <u>ऐ</u> - (ai)	ए (e)
अ (a)	- <u>ओ</u> - (o)	उ (u)
अ (a)	- <u>औ</u> - (au)	ऐ (ai)
अः (ah)	- <u>ओ</u> (o)	unaffected
इ (i)	- <u>य्</u> (y)	unaffected
उ (u)	- <u>व्</u> (v)	unaffected
: (h)	- <u>स्</u> , - <u>र्</u> , - <u>श्</u>	unaffected

ATMA BODHA
“Knowledge of the Self”

CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION	4
	1. INVOCATION (Verse 1)	5
VERSE 1:	<i>The Qualified Student for this Text</i>	6
	2. SELF-KNOWLEDGE (Verses 2 – 5)	8
VERSE 2:	<i>As Fire – the Direct Cause for Cooking</i>	8
VERSE 3:	<i>As Light – the Sole Remover of Darkness</i>	10
VERSE 4:	<i>As Sun – Revealed When Clouds Pass Away</i>	11
VERSE 5:	<i>As Coagulant – Settles After Cleaning Water</i>	13
	3. THE WORLD (Verses 6 – 9)	14
VERSE 6:	<i>As a Dream Only!</i>	14
VERSE 7:	<i>As Mother-of-Pearl Appears Silver</i>	15
VERSE 8:	<i>As Mere Bubbles in Water</i>	16
VERSE 9:	<i>As Ornaments Made of Gold</i>	17
	4. THE UPADHIS (Verses 10 – 14)	20
VERSE 10:	<i>As Space – One Appears as Many</i>	20
VERSE 11:	<i>As Flavours Superimposed in Water</i>	21
VERSE 12:	<i>The Gross Body</i>	22
VERSE 13:	<i>The Subtle Body</i>	23
VERSE 14:	<i>The Causal Body</i>	24
	5. AN ERROR OF MISAPPREHENSION (Verses 15 – 24)	26
VERSE 15:	<i>As a Colour Appears in a Crystal</i>	26
VERSE 16:	<i>As Rice Grain is Uncovered</i>	27
VERSE 17:	<i>As the Reflection in a Mirror</i>	29
VERSE 18:	<i>As a King – Distinct from the Crowd</i>	29
VERSE 19:	<i>As the Moon – Appearing to Run</i>	30
VERSE 20:	<i>As Sunlight Keeps People Busy</i>	31
VERSE 21:	<i>As Blueness is Superimposed on the Sky</i>	32
VERSE 22:	<i>As Tremblings Are Attributed to Moon</i>	33

VERSE 23:	<i>Where Do Attachments, etc, Reside?</i>	34
VERSE 24:	<i>As the “Essential Nature” of a Thing</i>	35
	6. THE BIRTH OF THE EGO (Verses 25 – 37)	36
VERSE 25:	<i>The Fundamental Error – Birth of EGO</i>	36
VERSE 26:	<i>The Deluded Ego Claims to Act and Know</i>	37
VERSE 27:	<i>As Mistaking the Rope for a Snake</i>	38
VERSE 28:	<i>As a Lamp Illumines Objects</i>	40
VERSE 29:	<i>As a Lighted Lamp Illumines Itself</i>	41
VERSE 30:	<i>The Negation of All Conditionings</i>	41
VERSE 31:	<i>As Perishable as Bubbles</i>	42
VERSE 32:	<i>Beyond the Body and Sense Objects Am I</i>	43
VERSE 33:	<i>Beyond Mind and Pranas Am I</i>	44
VERSE 34:	<i>Beyond all Attributes Am I</i>	45
VERSE 35:	<i>Beyond All Change and Taint Am I</i>	47
VERSE 36:	<i>This is What I Am!</i>	48
VERSE 37:	<i>As Medicine Destroys Diseases</i>	48
	7. TOWARDS REALISATION (Verses 38 – 53)	50
VERSE 38:	<i>Meditate Upon Such a Self</i>	50
VERSE 39:	<i>Total Abidance in the Self</i>	51
VERSE 40:	<i>The All-Full Infinite State</i>	52
VERSE 41:	<i>The Implications of Non-Duality</i>	54
VERSE 42:	<i>As Fire Kindled in the Arani</i>	55
VERSE 43:	<i>As the Sunrise Clears Darkness</i>	55
VERSE 44:	<i>As the Missing Necklace</i>	56
VERSE 45:	<i>As the Post Appears as Ghost</i>	57
VERSE 46:	<i>As Wrong Notions of Directions Are Destroyed</i>	58
VERSE 47:	<i>The Vision of the “Eye of Wisdom”</i>	60
VERSE 48:	<i>The Universal Vision of Self</i>	62
VERSE 49:	<i>As a Worm Transforms into a Wasp</i>	63
VERSE 50:	<i>As “Atma Rama” – the Inner Saga of Rama</i>	64
VERSE 51:	<i>As a Lamp Placed Within a Jar</i>	66
VERSE 52:	<i>As Space, As a Fool, and As Wind - Unattached</i>	67
VERSE 53:	<i>As Water, Space & Light Dissolve into Themselves</i>	68
	8. REVELLING IN FREEDOM (Verses 54 – 67)	71
VERSE 54:	<i>There is No Other Seeking – 1</i>	71
VERSE 55:	<i>There is No Other Seeking – 2</i>	72

VERSE 56:	<i>The Infinite, Eternal and Non-Dual Reality</i>	73
VERSE 57:	<i>Method of Negation and Assertion</i>	75
VERSE 58:	<i>A Particle of Bliss Only Enjoyed by Deities</i>	75
VERSE 59:	<i>As Butter Permeates Milk</i>	76
VERSE 60:	<i>The Attributeless Brahman</i>	77
	<i>Ramblings on Realisation</i>	78
VERSE 61:	<i>The Self-luminous Brahman</i>	79
VERSE 62:	<i>As Fire Permeates the Red-hot Iron Ball</i>	81
VERSE 63:	<i>As the Unreal Shine of a Mirage</i>	82
VERSE 64:	<i>Reality Can Only Be Brahman, the Non-Dual</i>	84
VERSE 65:	<i>As the Blind Do Not See the Sun</i>	83
VERSE 66:	<i>As Molten Gold is Freed of Dross</i>	84
VERSE 67:	<i>As the Sun Destroys Darkness</i>	85
	9. CONCLUSION	86
VERSE 68:	<i>The Promise of Fulfillment</i>	86
	<i>Thought Flow In Atma Bodha</i>	87
	<i>Split-Sandhee Samskrit Version</i>	91
	<i>Split-Sandhee English Transliteration</i>	96



SRI HANUMAN

ATMA BODHA
(68 verses, 9 Chapters)
<i>“KNOWLEDGE of the SELF”</i>

INTRODUCTION

ATMA BODHA IS A *Prakarna Grantha*, dealing with Knowledge of the Self. It describes the state of realization from different standpoints, using various comparisons from day-to-day experiences. It explicitly conveys Brahman as the only Reality and all other Tattvas in the world have only an apparent Reality. That is the sole subject of this text.

It is written in poetry, so it is also a *Padya Grantha*, not a Gadya Grantha (prose). There are 68 couplets in the entire text, without any group classification or title for each verse. The poetical meter is similar to the verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

From the Introduction by Swami Chinmayanandaji, we quote:

“Sri Shankaracharya, in the days of his perfect maturity, took up his pen to write ‘Introductory Books’, introducing the theme of Vedanta for the infants in the spiritual world. *Atma Bodha* is one of them. This is not an original book inasmuch as there is not a single idea in it which is an entirely original contribution of Sri Shankara. Every one of them is culled from the garden of the Upanishads, and strung together on the chord of his poetry.

“Scientific detachment, honest observation, logical conclusions, and heroic decisions alone can help an individual to come away from his own life’s fallacies. *Atma Bodha* supplies all these requisites and Acharya Shankara has made this scientific treatise a chiselled beauty with a distinct cadence and rhythm of its own.”

The Beautiful Similes & Metaphors

Commenting on the exquisite examples given in the book, Swamiji says: “The poet in Shankara revels in these 68 verses. There is no verse here which does not have a simile. Each is a picture, a sure and striking example. These examples are real hammer strokes that nail the elusive ideals of Vedanta onto the immature comprehension of all early students. They are all striking examples, so pregnant with suggestions that to ruminate upon them is in itself a profitable meditation for the new initiates.”

With those comments from Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayanandaji, we begin the talks on *Atma Bodha* delivered by Acharyaji Swami Advayananda to the students of the 15th Sandeepany Vedanta Course.

MANGALAACHARAN

(Verse 1)

“Invocation”

WE ALWAYS START OUR preparations for auspicious celebrations, such as Diwali, with a comprehensive cleaning programme. In the same way, when we are about to receive the holy teachings of the knowledge of the Self, it is expected of us to undergo a self-cleansing programme of spiritual Sadhana.

VERSE 1: *The Qualified Student for this Text*

तपोभिः क्षीणपापानां शान्तानां वीतरागिणाम् ।
मुमुक्षूणामपेक्ष्योऽयमात्मबोधो विधीयते

॥१॥

1	<i>Tapobhih ksheena-paapaa-naam</i>	<i>Purified of their sins by austerities,</i>
2	<i>shaantaa-naam veetaraagi-naam;</i>	<i>peaceful at heart, free from all cravings,</i>
3	<i>mumukshoo-naam apekshyah ayam</i>	<i>and with heart yearning for Liberation, this</i>
4	<i>aatma-bodhah vidheeyate.</i>	<i>text “Atma Bodha” is being composed.</i>

An Invocation:

The text starts with the word ‘Tapas’ – an auspicious start in the context of this subject. The entire Ramayana was begun with this word, and what a great book that is! Tapas is an auspicious word. It is Tapas that opens the door to all auspiciousness. It cleans us of all the ‘dirt’ and impurity in our heart and makes us ready to receive divine knowledge.

The very thought of Brahma Jnana or knowledge of the Self brings auspicious thoughts to our mind. In itself it is an invocation to merely utter the name “Atma Bodha”. This is thus to be taken as an Invocation or a Mangalacharan to begin this unique text on Self-knowledge.

Anubandha Chatushtaya:

As in the previous book we have studied, namely, *Tattva Bodha*, it is the usual practice to give the Anubandha Chatushtaya at the outset of the text. This verse serves that purpose. The fourfold “Prospectus” announcing the purpose and eligibility for the study of this book is given as follows:

i) **Adhikari:** The opening words state for whom this book has been written: “Those who have purified themselves with austerities, who are peaceful in heart, free from cravings and desirous of Liberation.” This is the qualification of Sadhana Chatushtaya.

ii) **Vishaya**: The subject is given by the title of the book, *Atma Bodha*. It is stated at the very beginning that the subject is Knowledge of the Self, the true inner Self, not the self which is ignorant and deluded.

iii) **Prayojana**: The benefit to be obtained from the study of this book is given in the term “Mumukshunaam”, which tells us that the goal here is Self-realisation. That is the benefit offered by this book. Liberation is guaranteed for those who are Adhikaris.

iv) **Sambandha**: Indicated by the word **Vidheeyate**, meaning “is being composed”; we have the promise that this book will fulfil the expectations of the student who is seeking Liberation. It says explicitly that the book is connected with that particular goal.

We have already come across two terms which describe the type of Sambandha:

(i) the *Bodhya-Bodhaka* Sambandha (text and the goal); and

(ii) the *Pratipadya-Pratipadika* Sambandha (revealer and the revealed).

Now we introduce a third term which means the same thing:

(iii) the *Prakashiya-Prakashaka* Sambandha (illuminator and the illumined).

The Sambandha of *Atma Bodha* to the goal of God-realisation is more accurately described by the third type, although all three may be used.

The Spiritual Meaning:

Tapas is any Sadhana which is undertaken to make the mind turn inward, to make it introspective and thereby suitable for inner reflection. This definition clarifies the popular meaning of the word which is taken to mean severe austerities. It is not what we DO that describes Tapas, but with what attitude we do it. This is an important distinction. Much of what passes as Tapas could in fact be pure expression of the ego wanting to gain acclaim in this manner.

Understanding the word to mean as defined above, such Tapas purifies one of all impurities. To purify oneself is the object of undergoing any Tapas. Having undergone Tapas, one gets the necessary purity of mind or Chitta Shuddhi to begin the path of Jnana Yoga or Vedanta that is to follow in the rest of the text.

Forms of Tapas:

The study of the Shastras is itself a Tapas, for it removes much of our impurities. The study of the Shastras never goes in vain. Although we may not get the final Aparoksha experience of the Reality, we will still nevertheless benefit by getting acquainted with the knowledge of the Self intellectually. That would be the seed which will sprout when the time is ripe.

If the qualification is not there, this study will hasten its arrival. The Paroksha Jnana (intellectual grasp) received from *Atma Bodha* will fructify at some time. There is no doubt about this.

Austerities involve some form of self-denial. There are numerous kinds of Tapas. As already mentioned the common feature of true Tapas is that it must turn the mind within towards contemplation of the Self. The initial fruit is Chitta Shuddhi. This is the criterion for gauging the benefit of Tapas.

As Tapas, people undertake certain fasts, like the Chandrayana. In this fast the person starts on the new moon day with no food at all. Then each day he increases his intake until on the full moon day he takes his normal fill. Thereafter, he starts reducing the

food daily till on the next new moon day, it is zero again. That is one Chandrayana fast. Such type of austerity can greatly speed up the process of purification of the mind.

A little bit of burning of ourselves is required for destroying Durita or Kausha or Paapa (all of which mean the same thing: impurities). Tapas is the Upa-Lakshana or group name for all these practices.

The term “kshee” is used to indicate that our sins have to be “decayed”. By decaying they will die off. They will, of course, be removed totally only through Jnana, which is still to come, but the bulk of the gross impurity is cleared by Tapas.

Shanti or Peacefulness, Desirelessness, & Aspiration:

Tapas eventually renders the mind calm and peaceful. **Shaantanaam** refers to those who are peaceful. Only such persons can see the defects of cravings; they are the persons described by the word **Veetaraaginaam**. When cravings for the objects of the world is removed by seeing the defects in them, then the desire for liberation grows in direct proportion. Persons with such desire for God are called as **Mumukshunaam** in the verse.

The key factor in this process of purification is the reduction of three things that draw our attention outwards. They are:

- i) **Lokeshana**: this is worldly name and fame, described in the previous text as *Kirti*.
- ii) **Vitteshana**: this is worldly comforts, and is comparable to the previous term *Kanchana*.
- iii) **Putreshana**: this is desire for children, and is the equivalent of *Kamini*.

[The suffix ‘eshana’ here means Raga or “attraction for”.]

Sadhana Chatushaya is implied indirectly in this verse: Veetaragi is Vairagya, which comes from Viveka. Shanta sums up all the virtues under Shad Sampati. And Mumukshutwa is, of course, the fourth item that completes the Sadhana Chatushtaya.



Chapter 2
Verses 2-5 (4 no.)
<i>"Self-Knowledge"</i>

VERSE 2: *As Fire – the Direct Cause for Cooking*

बोधोऽन्यसाधनेभ्यो हि साक्षान्मोक्षैकसाधनम् ।
पाकस्य वह्निवज्ज्ञानं विना मोक्षो न सिध्यति

॥२॥

1	<i>Bodhah anya-saadhane-bhyah hi</i>	<i>In comparison with other means, knowledge, indeed,</i>
2	<i>saakshaat moksha eka saadhanam;</i>	<i>is the single direct means for Liberation.</i>
3	<i>paakasya vanhi-vat jnaanam</i>	<i>As fire is for cooking, so is knowledge –</i>
4	<i>vinah mokshah na sidhyati.</i>	<i>without it Liberation is not possible.</i>

1 The subject matter begins from this verse: Knowledge of the Self. Here we have a comparison between Self-knowledge and all the other forms of Sadhana practised by seekers. Why is such a high place given to Knowledge? Why is there preference given to this Sadhana over all the rest?

The answer is that Self-knowledge is the direct means to attain the Self. This means it leads one directly to the result without any other intermediate means required. In other words, it has a direct connection with the result, and no other means is necessary. This is very much like a person who has a direct link with the Prime Minister and who therefore does not need to go via anybody else to get to him.

2 Mokshaika Saadhanam: means “the prime means for Liberation”. If we know and understand what the Self is, we will see that this is merely pointing out a fact. It is not making an assessment of any other practice or form of Sadhana. It is simply stating a fact: that knowledge of the Self is the essential cause to bring about Liberation or Self-realisation.

4 This makes knowledge independent, self-sufficient, and complete in itself as a means for Liberation. Once the knowledge has come, the result is sure to follow. The distance between me and liberation is bridged by knowledge. No kilometers are meant here. As soon as knowledge dawns, Liberation IS!

Misunderstanding the Comparison:

There is a category of Vedantins who use this verse to place themselves above those who follow other Sadhanas. Acharyaji warned us in no uncertain terms of this danger. It is the very anti-thesis of Vedanta to arrogate oneself in this manner. Such people have done a great dis-service to Vedanta, and are responsible for the bad name it has among the public.

As mentioned earlier, it is only stated as a fact that knowledge is essential for liberation. But every element of the process of reaching knowledge is to be respected. There are Bahir-Anga Sadhanas (external means) and there are Antar-Anga Sadhanas (inner

means). Both are needed according to the stage of one's development. The Bahir eventually brings one to the Antar Sadhana. No disrespect is meant in this verse for those who are practising the Bahir Sadhanas.

The verse tells us that the journey to Self-discovery goes through many stations. The penultimate station is knowledge. The train heading for Liberation has to go through the station of knowledge. That is stated as a fact. No superiority or inferiority is intended in this verse.

Since the disease is ignorance, it is only knowledge that will remove the disease. And that knowledge is available to all who are on the journey to the Self, as the last station that they have to pass through.

When it is said that Matric is essential to gain entry into University, it does not mean that those in earlier standards are wasting their time. When they get to Matric they will become eligible for University. That is the spirit of this verse.

The Example of Cooking:

3 A better example would be hard to find. This perfectly fits the needs of the point being made. Cooking needs many items before it can begin:

- a) The food items are first brought. Has the cooking begun? No.
- b) The foods are placed in a pot. Has the cooking begun? No.
- c) The pot is placed on the pit prepared for the fire. Has cooking begun? No.
- d) The firewood is brought and placed under the pot. Has cooking begun? No.
- e) The matches are brought. Has cooking begun? No.
- f) When the match is struck and the firewood lit, has cooking begun? **YES!** It is because fire is the *direct* means to cause cooking.

Now we do the same analysis for liberation:

- a) Karma Yoga is started. Has liberation come? No.
- b) Chitta Shuddhi is developed. Has liberation come? No.
- c) Upasana or devotional worship has begun. Has liberation come? No.
- d) Chitta Ekagrata or one-pointedness of mind has been developed. Has liberation come? No.
- e) Sadhana Chatusthaya has started. Has liberation come? No.
- f) Guru Upasana (approaching one's Guru) has started. Has liberation come? No.
- g) Sravana and Manana have been done. Has liberation come? The answer is still no.
- h) Then Nididhyasana has started. Has liberation come? **YES!** It is now coming. The knowledge ripens into realization or Samadhi. The Brahmakara Vritti "*I am Brahman*" raised in Nididhyasana takes one to the point of realization. This is the dawn of knowledge of the Self. The knowledge has become crystal clear and so nothing intervenes between it and liberation.

This does not mean that all the previous steps were a waste of time! They were all needed, in the cooking as well as in the attainment of liberation. But, as the essential factor in cooking was to have the fire (heat), so too, the essential factor in liberation is to have knowledge.

VERSE 3: *As Light – the Sole Remover of Darkness*

अविरोधितया कर्म नाविद्यां विनिवर्तयेत् ।
विद्याविद्यां निहन्त्येव तेजस्तिमिरसङ्घवत्

॥३॥

1	<i>A-virodhi-tayaa karma</i>	<i>Since it is not opposed to action,</i>
2	<i>na avidyaam vi-ni-vartayet;</i>	<i>Ignorance cannot destroy its (effects);</i>
3	<i>vidyaa vidyaam nihanti eva</i>	<i>Knowledge alone can destroy ignorance,</i>
4	<i>tejah timira-sangha-vat.</i>	<i>as light alone can remove darkness.</i>

The Place of Action in Spirituality

The question arises, “What place does action have in the spiritual process?” Action has proven itself to be invaluable in the development of this world. Through action we can realize so many of our dreams. It needs action to build roads, buildings, dams, power stations, etc. It was action that took man to the moon. It is action that makes this world run. So why can action not have a place in spiritual transformation as well?

Sri Shankaracharya must have given this question serious thought before arriving at his conclusion to the contrary. Even considering the startling achievements of action in the external world, the answer Shankaracharya comes up with is to still place knowledge above action. Here his explanation is given.

We start with ignorance; it is what pervades our entire life. Because of it, we get identified with the body. We then perform actions to take care of this body. These become our central preoccupation. Very soon we include actions that arise purely from the desires arising through our body identification. Soon we are engulfed in activities, all of which may be astounding in themselves but which do not take us a single step forward towards God. When our actions are not fulfilling, we become unhappy. Another series of actions are started to make us happy in the world. That does not succeed. All this is because actions are rooted in ignorance: they are conceived in ignorance, governed by ignorance, mothered and fathered by ignorance, supported by ignorance – how can it oppose ignorance when ignorance is so rooted in it? And how can a handmaid of ignorance be the cause of destroying ignorance? Actions are not in opposition to ignorance and can, therefore, never overcome ignorance.

We need to turn to something that is the ‘enemy’ of ignorance. That is knowledge.

Anything that we DO will only strengthen our ignorance. Since actions have identification with the Upaadhis as their basis, they will only strengthen our ignorance.

On the other hand, knowledge is in direct opposition to ignorance. It is the only thing that stands a chance to destroy ignorance. If ignorance is the root of our bondage, then knowledge must surely be the only means to liberate us. That is the essence of this verse.

Example of Light Destroying Darkness:

A strikingly appropriate analogy is given by Sri Shankaracharya. If one has entered a cave and there is pitch-black darkness, the only way to get rid of it is bring in some light, and the darkness vanishes instantly.

If people in the cave decide to try other methods what would happen? They may decide to “sweep away” the darkness. They get a broom for the purpose, but it does nothing to get rid of the darkness. Another suggestion they try is to “wash out” the darkness with water. That, too, fails hopelessly. Only light overcomes darkness because it is in direct opposition to it.

This is why it is knowledge alone that would help ultimately to get rid of the darkness of ignorance. Any amount of action will not directly cancel ignorance.

Acharyaji concluded with poetic elegance: “Yes, we can crown Action the Queen of the world for the awesome role it plays in transfiguring our material world, but the King of the world has to be Knowledge!”

VERSE 4: *As Sun is Revealed When Clouds Pass Away*

अवच्छिन्न इवाज्ञानात्तन्नाशे सति केवलः । var परित्रच्छि
स्वयं प्रकाशते ह्यात्मा मेघापायेऽशुमानिव ॥४॥

1	<i>Ava-cchinnah iva ajnaanaat</i>	<i>Appearing as finite because of ignorance,</i>
2	<i>tat naashe sati kevalah;</i>	<i>when ignorance is destroyed, then alone</i>
3	<i>swayam prakaashate hi aatmaa</i>	<i>does the Self reveal Its own true nature,</i>
4	<i>meghaa-paaye amshumaan iva.</i>	<i>as the Sun is revealed when the clouds pass away.</i>

Here the previous idea is continued, but from the perspective of ignorance. It is ignorance that makes the individual self feel limited, although in truth the Self is limitless. The identification with the body, mind or intellect, known as the Upaadhis, causes one to feel very restrained and limited. The following three aspects may clarify this limitation:

i) **Limited in Space:** The pure Self is defined to be Sarvavyapi or omnipresent. Due to the identity with the body, it is experienced as being Alpavyapi, that is, limited in space to just here, not everywhere.

ii) **Limited in Time:** The pure Self is also eternal or Nitya. Again we do not experience this as our very nature, because we are limited in time by the Upaadhis. Time is a mental concept superimposed on the Self, and hence we feel we are Anitya instead of Nitya. We are oppressed by the idea that we have a temporary existence only. We do not wish to die. The very thought instills fear in us. Yet, our true Self is deathless. (This is the theme the *Geeta* takes up at the very outset of its teaching.)

iii) **Limitation in Body:** The pure Self is also not limited to one object, it is Sarva-Atman. However, because of identification with one body only we feel limited and threatened by all the other bodies or objects around us as we see them as “not us”. Thus we experience the severe limitation of being “Mama-Atman” and not the Sarva-Atman that we are in reality.

Thus ignorance has robbed us of knowing ourselves as we are. To restore us to our original nature, we need to have knowledge of who we are. Then ignorance automatically gets destroyed. Knowledge is in direct opposition to the ignorance of “I am the body”.

Example of Sun and Clouds:

What example best illustrates this limitation we feel? The example in this verse is of clouds shielding the direct rays of the sun. The sun is self-luminous; we need not show a light on it to see it. And if clouds are shielding it, nothing needs to be done to the sun to get its rays again. Just the clouds need to disperse by a strong gust of wind. Once they have moved away, the direct rays of the sun are seen.

In this example the sun stands for the Self which is self-effulgent and not in need of anything to enable it to be known. Ignorance is the dark cloud that is shielding the sunlight. The wind to blow away the cloud of ignorance is the strong gust of the Brahmakara Vritti.

For driving away the clouds blowing “phew, phew” from the mouth on the ground would not help. The wind has to blow high up where the cloud is situated. Even so, the Brahmakara Vritti must be ‘blown’ deep within in the silence of meditation. Then it can be effective in driving off ignorance.

By removal of ignorance by the “wind” of knowledge is meant the whole routine of Sadhana to the point of total Chitta Shuddhi and Chitta Ekagrata. This is taken for granted in this verse. The first offshoot of ignorance is identification with the Upadhis; from that arises the feeling of being limited; from that arises discontent or the feeling of incompleteness; and from that arises desire. All this happens at the internal level. With the manifestation of desire, the first steps are taken to engage with the external objects in order to fulfill the desire. Thus begins the vast network of actions by which ignorance becomes more and more deep-seated in us. In the simile used here, this process is like the cloud building up bigger and bigger, getting darker and darker and concealing the sun more and more.

Beyond the Limitations:

When the limitations are recognized and negated, we get closer to our pure or Kevala state beyond limitations. Three types of differences are not to be there for anything to become unlimited:

- i) **Swagata Bheda**: no parts are seen to exist within itself.
- ii) **Sujaatiya Bheda**: Within the same species of the thing, say trees, no differences are seen between different trees. The ‘tree-ness’ is seen in all objects in that category.
- iii) **Vijaatiya Bheda**: Between different species, e.g. between man and animals, no differences are seen. This can only be possible when that which is common in both becomes the determining factor. The common life-force existing in each object in this category becomes the unifying factor.

When, at each of these levels, we go to the common factor, then the ‘limitedness’ associated at that level disappears. At the level of the Self or supreme Consciousness, every object becomes limitless, as we now go beyond the form of the object and see only the common consciousness in all objects.

In this manner, by deep meditation and enquiry we can transcend our limitations. As this process is taken to its logical extreme at the Self level, knowledge dawns, and that removes all the limitations imposed on our life by ignorance.

VERSE 5: *As Coagulent – Settles After Cleaning Water*

अज्ञानकलुषं जीवं ज्ञानाभ्यासाद्विनिर्मलम् ।
कृत्वा ज्ञानं स्वयं नश्येज्जलं कतकरेणुवत्

॥५॥

1	<i>Ajnaana kalusham jeevam</i>	<i>Defiled by ignorance, the egocentric self</i>
2	<i>jnaana-abhyaasaat vi-nir-malam;</i>	<i>is purified by constant practice of knowledge.</i>
3	<i>kritvaa jnaanam swayam nashyet</i>	<i>Upon the dawn of knowledge, it itself is destroyed</i>
4	<i>jalam kataka-renu-vat.</i>	<i>as the soapnut powder settles with the dirt in water.</i>

The process mentioned at the close of the discussion of the previous verse, namely, the deep meditation and enquiry into the nature of the Self, is the focus in this verse.

When this process is taken to its limit, all limitations are transcended. At that point ignorance ends and the means by which it ends – the Brahmakara Vritti – is also discarded. Total purity from all defilements is attained, followed by the dawn of Self-knowledge.

Example of the “Kataka-nut”:

The above process is compared with the effect that the powder of the *kataka-nut* has on a bucket of muddy water. In India, this powder, which is also ‘dirt’, is added to water which is to be used for drinking, especially during the Monsoon season, when the water sources are always very muddy. The powder has the special quality to precipitate the fine muddy particles in the water and make them settle to the bottom of the bucket. The clear water left behind at the top of the bucket is decanted for drinking. Finally the dirty mixture of mud and the powder at the bottom of the bucket is discarded, having done its job of clearing the rest of the water.

The simile applies in the following manner: The water is the Self. The adulteration with mud is the impurities embedded in our Jiva due to the lifestyle fostered in us by Ignorance. To remedy the situation, we use the *kataka-nut* powder of the Brahmakara Vritti, that is, the repetition of the thought of “I am Brahman”.

During Nididhyasana we have a great and indispensable need for the Aham Brahmasmi Sadhana, i.e. the effortful application of the “I am Brahman” thought. At the culmination of Nididhyasana, when one is well-established in Samadhi, this Sadhana is not required anymore. The consciousness of Brahman becomes effortless. Here we see how apt the illustration of the kutaka-nut powder is in describing this process of Sadhana.

Vidya Maya and Avidya Maya:

Avidya Maya is the veiling power of Maya. Also in the realm of Maya is Vidya Maya, which is Sattwic in nature and has knowledge as its basis to build up our lives. This Vidya Maya teaches us about how we can overcome Avidya Maya. When it has done that, then both Avidya Maya and Vidya Maya are discarded.

The kutaka-nut illustration ideally fits in with this view of Vidya and Avidya Maya.

Chapter 3

Verses 6-9 (4 no.)

“The Nature of the WORLD”

VERSE 6: *As a Dream Only!*

संसारः स्वप्नतुल्यो हि रागद्वेषादिसङ्कुलः ।

स्वकाले सत्यवद्भाति प्रबोधे सत्यसद्भवेत्

॥६॥

1	<i>Samsaarah svapna-tulyah hi</i>	<i>The world is truly like a dream only:</i>
2	<i>raga-dvesha-aadi sankulah;</i>	<i>full of its attachment and aversions, and so on.</i>
3	<i>swakaale satya-vat bhaati</i>	<i>While the dream continues, it appears to be real;</i>
4	<i>prabodhe sati asat bhavet.</i>	<i>when we awaken, its unreality is seen.</i>

From verse 6 – 9, we shift our attention from the Self and Self-knowledge to the world of appearance of names and forms.

1 Samsara here means the world of transmigration, the world of births and deaths in an endless cycle, which can only be escaped through knowledge of the Self. The characteristic feature of this Samsara is that “it is the realm where one thought is not like the next thought, and thoughts change so rapidly from one to the next. That is the nature of Samsaric life.

Samsara means “that which is ever-changing”, and that is why it is such an appropriate word to describe this world – which is a play, changing every moment. A thought does not stay for long in the mind; it changes moment to moment.

The message of this verse is to show how unreal this world is. It does that through a beautiful simile...

“Swapna –Tulyo” Nyaya or Analogy:

The world of objects, existing in time and space, is compared to a dream as it is viewed from the waking state.

A little background here will help. We have already known of the three Grades of Reality, namely, *Pratibhashika*, *Vyavaharika* and *Paramarthika*. Dream experiences are *Pratibhashika*, the external world is in *Vyavaharika*, and the Self or Brahman is *Paramarthika*. The first is destroyed by the second and the second is destroyed by the third.

In this verse, the *Vyavaharika* reality’s relationship to the *Paramarthika* Reality is compared to the *Pratibhashika* reality’s relationship with the *Vyavaharika* reality. In other words, the *Vyavaharika* reality of this world is seen as if it is a dream which is viewed in retrospect during the waking state. We laugh at ourselves when we realize how foolishly we behaved in dream. The same thing happens when a man awakens into the state of realization, that is, when he shifts from the *Vyavaharika* to the *Paramarthika* Reality. Such a man of realization recognizes the experience in this world as “a dream” wherein he

experiences this world as a realm of objects, time and space. Just as dream is so distinctly different from the waking state, so also the waking state is distinctly different from the state of God-realisation.

This is the appropriateness of the analogy.

2 Raga Dwesha Aadi: The word **Aadi** after Raga-Dwesha indicates “etc”. It refers to the whole chain of qualities of which Raga and Dwesha are the first two. The others are Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya. Translated into English the six negative qualities are likes, dislikes, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy. By keeping these alive it is like stabbing ourselves daily with six daggers!

3 Swa-Kaale: In this whole world, people are on the move day and night because of any one of these 6 qualities. It keeps the whole dream-play going on endlessly. Swa-Kaale is used referring to this ‘time-bound’ drama. It means “as long as the dream continues”.

4 When one has awoken from this dream through knowledge, it no longer exists. It vanishes exactly like the way a dream vanishes.

VERSE 7: *As Mother-of-Pearl Appears Silver*

तावत्सत्यं जगद्भाति श्रुतिकारजतं यथा ।

यावन्न जायते ब्रह्म सर्वाधिष्ठानमद्वयम्

॥७॥

1	<i>Taavat satyam jagat bhaati</i>	<i>As long as the world appears to be real,</i>
2	<i>shuktikaa rajatam yathaa;</i>	<i>like the mother-of-pearl appears as silver;</i>
3	<i>yaavat na jnaayate brahma</i>	<i>so long Brahman (the Truth) cannot be realized,</i>
4	<i>sarva adhishtaanam advayam.</i>	<i>which is the substratum of all and one without a second.</i>

This is the second verse dealing with the phenomenon of the world. Like its predecessor, it continues along the same lines, but using a different simile. All these similes come from the tradition of the time. They were commonly used among the people. Hence by using these amazing similes, Sri Shankaracharya was able to get his ideas accepted by the people of his time. But they are so minutely appropriate that even to this day their suitability has not altered.

“Shuktika-Rajatam” Nyaya or Simile:

Sri Shankaracharya, who hailed from the coastal state of Kerala, must have personally been familiar with the mother-of-pearl shell which has the glitter of silver in appearance. It looked like a silver coin, hence the term **rajatam**. It would fool anyone to pick up this shell thinking it was a silver coin, until it is carefully examined.

This world is compared to such a shell, called **shuktika**. The glitter is there so long as we are in blissful forgetfulness of the Self within us. Our extroverted minds, steeped in the six negative qualities mentioned in the previous verse, find delight in it. That delight is not without its opposite quality – pain or sorrow.

The Lesson of Pain

Pain, which always accompanies pleasure, has the ability to turn the mind momentarily inward to question the basic reality of the world. Pain occurs in our minds, in the subtle body. Pain turns our attention to the 'shell' rather than the 'silver'. That is the most favourable moment to make a complete turnaround in our values in life.

However, if we are not aware enough to learn from pain, then that moment passes and the delusion of 'silver' grips us again. Forgetful of sorrow and pain, we resume our mad hunt for pleasure in the world. The silvery attractions draw us out once more. We place value on them repeatedly, considering them to be precious and filled with the promise of pleasure. Pain's lesson goes by unheeded.

The Jagat not only refers to physical objects of pleasure but also the realm of feelings and emotions which are like 'silver' to the mind; and the realm of thoughts, ideas and ideologies which are like 'silver' to the intellect. All these attractions are removed when it is discovered that they are mere shells of Maya's delusion.

Avoiding the Attractions of the World:

We need not wait for any suitable conditions in order to quit our attraction for this world. That would be like waiting for the waves to stop before getting into the beach waters. If we can trust what the scriptures are telling us, we would take practical steps to avoid the pitfalls of attraction in the world, and begin to take Viveka and Vairagya seriously. We would seriously begin to give up the six negative qualities now itself, for with them God-realisation is yet an impossibility.

That would be the message to pick up from this and the previous verse, something we can start putting into practice right where we are.

Acharyaji's words are poignant: "O Sadhaka, do not run behind this world. It is just an illusion. It may look very beautiful, but it is not worth our attention. For that silver shell, even the local nut-seller will not give you his packet of nuts; he knows it is not real silver!"

So why waste time? In case we are still not convinced, here's another reason ...

VERSE 8: *As Mere Bubbles in Water*

उपादानेऽखिलाधारे जगन्ति परमेश्वरे ।

सर्गस्थितिलयान् यान्ति बुद्बुदानीव वारिणि

॥८॥

1	<i>Upaadaane akhilaa-dhaare</i>	<i>As the material cause and support of everything –</i>
2	<i>jaganti parameshware;</i>	<i>in the supreme Self are bound all these worlds.</i>
3	<i>sarga-sthiti-layaan yaanti</i>	<i>In Him do they rise, exist and dissolve,</i>
4	<i>budbudaani iva vaarini.</i>	<i>like bubbles in water!</i>

A beautiful painting is created in our mind by this verse. We have three words that are pregnant with the story of how it all began:

In the following three words, are described the worlds, **Jaganti**, the plural of Jagat or world. [The Samskrit student will see the Saptami Vibhakti, the locative case in English grammar, at work, with all three words ending in 'e'.]

i) **Akhilaadhaare**: This refers to the substratum of everything. Maya, the illusory power, is at the root of creation. She is superimposed on Brahman, Her substratum. She, whose nature is Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, is the primary Cause of the numerous effects we see in this world. Whether the effects are seen locally or globally, that is, at the individual level or the cosmic level, they all arise from the illusory or unreal Maya.

ii) **Upaadaane**: this is the material cause of this universe, which are the five elements springing out of Maya's creative or projecting power.

iii) **Parameshware**: Like the Master of Ceremonies, the Supreme Self commands the whole world show in His aspect as Ishwara, the Creator. It is all taking place *in* Him, and by His command, He being the substratum of all creation.

Thus we see that these three words give us the substratum, the material cause and the efficient cause of creation. This applies to everything that is born out of Ishwara. That everything includes innumerable worlds. For convenience, we classify them into 14 worlds: seven higher subtle planes, and seven grosser planes from the gross physical plane downwards to the lowest plane of 'Hell'.

"Bud-budaani" or the Bubble Simile:

All these 14 worlds have three basic qualities: i) **Sarga**: they rise or are born; ii) **Stithi**: they exist for a period; iii) **Laya**: and then they dissolve and disappear. All this happens in the Substratum, with Maya as their Upadana or material cause, and Parameshwara (Brahman) as their efficient cause.

This introduces the fitting metaphor of the bubbles in water. It is more than just a metaphor, the word **bud-bud** and even the English 'bubbles' for that matter, captures the sound of what it stands for, and hence it is called an *Onomatopoeia* in English. Other such words which incorporate the sound of what they describe are: the 'buzzing' of bees, the 'bang' of a door, the 'jingle' of bells, the 'murmur' of brooks.

Bubbles in water arise as small pockets of air, become larger as they merge with other bubbles, and rise to the surface. There they suddenly burst. It can be an absorbing, entertaining sight just to watch bubbles in water as they arise, exist, and collapse.

The creation of the innumerable worlds of this whole cosmos is just like that. The simile is used so effectively as to even tell us what the value of this illusory world is – no more than a burst of air bubbles in water! The poet in Shankaracharyaji cannot resist having a laugh at this universe – "Here, this is what I think of all your majesty! You are all just bubbles, nothing more!"

One wonders at the vision of Shankaracharyaji: From which balcony was he gazing at this magnificent world show, which appeared to him like a giant AQUARIUM!

VERSE 9: *As Ornaments Made of Gold*

सच्चिदात्मन्यनुस्यूते नित्ये विष्णौ प्रकल्पिताः ।
व्यक्तयो विविधाः सर्वा हाटके कटकादिवत्

॥९॥

1	<i>Sat-Chit-aatmani anusyoote</i>	<i>In the Self whose nature is Existence-Consciousness, in that which is all-pervading,</i>
2	<i>nitye vishnau pra-kalpiaah;</i>	<i>in that eternal, upon that Vishnu – is the mental projection,</i>
3	<i>vyaktayah vividhaah sarvaa</i>	<i>of this entire world of manifestation of all things;</i>
4	<i>haatake kataka-aadi-vat.</i>	<i>just as out of gold are made all these various ornaments</i>

In this verse, as in the previous, we have another set of three words, [also in the Saptami Vibhakti of Samskrit,] at once taking our minds beyond the three limitations experienced by all individual beings, concluding with a simile designed to focus our minds on the single all-pervading Reality of the Self.

The Limitations of the Projected World:

First let us look at the three words in the order in which they appear: The subject of these words is the “Projection of the entire Universe”. On what is it projected?

i) **Atmani Anusyoote:** (Atmani also has to be in Saptami Vibhakti because it goes with Anusyoote) It is projected on the all-pervading Atman.

ii) **Nitye:** on the eternal Atman.

iii) **Vishnau:** and upon Vishnu, the Lord, who is their substratum.

Using these three words has the following deeper significance. We know that anything in this entire ‘world of multiple worlds’ is subject to three limitations. They are:

- i) Vastu – the limitation of object;
- ii) Kala – the limitation of time;
- iii) Desha – the limitation of space.

These three limitations may be matched respectively with the three terms used for the Substratum. The Substratum transcends the limitations; or it may be said, the limitations are negated by the Substratum upon which they are projected. Thus we get:

- i) **Anusyoote**, the all-pervading, negates Vastu, the limitation of object;
- ii) **Nitye**, the eternal, negates Kala, the limitation of time;
- iii) **Vishnau**, the omnipresent, negates Desha, the limitation of space.

The “Hatake-Katakadi” Simile:

By describing the world as a projection upon the Self, the essential truth we see is that the world is a fluctuating show of objects upon a substratum that is common to every object. This comes out remarkably accurately in the simile chosen in this verse.

Gold ornaments are innumerable, but the gold is common in all of them. In this simple yet superb simile we get a good idea of how a sage of realization sees the world: As a goldsmith also sees the ornaments but sees the gold more clearly, so too, the sage also sees the world, but sees the underlying Self more clearly.

The world is seen by a sage as a superimposition on the Self. The sage is acutely aware of the unchanging Reality of the Self behind all the changing names and forms

projected upon it. The ordinary individual who is unaware of the existence of this Self, is entranced by the ornaments which to him appear to be everything.

The *ornamental* value placed on the objects by the ordinary person is of no concern to a goldsmith when he is asked to value the jewellery. He is not concerned with the sentimental value of the jewellery. Even he knows that the only value lies in the gold and nothing else! Any other 'value' added to the gold, is only a superimposed value dependent entirely upon the owner of the jewellery.



Chapter 4

Verses 10-14 (5 no.)

“The UPADHIS or Conditioners”

VERSE 10: *As Space – One Appears as Many*

यथाकाशो हृषीकेशो नानोपाधिगतो विभुः ।

तद्भेदाद्भिन्नवद्भाति तन्नाशे केवलो भवेत्

॥१०॥

1	<i>Yathaa aakaashah hrishheekeshah</i>	<i>As with Space, so with the omnipresent Lord:</i>
2	<i>naanaa upaadhi-gatah vibhuh;</i>	<i>The All-pervading, associated with various Upadhis,</i>
3	<i>tat bhedaat bhinna-vat bhaati</i>	<i>due to their distinctness, It appears to be diverse,</i>
4	<i>tat naashe kevalah bhavet.</i>	<i>but separated from them, It becomes One.</i>

The simile is given at the outset, “Just as space”. Let us first look at the real situation and then come back to consider the simile.

The Deeper Meaning Behind “Hrsheekesha”

1 This is derived from two words: *Hrisheeka* + *Isha*. *Hrisheeka* means “the senses” (Indriyas); *Isha* means the “controller”, governor, one who sustains or gives life. The combined meaning reads as “one who controls the senses”, i.e. the Omnipresent Lord.

The word has an interesting secondary meaning: the root *Hr* means “to loot or take away”. What do the senses loot? Through the senses the sense objects are *looted* from the world and brought to their Indwelling Lord, the Presence within. Why would He want this loot? – He who is the all-pervading Lord, what need is there for Him to tarnish His hands!

A little insight makes us see that there is an imposter in place of the Lord. He is the Ego. Because of his intervention, the actions of the senses take on the appearance of “looting the world”. The senses appear to be robbers, bringing the sense objects to their ‘boss’ the Ego! The Ego enslaves the senses and makes them perform such a demeaning service. Instead of serving the Lord, the senses are made to serve the ego and gratify its ever increasing desires. This is the tragedy of sense enslavement.

Although this secondary meaning appears not to relate to the context of the verse, it highlights the tragic consequences of the illusory appearance of the numerous Upadhis. Identifying with the Upadhis is what stirs up desire after desire, and leads to more and more “looting” of the sense objects.

When these Upadhis are destroyed, says the verse, then only will the diversity end and the unity behind it be seen.

The Simile of Space:

Space is here directly compared to the all-pervading Omnipresent Self. Space has no limits, it cannot be divided. Yet, man delights in breaking it up into different units, by his

walls and fences, by seeing differences in the sense objects, which then become possessions of individuals.

Yet, space is pure. In spite of the different Upadhis superimposed upon it by the ignorance of man, space remains united as one all-pervading entity. This is the idea that is intended to be brought out for the case of the Self. The Self is pure, unaffected by all the numerous items It gets associated with in the world. Upon the destruction of the Upadhis, the Self is seen to be unaffected. It always was one and shall always remain one.

VERSE 11: *As Flavours Superimposed in Water*

नानोपाधिवशादेव जातिनामाश्रमादयः ।

आत्मन्यारोपितास्तोये रसवर्णादि भेदवत्

॥११॥

1	<i>Naanaa upaadhi-vashaat eva</i>	<i>Because of its association with different Upadhis,</i>
2	<i>jaati-naam-aashram-aadayah;</i>	<i>the idea of caste, colour, position, etc,</i>
3	<i>aatmani aaropitaah toyee</i>	<i>are superimposed upon the Atman; as in water</i>
4	<i>rasa-varna-aadi bheda-vat.</i>	<i>are (superimposed) differences like flavour, colour, etc.</i>

This verse continues the theme begun in the last verse, expanding on the effect of the different conditionings or Upadhis in appearing to split Reality into pieces. In the last verse the focus was on finding a solution for the removal of the differences raised by the Upadhis. In this verse we are not looking the solution, but we examine the consequences of the appearance of innumerable differences in day-to-day life resulting from these Upadhis.

The Birth of Distinctions in Human Society

The direct result of differences in the Upadhis combined with distortion in our vision is that humanity itself gets split into so many groups, each claiming to have a unique characteristic. Caste, colour and creed are directly mentioned here, but it does not stop there. “And so on” refers to an endless list of other divisions into which humanity gets broken up or splintered.

If diversity were accepted in a healthy spirit, which is possible if there were no ego operating in men, then there is no cause for alarm. In many old traditions, people have successfully lived together in spite of the presence of these differences, because they kept in check their ego from identifying with those differences.

However, that is more an exception than the rule. In most cases, communities have used these differences to create enmity, hostility and even wars among various groups. The tragic reality is the pain and sorrow that our society is suffering from such divisive thinking.

In this context a verse such as this has much to teach us. Sri Shankaracharya is here placing before mankind the bare truth. If we take note of it and correct ourselves at the root of the problem, mankind can save itself from endlessly acting out tragedy after tragedy in the course of its history.

The Example: Water Differentiated by Flavours and Colour:

The simile is again astonishingly appropriate. It is another of the gems pulled out by Shankaracharya from his seemingly unlimited imagination.

Water is intrinsically pure. In that state of purity it is colourless – it takes on the colour of that which it is placed in. It is also tasteless in its pure state. It takes on the taste of any flavour that is added to it, such as tea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, and so on. Pure water has the property of accurately conveying the properties of colour and flavour added to it, while ever remaining pure in itself. Water is not to blame if flavours or colours added to it do not agree and produce a dirty displeasing taste or colour.

This is precisely what this verse is trying to teach us about society and its problems. The Self is unaffected by all the numerous divisions that are ascribed to It by the power of the ignorance in man, for it always remains uniform and unaffected by them. When conflicts arise among men, the blame falls on the ignorant understanding of these differences.

The conclusion we have to come to is that the Upadhis, by being “near” the Self, impart their own characteristics to the Self, even as the flavours and colours impart their qualities to the water into which they are added. This, in fact, is the literal meaning of the word Upadhi! The word conditioning does not do full justice to the meaning of Upadhi. There is much more to it in the philosophical sense.

What exactly are the Upadhis? The next three verses summarize them beautifully into gross, subtle and causal Upadhis...

VERSE 12: *The Gross Body*

पंचीकृतमहाभूतसंभवं कर्मसंचितम् ।
शरीरं सुखदुःखानां भोगायतनमुच्यते

॥१२॥

1	<i>Panchi-krita mahaa-bhoota</i>	<i>From the five elements made after Panchi-Karana;</i>
2	<i>sambhavam karma sanchitam;</i>	<i>determined by one's own past actions;</i>
3	<i>shareeram sukha-duhkhaanaam</i>	<i>is born this body. Experiencing pleasure and pain</i>
4	<i>bhog-aayatanam uchyate.</i>	<i>through this medium, is said to be its purpose.</i>

This verse expresses in one concise couplet what was explained at length in verse 6.1 of *Tattva Bodha* where the **Gross Body** was defined, under the chapter heading ‘The Three Bodies’. The content is identical and need not be explained here.

Bhoga Aayatanam: – “Tenement” of Experience:

The example here is that of a business premises where, at the counter, various transactions take place; goods coming in and goods going out; payments in and payments out; customers in and out. There is a two-way interchange of transactions. Some transactions bring a profit, some bring a loss. It is all part of a day's work.

This simile is meant to represent the gross body's main function. It is the counter of experiences at which transactions of actions take place daily. There are senses bringing in information from the outer world, and other senses take our responses out to the world.

Good deeds are performed, which earn merit or Punya. This merit is very helpful when accumulated and spent in the right direction to serve the purpose of this human birth.

On the other hand, impure actions are also carried out across the same counter, and these bring a loss or a demerit. It is a loss relative to the spiritual goal, even though it may actually involve a huge profit in material terms. Demerit is Paapa, and it also contributes to what kind of birth we will have when reborn.

This human body is the only birth in which Paapa and Punya can be earned. In all other births the existing storehouse of Karma has to be worked out with no opportunity for earning any merits.

Hence, the example of a “tenement” or a “counter” for transactions is most appropriate to describe the function of the gross human body.

VERSE 13: *The Subtle Body*

पंचप्राणमनोबुद्धिदशेन्द्रियसमन्वितम् ।

अपंचीकृतभूतोत्थं सूक्ष्माङ्गं भोगसाधनम्

॥१३॥

1	<i>Pancha praana manah buddhih</i>	<i>The five Pranas, the mind and intellect,</i>
2	<i>dasha indriyah saman-vitam;</i>	<i>together with the ten senses combined;</i>
3	<i>apanchi-krita bhootah uttham</i>	<i>formed from the subtle elements, forms the</i>
4	<i>sookshma-angam bhoga saadhanam</i>	<i>subtle body, the instrument of experience.</i>

This verse is a more compact version of 6.2 of *Tattva Bodha*, on the ***Subtle Body***.

Bhoga Sadhanam: “Instrument” of Experience:

The illustration here is of an instrument, such as a pen. An instrument is used for a specific task, and put away when the task is done.

A pen may be picked up when there is some writing to be done. As soon as the work is complete, the cap is fitted and the pen put away. In this manner, the subtle body, which is constituted of 17 parts, may be thought of as being so many instruments. Each of those 17 instruments has a function. Upon completion of that function it takes a rest. The Pranas, are instruments which do not take a rest like the others, as it has to support life in the body without a break.

The important implication of using the subtle body as an *instrument* is that it prevents attachment of the Self building up – attachment towards the functions performed or that upon which the function is performed. Knowing that it is only an instrument, the mind and the intellect, and in particular the Chitta or memory of past experiences, would be used very wisely, without taking much note of all the emotions concerning those experiences. Human life gets unnecessarily complicated when all the past is dragged into the present. Relationships cannot be healed, but remain tense due to an incident of the past. The spirit of forgiveness is not possible if we do not manage the Chitta well.

At the mind level, we prevent the mind from ruminating over the dead past. We also prevent it from ruminating over how it is going to fulfil the next desire. Used as an instrument, we restrict it just to what it is meant to do in the present.

However, that is the ideal condition of usage of the equipment of the subtle body. In practice this is rarely the case, and it is why human life can become so complex and stressful. Attachment to objects and desires makes us identify ourselves completely with these equipments. We virtually 'live' all the time in our thoughts and emotions.

The Inter-Connection Between all the Parts of the Subtle and Gross Body:

The additional point spoken about by Acharyaji was the inter-connection between the Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic manifestations of Maya. The Sattwic Organ of knowledge **perceives** the Tamasic gross object for each element respectively. The Rajasic Organ of action **facilitates** that perception for each element respectively. The mouth produces the sound which the ear hears. Notice the connection between the skin and the hands; when the skin wants to get in touch with its object, it invariably uses the hands.

ELEMENT	SATTWA	RAJAS	TAMAS
Tanmatra	Organ of knowlg.	Organ of action	Gross Object
-----	-----	-----	-----
Space	Ears	Speech (mouth)	Sound
Air	Skin	Grasping (hands)	Touch
Fire	Eyes	Locomotion (legs)	Form/Colour
Water	Tongue	Procreation (genitals)	Taste
Earth	Nose	Elimination (anus)	Smell

Notice also the connection between the eye and the legs. When the eye is attracted by a beautiful form, the legs are activated to provide locomotion towards it.

The tongue's desire to be satisfied by taste is linked to the sexual urge of procreation. This is why control of the taste-buds is a primary Sadhana for the practice of celibacy or Brahmacharya.

And lastly, the most objectionable thing about a bodily elimination is its smell, picked up by the nose. This explains the link between the nose and the organ of excretion.

In this way the qualities of the senses are linked to their sense objects.

VERSE 14: *The Causal Body*

अनाद्यविद्यानिर्वाच्या कारणोपाधिरुच्यते ।
उपाधित्रितयादन्यमात्मानमवधारयेत्

॥१४॥

1	<i>Anaadi avidya anirvaachyaa</i>	<i>Ignorance is beginningless and inexplicable;</i>
2	<i>kaarana upaadhih uchyate;</i>	<i>it is said to form the Causal Body.</i>
3	<i>upaadhi-tritayaat anyam</i>	<i>Other than these three conditioning bodies,</i>
4	<i>aatmaanam avadhaarayet.</i>	<i>we should understand the Self to be.</i>

The reference is to verse 6.5 of *Tattva Bodha*, which defines the **Causal Body**. This is one of the few verses without a simile.

The “Desire-Lineage”:

Here, the new point brought out is on the subject of “The Consequences of Desire”.

1 Ignorance is said to be the form of the causal body. The causal body is just pure Ignorance. We do not know the cause of Ignorance. Logically there can be no cause for it. It is said to Causeless. Acharyaji elaborated on the details of this Lineage as follows:

1. **IGNORANCE**

⇒ 2. **DESIRE**

⇒ 3. Entry into **SAMSARA**

⇒ 4. Performance of **ACTIONS**

⇒ 5. Reaping of **PUNYA/PAAPA** (merit and demerit)

⇒ 6. Accumulation of **KARMA**

⇒ 7. Entry into another **BIRTH/DEATH** Cycle

⇒ 8. Reaping of **JOY/SORROW**

⇒ 9. Endless **TRANSMIGRATION**.

This lineage, from Step 1 to Step 9, is the vicious cycle spoken of in the scriptures, and from which the Rishis have been trying their utmost to save us.

There is a link between Causeless and Beginningless. Ignorance is considered to be beginningless. Logically, it is first found to be causeless. We cannot posit any cause for ignorance. And because it is causeless, it has to be beginningless.

However, we do know from logical analysis that its first “effect” is seen as **Desire**. Desire is born due to ignorance of the Truth. It arises from the alienation of our true identity. From desire there arises a train of consequences, which is like a “**desire-lineage**”, and is appropriately known as the Anartha Parampara or “Inauspicious Lineage”. Knowledge of this Lineage helps us to trace back to our original identity beyond Ignorance.

By saying that Ignorance does not have a cause, Vedanta is not being escapist in its approach. It is not hiding away from the problem. It is actually merely stating a logical fact. It is by facing the bare fact that Vedanta has established its credentials to provide the most flawless philosophical model to explain Reality.

The final outcome of these three verses is to teach us what the Self is NOT. Hence, we can now once again go back to the discussion of what it is...



Chapter 5

Verse 15-26 (12 no.)

“An Error of MISAPPREHENSION”

THE PROBLEM

VERSE 15: *As a Colour Appears in a Crystal*

पंचकोशादियोगेन तत्तन्मय इव स्थितः ।

शुद्धात्मा नीलवस्त्रादियोगेन स्फटिको यथा

॥१५॥

1	<i>Pancha kosha-aadi yogena</i>	<i>Due to its closeness with the five sheaths, etc,</i>
2	<i>tat tanmayah iva sthitah;</i>	<i>appearing to be identical with them is the</i>
3	<i>shuddhaatmaa neela vastra-aadi</i>	<i>Pure Self – as in the proximity of blue cloth,</i>
4	<i>yogena sphatikah yathaa.</i>	<i>a clear crystal also appears to be blue.</i>

In this verse the precise distinction between the Self and the sheaths discussed above, is explained using a superb simile.

The main reason for the misplaced identity of the Self is given. The Self is pure and clear. It has no qualities in itself. The qualities all belong to the five sheaths. However, because of the close association of the Self and these sheaths, their qualities appear to get transferred onto the Self, whom we cannot see.

What are these qualities which get transferred to the Self? It is everything that we would attribute to the five sheaths. The list can be quite large but we shall summarise it:

i) **From the gross sheath:** The gross body is associated with a particular race, a particular type of dress, and certain specific features unique to the race. It can be thin or fat, tall or short, dark or fair, and so on.

ii) **From the Subtle Sheaths:** The organs of action have their qualities, for example, the language spoken, the customs and traditions followed, the social interaction circle defined by one's status and wealth, the religious affiliation, and many other unique traits which arise only due to the ignorance of the one Self.

All these qualities are erroneously superimposed on the Self. Something that is pure can take on in every detail the qualities of that which it is associated with.

The “Neela Vastra-adi Yogena” Simile:

The appropriateness of this simile lies in the fact that a crystal is clear (colourless) and perfectly reflects the colour of the light rays falling upon it. Because of its purity and clarity, a crystal will appear to be of the same colour as the cloth on which it is placed.

Just as the crystal is not affected by the colours which surround it, so also the Self is not affected by the qualities which we erroneously superimpose upon it. It remains pure.

The five sheaths have a distinct “colouring” as described earlier, referring to the body and mind associations with race, culture, language, etc. The more the colouring the greater is the impurity. In a very gross mind, the Self is not detected at all. There is no sign of its own purity due to the thick impurity of the sheaths. In a Sattwic person, the colouring is not so strong. There will still be something of the Self coming through the sheaths. The purity of character will permit the sweet glow of the Self to shine through in such a person.

What is the solution to the problem of wrong identification?

THE SOLUTION

A. DISCRIMINATIVE ENQUIRY

(16-17)

VERSE 16: *As Rice Grain is Uncovered*

वपुस्तुषादिभिः कोशैर्युक्तं युक्त्यवघाततः ।

आत्मानमन्तरं शुद्धं विविञ्च्यात्तण्डुलं यथा

॥१६॥

1	<i>Vapuh-tusha-aadibhih koshaih</i>	<i>As from the husk, etc, so also from the sheaths;</i>
2	<i>yuktam yuktyaa avadhaatatah;</i>	<i>as by thrashing rice in a mortar, so also by logical reasoning;</i>
3	<i>aatmaanam antaram shuddham</i>	<i>the purity of the Self within should be uncovered</i>
4	<i>vivichyaat tandulam yathaa.</i>	<i>as the rice grain is uncovered (from the husk).</i>

In this verse the connection with the sheaths and the Self is seen from a practical Sadhana viewpoint. It tells us how it is possible to separate the Self from these sheaths which disguise It. The process is a deeply internal one, using the most refined of all the instruments of the subtle body, namely, the intellect.

The verse gives us the assurance that with a purified intellect, one can “separate” the Self from the sheaths. It is a rigorous analytical process, requiring a very pure and sharp intellect, and supported by the declaration in the Shastras of our true identity with Brahman the Supreme Reality. When this analysis is performed with relentless precision, the Self is beheld independent of the five sheaths which “cover” It.

“Avadhaatata Tandulam” – Rice Threshing Simile:

The husk of identification with the five sheaths is pounded away, and then the Pure Self is beheld, completely free from all the Upadhis which were associated with It.

The process of using the sharp and purified intellect to behold the Self is compared to the process of separating the husk and the bran from the rice grain so that the pure rice is seen. This process is accomplished in three stages: *threshing*, *winnowing* and *hulling*.

i) In the first stage, the grain with the husk is pounded to separate the husks.

ii) In the second stage the husk and rice grain mixture is separated by winnowing. This involves lifting the mixture up into the air in a slight breeze. When the mixture falls the grain falls directly into the wicker winnow, whilst the light husk gets blown away by the breeze and falls outside the winnow.

iii) In the *third stage*, the rice grain itself has to be carefully pounded in the hulling process to remove the bran that covers it, without breaking up the rice grain. This is the most delicate process.

These three processes resemble the three processes which the intellect has to carry out in revealing the Self. They are Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. It is hard work for the intellect, but with sufficient Chitta Shuddhi and Chitta Ekagrata, it can be achieved.

The Threshing, Pounding and Hulling to Reveal the Self:

The intellectual process of stripping away sheath by sheath was explained by Acharyaji as follows, using examples from the other schools of thought, and going step by step towards the Self.

i) **Charvaka School of Materialism:** There are four shades in the Charvaka school, all of them materialistic. The first school takes the body itself to be the Self. These are the rank materialists, living only to indulge in pleasures of the flesh. The second group goes a step subtler (that is, from outer to inner) and considers the senses to be the Self. Next is the group that takes the Pranas as the Self, and fourthly are those that regard the mind as the Self. That is the best that this group can acknowledge as being God. Even at the mind level, their philosophy is only to enjoy every conceivable mental pleasure.

Acharyaji questions the materialistic school in this manner. If I can be the body, then why can't I be this desk in front of me also? If my blood vessels extended themselves and flowed through the desk, will that make it 'Me'? In this way, the imperfection of the materialists is revealed, from the Vedantic view.

ii) **The Bauddha School:** says that the intellect is the highest level of God in existence. This is called the Kshanika Vijnana Vada. But, the Buddhi is also an instrument.

iii) **The Meemamsas:** under Kumarila Bhatt, the Meemamsas have gone a step beyond the Bauddhas and accept that the Self is a combination of knowledge and ignorance. Both exist in this universe, and so both must be accepted as the Truth. The level is observation of the world phenomenon. They do not take the enquiry any further.

iv) **Shunya Vadis:** These people say that in deep sleep there is nothing, not even a single thought. Hence, the Self must be nothing.

v) **Vedanta:** This is the only school that says that even this sheath which sees nothing, that is, the causal body, is only a sheath – a sheath of ignorance. Going beyond that is Pure Consciousness, which expresses Itself as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

Vedanta then proceeds to explain the practical means of having such an elevated experience as Self-knowledge. It bases its Sadhana on total purity of heart and clarity of intellect. Together, they take us to the ultimate experience.

The last word on this verse is that the sheaths are to be seen as different layers of clothes we wear. In 'cold' climates, where coldness is a symbolic measure of the "*absence of knowledge of God*", we put on many layers of clothes. As the weather warms up, that is, as we get closer in subtlety to the Self, we remove more of the layers, as we have seen in the examples of the different schools. In the last stage, Vedanta removes even the sheath of ignorance (the Anandamaya Kosha) and pierces through to the Self.

In Vedanta, the ultimate aim is crystal clear realization or perception of our true nature. It is the Non-dual Truth where there is no "other".

VERSE 17: As the Reflection in a Mirror

सदा सर्वगतोऽप्यात्मा न सर्वत्रावभासते ।
बुद्धावेवावभासेत स्वच्छेषु प्रतिबिम्बवत्

॥१७॥

1	<i>Sadaa sarva-gatah api aatmaa</i>	<i>Although the Self is always all-pervading,</i>
2	<i>na sarvatra ava-bhaasate;</i>	<i>yet It does not shine everywhere (in everything).</i>
3	<i>buddhau eva ava-bhaaseta</i>	<i>It manifests in the intellect only,</i>
4	<i>svaccheshu prati-bimba-vat.</i>	<i>just as the reflection (manifests best) in a mirror.</i>

In this verse the intellect is given its proper place as the prime instrument available to human beings to explore their spirituality. It is in the intellect that the Lord shines more clearly than in any other sheath of the human being.

Vedanta, in the same breath proclaims that only purity can capture clarity of intellect. Hence, the intellect that is given prime place is not a biased intellect leaning towards the mind and its desires, but a clean and clear instrument that is unswayed by desire. Such an instrument alone is capable of arriving logically at the Truth.

“Swaccheshu Pratibimbavat” Simile:

All objects reflect light in varying degrees. What appears dull is only dull because the light is not being reflected fully off that object due to roughness of its surface. The smoother the surface the greater is its power to reflect light. Perfect smoothness is found in a mirror, which reflects most faithfully all the light that falls upon it. Hence it is a fitting object to be used as an example for the light that reflects off a purified intellect. Of all the objects produced in nature, that which reflects the light of the Self most faithfully is our INTELLECT.

Other objects are too gross to be able to reveal the Self, although in a Sattwic person, there is a distinct purity that radiates even from his physical body, and his mind, being calm, radiates an aura of calmness and peace wherever it goes. However, even in a Sattwic person, it is his intellect which truly shines as we see in him the highest example of complete control over his mind and senses.

B. CULTIVATING WITNESS-SHIP: (18-22)

VERSE 18: As a King – Distinct from the Crowd

देहेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिप्रकृतिभ्यो विलक्षणम् ।
तद्वृत्तिसाक्षिणं विद्यादात्मानं राजवत्सदा

॥१८॥

1	<i>Deha indriya manah buddhih</i>	<i>The body, senses, mind and intellect –</i>
2	<i>prakriti-bhyah vi-lakshanam;</i>	<i>constitute Prakriti or matter; distinct from them,</i>
3	<i>tad-vritti saakshinam vidyaat</i>	<i>and known to be their witness,</i>
4	<i>aatmaanam raja-vat sadaa.</i>	<i>is the Atman or Self, always like the King.</i>

What is Witness-ship?

Quite early in our study, in the *Tattva Bodha* we came across the reference to the Witness of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. That Witness was said to be the Self. It was a Tataksha Lakshana of the Self (definition by using something “nearby” to point to the real thing). Here we are introduced to the practice of being a witness to the five sheaths (i.e. the three bodies).

The essential quality of being a witness is to remain “uninvolved”. A witness in a court of law has to be someone who saw what happened, but from a neutral perspective, not taking any sides. Similarly, being a witness to our three bodies requires us to consciously remain neutral and not take sides, either towards likes or towards dislikes.

That “involvement” is only possible if we see ourselves as NOT being these sheaths, that is, we see them as instruments we are using, but not identified with them in any way. “They are ours, we are not them”. That is the requirement for being a witness.

“Rajavat Sada” Simile: Distinct Like a King

What simile can reflect this witness-ship better than a **King** who, simply by his presence among his ministers, gets them to do their job with perfect loyalty. If it is announced that the King is coming to a certain place, without any effort from the King, all the necessary arrangements for his visit are made automatically and people gather there in their thousands.

This air of authority, respect and confidence which the King instills in his subjects merely by his presence, is what Sri Shankaracharya wishes to convey by choosing a King as the simile for the Self in this verse.

With the Self simply being present, all the Devatas, like a King’s ministers, go about their duties with 100% loyalty, controlling every function in the universe. Nobody can bribe God’s appointed Devatas to do them small favours. The Self has full confidence in the Devatas He has chosen to do His work.

A King with such faithful ministers can sleep peacefully. His kingdom runs smoothly and efficiently. He is not called upon to interfere in the state affairs. He remains a perfect witness of all state matters. Even so, the Self remains ever-peaceful and detached, being the supreme Reality behind all manifestations in the universe.

VERSE 19: *As the Moon – Appearing to Run*

व्यापृतेष्विन्द्रियेष्व्वात्मा व्यापारीवाविवेकिनाम् ।
दृश्यतेऽभ्रेषु धावत्सु धावन्निव यथा शशी

॥१९॥

1	<i>Vyaa-priteshu indriyeshu aatmaa</i>	<i>The Atman, observed through the active senses</i>
2	<i>vyaa-paaree iva avivekinaam;</i>	<i>by the non-discriminating people, is as if active</i>
3	<i>drishyate abhreshu dhaavatsu</i>	<i>in appearance; when the clouds move in the sky,</i>
4	<i>dhaavan iva yathaa shashee.</i>	<i>it seems as though the moon were running!</i>

In verse 18, the Witness-ship was focused on authority, awe and respect; it did not get into contact with the work. 1 In this verse, the same Witness-ship is seen as if

performing the activity, although it is in reality untouched by the activity. We have to consider the example first in this case, to properly grasp the real situation.

“Dhaavan Iva Yatha Shashee” Simile: As the Running Moon

3-4 Acharayaji paints the scene: “It is twilight; a group of clouds are flying through the skies. In between them we see the moon. From a scooter the little boy, holding fast to his dad, stares at the moon. He screams to dad, ‘Hey, daddy, look the moon is chasing us. Will it reach home before us? Quick, go faster, let’s beat it!’

“This is how a child would see the moon racing with his scooter!

“Sri Shankaracharya never grew up! He always remained as a child, ever amazed by what he saw in nature!” [This was Acharyaji’s loving tribute to the foremost Guru in his Parampara.]

What does this teach us? How far away is the moon? – Never too far away to avoid taking the blame for our activities on earth!

2 The Self is in a similar situation. Although it remains only as a witness of what is going on “under its nose”, yet in the eyes of one who has not learnt to discriminate, the **Aviveki**, it appears as if the Self is acting. Due to the Self’s proximity to the scene of action, it is viewed as if it is performing the actions. There is a complete transference of doership from the Upadhis that are involved in the action, to the Self which is independent of these Upadhis and who is not affected by the actions.

The Self is *Asanga* (unattached), *Kutastha* (unaffected) and *Chidrupa* (pure consciousness). Yet it is seen by the unknowing intellect as being the actor itself of all the numerous actions performed by the body and mind.

VERSE 20: *As Sunlight Keeps People Busy*

आत्मचैतन्यमाश्रित्य देहेन्द्रियमनोधियः ।

स्वक्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्ते सूर्यालोकं यथा जनाः

॥२०॥

1	<i>Aatma chaitanyam aashritya</i>	<i>Depending on Self, of the nature of consciousness,</i>
2	<i>deha indriya manah dhiyah;</i>	<i>the body, senses, mind and intellect</i>
3	<i>swa-kreeyartheshu vartante</i>	<i>engage in their respective activities –</i>
4	<i>sooryaa-lokam yathaa janaah.</i>	<i>just as sunlight heralds activity amongst people.</i>

The Witness-ship, seen in the above two verses as i) a figure of authority that inspires action, and ii) as the contractor himself of all activities, is here seen in a third perspective, iii) as the energizer that sets everything in motion.

1 Aashritya: “depending on”; the Self is first defined as of the nature of consciousness, to indicate that it is actually just a witness of all the activities taking place. The word *Aashritya* is used to show Its connection to these activities. **2** The body, senses, mind and intellect depend on the Self to do their work. What are they depending upon Him

for? – For the power that energises them or galvanizes them into action. **3** They await the Self’s consent, as it were, before plunging themselves into action.

What analogy can best describe such a relationship between the workers and their boss?

“Sooryalokam Yatha Jana”: The Energising Sun

4 The sun has the power of getting things moving. The word Surya itself literally means “that which moves others”. When the sun rises, people ‘move’ – out of their beds! When the sun rises, the birds start chirping. Everything in nature awaits the signal from the sun before engaging with their work for the day.

This beautifully compares with the situation of the Self, who has simply to give consent and all things get done thereafter.

The sun rises up. Its first rays place its signature on the pay-cheques of the workers here on earth, and they are happy to plunge into their work thereafter!

VERSE 21: *As Blueness is Superimposed on the Sky*

देहेन्द्रियगुणान्कर्माण्यमले सच्चिदात्मनि ।
अध्यस्यन्त्यविवेकेन गगने नीलतादिवत्

॥२१॥

1	<i>Deha indriya gunaan karmaani</i>	<i>Qualities and functions of the body and senses,</i>
2	<i>amale sat chit aatmani;</i>	<i>are, upon the pure Self, whose nature is Existence and Consciousness,</i>
3	<i>adhyasyanti avivekena</i>	<i>superimposed due to lack of discrimination (by fools),</i>
4	<i>gagane neelat-aadi-vat.</i>	<i>just as colours like blue, etc, are superimposed on the sky.</i>

This verse is indirectly a tribute to the intellect in man which has the capacity to distinguish and resolve the situation of superimposition described here. **1** The actions and functions of the body and senses are ascribed to the Self. That is the error which is the subject of this verse. Anyone with a sharp intellect can see without much difficulty that the Self cannot be blamed for the actions performed by the body and senses, as **2** It is beyond them and is unaffected by them.

3 Hence, to ascribe this activity to the Self can only be the work of fools, who do not have their reasoning power awakened. That is the view of Sri Shankaracharya in this verse.

“Gagane Neelatadivat” Nyaya: The Blue Sky

4 The sky is not actually blue. It may appear in varied colours, depending on the time of the day. At sunrise and sunset it is of quite a different hue altogether. Blueness is a quality that is superimposed upon it. Not only its blueness, but also various other qualities such as misty haze, fogginess, air pollution, dustiness, have their origins in things which are

not the sky. Yet, it is the sky that is described as misty, foggy, etc. although it has nothing to do with those conditions.

This is the superimposition of the conditions which occurs in relation to the Self. Only when we use our discriminative reason to look into the truth of things can we correct this erroneous superimposition of such qualities upon on the ever Pure Consciousness.

VERSE 22: *As Tremblings Are Attributed to Moon*

अज्ञानान्मानसोपाधेः कर्तृत्वादीनि चात्मनि ।

कल्प्यन्तेऽम्बुगते चन्द्रे चलनादि यथाम्भसः

॥२२॥

1	<i>Ajnaanaat maanasa upaadheh</i>	<i>Due to ignorance, that which belongs to the mind,</i>
2	<i>kartritva-aadini cha aatmani;</i>	<i>the agency of actions, etc, is attributed to the Self;</i>
3	<i>kalpyante ambugate chandre</i>	<i>just as attributed to the moon reflected in water</i>
4	<i>chalana-aadi yathaa ambhasah.</i>	<i>are the tremblings, etc, which belong to water.</i>

1-2 The purpose of this set of verses (18 – 22) is to enhance our ability to observe ourselves as being witness of the frenzied activity we are engaged in or we see in our own realms daily. Clearly, the author finds it important to stress the development of this skill as he is certain that without it no headway can be made in our understanding of the Self.

3-4 For this reason, this verse picks up another common flaw in our understanding of daily life. We see “tremblings” or agitations in our world on a daily basis, and we are given to see them as the quality of our own self. If we can stand back and be a witness of these agitations that occur in our external circumstances, then we will gradually learn not to identify ourselves with them for they are not from our true Self.

We cannot claim to be witness to our actions and also be affected by them to the extent that we are moved around like toys by them. The development of detachment is the skill called for in this verse, to cultivate the greater skill of remaining a witness.

“Chandre Chalanadi Yathambhasa” – The Moon’s Reflections

Once again a child is our observer in the simile. A child sees the perfect reflection of the moon on a calm day in the puddle of water outside the house. Then a leaf falls into the puddle. The moon’s reflection gets fragmented. The child runs inside the house excitedly to tell his mother, “Look, mummy, the moon is broken!”

Both the direct moonlight as well as the reflected moonlight are unaffected by the turbulences in the puddle of water. Yet, to the child they seem to have “broken the moon”, and he takes immediate steps to run and fix it. Nor is the moonlight affected by any dirt or mud in the puddle. The moonbeams remain pristinely pure.

This is how we are often affected by little disturbances in our life. Every movement disturbs our balance, and we react thoughtlessly to rectify it. If we developed a little of the witness-consciousness which is being taught here, we would not react in haste. Calm observation may be the best way to resolve a disturbing situation. By observation, we come in touch with a part of our being that is truer than the superficial self (ego).

D. MIND IS RESPONSIBLE: (23-24)

VERSE 23: *Where Do Attachments, etc, Reside?*

रागेच्छासुखदुःखादि बुद्धौ सत्यां प्रवर्तते ।
सुषुप्तौ नास्ति तन्नाशे तस्माद्बुद्धेस्तु नात्मनः

॥२३॥

1	<i>Raaga-icchhaa-sukha-duhkha-aadi</i>	<i>Attachment, desire, pleasure, pain, etc,</i>
2	<i>buddhau satyaam pra-varatate;</i>	<i>are perceived only when the intellect functions.</i>
3	<i>sushuptau na asti tat naashe</i>	<i>In deep sleep, when the intellect is absent, they too are absent;</i>
4	<i>tasmaat buddheh tu na aatmanah.</i>	<i>therefore, they belong to the mind alone and not the Atman.</i>

Placing himself in the shoes of an objector, Acharyaji asked, “You are asking me to take all my attention away from the things I like. What kind of life are you asking me to live? Whatever you may say about desires, I feel very much that I am those desires. Is there any proof you can give of your statements apart from all these examples. I am tired of your similes. They are only similes, where is the proof that this is so?”

These objections are to be expected, but the Vedantin is rooted in sound logic and observation of life without any bias. Here, in this verse, Sri Shankaracharya resists the temptation of giving a simile, in order to answer the above doubt.

Where Do Attachments, Desires and Pleasures Reside?

1-2 We experience all these only as long as the intellect or mind functions. As soon as the mind is not available, as in deep sleep, these tendencies, desires, attachments, and so on, also cease. Is that not proof enough that they exist only in the mind and not the Atman? Hence, they cannot be the Self.

3-4 The logic of this verse is undeniable. It is simple and clear. The conclusion Sri Shankaracharyaji expects us to draw from it is that these are mental conditionings and we should not identify ourselves with them, unless we don't mind being kicked about whichever way the mind blows. There is a Self within us that is steady and unflickering. It does not follow the vagaries of the mind. It is stable and steady, silent and peaceful, desireless and unattached.

Examples of How to Detach From the Mind:

Since Sri Shankaracharyaji had decided to give his similes a rest, Acharyaji gave some excellent examples of his own:

1. A buffalo is walking past as you cross the road. Buffalos are always a nuisance to traffic, but you have no need to make that your problem unless, of course, you somehow feel that you are that buffalo! That is what we are doing to the thought-buffalos of our mind. They are not “me”; we should just observe them and ignore them. But when we make them “me”, that is when we are asking for trouble.

2. We see a boat rocking in the water at the river bank. After watching it for some time, we ‘take over’ the rocking movement and feel as if we are rocking with it. Why? – Because we identify with it.

3. A Mahatma was trying to teach a student how to handle the mind. He took two stones and kept rubbing them against each other. His student, watching this, asked why this was being done. The Mahatma said, “I am trying to make these stones white.” The student said it was not possible to do that; the stones will never become white. Then the Mahatma smiled at him and said, “It is the same with this mind. We can never change it; we have only to learn to be indifferent to it. However much we try, we will never make it Brahman.

4. And the last example: Suppose we have just completed a long 2-day journey to Sidhabadi in the Himalayas. When we get off the train, for quite a while we find ourselves still swaying like we were doing in the train. It is hard to keep balance, until we adjust slowly to being motionless again.

VERSE 24: *As the “Essential Nature” of a Thing*

प्रकाशोऽर्कस्य तोयस्य शैत्यमग्नेर्यथोष्णता ।

स्वभावः सच्चिदानन्दनित्यनिर्मलतात्मनः

॥२४॥

1	<i>Prakaashah arkasya toyasya</i>	<i>As the sun’s nature is luminosity; that of water is</i>
2	<i>shaityam agneh yathaa ushnataa;</i>	<i>coolness; and that of fire is heat; so too,</i>
3	<i>swabhaavah satchidananda</i>	<i>the nature of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss;</i>
4	<i>nitya-nirmalat aatmanah.</i>	<i>of Eternity and Purity, are of the Self or Atman.</i>

Knowing that the mind’s nature cannot be changed, we leave it to its own ways. We do not fight it, just ignore it. Just as the mind has its own nature, so too, the Self has its own nature which is the opposite. Why not try to be identified with the nature of the Self instead of the mind?

3-4 This is what we are being made aware of here. Everything in creation has a nature which it has to express. The Self has the nature of being eternal, pure, Existence itself, Consciousness which is of the nature of Knowledge, and Bliss. These are not just qualities that we are seeing in a role model outside, but they are of our very own Self.

By shifting our attention to that which is stable and unchanging within us, we can break away from our mind, whose very nature it is to be changing all the time. This is the strategy which is being passed on to us in this verse.

Sri Shankaracharyaji gives us three universally known objects whose nature cannot change, and without which they will be something else.

The Example: The Sun, Water, and Fire

1-2 It is the Swabhava of these three objects to respectively be luminous, cool and hot. Without these qualities they will not be what they are.

The Self has the essential qualities mentioned above. If we contemplate upon these qualities, we will get closer to the Self, and thereby feel these developing in us. The Self can only be defined directly in terms of its essential nature, Satchidananda.

Chapter 6
Verses 25-37 (13 no.)
<i>“The Birth of the EGO”</i>

A. FEATURES OF THE EGO:

(Verses 25-27)

VERSE 25: *The Fundamental Error – Birth of EGO*

आत्मनः सच्चिदंशश्च बुद्धेर्वृत्तिरिति द्वयम् ।
संयोज्य चाविवेकेन जानामीति प्रवर्तते

॥२५॥

1	<i>Aatmanah sat-chid-amshah cha</i>	<i>The Existence-Consciousness aspect of the Self,</i>
2	<i>buddheh vrittih iti dvayam;</i>	<i>and the thought wave of the intellect –</i>
3	<i>samyojya cha avivekena</i>	<i>by the indiscriminate blending of these two,</i>
4	<i>jaanaami iti pravartate.</i>	<i>there arises the notion of “I know”.</i>

Here, Sri Shankaracharya turns again to pure reasoning to present his point, without resorting to any analogy or simile. The verse aims to help us explain at the level of the mind, that is, to our own intellect, how the Self has come to get identified with the mind. From the standpoint of creation or duality, this explanation gets to the very root of the entire problem of Ignorance and all its ramifications.

We cannot explain this to our mind, because as we have seen in *Tattva Bodha*, the mind is not where reasoning, analysis and decisions are taken. Reasoning belongs to the realm of the intellect. This verse explains at the intellectual level how this false identification takes place. It is quite a fundamental misperception, and any light thrown on this will be of value to disidentify ourselves from the mind, using the intellect as our tool.

Firstly we notice that only Sat and Chid are mentioned; the omission of the Ananda aspect from the above verse is deliberate. The Ananda aspect can only be studied when the mind is experiencing one of the states known as Priya, Moda and Pramoda. Since this is exceptional rather than the regular state of our experience, we omit it, and look only at the Sat and Chit aspects of the Self.

Anyonya (or Itaretara) Adhyaasa: Mutual Superimposition

Vedantic analysts have used this expression to explain what is being described in this verse. *Anyonya Adhyaasa* means “mutual superimposition”, one upon the other.

An example was given by Acharyaji of a red hot iron ball. This example occurs in this very text later on in verse 62, but is brought in here to illustrate the principle of mutual superimposition.

We have two things in this example:

- i) Firstly, there is **fire**, which is red hot but has no solid form.
- ii) Secondly, we have an **iron ball** which has form but no heat.

When the two are brought together, the iron ball begins to glow with the heat from the fire. We can look at this result in two ways:

- i) We can say that the iron has taken on the property of the fire and become hot; or,
- ii) We can say that the fire has taken on the form of the iron and is now glowing in the shape of a ball of iron.

This is what is called mutual superimposition in philosophical terms. There is a transfer of properties in both directions – from ball to fire and from fire to ball. Each object shares its essential characteristic with the other.

“Unholy Wedlock” – Creation of the False Ego

Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji used to call the association of the intellect and the Self by the term “unholy wedlock”. This is what the verse is referring to as “indiscriminate blending of the two”. The verse tells us that such an association has brought about a misplacing of identity, or a shift in our identity from the Self to a pseudo-Self identified with thoughts. The latter is what we commonly call the ego-self or ego-sense or just *Ego*.

The unholy wedlock of the intellect and the Self is similar to that of the fire and the ball. Self has Absolute Reality, intellect has only Vyavaharik reality. When the two merge, they become a compact one. They share each other’s qualities. The Sat and Chit aspects of the Self are “I am” and “I know”. The intellect is the instrument of analyzing our thoughts. The marriage results in the thought “I am this thought...” From this, a whole train of thought identification ensues. Due to ignorance and an undeveloped sense of discrimination in the intellect, this resulting thought train is mistaken to be our Self, when it is in fact our pseudo-Self, the Ego.

This is called “indiscriminate blending” in this verse. The philosophical term is Anyonya Adhyasa.

Then what is “Discriminate blending”?

The next 12 verses (up to verse 37) are wholly dedicated to the cultivation of the power of discrimination in the intellect *so that the error referred to in this verse is not made*.

VERSE 26: *The Deluded Ego Claims to Act and Know*

आत्मनो विक्रिया नास्ति बुद्धेर्बोधो न जात्विति ।

जीवः सर्वमलं ज्ञात्वा ज्ञाता द्रष्टेति मुह्यति

॥२६॥

1	<i>Aatmanah vikriyaa na asti</i>	<i>There is no action for the Self,</i>
2	<i>buddheh bodhah na jaatu iti;</i>	<i>and the intellect itself has no capacity to know;</i>
3	<i>jeevah sarvamalam jnaatvaa</i>	<i>Yet the individuality, experiencing them, thinks</i>
4	<i>jnaataa drishtaa iti muhyati.</i>	<i>“I am the knower and the seer”, and is thus deluded.</i>

Three important facts are presented in this verse which we would need to keep in mind when engaging our intellect to the task of probing the Truth:

1 i) Atman does not act: Atman has no modification, hence it cannot be attributed the responsibility of acting; it does not act.

2 ii) The inner instrument is inert: The Buddhi is Jada as it is a product of Maya and thus ‘unreal’ by its nature. It is composed of ‘matter’, subtle matter but still insentient. The components of Antahkarana are simply subtle body instruments, and cannot “know”.

3-4 iii) Intellect reflects the light of Atman: This makes it appear to be a conscious entity, but that is the delusion. This consciousness “takes over” by a pure assumption the function of knowing the Self. This is a false self, not the real Self. But it does not know that.

These are the items which our discrimination or intellect has to apply itself to in order to assist us in obtaining Self-knowledge. The particular role of the intellect in this regard is going to be identified in the next few verses.

Analogy of a Light Bulb:

There is no example or simile given in this verse, but Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, author of our commentary, ventures an illustration: that of an *electric bulb*. All three of the above points are illustrated by it:

i) In itself the bulb cannot give light without electricity flowing through it. When electricity (symbolizing the Self) flows, then the inert bulb lights up, as that is what it is designed to do; it cannot do anything else.

ii) The bulb becomes the means by which we are able to “perceive” electricity. In the same way, the intellect plays its role of making us “aware of” the existence of the Self, although on its own it has no power to know it.

iii) The point about the ego-sense is also illustrated by this analogy. If the bulb had an ego-sense, it would feel that it itself were producing the light, although it is only an instrument that is used by the electricity to give light. By its association with the electricity it is seen to be an instrument of light.

The bulb represents the intellect. Due to its inherent quality of ignorance which is due to its own origin as part of Maya’s creation, the intellect erroneously develops the ego-sense of possessing intelligence. This accounts for the onset of the whole entourage of Avidya manifesting in the human individual or Jiva.

VERSE 27: *As Mistaking the Rope for a Snake*

रज्जुसर्पवदात्मानं जीवं ज्ञात्वा भयं वहेत् ।

नाहं जीवः परात्मेति ज्ञातं चेन्निर्भयो भवेत्

॥२७॥

1	<i>Rajju-sarpa-vat aatmaanam</i>	<i>As one who regards a rope as a snake, so too one</i>
2	<i>jeevam jnaatvaa bhayam vahet;</i>	<i>regarding oneself as an ego, is overcome by fear;</i>
3	<i>na aham jeevah paraatmaa iti</i>	<i>“I am not the ego, but the Supreme Self” –</i>
4	<i>jnaatah chet nirbhayah bhavet.</i>	<i>if he realizes this, he becomes fearless.</i>

An attempt is made in this verse to relieve the intellect of the burden placed upon it by the falsely created sense of “I”. The burden is simply all the fears resulting from the misplaced identity of oneself as an individual. These are shown in this verse to be unnecessarily taken upon one’s own shoulders, when in reality *they do not even exist*.

“Rajju-Sarpa-Vat Atmanam”: The Rope-Snake Analogy

In this simile, a rope is seen and misidentified as being a snake. The resulting fear that grips the person beholding this has no basis as it arises from pure delusion. The rope is not even aware of the existence of the ‘snake’, so it cannot be held responsible. It is the individual consciousness or the ego which has to bear the responsibility of the consequences for this deluded perception.

The burden of ‘fears’ represent the entire range of deluded perceptions arising from this ego-consciousness. Fear is used here as an Upa-Lakshanam (a term representing many other terms in the same family). All the 6 negative qualities are included in it from Kama, Krodha onwards. The Jiva, under its own delusion and imagined fear, suffers from the consequences of such fear.

The real fear of the snake is due to the venom in its bite. The sage solves the problem by removing the ‘venom’ from the snake’s bite. The venom lies in the sense of egoism that heads this whole web of delusion. We will discuss more on the details of how this happens, but at this stage, for the sake of completing this analogy, we mention here that the “ego-sense” in a sage is rendered ‘toothless’. The snake has been burnt and is there only in appearance, it cannot do any harm. A burnt snake may still look like a snake but it cannot do anything.

The sage’s egoism is like that. It is just enough to go on functioning in this world; it serves only an operational function. But really there is no ‘venom’ in it. The venom of selfishness has been transformed into the nectar of universal vision.

Fear & Bondage

A burnt rope cannot be used to tie anything; the moment it is touched it crumbles to ashes. Similarly, the sage’s egoism, which is burnt, cannot tie him to this world anymore. The sage is freed from bondage to this world.

An ignorant person’s ego is full of venom. If he is criticized he will seek revenge on the one who criticizes him. He will try to bite back with venom. But in a Jnani there is no such reaction. He knows he has been criticized, but remains indifferent to it, understanding that it is only a thought current passing through. He has no fear of criticism.

The fearlessness of the sage tantamounts to complete liberation from all bondage.

Because the Jnani has risen above egoism, he sees the correct picture of all the facts listed in verse 26 above. He knows that the consciousness expressing through his intellect is a reflection of the Self, i.e. it is Chid-Abhasa. Hence he is not disturbed by any wave produced in it, such as the crest of praise or the trough of criticism.

B. THE SELF-LUMINOUS SELF: (28-29)

VERSE 28: *As a Lamp Illumines Objects*

आत्मावभासयत्येको बुद्ध्यादीनीन्द्रियाण्यपि ।
दीपो घटादिवत्स्वात्मा जडैस्तैर्नावभास्यते

॥२८॥

1	<i>Aatmaa ava-bhaasayati ekah</i>	<i>The Self alone illuminates</i>
2	<i>buddhi-aadini indriyaani api hi;</i>	<i>the intellect, etc, and also verily the senses,</i>
3	<i>deepah ghat-aadi-vat swaatmaa</i>	<i>just as a lamp itself illuminates pots, etc.</i>
4	<i>jadaih taih na ava-bhaasyate.</i>	<i>Inert themselves, they cannot illumine themselves.</i>

We return here to the light bulb analogy made in verse 26, this time it is coming directly in the text itself, as a lamp illumining a jar. There it was used to illustrate the false origin of the ego. Here it is used to emphasise the inherent **inertness** of the intellect equipment (i.e. point number two in verse 26).

What is meant by inertness of the intellect? The intellect is recognized to be the most subtle part of the creation of the human being. The supremacy of the intellect was brought out in verse 17. In spite of that supremacy, why is it still described as being inert?

Its supremacy lies only in the fact that it is the “light bulb” of the human being. No other part of the human being has this capacity to express the Self so clearly as the intellect, although in their functioning they all express to some extent the ‘intelligence’ of the Self. The king of the human equipment is the intellect; it enlightens all other functions.

Nevertheless, it still cannot illumine itself. This limitation of the intellect is the point being made in this verse. Intellect, although the highest instrument we have, cannot be equated to the Self. By nature, it is still part of “material” creation, and in that sense inert.

Being Clear of the Role of Intellect:

The great value of the intellect lies in its power to analyse and reflect. The intellect alone can grasp our real state of bondage: that we are trapped in a prison. To understand the nature of the imprisonment, and to help us see the way out of it is the great function of the intellect. Once it has done that, its job is over, and the Self is revealed by itself, by its own self-luminous nature. This idea is developed further in the verses to follow.

Thus, the intellect only has to uncover the veil of ignorance. It is not tasked to reveal the Self. The Self will do that of its own accord, as it is self-revealing. It does not need the intellect to illumine it; indeed, there is no such need to illumine it as it is self-luminous.

If the intellect could speak to the Jiva, it would be saying: “Come, take me, use me, get your job done through me, and then you may discard me for my job would be over.” That is what the pure intellect is saying to the entrapped Jiva or consciousness that is caught in the net of egoism.

In this connection, we note that Vedanta is the only philosophy in the world that presents the process of enlightenment in this manner. The manner is characterized by Tyaga or Renunciation. Renunciation is in the very heart of Vedanta. The “Neti Neti” procedure (see verse 30) is designed to renounce every component of the three bodies we are imprisoned in. As we peel off these outer coverings, starting at the grossest level and ending with the most subtle (the intellect), we are renouncing every step of the way.

And finally, arriving at the intellect whence we can go no further, Vedanta says: “That by which you were enabled to renounce, is itself now to be renounced.”

VERSE 29: *As a Lighted Lamp Illumines Itself*

स्वबोधे नान्यबोधेच्छा बोधरूपतयात्मनः ।
न दीपस्यान्यदीपेच्छा यथा स्वात्मप्रकाशने

॥२९॥

1	<i>Swa-bodhe na anya-bodhecchhaa</i>	<i>To know the Self, needs no other knowledge,</i>
2	<i>bodha-roopa-tayaa aatmanah;</i>	<i>for, one's own Self is of the form of knowledge.</i>
3	<i>na deepasya anya-deepecchhaa</i>	<i>A lighted lamp does not need another lamp,</i>
4	<i>yathaa swaatma prakaashane.</i>	<i>to make it visible as it illumines itself.</i>

As an introduction to this verse, Acharyaji placed the discussion in its overall context in the following words.

We cannot avoid the reflection of consciousness. It is the way we have been created. We cannot change that, and we will get nowhere if we deny this fact. All we can do is to say that we are not the Jiva, the individualized being. Our strategy for escaping from our self-made prison is to dissociate ourselves from the body, mind and intellect as much as possible. Therein lies our only practical recourse for liberating ourselves.

If we did not have the “I”-sense there would be no problem in the first place. But it has happened like that, it is unavoidable. So the only way out is to feel we are the Supreme Self, and not this Jiva. In this process our greatest instrument to accomplish this is the intellect. We have to use its power of analysis, of thought construction, of decision and command over the rest of the body's components to the ultimate.

In this verse we are given the assurance that once we have done that part of the Sadhana, using the intellect, the Self will reveal itself to us. It is not in need of ‘any other lamp’ to show itself to us.

The Example: “Na Deepasya Anyadeepeccha”

*There is no need for another lamp to light one that is already lit.
In the same way there is no need for anything to light the Self, that is,
reveal the Self to us, because the Self has this capacity built into it. It is
self-luminous.*

When all the things that conceal the Self from us are removed, It shines forth by Itself. All our Sadhana is to undo all the harm that has already been done in numberless births of ignorant living. Once we can grasp with our intellect the knowledge of the condition of the entrapped Jiva, then alone can we take the steps to remove the veils one by one, and permit the Self to shine through.

C. “NETI – NETI” : THE DOCTRINE OF NEGATION (30-33)

VERSE 30: *The Negation of All Conditionings*

निषिध्य निखिलोपाधीनेति नेतीति वाक्यतः ।
विद्यादैक्यं महावाक्यैर्जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः

॥३०॥

1	<i>Nishidhya nikhila-upaadheen</i>	<i>By the process of negation of all conditionings</i>
2	<i>“na iti, na iti” iti vaakyatah;</i>	<i>as per the scriptural statement “Not this, not this”,</i>
3	<i>vidyaat aikyam mahaa-vaakyaih</i>	<i>know the oneness proclaimed by the Mahavakya:</i>
4	<i>jeev-aatma param-aatmanoh.</i>	<i>“The individual soul is the Supreme Soul”.</i>

In this verse the central objective of all our Sadhana is highlighted.

“Neti-Neti” refers to the negation of all the Upadhis which keep us separated from our identity with our true Self. This negation process is a Sadhana of discrimination, done within the intellect. By seeing the defects at each level of existence, the intellect rejects the ‘falseness’ level by level. This is done at two major levels, namely, the Pindanda and the Brahmanda – these are the individual level and the cosmic level, the microcosm and the macrocosm.

The reason for their rejection is that they are seen to have falseness as their basis. For this reason this process is also referred to as **de-falsification**. The Upadhis are the three bodies at the individual level, and the three Prapanchas at the cosmic level. At every level, whatever we have been identified with is examined carefully and their connection with us is *falsified*. This is the essence of the “Neti-Neti” process.

By this process, we clear the veils which hide the Self from our direct experience of It. Upon completing such a process of Sadhana, the Self stands before us fully revealed.

Ajnana Visishtha Chaitanyam:

This is the philosophical term given to the human predicament. It means “the Self is veiled by Ignorance”. Another term used is “Ajnana Upahita Chaitanyam” which means “the Self is conditioned by Ignorance.”

The word Upahita is connected with Upadhi. Upadhi is that which conditions, whilst Upahita is that which is conditioned. By removing all that which conditions the Self and renders it as the conditioned self or Jiva, the latter is restored to its original pristine pure state. This is the realized state or the enlightened state.

In the next three verses, this process is clarified for each stage of Sadhana – Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana.

VERSE 31: *As Perishable as Bubbles*

आविद्यकं शरीरादि दृश्यं बुद्बुदवत्क्षरम् ।
एतद्विलक्षणं विद्यादहं ब्रह्मेति निर्मलम्

॥३१॥

1	<i>Aavidyakam shareer-aadi</i>	<i>The body, etc, up to the causal body,</i>
2	<i>drishyam budbuda-vat ksharam;</i>	<i>are perceivable objects, perishable as bubbles.</i>
3	<i>etad vi-lakshanam vidyaat</i>	<i>Realise, “I am different from all these,”</i>
4	<i>“aham brahma” iti nirmalam.</i>	<i>“I am the ever pure Brahman”.</i>

This step may be compared with Sravana, as it acquaints us with the whole problem.

This verse clearly identifies what is to be falsified or negated in the process of “Neti-Neti”. The next two verses go into the specifics of the process.

That which has to be falsified is everything right up to the causal body. This means the gross body, subtle body and the causal body.

Self & Upadhis – Their Relative Importance

What does it mean to negate the three bodies, viz. gross, subtle and causal? That which arises from ignorance is to be negated or falsified. By implication this means all three bodies as they all arise from Maya or Ignorance in association with Brahman.

It is not intended here to reduce the value of the functions that the three bodies perform, but merely to see their real value in relation to the absolute Truth of our very Being, the Self. Nothing should presume to take the place of the Self; that is quite clear. However, in the process of establishing the superiority of the Self, these Upadhis are not to be run down; not to be relegated as worthless; not to be sneered upon as inconsequential. They are simply to be seen for what they are – as *instruments* of the individual self.

It would be against the spirit of Vedanta for the Self to proclaim its greatness by chopping off the worth of the other elements of creation (the Upadhis). In the hands of the careless student, the verse is open to such incorrect interpretation. Hence, Acharyaji cautioned us against such a puerile view of the Self’s greatness.

Similarly when it is said that the Self is *different* from all these, again it is not said in a competitive spirit. The Self is not in need of being glorified. The glorification, if any, is only to highlight to the seeker that he should never give undue importance to these Upadhis, that is, he should never make them so important in his life that he forgets the Self which is his real nature.

The Example: “Budbudavat Ksharam” Evanescent Bubbles

When it is said that these Upadhis are like objects that are perceived and are therefore like bubbles, once again the above comment applies. It is simply to illustrate that they are not dependable in themselves. They have a function to perform in the plan of Maya, but they do not have the qualities of the Self, that is, being all-knowing, all-pervading and timeless. Their existence is like the existence of bubbles – evanescent and fleeting.

As bubbles they may also be viewed as having little significance in the true purpose of life, in relation to the evolutionary purpose of life. For if not utilized for what they were intended, they have a strong tendency to distract us from that purpose, and even make us recede from that purpose. If we allow ourselves to be engrossed by the bubbles, we are in danger of further delusion and bondage to this world.

Earlier the same simile was used to describe the macrocosmic creation of all the worlds. Now it is being applied to the microcosmic existence of the human body, which is just as fleeting as the mighty worlds out there.

VERSE 32: *Beyond Body and Sense Objects* (Athatvya-Vritti Lakshana)

देहान्यत्वान्न मे जन्मजराकार्श्यलयादयः ।
शब्दादिविषयैः सङ्गो निरिन्द्रियतया न च

॥३२॥

1	<i>Deha anyatvaat na me janma</i>	<i>I am other than the body, thus not for me is birth,</i>
2	<i>jaraa akaarshya laya aadayah;</i>	<i>wrinkling, senility, death and so on.</i>
3	<i>shabda-aadi vishayaih sangah</i>	<i>With sense objects such as sound, etc, association</i>
4	<i>nir-indriya tayaa na cha.</i>	<i>is nil as I (the Self) am without sense organs.</i>

This and the next verse are Manana on the Self, wherein we ponder carefully over what we have heard on the Upadhis. We reflect seriously about the body and the mind and negate them, that is, go beyond the limitations imposed by them.

In this verse we deal with the gross body – “I am not the body,” nor all the associated transactions it has with this world of names and forms.

Notice that the emphasis is on the changeability of the body. This is true of the entire gross universe of objects, but we see the effect of that changeability more dramatically when we see it in our own body. As we grow we encounter the 6 stages or modifications which the body undergoes. They are: existence, birth, growth, maturity, decay and death. They are the six phases which our body goes through in the course of a life of normal duration.

When the body’s hold on our attention is loosened, then we begin to free ourselves from six changes that it undergoes, and which are inevitable to the body. The real “I” is seen as a constant background, unaffected by the changing foreground. By retreating into the area of constancy in life, our life no longer dances up and down to the tune of the ever-changing waves of bodily experiences. We do not live with the body as our centre. The body is not viewed as the essential part of us. It is there, and we have to take care of it; but it is not the centre-stage of my life.

This is how a seeker of Truth begins to reflect and analyse his body and its associated needs. As clearly mentioned in the previous verse, this does not mean that we sneer at the body as some inferior object to be detested. No such attitude is even suggested, even in the straightforward words, “I have nothing to do with these sense objects.”

By negating the gross body, we begin to reduce all identification with it, and finally eliminate it. In this process, our link to the spiritual world within is strengthened.

The negation of body includes negation of our senses and all the sense objects that interact with the senses. These would naturally receive the same treatment as the body. They cease to dominate the drama of life.

VERSE 33: *Beyond Mind and Pranas Am I* (Athatvya-Vritti Lakshana)

अमनस्त्वान्न मे दुःखरागद्वेषभयादयः ।

अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्र इत्यादि श्रुतिशासनात्

॥३३॥

1	<i>Amanas-tvaat na me duhkha</i>	<i>Because I am not this mind, thus not for me is sorrow,</i>
2	<i>raga-dvesha-bhaya-aadayah;</i>	<i>attachment, malice, fear and so on.</i>
3	<i>apraanah hi amanaah shubhrah</i>	<i>The Self is without Prana, and even without mind;</i>
4	<i>iti aadi shruti-shaasanaat.</i>	<i>“It is Pure” – thus declare the Shrutis (Upanishads).</i>

We now deal with the second aspect of our Upadhis – the mind. This step is Manana on the mind. It is more subtle reflection than that described in the previous verse. It is much more difficult to negate the mind than to negate the body. The abstract is always more elusive than the concrete.

1 Why is this negation being done? Is it because the Guru said so? No, it is because that is the firm conviction that is arising in our mind of the limitations incumbent upon these Upadhis. It is from our own intellectual conviction that we make the resolve to raise ourselves above these limitations, and not because anyone has told us to do so. This is the deep personal conviction which Vedanta imposes upon us, and from which springs the energy for the Sadhana.

2 The mind here has to be taken as the entire Antahkarana or inner equipment, i.e. the mind, intellect and ego-sense. All these together form the mental Upadhis. Each one of them is associated with the full baggage of attachments, fears, likes and dislikes, emotions and feelings, and the joys and sorrows that are the effects of these thoughts.

We notice that from step 31, the text begins to use the first person. ‘I’ am the subject of the actions. This is because the negation process is a process that concerns only ‘me’ in my relationship with all these Upadhis. It is an individual Sadhana to overcome the individuality. No one else need even know about this Sadhana. It is a personal practice, done for self-purification, not for acquiring any accreditation from others. It must not end up as an *achievement* for which the ego will be expecting to be applauded.

3 Swami Chinmayanandaji compares this step (of bringing the mind under scrutiny) as one would view or analyse one’s own dream. Once the dream is seen as a dream, it ceases to carry with it all the associated feelings and emotions it may have carried while it was still being dreamt. Upon awakening from one’s dream, the child that died in the dream does not bring sorrow. Similarly, the seeker does not lament that he has to give up all the feelings that he once associated with his experiences. He now sees his mental encounters dispassionately as a witness. The ‘death’ of all the good or bad emotions and thoughts is not a cause for mourning, any more than are the termination of the sorrows and joys of dream upon awakening.

The logic of Vedanta is simple; we need not complicate it. Complications invite impurities to set in. The process is seen simply as this: “I am not these emotions. I am free from sorrow or pain. I have no attachment, malice or fear.” This practice, if carried out in simplicity, which means with purity, is sure to bring the result of peace of mind.

4 In other words, *we should be very happy to be free from the mind!* For it is the direction given by the Srutis (Upanishads) themselves. Handling of the mind in this way should bring us joy, not regret in having to lose something.

Performed in this manner, the due reward of mental peace is sure to come, and that prepares us for the third stage of Sadhana, which is Nididhyasana.....

D. NIDIDHYASANA or MEDITATION ON THE SELF: (34-37)

VERSE 34: *Beyond all Attributes Am I*

(Tatastha Lakshana)

निर्गुणो निष्क्रियो नित्यो निर्विकल्पो निरंजनः ।

निर्विकारो निराकारो नित्यमुक्तोऽस्मि निर्मलः

॥३४॥

1	<i>Nirgunah, nishkriyah, nityah,</i>	<i>Without attributes, without actions, eternal,</i>
2	<i>nirvikalpah, niranjanah;</i>	<i>without any desire (thought), without dirt,</i>
3	<i>Nirvikaarah, niraakaarah,</i>	<i>without any change, without form,</i>
4	<i>nitya-muktah asmi nirmalah.</i>	<i>ever liberated, and ever Pure I am.</i>

Now the most important step of all is being dealt with in the next 4 verses, up to verse 37. We keep in mind that this discussion on the role of the discriminating intellect began with verse 26, and covers 12 verses. Here we come to the final phase of the discussion, which is Nididhyasana or meditation on the divine qualities of the Self.

Up to now we were focusing on **NEGATION** ("Neti-Neti"). Now the time has come to focus on positive **ASSERTION**. The divinity of the Spirit is asserted in Nididhyasana.

Nididhyasana is where we bring the whole process to its glorious end, where we reap the full benefits of all the laborious efforts of earlier Sadhana. There is actually nothing to discuss. The spirit of these verses is purely to assist us in the meditation Sadhana.

No Need for "Why" & "How" Now

To bring in why and how at this stage will sully the experience of Truth.

Most important to derive the full benefit of these verses is to know that at this stage we are not interested in the 'why' and the 'how' anymore. All the 'whys' and the 'hows' have been dealt with in the previous stages. We have passed that stage already and come to the last phase which requires us to hold our focus steady and imbibe the richness of the Self-experience.

We must feel the full flow of these qualities throughout our system, body and mind. Acharyaji gave a stunning simile of his own in this regard. He said, "*We do not need the speed-breakers of 'why' and 'how' to arrest the smooth flow of these qualities into our bloodstream.*"

What a beautiful illustration of the state of meditative ecstasy! Surely, that can only come from one who is himself immersed in such a state of bliss.

1-4 Nine qualities of the Self are listed in this verse.

i)	Nirguna	– without attributes
ii)	Nishkriya	– without actions
iii)	Nitya	– eternal
iv)	Nirvikalpa	– without any desire and thought
v)	Niranjana	– without any dirt
vi)	Nirvikara	– without any change
vii)	Nirakara	– without form
viii)	Nityamukta	– ever free or liberated
ix)	Nirmala	– without impurity; ever pure

What a line-up! – An awesome, invincible team indeed!

We experience our deepest Self as these beautiful qualities. It is such an experience that makes the spiritual quest so intensely rewarding and worthwhile. It is for a glimpse of

these qualities that Yogis and sages make huge sacrifices in their personal lives. Do they not now richly deserve to reap the harvest of all their hard work?

An Indirect Simile: “Ni” – the Highest Note in Music

All nine words for the nine qualities of the Self begin with the prefix ‘Ni’. The seventh and highest note of a music octave is *Ni*, in Indian music. Is it significant here that in talking about the qualities of God, the name of this note is in all of them?

A classical musician, when he gets to the highest note, tries to hold it for as long as he can. Is it significant then that when the spiritual seeker scales the heights of spirituality, he tries to maintain that state for as long as he can? – Perhaps for ever!

VERSE 35: *Beyond All Change and Taint*

(Tatastha Lakshana)

अहमाकाशवत्सर्वं बहिरन्तर्गतोऽच्युतः ।

सदा सर्वसमः सिद्धो निःसङ्गो निर्मलोऽचलः

॥३५॥

1	<i>Aham aakaasha-vat sarvam</i>	<i>Like Space I fill all things,</i>
2	<i>bahih antar-gatah achyutah;</i>	<i>within and without. Changeless,</i>
3	<i>sadaa sarva-samah shuddhah</i>	<i>always the same in all, ever pure,</i>
4	<i>nissangah nirmalah achalah.</i>	<i>unattached, stainless and motionless (am I).</i>

The “I” refers to the Supreme Self. There is great need for repetition, and Sri Shankaracharyaji is never found wanting in providing us with a bumper feast!

Repetition in the subject of meditation is welcome, not boring. Meditation itself is a repetitive process. It is something the sage does daily, for hours on end, without tiring. There cannot be boredom in enjoying being in the presence of our own Self.

As we expand our identity beyond the frontiers of individuality, where do we stop? Is there an end in sight? No.

“Akashavat Sarvam” – The Simile of Space Again:

1-2 The only simile that can compare with our ever expanding consciousness is Space itself. That is captured in, “I fill all things within and without.”

Space, as inspiring and expansive as it is, is just a concept in the mind. We can only compare the Self to it, but the Self goes beyond it; It has no second to be compared with.

3-4 However, there is a strong point of similarity: The Self, like space, allows everything to exist in It, yet is not contaminated by anything else. This is the context in which we used the same simile earlier, in verse 10, where it was from the angle of ignorance that we looked at space – as being cut up by our limited individuality into units. This time the context is the opposite. We are seeing it from the angle of the enlightened sage. It is unlimited and pristinely pure.

Reality can have no qualities. If it had, then there would need to be another Reality that would support those qualities. Extending this reasoning would lead to an infinite regression, that makes the hypothesis illogical.

VERSE 36: This is What I Am!**(Swaroop Lakshana)**

नित्यशुद्धविमुक्तैकमखण्डानन्दमद्वयम् ।
सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं यत्परं ब्रह्माहमेव तत्

॥३६॥

1	<i>Nitya, shuddha, vimuktaikam,</i>	<i>Eternal, pure, ever-liberated and One;</i>
2	<i>akhanda-aanandam advayam;</i>	<i>indivisible Bliss, and non-dual;</i>
3	<i>satyam jnaanam anantam yat</i>	<i>Existence, Knowledge and Infinite;</i>
4	<i>param brahma aham eva tat.</i>	<i>I am verily that Supreme Brahman.</i>

4 Again an assertion is made as to who we really are. And again we have nine qualities painted before us in a panorama of exquisite beauty.

1-2 To contemplate on these thoughts is the way to directly experience the Self. This concludes the Nididhyasana or meditation upon the Self. In the process, we have unearthed the richest of spiritual treasure. The Brahma Nishtha sage drinks his fill of these qualities as though they are nectar to him.

Since beginning the quest for perfection from verse 30, starting with the doctrine of negation, we have completed all the three Lakshanas or definitions or pointers to the Self. This verse gives the final, Swaroop Lakshana, the direct pointer to the Self by telling us what It actually is.

3 Satyam, Jnaanam, Anantam: This is a very familiar Upanishadic statement appearing in the Taittiriya Upanishad, and dealt with in great detail in Sri Shankaracharya's Bhashya on that Upanishad. Here, Sri Shankara repeats the words as they are the most eloquent expression to describe the nature of the Self.

As we shall see when studying the Upanishad, Satyam affirms Brahman by negating non-existence; Jnaanam affirms It by negating inertness; and Anantam affirms It by negating incompleteness. In this way we have the most comprehensive description of the nature of the Supreme Truth.

The next verse explains the impact of this experience on him.

VERSE 37: As Medicine Destroys Diseases

एवं निरन्तराभ्यस्ता ब्रह्मैवास्मीति वासना ।
हरत्यविद्याविक्षेपान् रोगानिव रसायनम्

॥३७॥

1	<i>Evam nirantara-krita, or Evam nirantara-abhyastaa</i>	<i>Thus, by constant, endless practice of the</i>
2	<i>brahma eva asmi iti vaasanaa;</i>	<i>thought "I am Brahman", the impression created</i>
3	<i>harati avidyaa-vikshepaan</i>	<i>destroys ignorance and mental agitations,</i>
4	<i>rogaan iva rasaayanam.</i>	<i>just as medicine destroys diseases.</i>

From verse 25 to 37 we have journeyed from a state of "indiscriminate mixing" productive of the most serious of all blunders in human evolution, to the serene state of

infinite peace and purity that transcends all duality. What a vast ground to have covered!
And where did all this take place?

1-3 In that crucible or laboratory of all thought processes – the human intellect. We have used intellect for its highest purpose: to establish the “*I am Brahman*” thought as a counter-Vasana in the causal body to eradicate ignorant Vasanas. This is done by sheer untiring effort of great magnitude, prolonged in time, concentrated in thought, focused in clarity, and imbued with devotion and love for God. Under these conditions (known as Abhyasa) we have seen how it is possible to make a diametrical shift from the delusion of ignorance to the firm conviction of knowledge. This is the definition of “constant practice” used in this verse.

The Nyaya of “Roganiva Rasayanam”: Medicine Destroys Diseases

4 In this laboratory has been produced the medicine that destroys the most widespread of diseases that perplexes humanity - IGNORANCE.

To produce a medical cure takes a long time. Much research is needed to analyse information as well as various chemical processes. To then produce the medicine requires more laborious effort, trying to get the best conditions to carry out the chemistry needed to produce it. Thus this simile fits excellently in describing the laborious effort or Abhyasa that we need to put in to bring us to the threshold of spiritual illumination.

Since the disease here is of the nature of ignorance, the cure produced is of the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is the only antidote for ignorance, even as medicine is the only cure for disease.

The knowledge is obtained from hearing it, no doubt, but much else goes into it from that point onward in overcoming doubts, and undergoing further purification in thinning out the strength of old impressions that contradict this knowledge.

Vedantic Cure Compared With Other Cures

This work is well and aptly represented by the medicine analogy. One can use a medicine that will just get rid of the symptoms of the disease; this gives temporary relief from the disease. Then one can get a medicine that goes to the root of the disease and “roots it out”. This may take longer, but it is more effective in the long run. Similarly, in the comparison with a spiritual cure, the Vedantic medicine goes to the very root of all diseases, namely, ignorance or Avidya itself. A treatment at any other level will only bring temporary relief from the symptoms.

Even the method of administering the medicine bears resemblance to the spiritual method used. The Ayurvedic doctor will give you a long list of what you must do or not do during the treatment. Then he will tell you exactly when to take the medicine and how much to take. When all these conditions are fulfilled, the resulting cure is certain. It is the same in spirituality. The do’s and don’ts of Yama and Niyama are standard in the ‘spiritual industry’. Regularity in meditation is the frequency of intake. The dosage is how concentrated one can be during the period spent in meditation.

When all these conditions are met, the cure is assured without any doubt. This is Vedanta’s gift to the world. No other system goes so deep as Vedanta does.

Chapter 7
Verses 38-53 (16 no.)
“Towards REALISATION”

The State of Realisation

The destruction of the mind has taken place in the previous verse. That is the dawn of Realisation! What follows are observations from that privileged platform. From here till the end of the text we have exquisite descriptions of the state of God-realisation, given by a God-realised sage of the highest order – Sri Shankaracharyaji.

The descriptions defy further comment, and are left largely to speak for themselves; for each soul to interpret according to his growth and inner inspirations. Acharyaji’s comments are faithfully produced for these verses.

A. SAMADHI – SAVIKALPA & NIRVIKALPA: (38-39)

VERSE 38: *Meditate Upon Such a Self*

विविक्तदेश आसीनो विरागो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
भावयेदेकमात्मानं तमनन्तमनन्यधीः

॥३८॥

1	<i>Vivikta-deshe aaseenah</i>	<i>Sitting in a solitary place;</i>
2	<i>viraagah vijita indriyah;</i>	<i>freeing the mind from desires, controlling the senses;</i>
3	<i>bhaavayet ekam aatmaanam</i>	<i>meditate upon the One Self without a second,</i>
4	<i>tam anantam anyadheeh.</i>	<i>that boundless Being, with unswerving attention.</i>

This and the next verse take the student of Vedanta on a short but very significant part of the spiritual journey. It is the final lap of the journey, and may be introduced as follows:

A Closer Look at Samadhi

There is a fine distinction drawn between the various states of consciousness reached upon the end of Nididhyasana. In broad terms we have been calling this state as Samadhi in *Sadhana Panchakam* and *Tattwa Bodha*. But if we take a magnifying glass and look at the actual ‘map’ of the area that is travelled, we will see in finer detail what is broadly termed Samadhi. There are distinct levels of Samadhi which may be identifiable to one who is a serious practitioner.

If we look at a map showing India, Mumbai may be represented only as a dot called 'Mumbai'. If we magnify this map many times and look at Mumbai closely, we will see all the main routes into the city, the suburbs as we approach the city, and then finally the main railway station at which one has to get off. The word Samadhi is like Mumbai, and taking a closer look at it we identify many more details within the topic of Samadhi.

The two main distinctions mentioned by Acharyaji are Savikalpa Samadhi and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The former is a 'suburb' that we reach before the main station. It is the stage when the thoughts in the mind have been thinned out to a *single thought*. In Yoga this could be any thought, as long as it is a single thought. In Vedanta that single thought is called the Brahmakara Vritti, "I am Brahman". Savikalpa is also described as absorption of the mind while in meditation. It is like getting our first foot into the room of enlightenment.

As one progresses further through the suburbs, one gets closer to the main Terminus which in Yoga is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In this stage, the single thought is maintained without any effort even out of meditation, and continuously. It becomes the natural or Sahaja state in which one dwells at all times, without a break. That is the state of realization.

1-2 Here in this verse, more advanced practice of meditation is prescribed for the person who wants to advance from the suburban station of Savikalpa Samadhi to the final main station of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

3 More advanced practice means more intense and prolonged meditation with more concentration. At this stage, all actions have to be given up, and the senses have to be brought under 100% control. There should be zero disturbance. This is the zero-tolerance zone of perfection. Only under these conditions can one enter the non-dual state.

The Four Obstacles in this Stage:

4 Ananyadheeh: "unswerving attention"; Acharyaji identified four obstacles that arise to obstruct the meditator at this very advanced stage. They are, in the order that they appear as one gets closer to the goal:

- i) **Laya – Sleep:** the mind feels an irresistible urge to slip into sleep while meditating.
- ii) **Vikshepa – Restlessness:** the mind develops a tendency to suddenly revolt and become restless, despite all the Abhyasa up to this point. It is just its nature.
- iii) **Kashaya – Veiling:** the meditator confronts a 'block' of nothingness or darkness or a block of dirt Vasanas, beyond which he finds it impossible to go. It just stands there before him like an impenetrable wall.
- iv) **Rasawada – Taste of Bliss:** when he does pierce this veil, the taste of the bliss is so great that he simply remains 'locked' in the enjoyment of that taste, and refuses to go further. The bliss of the state becomes an obstacle to move forward.

This is just to give us, as students of Vedanta, some idea of what one is faced with at this penultimate stage of realization.

VERSE 39: *Total Abidance in the Self*

आत्मन्येवाखिलं दृश्यं प्रविलाप्य धिया सुधीः ।
भावयेदेकमात्मानं निर्मलाकाशवत्सदा

॥३९॥

1	<i>Aatmani eva akhilam drishyam</i>	<i>The entire world of perception should, in the Self,</i>
2	<i>pravilaapya dhiyaa sudheeh;</i>	<i>be merged by the wise one with intelligence.</i>
3	<i>bhaavayet ekam aatmaanam,</i>	<i>He should think of the one Self</i>
4	<i>nirmala-aakaasha-vat sadaa.</i>	<i>as being ever uncontaminated like Space always.</i>

Complete abidance in the Self is being described in this verse. With the right attitude or Bhava towards the external world, one can successfully progress past the four obstacles stage described in the previous verse commentary, which resembles a ‘stalemate’ situation. This verse also gives us some idea of the power that the intellect develops at this advanced stage of spiritual progress, due to the *purity of the soul*.

A Glimpse of “Drishti-Srishti Vada”

1-2 The feeling is held that the entire world is none other than oneself – it is not apart from ‘me’. The process may also be described as “dissolving the world with one’s intellect.” The process initiated here is of seeing the world as a thought (i.e. the Drishti-Srishti Vada). The world as an external object is abandoned, and in its place the world is viewed as a projection within the mind. Everything happens in the mind. This is quite a powerful model of viewing Reality. It cuts out many variables that would otherwise need to be considered. Since the world is seen as unreal, what difference does it make to eliminate it from the equation altogether, and incorporate it into the mind? This view of the problem localizes everything into one’s own mind. One’s mind becomes the only variable to be dealt with – it is as simple as that.

That is the approach taken for this final stretch of the journey.

4 Purity of mind is the most essential requirement at this stage. The slightest impurity could lead one into numerous dangers such as delusions of one becoming the ruler of the world, etc. Purity translates here into total desirelessness. Even a tinge of desire could spoil everything. Therefore, remaining ‘uncontaminated’ is a key qualification for succeeding in this practice.

B. EMERGING OUT OF IGNORANCE:

(40-46)

VERSE 40: *The All-Full Infinite State*

रूपवर्णादिकं सर्वं विहाय परमार्थवित् ।
परिपूर्णचिदानन्दस्वरूपेणावतिष्ठते

॥४०॥

1	<i>Roopa-varna-adikam sarvam</i>	<i>All identifications with form, colour, etc,</i>
2	<i>vihaaya paramaarthavith;</i>	<i>are discarded by one who has realized the Self.</i>
3	<i>pari-poorna chidaananda</i>	<i>As the all-full Infinite Consciousness and Bliss,</i>
4	<i>swaroopena avatishthate.</i>	<i>He dwells as its very embodiment.</i>

Class comments on this section are more to give us, the students, some idea of the state of God-intoxication, which of course is our goal, and therefore totally relevant to our interest. All the students of the Course have this as their aim in varying degrees. Hence, although the state is not our experience as yet, it is of great relevance to know as much as possible from a loved, respected and experienced source such as Acharyaji.

Self-Realisation: A Comparison

Earlier in *Tattva Bodha* we had learnt of the three states of Reality. They are:

- i) ***Pratibhashika***: the dream state;
- ii) ***Vyavaharika***: the normal, waking state; and
- iii) ***Paramarthika***: the Absolute or God-realised state.

We recall this now because of a comparison we are about to make to grasp the God-realised state, at least intellectually.

3-4 We are all familiar with the shift from dream state to waking state and how the dream world is completely destroyed upon waking up. In a not too dissimilar manner, may be seen the shift from the waking state to the God-realised state. At the least, that is one point to start from in comprehending this otherwise inexplicable state.

1 This verse directly tells us that the waking state is ‘discarded’. The waking state is an experience of perceptions of names and forms. All such identifications are discarded in the same way as we discard our dream objects upon waking.

Roopa-Varna-Adi: i.e. “forms, colours, etc.” This term is used here for names and forms. They are the five fields of the five sense organs. In effect they stand for the whole manifested universe.

Coming to our level, Acharyaji urged us never to give up the practice of meditation. Sitting erect and alert, we should stick to our daily practice firmly, keeping the body absolutely still. With that practice we have to be attentive about all other details of our life, following the Sattwic life-style of the Ashram in all details.

The “Chitta Shuddhi Chart” in Sadhana

In order to place us onto the path of Sadhana, Acharyaji has taken great pains to introduce the “*Chitta Shuddhi Chart*” which resembles the spiritual diary. Every Ekadashi Day a Chitta Shuddhi Workshop is held in order to reinforce the cultivation of certain key virtues. Acharyaji gives us notes on these virtues, extracted from Swami Sivananda’s book, *How to Cultivate Virtues and Eradicate Vices*. Thus far we have incorporated the following virtues into our Diary, as listed in the Geeta, chapter 12: Absence of hatred, friendliness, compassion, ego-lessness, ‘mine’-lessness, equanimity, forbearance, and forgiveness (in that order). A virtue is added at each workshop and discussed by the class. In this way a practical form is given to this highly theoretical portion of the text.

Besides these virtues, Acharyaji has also introduced the daily repetition of the Gayatri Mantra. A Japa *mala* was given to each student. Then a *Bhagavad Gita* was given, so that regular reading of Geeta verses can be done.

2 All this is being done to build up and maintain the highest level of purity or Sattwa in our mind. Through these measures, Acharyaji helps us practically to develop spiritually so that we are able to understand abstract verses such as this one and the ones to follow.

VERSE 41: *The Implications of Non-Duality*

ज्ञातृज्ञानज्ञेयभेदः परे नात्मनि विद्यते ।
चिदानन्दैकरूपत्वाद्दीप्यते स्वयमेव तत्

॥४१॥

1	<i>Jnaatru-jnaana-jneya bhedah</i>	<i>Distinctions like knower, knowledge and known</i>
2	<i>pare na aatmani vidyate;</i>	<i>do not exist in the Supreme Self.</i>
3	<i>chidaananda eka roopatvaat</i>	<i>Since its nature is homogenous consciousness and bliss,</i>
4	<i>deepyate swayam eva hi.</i>	<i>It verily shines by Itself.</i>

3-4 As in the same two Padas of the previous verse, here also the Supreme State is described in this line. We are here beginning to put words to that state which is beyond expression. Keeping that in mind, we proceed further with caution. The intellect, after all, is the only means we have of grasping spiritual Truth.

1 The first fact about Self-realisation is stated in this verse as: ***Jnatru, Jnana and Jneya*** are merged. These words translate into knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge becoming one. Another set of terms for these is ***Drashtru, Darshana and Drishya*** – “that which sees, the process of seeing, and that which is seen.” The pattern is: subject, object and the link between the two.

There are six sources of knowledge:

- i) ***Pratyaksha*** – sense perception;
- ii) ***Anumana*** – inference;
- iii) ***Upamana*** – similarity of objects;
- iv) ***Arthapatti*** – postulation;
- v) ***Anupalabdhi*** – noting something by its absence;
- vi) ***Sruti*** – the Scriptures; “that which is heard” – this is the literal meaning. The

Vedas are accepted as the valid source of all knowledge.

What sources do we have for the case of Self-knowledge?

The first three are not even there, because the mind is not there, it has been dissolved or transcended. There are no thoughts, so there cannot be any postulation. There are no distinctions of knower, knowledge (instrument of knowing) and the known – the experience is “homogenous”. Our only way to understand it is through the *Srutis* or what the scriptures say about it, until such time as we get direct experience of that state. The essential point we need to bear in mind is that no instrument of knowing is needed to know the Self, as It is Knowledge itself.

We get some idea here of why Samadhi is considered to be the death-knell of the Viparita Bhavana, the tendency to drift into old habits. Since thought itself ceases, there is no question of any such tendency any more, for these tendencies can only trouble us through the medium of thoughts. They give rise to thoughts. When they cease, then thoughts cease. The very root of disturbance is cut in Samadhi.

Acharyaji’s clarity on this was: Nirvikalpa Samadhi is 100% Vairagya, and the benefit for making that sacrifice is 100% Ananda or Bliss! A good deal, if not a bargain.

The maximum price is extracted for the maximum gain in life.

VERSE 42: As Fire Kindled in the Arani

एवमात्मारणौ ध्यानमथने सततं कृते ।
उदितावगतिर्ज्वाला सर्वाज्ञानेन्धनं दहेत्

॥४२॥

1	<i>Evam aatmaa aranau dhyaanam</i>	<i>Thus, in the Arani of the Self, meditation</i>
2	<i>athane satatam krite;</i>	<i>is done constantly as churning in the Arani;</i>
3	<i>uditaa avagati-jwaalaa</i>	<i>in the fire of knowledge that arises,</i>
4	<i>sarva ajnaanen-dhanam dahet.</i>	<i>all the fuel of ignorance gets burned.</i>

“Atma Aranau” Nyaya: The Fire-maker Simile

This is an example from Vedic times. People used to make a fire by using a contraption made of a wooden rod rotated between two wooden hemispherical-shaped sockets (called ‘arani’; for two aranis the Sanskrit dual form ‘*aranau*’ is used), with a piece of cotton in one of them. The rotation, similar to the action of churning, would produce heat by friction until the cotton ball caught alight. The ball would then be used to start the fire.

The application of this analogy is as follows: The two hemispherical sockets are the lower ego and the higher Self. They are ‘churned’ with the Mahavakya rod of “*I am Brahman*”. The fire of Knowledge that is generated by this churning process of *meditation*, ignites the cotton ball of ignorance.

“Meditation fans it into a conflagration in which all our misconceptions and ignorance are burnt down” – from Kaivalyopanishad.

VERSE 43: As the Sunrise Clears Darkness

अरुणेनेव बोधेन पूर्वं सन्तमसे हते ।
तत आविर्भवेदात्मा स्वयमेवांशुमानिव

॥४३॥

1	<i>Arunena iva bodhena</i>	<i>As by the lord of early dawn, so too, it is by knowledge –</i>
2	<i>poorva-san-tamase hrite;</i>	<i>the former dispels the darkness existing before dawn;</i>
3	<i>tat aavir-bhavet aatmaa</i>	<i>so too, (ignorance is dispelled) when the Self rises</i>
4	<i>swayam eva amshumaan iva.</i>	<i>of its own accord, just like the sun.</i>

“Aruna-Amshuman” Simile: The Dawn & Rising Sun

In this exquisite simile of sunrise, we see the same process from another angle. In the minutes before sunrise, the dense darkness of the sky lightens up slowly until the sky has a reddish glow to it. This period, called dawn or ‘aruna’, symbolizes the period of intense meditation when the darkness of ignorance is being gradually removed.

As the process advances and the skies turn red and then orange, the sun rises of its own accord, as it were, bringing on the bright day. Nothing needs to be done to the sun to

reveal it. The darkness had to be removed by Sadhana to usher in the state of illumination of the Self.

“When the egocentric existence in us, that obstructs the vision of the Self, is falsified by constant and diligent meditation, the vision of the true Self arises in all its glory” – Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji.

The removal of the darkness of the sky is itself due to the approaching presence of the sun. There is nothing that is being done to brighten the sky. True, we have compared that to meditation, but meditation is a state of ‘being’, not of ‘doing’. As Sadhana progresses and the dirt clears away, the mental ‘sky’ becomes brighter and brighter. The revelation of the Self is inevitable. It comes of its own accord.

In this way, Sri Shankaracharya, a great lover of nature with a keen observation, conveys to us another great Truth to inspire us into the practice of deep meditation, when only Awareness alone clears away the dross and leads naturally to Self-illumination.

VERSE 44: *As the Missing Necklace*

आत्मा तु सततं प्राप्तोऽप्यप्राप्तवदविद्यया ।
तन्नाशे प्राप्तवद्भाति स्वकण्ठाभरणं यथा

॥४४॥

1	<i>Aatmaa tu satatam praaptah</i>	<i>Although the Self is the ever-existing Reality,</i>
2	<i>api apraapta-vat avidyayaa;</i>	<i>yet, because of ignorance, it is not realized.</i>
3	<i>tat naashe praapta-vat bhaati</i>	<i>When ignorance is dispelled, the Self is “gained” as though it were an object,</i>
4	<i>swa-kantha-abharanam yathaa.</i>	<i>just as the missing ornament around one’s neck.</i>

In discussing this verse, particularly the aptness of its simile, Acharyaji could not resist asking: How many doctorates must we give to Shankaracharya for these beautiful metaphors! In appropriateness this may well claim the first prize.

1 It has been said repeatedly that the Atman is the ever-existing Reality. It has always been there. This led Acharyaji to make one of his own equally amazing observations: When, after so much of sacrifice and serious Sadhana, the Jnani finally realizes the Atman, what a fool he must appear to himself! He searched and searched for goodness knows how many decades, and when he found it, it was in himself already!

2 Indeed the loss (of Atman) was illusory; and its gain, too, is equally illusory. It appears that It is ‘attained’ whereas in fact It is really forgotten; so It is not discovered but rather It is only remembered!

And that idea is caught with great precision in the following metaphor...

“Swa-Kantha Abharanam”: The Missing Neck-Ornament Simile

4 The simile was slightly adjusted by Acharyaji to suit the Course students:

Imagine a student sitting for Japa with his Japa mala. Halfway through it he goes into Samadhi! (Here the students can really sense the fun that is coming.) It is a very deep Samadhi, and to enjoy it all the more he puts his mala around his neck and brings his head to his pillow. That is not comfortable enough, so he puts his blanket over him. (There is

laughter at every step of this narration.) He only gets out of this Samadhi the next morning. When he gets up he is in a desperate hurry – there are only 7 minutes left and he still has to bath, but where is his mala?

There is a knock on his door. The neighbouring Brahmachari is there to remind him that he is getting late for the morning chanting class. He opens the door and says he cannot find his mala. Instead of his friend offering to help him to find it, as one would expect Brahmacharis to do, he just smiles back, as if teasing him! The Brahmachari who is running late cannot take this, especially when there are now only three minutes to go. The friend, still irritatingly smiling, walks closer to him, clutches something around his neck and turns it around. The Brahmachari realizes instantly what had happened: “Oh, what a fool I have been, its still around my neck!” He is happy that he has found his mala.

That was Acharyaji’s version of this simile. After the class settled down from the bout of laughter, no one was sure about one matter: Did the Brahmachari have his bath before rushing off to the class?

3 Such an appropriate simile is hard to come by. It fits the realization of the Self to the tee. That is why Acharyaji said the Jnani looks like a fool when he realizes his Atman – it was around his ‘neck’ all the time!

VERSE 45: *As the Post Appears as Ghost*

स्थाणौ पुरुषवद्भ्रान्त्या कृता ब्रह्मणि जीवता ।
जीवस्य तात्त्विके रूपे तस्मिन्दृष्टे निवर्तते

॥४५॥

1	<i>Sthaanau purusha-vat bhraantya</i>	<i>Due to delusion, a ghost is seen instead of post;</i>
2	<i>kritaa brahmani jeevataa;</i>	<i>so also, in Brahman is seen the individual Jiva;</i>
3	<i>jeevasya taattvike roope</i>	<i>the real nature of the Jiva –</i>
4	<i>tasmin drishte nivartate.</i>	<i>when it is seen as the Self, (then the Jiva) is destroyed.</i>

2-3 Wrong identification, which was the very root of the ‘forgetfulness’ or drifting away from the Self, is only at the level of the mind. It is just a thought, the “I”-thought. The entire problem of spirituality is discovered to have arisen from just this one thought. Does that not make the whole of spiritual life look so trivial! Volumes of books have been written on this “trivial” problem!

4 If we correct that single, original, stray thought of “I” – meaning the thought which led us astray from the Self – then the error is corrected, and with it the Self discovered. In trying to make us understand the sheer simplicity of spiritual illumination, Sri Shankaracharya in this verse torments us again with another one of his crazy similes...

“Sthanau Purushavat”: The Post and the Ghost Simile

1 Here we are teased again about the nature of the delusion that has overcome us, and Acharyaji’s fertile imagination was triggered by it:

A man is returning home late at night in the fog. As he approaches his home, he is terrified by the sight of a man with his hands up in the air, as though eerily stalking through his garden. He is gripped by fear at the sight of this ‘ghostly’ figure. As he slowly recovers

from the shocking sight, he recognizes that it is not a ghost at all, but an old dead tree which was struck by lightning a year ago and whose trunk and a couple of branches still remained as a reminder of its death. In the fog it looked like the ghostly figure of a man and the branches looked like his twisted hands!

That is how delusion clouds our vision of the truth, like a ghost in the fog, that never existed. Self-realisation or the true Self revealing Itself follows inevitably when ignorance is cleared.

The 'egocentric individuality' sees the world only as a ghost; the enlightened sage alone sees it as a post, and loses all fear for it.

VERSE 46: *As Wrong Notions of Directions Are Destroyed*

तत्त्वस्वरूपानुभवादुत्पन्नं ज्ञानमजसा ।

अहं ममेति चाज्ञानं बाधते दिग्भ्रमादिवत्

॥४६॥

1	<i>Tattva swaroopa anubhavaat</i>	<i>As a result of the experience of the Truth,</i>
2	<i>utpannam jnaanam anjasaa;</i>	<i>Self-knowledge is gained, and instantly</i>
3	<i>"aham mama" iti cha ajnaanam</i>	<i>the ignorant notions of "I" and "mine"</i>
4	<i>baadhate dig-bhrama-aadi-vat.</i>	<i>are destroyed, just as wrong notions of directions (are destroyed by right information).</i>

1-2 To attain something that is not with us requires three things: knowledge, time and space. We need the (secular) knowledge of when and where to get it, the time to get it and to cover the space that separates us from it. But the attainment of the Self is not in this category. It is already in us. To get it we need only Self-knowledge – no secular knowledge, no time, and no coverage of space.

These two categories are given technical terms in Samskrit by Indian philosophers (these are not terms exclusive to Vedanta):

i) ***Apraaptasya Praapti:*** The former belongs to this category, which means “attaining that which we do not possess.” For this category, Action is required. The results of an action always come in the ‘future’ of the actual action, whether that may be just seconds away or centuries away. With action comes the accompaniment of the whole train consequential to action, namely, the creation of merit or demerit (Punya or Paapa), the time when it will fructify, the actual fructification, and the experience of the joy or sorrow. This is the cycle of Karma which, when looked at compositely and over the long term, is the same as the cycle of rebirth, of endless repetition.

ii) ***Praptasya Prapti:*** This refers to the category of attaining “that which is already with us, but concealed from us.” Self-realisation falls in this category. Here Karma is not necessary. We do not need to go through an endless cycle of births and deaths to acquire it. We simply need Knowledge to destroy the ignorance that conceals it. No action is required.

An objector may say that he sees much action pertaining to the spiritual quest also. He feels it contradicts what we have just stated.

“Digbhramadivat”: Wrong Notions About Directions

3-4 Acharyaji took great pains to illustrate why he considered this simile to be of outstanding quality. It is listed out so that the application can be compared to it thereafter. As usual it had its entertaining side:

1. *Patika*: There is a traveller, who is journeying at night.
2. *Nagta Andhakara*: He gets lost in the dense darkness and cloudy conditions.
3. *Dig Bhrama*: He loses his sense of direction completely.
4. *Raja Marga*: He loses the main road on which he was.
5. *Yatra-Tatra*: He roams or wanders about here and there as a result.
6. *Kantaka*: He gets hurt by the sharp stones, he hits against trees, thorns, etc.
7. *Duhkham*: He experiences great sorrows as a result of these.
8. *Surya Tejo*: In the morning, at the coming of the dawn,
9. *Dig Bhrama*: He is able to see his way again, and gets the proper directions.
10. *Raja Marga*: He finds the main road which he had lost.
11. *Anandam*: He is ever happy that he has found his way once again.

The **application of this simile**, stage by stage, as laid out above is as follows:

1. *Jiva*: The individual soul is also on a similar journey.
2. *Avidya*: He gets lost in the dense darkness of Avidya or ignorance.
3. *Aham-Mama*: He loses his true identity and gets identified with “I” and “mine”.
4. *Brahma Marga*: He loses his path of going along the road to Brahman.
5. *Janma-Marana*: So he gets knocked about and goes through endless rebirths.
6. *Vighna*: These cause him to go through many a hardship or obstacle.
7. *Duhkha*: He experiences great sorrows as a result.
8. *Jnana Tejo*: Then at the right time he comes in touch with the spiritual teaching.
9. *Sadhana*: He does spiritual practices in earnest according to his Guru’s guidance.
10. *Brahma Marga*: He gets established on the spiritual path once again.
11. *Moksham*: He finally attains liberation and enjoys everlasting bliss.

Can there be a more appropriate simile than this? Acharyaji was justifiably thrilled during the entire narration of this simile.

One may view this as follows:

Those aspects of the spiritual journey which require action are connected to the aspect of spiritual unfoldment needed to reverse and nullify the Karma accrued from the first category of Action. To undo that action, we need to perform these purificatory actions which are part of the spiritual life. That includes everything from pilgrimages, rituals, chanting, study, Sravana, Manana and right up to but excluding Nididhyasana. All these have an element of ‘action’ in them. But the final explosion of Self-knowledge through concerted

Nididhyasana or meditation does not require anything external to reveal itself. This was seen in the examples of the last two verses.

There are two aspects to attaining the Self, the first is the Apraaptasya category, and the second is the Praaptasya category. Hence, there are two types of knowledge required, one for each of these aspects. In general literature, the term knowledge may loosely be applied to both these. The student of Vedanta is made aware of the two distinct types of knowledge on the spiritual path: the first is knowledge of the various 'actions' that need to be done; and the second knowledge (which may rather be written as Knowledge, with a capital 'K') is the self-revealed Knowledge of the Self which comes without the need of any action on our part. That comes in a flash as stated at the outset.

A Brief Re-Cap on Verses 40-46:

An interesting point is discovered when we review all the above seven verses, and study how the thought develops through them. We note a gradual shift in the standpoint from the body level to the Absolute level. It is so subtle, as to pass by almost unnoticed.

Here is a breakdown of how the thought flows:

i) In **verse 40**, our awareness of the Self is lost amidst the thick jungle of names and forms. We are still groping in the dark world of physical perceptions.

ii) In **verse 41**, the state of realisation is described in terms of our ability to know through the intellect. We have shifted from the physical to the intellectual.

iii) In **verse 42**, we move on from the intellectual to the intuitive level by coming to an understanding of meditation, explained so well by the Aruni metaphor.

iv) In **verse 43**, the benefits of meditation are seen as the brightening of the night sky metaphor. The development of a Sattwic aura around the seeker is being described.

v) In **verse 44**, the Self is now seen to have been with us all along. It was never really outside of us, but was around our own neck all the time! The problem is seen as one of *non-apprehension* of the Truth.

vi) In **verse 45**, it is further noted that we have mistaken the Self to be something else. A post is mistaken to be a ghost. The problem is seen as one of *mis-apprehension* of the Truth.

vii) And finally in **verse 46**, the whole "discovery" is credited to the Knowledge of the Self which we gain from the Guru. Without his clear directions, we will never be successful in our quest.

Thus we see a systematic presentation of the factors leading to the state of Realisation in the last 7 verses.

C. THE UNIVERSAL ATTITUDE: (47-50)

VERSE 47: *The Vision of the "Eye of Wisdom"*

सम्यग्विज्ञानवान् योगी स्वात्मन्येवाखिलं जगत् ।
एकं च सर्वमात्मानमीक्षते ज्ञानचक्षुषा

॥४७॥

1	<i>Samyak vijnaana-vaan yogee</i>	<i>The perfect Yogi of Realisation and Enlightenment,</i>
2	<i>svaatmani eva akhilam sthitam;</i>	<i>sees “The entire world residing in his own Self”,</i>
3	<i>ekam cha sarvam aatmaanam</i>	<i>and regards “The entire world as his own Self” –</i>
4	<i>eeekshate jnaana-chakshushaa.</i>	<i>thus does he behold with his “eye of wisdom”.</i>

1 The Yogi here stands for one who is united with his Self. The identity of Jiva and Paramatman is declared to be Yoga. The Yogi, having attained that state, sees with the “Eye of Wisdom”. What is this eye? Does it make him see differently from the rest of us?

“Eekshate Jnana Chakshusha”: The Eye of Wisdom Simile

4 Yes, the Yogi’s enlightened vision is so different from the vision of ignorant souls like us that it is here even said that he has a third eye to behold this unique vision. It is very symbolic. There is no physical eye called the ‘third eye’. It is another of Shankaracharyaji’s similes to convey to us the idea of an entirely new way of seeing the same world. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna bestows this ‘third eye’ to Arjuna to behold the Cosmic Vision.

The Jnani is said to have a special eye using which he looks upon the same world as you and I, but sees it in an entirely different manner. How does he behold it?

Eekshate: which means “sees” also carries with it the sense of seeing *effortlessly*, implying that he does not behold this world with any sense of strain, anxiety, worry, fear, etc, as we do.

What does he behold differently? – Everything. The Eye of Wisdom does not just refer to our vision. It includes all that we perceive through our senses. [*We have seen this used many times; it is called an Upa-Lakshana, where one item is used to represent a whole family of items.*] All five sense organs of perception are bringing in their reports to the mind. In the case of the enlightened person’s senses, the reports are very straightforward. They are not twisted or slanted according to one’s likes and dislikes. No personal whims influence or bias their reporting. So a Jnani perceives the whole world as it really is from the standpoint of Truth.

What Does the Yogi See?

2-3 The Jnani sees the world residing in himself. This is called *Sarvatma Bhava*. He also sees his own Self as the Self of all. These two statements appear to be contradictory, but they are not so. When we understand that they are spoken from two different standpoints then we can reconcile the apparent contradiction.

In Sanskrit there is a term used for such opposite statements. It is ***Daardyam***, meaning “a thing is said in its opposite way to mean the same thing, for the sake of adding emphasis.” The example here is, “*The Jnani see all as his Self, and the Self as all.*”

i) The first statement is from the macrocosmic viewpoint. The Yogi has expanded his consciousness to include everything. Thus the whole world appears to him as Himself. He becomes the common substratum of the whole world and all beings in it.

ii) The second statement is from the microcosmic viewpoint. The Yogi realizes that he is just one individual like every other individual. Just as God dwells in him, so does He in all others, too. He recognizes that his individuality, as that of all other beings, is a superimposition on the common Reality within all beings.

In English, there is a term called an **extended metaphor**. Firstly, a metaphor is a simile that is applied directly to what it is being compared with, eg. “He is a jackal”. The extended metaphor expands on that by adding a quality to it directly, eg. “He is a jackal; beware of his cunning.”

Here the ‘third eye’, which is used as a metaphor for the unique vision that the Jnani has, is extended by saying, “*The Jnani sees all as his Self, and the Self as all.*” The implied message is quite clear: “I am no longer just one wave, I am all the waves. Not only that, but I am also the water itself.” There is no longer any trace of the limited ‘I’ and ‘mine’.

In our case, when our mind goes everywhere, that is described as a ‘wandering mind’; it is considered to be a defect of the mind. In the case of the Jnani, when his mind goes everywhere, it is described as ‘a mind in Samadhi’; it is considered to be a virtue or perfection of the mind. That is another novel way of helping us to understand the significance of the Sarvatma Bhava.

The Sarvatma Bhava, as we will come to know from other Vedantic texts, is the touchstone of perfection. It is the one quality which verifies one’s realisation. It is also the hallmark of Vedanta, differentiating Vedantic realisation from other attainments.

VERSE 48: ***The Universal Vision of Self***

आत्मैवेदं जगत्सर्वमात्मनोऽन्यन्न विद्यते ।
मृदो यद्वद्वटादीनि स्वात्मानं सर्वमीक्षते

॥४८॥

1	<i>Aatmaa eva idam jagat sarvam</i>	<i>This entire universe is verily the Atman Itself.</i>
2	<i>aatmanah anyat na kinchana;</i>	<i>Nothing whatsoever other than Atman exists.</i>
3	<i>mridah yadvat ghat-aadeeni</i>	<i>Just as pots, etc, can be said to be only clay,</i>
4	<i>swaatmaanam sarvam eekshate.</i>	<i>so, the wise one sees everything as his own Self.</i>

There is a vision which sees unity everywhere. The corollary to this of seeing diversity in this world is the origin of all our problems. A vision which sees ‘**Unity in Diversity**’ is the saintly vision that is upheld here.

Two extreme examples of such a vision were quoted by Acharyaji:

i) A Mahatma was in meditation in a forest. A tiger came and was dragging him away for its meal. The Mahatma remained in his state of meditation, going on with his chanting. This was actually witnessed by Swami Tapovanji of Uttarkashi.

ii) A piece of hair was served in the plate of a Jnani. This would normally bring a reaction of disgust in most people, but it drew nothing of the kind in the Jnani.

“Mrido Ghatadini” Simile: The Clay Pots

Earlier we had come across a similar simile – *gold* and the gold ornaments. Here it is clay and the variety of clay pottery. The message is the same: They come out of clay, exist in clay and finally merge back into clay. In the same way, the Jnani beholds the Self in all, since the Self is the substratum common in all things.

Unity pervades the entire universe. Diversity is only a projection upon it. This is the glorious message brought out in this verse. It is saintliness in practice. It is this principle that makes Hinduism so universal in its outlook. We see more of the practical side of this attitude in the following verse...

VERSE 49: *As a Worm Transforms into a Wasp*

जीवन्मुक्तस्तु तद्विद्वान्पूर्वोपाधिगुणान्स्त्यजेत् ।
सच्चिदानन्दरूपत्वात् भवेद्भ्रमरकीटवत्

॥४९॥

1	<i>Jeevanmuktah tu tat vidvaan</i>	<i>The liberated soul, endowed with Self-knowledge,</i>
2	<i>poorva-upaadhi-gunaan tyajet;</i>	<i>gives up the traits of his previous equipments.</i>
3	<i>sah sat-chid-aadi-dharmatvam</i>	<i>and verily becomes of the nature of Satchidananda,</i>
4	<i>bheje bhramara-keeta-vat.</i>	<i>even as a worm would transform into a wasp.</i>

Once again the class enjoyed a real treat in listening to Acharyaji's magnificent explanation of the simile used in this verse. He captured fully the marvel of transformation from an ordinary being severely limited by his body and mind 'prisons', to the liberated sage who rises above these limitations and becomes a "super-man" far exceeding ordinary humans. The simile is a striking one which shows how such a transformation is possible in actual life.

"Bhramara Keetavat": The Worm and the Wasp

4 One has to be an enjoyer of Nature to appreciate this superb simile. What follows is the stunning detail which Acharyaji poured into this simile:

Have you ever seen a wasp building its nest? With great difficulty it brings a tiny lump of clay, moistened with its saliva. It finds a suitable spot where no one will disturb it and places it there. With its legs it maneuvers the ball of clay firmly. Then it flies off quickly to get the next ball because it must return before this ball dries up, so that the next ball can be stuck to it. This is so interesting to see.

When numerous balls are in place, the wasp comes along one day with a small worm and places it inside in such a way that its eyes are facing it directly. Then the wasp takes its position at the entrance and just sits there, glaring intently on the worm. The worm also stares at the wasp all the while, but out of fear, terrified by the sight of the wasp. If it takes its attention off the wasp even for a second, the wasp gives it a little sting and pulls it to attention once again!

And what does this intent concentration by the worm on the wasp bring about? There may be a biology book which explains the whole thing differently, but we are interested in the poetic beauty of a philosophic idea here: We behold a marvel of nature – just the constant fixed attention on the wasp soon transforms the worm into another wasp!

Application of the simile:

1-3 The spiritual seeker is the worm. As a worm he is helpless to do anything, severely limited by its cumbersome, ugly body to that pitiable state. The stare at the wasp

with such intense ‘fearful’ concentration is the practice of meditation on the Self. After a prolonged practice of this meditation, the seeker-worm emerges as a completely transformed being. He acquires the freedom of a new ‘body’, completely different from the one that limited him before. He can now fly into great heights of ecstasy; he can behold the whole universe as himself; and he can now raise himself above all limitations that he suffered from previously. He is a free being, entirely different from his old personality-based existence.

The transformation of worm to wasp is a perfect comparison to what the meditator achieves through his meditation, when he becomes a Self-realised Jivanmukta.

Another aspect of this simile is that it resembles the Guru-disciple relationship perfectly. The wasp is the Guru and the worm the disciple. The nest is the Ashram. The disciple comes to the Guru’s Ashram. He is placed under the discipline of the Guru. It may appear to be a fearful discipline with all the frightful glaring and the stings, but how appropriate it is to what the Guru has to do to achieve the transformation in his beloved disciple!

[The class really enjoyed this comparison, and the hilarity in which it was presented by Acharyaji. That has to be highlighted here, for after all Vedanta is not just a dry study. We never imagined that Vedanta could be so much fun!]

The final message is: The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself. It may seem an impossible transformation, but then who would have imagined that a worm could become a wasp? The emergence from the severe psychological limitation of an ignorant human to a God-realised saint is even more remarkable than a worm becoming a wasp.

VERSE 50: *As “Atma Rama” – the Inner Saga of Rama*

तीर्त्वा मोहार्णवं हत्वा रागद्वेषादिरक्षसान् ।
योगी शान्तिसमायुक्त आत्मारामो विराजते

॥५०॥

1	<i>Teertvaa moha-arnavam hatvaa</i>	<i>After crossing the ocean of delusion, killing</i>
2	<i>raga-dvesh-aadi raakshasaan;</i>	<i>the monsters of likes, dislikes, etc,</i>
3	<i>yogee shanti-samaa-yuktah</i>	<i>the Yogi who is united firmly with Peace</i>
4	<i>aatma raamah viraaajite.</i>	<i>becomes “Atma Rama”, one who revels in Self.</i>

“There are gems and pearls sprinkled throughout *Atma Bodha*”, began Acharyaji on this verse, as with great enthusiasm he prepared himself to regale us with another one of those exquisite similes, this time from India’s greatest epic, the Ramayana. By just a reference, Sri Shankaracharyaji pays the highest tribute to India’s precious spiritual heritage in the form of the *Ramayana*. And here is how he does it...

“Atmarama”: The Ramayana Story Simile

The entire Ramayana itself is the simile in this verse. And every bit of the beauty of this simile was brought out by Acharyaji, revealing to us his own great love for this scriptural epic. Here is how he delivered it to us: (English translations of the Sanskrit are in italics.)

1. *Sitan Veshi Ramah*: “*Rama goes in search of Sita*”, who has been kidnapped.

This compares with the spiritual seeker or the Yogi who is lost in worldliness, but is desperately trying to find his way out of it.

2. **Sugrivadi Krita Prayatna Samuttpannena Setuna:** What did Rama do? “*He obtained the help of Sugriva and others to build the Setu bridge*” to Lanka to rescue Sita.

Sugriva and others represent the Sadhana of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. Prayatna is all the effort and concentration put into that Sadhana.

The bridge itself is Jnana or knowledge of the Self, which directs us and takes us over to the destination.

3. **Samudra:** “*The ocean*”, over which the bridge was built, i.e. the Gulf of Mannar between Sri Lanka and India.

This is the ocean of Samsara or delusion, spoken of in this verse. This is vast indeed. The whole of the microcosm in all its detail, as well as the vast macrocosm of the fourteen worlds, is included in the word. The waters of the ocean represents both the waves of ups and downs we experience in this world, as well as the unfathomable depths of ignorance and delusion we struggle against. In this ocean are the “monsters” of likes and dislikes which give rise to a few pleasurable experiences but a majority of painful ones. These are killed by the Yogi in the course of his treacherous journey to the Self.

4. **Atithikshana Bana:** “*The very sharp and deadly arrows*” used to attack the hoards of the demon-king who had kidnapped Sita.

These arrows represent the sharp intellect of the Yogi which possesses Viveka, and the strong Vairagya or dispassion that enables him to remain unattached to the world of temptations.

5. **Ravana Harana:** Rama “*vanquishes Ravana*” and all his hordes of demoniacal soldiers.

This killing stands for the killing of the Yogi’s Vasanas and desires; his Raga and Dwesha; and all the subtle tendencies that induce him to tread the fruitless path of sensual indulgence.

6. “*The Discovery of Sita*”: This stands for the discovery of Shanti or peace within one’s being. It is a supreme peace that is independent of all external conditions. The very word ‘Seeta’ means calmness and peace. It is the state associated with great joy and bliss of the Self.

7. “*The Return to Ayodhya*”: Ayodhya is Rama’s own country, where He was born and grew up. Similarly, where is our source or origin, our true home? The Yogi also goes back to his true home, his own Self.

The word Ayodhya literally means “that state which is free from war and strife.” How apt is it! The rule of Lord Rama (Rama-Rajya) in Ayodhya was a state where all lived in inner peace and contentment, free from the stress and struggle associated with any other outer pursuit. The return to Ayodhya is a return to our own haven within where belong lasting peace and love. The effortless abidance in this inner realm where wars, discontent, revolutions, and so on have no place, is called Rama-Rajya.

Thus we see a complete parallel between the story of the *Ramayana* and the march of the soul onwards towards the discovery of its true nature. The spiritual journey is what epics like the *Ramayana* symbolize, and such epics have soaked deep into the fabric of Indian culture..

Could there be a more fitting tribute to Indian culture than this glorious reference to the *Ramayana*!

SUMMARY: On “Sarvatma Bhava”

The Bhava described in the last 4 verses (47-50) is that of “*Sarvatma Bhava*”. The oneness that the sage feels with everything around him is hard for the ordinary person to grasp. How do we understand this view of the world? - only through certain instances in life which resemble it.

The example given in class was that of a mother for her child. The mother certainly feels what may only be described as oneness with the child. Whatever she may be doing, her thoughts are always on her infant. And the child, too, has the thought of the mother uppermost all the time.

Acharyaji was reminded of this anecdote which illustrates the absence of oneness. Two men were watching a live musical drama performance. After a lady had just completed her performance, one of the men said, “What an atrocious performance!” The other man said, “That lady is my wife!”

The first man, feeling embarrassed, quickly offered a pretended apology, “O, I don’t mean her singing, but the lyrics – they were awful.” Whereupon the second man promptly rejoined, “I composed them!”

Such is the dialogue among those who have no inkling of what oneness is.

D. FREEDOM FROM LIMITATIONS: (51-53)

VERSE 51: *As a Lamp Placed Within a Jar*

बाह्यानित्यसुखासक्तिं हित्वात्मसुखनिर्वृतः ।
घटस्थदीपवत्स्वस्थं स्वान्तरेव प्रकाशते

॥५१॥

1	<i>Baahya-anitya-sukhaa-saktim</i>	<i>Attachment for the fleeting joys of the outer world</i>
2	<i>hitva-aatma-sukha-nirvritah;</i>	<i>– after having renounced these, and contented with the bliss derived from the Self,</i>
3	<i>ghata-stha-deepa-vat shashvat</i>	<i>as a lamp placed inside a jar, forever</i>
4	<i>antah eva prakaashate.</i>	<i>shines inwardly alone within himself.</i>

1-2 All joy is experienced within, not in the objects. However, because the joys are triggered by various tempting objects in the world, they are referred to as “fleeting joys of the world”. In truth, even that which we experience as sensual pleasure comes only from the Self but it is reflected via the body’s mental equipment. Giving up the external objects, the Yogi finds his joy directly in the Self, the spring of all joy.

“Ghatastha Deepavat” Lamp in a Jar Simile

3 The most important part of this simile is that the light is placed *inside* an opaque pot and hence cannot be seen from outside. This is supposed to teach us that the state of

joy of the liberated sage is not something that others can know. It is deep in his heart and will always remain there.

Externally, the sage may appear to be a very busy person, if his Prarabdha Karma is to be such, but inwardly he is always centred in his Self. That gives him the poise and equanimity, which are described in the *Geeta* as the essential qualities of a Sthitaprajna, the sage of steady wisdom.

4 Only the sage knows how much he is enjoying the state of inner bliss. It cannot be fathomed from outside. This is the special message given by this simile.

Does another Jivanmukta know that state? There is a Tamil saying, “The route taken by a snake is known only to another snake!” This suggests that, yes, another Jivanmukta will appreciate the state of a Jivanmukta. If both of them are actually conscious of everything else as their own Self, then surely this is not difficult to accept.

There are, nevertheless, many clues by which a Jivanmukta’s inner state may be deduced. His detachment, his reactions, his calmness, and his absence of any sense cravings, etc, all speak without words of his majestic inner state as Emperor of his inner kingdom.

VERSE 52: *As Space, As a Fool, and As Wind – Unattached*

उपाधिस्थोऽपि तद्धर्मैरलिप्तो व्योमवन्मुनिः ।
सर्वविन्मूढवत्तिष्ठेदसक्तो वायुवच्चरेत्

॥५२॥

1	<i>Upaadhi-sthah api tad-dharmaih</i>	<i>Though living with Upaadhis and their attributes,</i>
2	<i>aliptah vyoma-vat munih;</i>	<i>the contemplative one is unattached to them, like Space;</i>
3	<i>sarvavit moodha-vat tishthet</i>	<i>though knowing everything, he may behave as a fool;</i>
4	<i>asaktah vaayu-vat charet.</i>	<i>or, totally unattached, he may yet move about like wind.</i>

Three similes are interwoven in this single verse – that of Space, that of a fool or mad-man, and that of wind.

Firstly, the inter-relationship of all three needs to be seen. The primary simile is the one on Space. This is intended to illustrate the attribute of *non-attachment*. To illustrate two extreme examples of this non-attachment, the other two similes arise. The first illustrates the non-attachment which leads one to do nothing – he is regarded by the world as a fool. The second illustrates the non-attachment which allows one to do superhuman work, moving about freely like the wind.

We now look at each one in turn:

i) **Vyoma-vat:** “like Space”; reference is again made here to ‘Space’, which reminds us of the Avachheda model (refer to *Tattva Bodha*, v15.2) of explaining the Self as appearing different from the ghatta or the mutta space. An ordinary person identifies himself with the pot, not the free space within or outside the pot. The Jivanmukta is the opposite. He identifies himself with the free space, and remains indifferent to the pot (the body) which he views as a temporary shelter. He is free to move in and out of his pot-body or mind, and identifies himself with all space.

Space, within which all objects are found, is never attached to those objects. Even if the objects transform into other objects, the Space remains the same. There are two extreme cases that illustrate such a non-attachment, and each of them has been ascribed a simile in this verse. They are:

ii) **Moodha-vat:** “*like a Fool*”; the detached sage, not being attached to any image of himself, has no need to display himself in society. His detachment frees him from all obligations to please society. Thus he is able to withdraw himself from all activity amongst men. Thus he opens himself to appearing as a fool by those who do not have any knowledge of his spirituality.

He is comfortable with that charge! He remains unconcerned with such matters, having risen above praise and censure. Only one who is unattached can do this.

iii) **Asakta Vayu-vat:** “*free like the Wind*”; the wind can move about in space freely. No man-made laws can control its flow. As Acharyaji said, “The U.S. Government may rule that Cuban airplanes may not enter its air-space, but it has no power to stop ‘Cuban’ air from entering ‘U.S.’ air-space.”

This is the freedom allowed to Wind to move about as it wishes. In the same way a sage, identified with all space, may sometimes enter the Upadhis and function as ghatta-space or even go to a higher level and function as mutta-space (that is, as head of an organisation). He is not limited by his body or mind. His detachment from them gives him the power to lact beyond those Upadhis and perform superhuman deeds as and when he likes. That is the freedom he has acquired, like wind.

Examples: Lord Jesus, after being in seclusion for 18 years of his life, returned to Jerusalem and in his remaining 3 years began his world-transforming mission.

In recent history we see the case of Srila Prabhupada, who went to the west at the age of 66 years, having two heart attacks on the ship that took him there. Within 10 years, he raised the world-wide organization of the Hare-Krishna Movement.

Swami Vivekananda and Swami Sivananda are other classic examples of sages who “moved like the wind” in spreading their mission. Like the wind, a sage takes his fragrance wherever he goes. He is welcome everywhere because he carries such a good, healthy fragrance. People are enchanted by the sweet aroma of his divine personality. That power of attraction draws people to him. He is wanted by many just for his presence.

VERSE 53: ***As Water, Space & Light Dissolve into Themselves***

उपाधिविलयाद्विष्णौ निर्विशेषं विशेन्मुनिः ।

जले जलं वियद्व्योम्नि तेजस्तेजसि वा यथा

॥५३॥

1	<i>Upaadhi vilayaat vishnau</i>	<i>On the dissolution of the Upadhis, in the Spirit, the</i>
2	<i>nir-vishesham vishet munih;</i>	<i>the contemplative sage is absorbed in the all-</i>
3	<i>jale jalam viyat vyomni</i>	<i>like water into water, space into space,</i>
4	<i>tejah tejasi vaa yathaa.</i>	<i>and light into light.</i>

In this verse, it may appear from the words and the similes used, that the situation at the time of death is being referred to. It is not so. The state of Jivanmukti is being described, and Jivanmukti is liberation *while still living*! The resemblance to death is only because Jivanmukti is the death-knell of the Ego, which finally is destroyed when illumination comes.

How is Liberation attained? That is what is described here.

1 The Upadhis of the body, mind and intellect are dissolved by withdrawing all identification with them. This requires the maximum clarity of the intellect to accomplish.

2 When the seeker does succeed in dissolving them, i.e. disidentifying with them, then the naturally occurring state of Self-realisation blossoms forth by itself. The blossoming takes the form of a total absorption of the individual self (ego) with the universal Self.

3-4 At this point, come the three similes which illustrate such a state of absorption of the little self into the universal Self.

Like Water, Space and Light

We have another 3 similes, as we did in the previous verse. Here, too, let us first see the inter-relationship between them before going into the details.

The three similes describe the merging process at three different levels: Water represents the merging at the gross level; Space represents it at the subtle level; and Light represents it at the causal level, the level of ignorance or darkness.

i) **Jale Jalam**: At the gross level, merging can best be observed when water unites with water. There is complete mergence, which is irreversible. This is not so when solids unite, for they can again be separated. Air masses, too can unite perfectly, but then they are not visible.

At the physical level the sage breaks through the barriers set up by the many different types of bodies creatures have. He sees the common Self in all of them. Thus he is not swayed by physical attributes in his judgement of people. Beautiful or ugly, lean or stout, Indian or Chinese – these are not important differences to the sage.

ii) **Viyat Vyomni**: At the subtle level of the mind and intellect, Space becomes the perfect simile to illustrate mergence – not only because it is subtle, but because it is all-pervading. Everything physical is pervaded by space. Similarly, the subtle creation pervades the gross creation. Mind and intellect are superior to the body.

All mental differences such as caste superiority or inferiority, intelligent or dull, etc, are seen as the manifestations of the same Total Mind by the sage. He has transcended the individual mind and become one with the universal mind. This is the purpose of the Space simile.

iii) **Tejah Tejasi**: At the causal level, ignorance or cosmic delusion is the factor that is being addressed. Light represents the Truth (Reality); darkness stands for Falsity (unreality).

There is no such thing as darkness merging with darkness for it is unreal. However, light can merge with light as they are real entities. Similarly, the Atman (Light of the Self) merges with Brahman (Universal Light) when ignorance is destroyed by knowledge.

In all three cases above, the Upadhis are overcome, and Infinity is realized.

When the Upadhis are disidentified from the Self, the Self takes on its true identity of being free from all limitations, and immediately (as part of the same process) gets

identified with the Supreme Self. It may be said that with the individual Self merges with the Supreme Self. Both of these are the same thing.

For the Jnani, it makes no difference whether he is a person who is knowledgeable in the secular fields of learning. He does not feel bad about such matters as this. When one has acquired a fortune, the paltry wealth of individuality is immaterial. There is no desire for having any status in knowledge.

Nor does the Jnani have any attachment to a fixed place to call his 'own', for he has come out of all sense of limitations, and rightfully the whole world belongs to him. When the river merges into the ocean, it loses its identity as a river. That identity is no longer relevant. The greater identity with the ocean puts the river identity into insignificance. So also, the greater divine personality has little use for the old limited personality. This is another conclusion that one can draw from this verse.



Water or Wave?

Chapter 8

Verses 54-67 (14 no.)

“Revelling in FREEDOM”

The BLISS of Realisation

The above verse may be said to be the last wherein the author Sri Shankaracharyaji has something of a philosophic or technical nature to teach. From this verse onwards to the end, having finished with the job of analysis and teaching, the author revels in the experience of the Self. There is poetic beauty in each of these verses.

The author invites us to join him in his party. We need to shut our intellects now and open our hearts to live the great experience that it is to realize the Self. And what better guide can we hope to have than the great Shankaracharyaji for this meditative tour!

When these verses go through us without any blockage from our mind and intellect, then we can know that we are ‘close’ to clarity.

A. MERITS OF THE REALISED STATE: (54-55)

Verses 54 and 55 are taken together. Six lines of poetry drape these verses: When Brahman is realised...

- i) The attainment leaves nothing else to be attained;
- ii) The blessedness leaves no other blessing to be desired;
- iii) The knowledge leaves nothing else to be known;
- iv) Seeing which, nothing more remains to be seen;
- v) Becoming which, there is no need to be born again;
- vi) Knowing which, nothing remains to be known.

VERSE 54: *There is No Other Seeking – 1*

यल्लाभान्नापरो लाभो यत्सुखान्नापरं सुखम् ।
यज्ज्ञानान्नापरं ज्ञानं तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥५४॥

1	<i>Yat laabhaat na aparah laabhah;</i>	<i>Apart from this attainment there is no other;</i>
2	<i>yat sukhaat na aparam sukham;</i>	<i>apart from this blessedness there is no other;</i>
3	<i>yat jnaanaat na aparam jnaanam;</i>	<i>apart from this knowledge there is no other;</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti ava-dhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

VERSE 55: *There is No Other Seeking – 2*

यदृष्ट्वा नापरं दृश्यं यद्भूत्वा न पुनर्भवः ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नापरं ज्ञेयं तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥५५॥

1	<i>Yad drishtvaa na aparam drishyam;</i>	<i>Having seen which nothing more remains to be seen; having become which,</i>
2	<i>yat bhootvaa na punar-bhava;</i>	<i>one is not born again in this world; and having</i>
3	<i>yat jnaatvaa na aparam jneyam;</i>	<i>known which nothing remains to be known;</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti ava-dhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

In all experiences there is the following triad: Experiencer, Experience and the Experienced. This is general is the subject; the purpose; and the object or the means of attaining the purpose.

The first three points listed in v54 address the purpose; the second three points address the object or the means. The subject is the reader himself. Ordinarily, when the subject unites with the object, the purpose is attained. The above statements clearly do not apply to the ordinary human endeavours. It is only when one has realized God that they begin to make sense to us. The statements are true only for one in the state of God-realisation. In fact, they become the signposts of Realisation.

The Purpose: (verse 54)

i) **Attainment:** achievement and success are the prime motivations or purposes for most people in this world. Addressing such people, Sri Shankaracharya makes the first point: his aim is to make them think of higher purposes than the usual worldly ones.

ii) **Blessedness:** However, there are those who may not be interested in attaining some gain, but who are drawn by their nature towards feelings of happiness. For these people, the second point is made to indicate to them there is something much higher than worldly happiness and joys.

iii) **Knowledge:** And thirdly, there is a small minority that is driven by the quest for knowledge. They may have no desire for fame and glory and possession, but have an intense desire to possess knowledge. For them the third point is made to tell them that even in the field of knowledge there is nothing greater to be known than the Self.

The Objects: (verse 55)

iv) **Seeing:** This is the ego's yardstick to measure itself by possessing that which it beholds and make them extensions of itself;

v) **Becoming:** This is the ego's yardstick by which it wants to become something because it is not content with what it already is;

vi) **Knowing:** This is the ego's yardstick by which it measures itself by the amount of knowledge it possesses, because it is not content with what it already knows.

In this verse, these yardsticks are called into question. Only the Self surpasses these three needs of the ego. There is no yardstick to gauge the state of the Jnani. He has crossed all yardsticks that can measure only limited objects. He is now in the realm of the Infinite.

Infinity alone answers these needs satisfactorily, and Infinity is only experienced by the sage of Realisation, none else.

Only to a man of Realisation do the six statements become an actual fact.

The Man of Realisation:

We may well understand Satchidananda but it is very difficult to understand the man of Realisation.

It is not that the Jnani *becomes* Brahman; the Jnani at the moment of realization comes to understand that he always was Brahman.

Why is there no further desire for one who becomes one with Brahman? The key to understanding the Jnani lies in the fact that he has transcended the mind.

The entire human pursuit is brought into the spotlight by these two verses. Our experience of the world is entirely a mental one. We see the world through our mind. Because the mind is an instrument bound to the realm of “Ignorance”, its conception of the world is always like that of one craving to have and want more. It can never be contented. In every worldly pursuit, when we gain anything, we are never satisfied because we always want more.

These two verses ridicule such narrow vision as possessed by one’s mind. They contrast it with the majesty of the Self. They are the perfect answer to a Sadhaka’s search. They bring stability to his mind by arresting its tendency to reach outwards for fulfillment. All fulfillment is obtained by realizing the Self. Hence, for a Sadhaka these two verses need to be memorized. They are his anchor in spiritual life.

B. ATTRIBUTES OF BRAHMAN: (56-62)

VERSE 56: *The Infinite, Eternal and Non-Dual Reality*

तिर्यगूर्ध्वमधः पूर्णं सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयम् ।
अनन्तं नित्यमेकं यत्तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥५६॥

1	<i>Tiryak oordhvam adhah poornam;</i>	<i>That which pervades all the quarters, above and below; which is Existence-</i>
2	<i>sac-chid-aanandam advayam;</i>	<i>Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, and Non-dual;</i>
3	<i>anantam nityam ekam yat;</i>	<i>which is Infinite, Eternal, the One alone;</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti avadhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

Nothing said in these last 15 verses is new. It is sheer poetical brilliance. The author is simply putting on the *icing* to the cake he has baked so meticulously in the earlier part of the book. Well, we are being invited to the party as well, to enjoy the spectacular experience of the Self, given by one who was himself firmly established in that state.

Acharyaji made one point which is relevant at this stage, although not directly stated in the verse, but implied in the description of “one, eternal and non-dual”. This oneness is hard to grasp by students of Vedanta. And so it justifies the pains that Acharyaji took to make the following point:

Beyond Life, Mind and Brain:

3 How do we grasp intellectually this idea of oneness of Brahman?

We start with the grossest of the above three factors which are part of the evolution in nature. The brain is the grossest. We are usually trained to think that if the brain is not functioning, there is no mind, and certainly no life. That was questioned by Acharyaji.

It is well-known that certain creatures go into a state of extended hibernation, sometimes through actually freezing themselves. In this state, all physical signs of life are withdrawn. There is no circulation, no breathing, no movement whatsoever. It is a state that might be equated to death. However, when the time is over, the life returns to that body as before. It proves that the mind existed even when the brain was no longer functioning.

The valuable conclusion here is that mind exists independently of the brain. It may use the brain for its functioning but it is independent of it. The mind exists entirely in the subtle body, while the brain exists in the gross body. They are two different levels of manifestation.

Then there is the third factor – Life. Our existence is proven by the life that manifests through us. But we know that only through our mind. The mind is the instrument for this knowledge. Just as the mind is seen to exist when the brain is not functioning, we can also posit that life still exists when the mind is withdrawn. The proof of that is deep sleep when there is no mind, but life is ongoing. The Pranas are still functioning without the mind. So the independence ascribed to the mind in relation to the brain, may also be granted to life in relation to the mind.

An important conclusion can be made from the above analysis: ***Life is something that exists all the time.*** We cannot limit it only to the existence of this body. What is the implication of this? – It sets the stage for establishing the *Theory of Reincarnation*.

The Theory of Reincarnation

We know that even though the physical body may drop, the Mind does not. It goes to its subtle realm, with all the impressions and tendencies familiar to it. The subtle realm of the mind is the Sattwic portion of the Tanmatras or subtle elements.

In the same way, Life also continues after death in its own subtle realm different from that of the mind. The subtle realm of Life or the Pranas is the Rajasic portion of the Tanmatras or subtle elements.

When conditions ripen, the Mind and Life come together again to manifest in another Birth, to continue the evolutionary journey from where it left off.

1-2 The relevance of this discussion is that it explains how the Jnani identifies himself with the all pervading, one and eternal Self. The Jnani does not see life and mind as being dependent on the existence of the body. There is a transcendence of this mortal structure which permits him to behold the bigger picture unavailable to ordinary beings.

Acharyaji's point is that Mind creates the delusion of something being alive or dead. Beyond the mind there is a Consciousness which is self-aware as Bliss and Knowledge.

Thus, through reason, we have arrived at the amazing conclusion that both Mind and Life are not restrained by the boundaries of the physical body, nor dependent on it for their existence. This is the understanding which we should have when we talk of the Self being ***"one, eternal and non-dual."***

VERSE 57: *Method of Negation and Assertion*

अतद्व्यावृत्तिरूपेण वेदान्तैर्लक्ष्यतेऽव्ययम् ।
अखण्डानन्दमेकं यत्तदब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥५७॥

1	<i>Atad-vyaa-vritti roopena</i>	<i>By the process of negating what it is not;</i>
2	<i>vedaantaih lakshyate avyayam;</i>	<i>indicated in Vedanta as the Indestructible</i>
3	<i>akhand-aanandam ekam yat</i>	<i>which is Indivisible, Blissful and One –</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti ava-dhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

Again the oneness, the indivisibility, is stressed – this time with the inclusion of Bliss, the essential nature of the Self, and the process of negation by which we arrive at this oneness.

The discussion of verse 56 brought an understanding of the independence of existence or Life from the brain and even the mind. We can see that it is incorrect for us to deduce that the stone has no mind or life simply because it has no brain. Anything that exists has to be aware of its own existence. Awareness of existence is the very nature of the Self.

A thing or being does not need a Mind to be aware of its own existence; it needs the mind only to know if other things exist.

This compels us to take a closer look at the process of Negation referred to here. What are we negating? Are we being asked to negate this world? That cannot be, since the Self that we are seeking is all-pervading in all the phenomena of the world. This verse directly tells us that we have to learn to see the Self in all beings and creatures. The negation of “Not this, not that” is to remove our ignorant and deluded view of the world and return the true view to its rightful place in the foreground of our life.

This will bring us to experience the blissful aspect of the Self.

VERSE 58: *A Particle of Bliss Only Enjoyed by Deities*

अखण्डानन्दरूपस्य तस्यानन्दलवाश्रिताः ।
ब्रह्माद्यास्तारतम्येन भवन्त्यानन्दिनोऽखिलाः

॥५८॥

1	<i>Akhand-aananda roopasya</i>	<i>The Lord's nature is unbroken (infinite) Bliss.</i>
2	<i>tasya aananda lav-aashritaah;</i>	<i>Depending on just a small particle of that Bliss,</i>
3	<i>brahmaadyaah taaratamyena</i>	<i>do the Creator and other Deities proportionately</i>
4	<i>bhavanti aanandinah akhilaah.</i>	<i>become blissful with their share of that particle.</i>

Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji says, “A relative picture has been drawn here to give us a wild quantitative measure of the infinite (bliss) in terms of a finite yardstick.”

Sri Shankaracharyaji tries to give us an idea of the infinite bliss of the Self, by saying that only a ‘particle’ of it is enjoyed by great Deities like Brahmaji Himself. Then that small particle is sized down even further as it is *proportionately* enjoyed by all the billions of creatures from Brahmaji down to the least significant ant on earth. Proportionate enjoyment refers to the varying capacities to enjoy the presence of God according to the degree of evolution of the being. Acharyaji stated the five categories of creatures: those possessing one sense, two senses, etc. up to all five senses. Each of these categories has different means available to enjoy the presence of bliss in creation.

Nothing is said about the 99.9% that is left ‘un-enjoyed’ by creation. This leaves one in awe of the magnitude of the Bliss of the Self! Only the man of realization can have a true idea of what this bliss really means. To the rest of mankind, it remains only in the realm of conjecture to ponder over this state.

The Taittiriya Upanishad has an entire Anuvaka (chapter) on “Relative Joy” enjoyed by the Devatas down to the human being. It, too, has the same purpose – to give us some idea of infinite Bliss of the Self. The additional step the Upanishad emphasizes is that our enjoyment of bliss is proportional to our degree of renunciation. The greater the renunciation, the greater the bliss.

The practical side of the verse is that we should learn to see God even in the most insignificant things around us. Yes, of course He is there in the grandest part of His creation, but let us not ignore Him in the least of His creation. By this practice, we can begin to taste the bliss “drop by drop”, until we gather the capacity to taste the whole oceanful in due course.

VERSE 59: *As Butter Permeates Milk*

तद्युक्तमखिलं वस्तु व्यवहारश्चिदन्वितः ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म क्षीरे सर्पिर्वाखिले

॥५९॥

1	<i>Tadyuktam akhilam vastu</i>	<i>All objects are pervaded by Brahman.</i>
2	<i>vyavahaarah chid-anvitah;</i>	<i>All actions are possible because of the All-permeating.</i>
3	<i>tasmaat sarvagatam brahma</i>	<i>Therefore, Brahman alone permeates everything,</i>
4	<i>ksheere sarpih iva akhile.</i>	<i>even as butter permeates milk.</i>

1-2 We have been made aware in the last two verses of the all-pervading nature of the Self, as well as of the immense bliss of experiencing it. Presented in this verse is one more practical encouragement of seeing God in all things. We are here encouraged to **dedicate all our Actions to Him**, knowing that these actions are only possible because of the presence of God within.

“Ksheere Sarpirivakhile”: Like Butter in Milk

3-4 The simile for ‘seeing’ God in all is ‘seeing’ butter in every drop of the milk. We know that butter pervades the milk, because we see the butter after churning the milk. Butter, from which ghee is made, may be said to be the best part of the milk. It is certainly where all the energy comes from. Without the butter, what is left is not milk but only water.

The simile thus points out two things:

i) God is there in every part of this creation in the same subtle way as butter is in every drop of the milk. We have to look beyond the physical and consider the essence of things to be able to see God.

ii) The underlying presence of God is the only real part of creation. The physical manifestation, arising from Maya, is illusory like Maya. As butter is the essence of milk, so also God is the essence of creation. Non-dualists would say, “God alone is!”

Acharyaji illustrated this with an example. There was a king who wanted to have proof of the existence of God. So he offered a big prize to the wise man who could explain this to him. A young man came forward and said he would explain. He asked the king to get some milk. Then he asked him if there was butter in it. Then he asked if he could see the butter. In this way he was able to explain to the king that it was only by the churning of Sadhana that one could get purer and be able to see the “butter of God” in all things.

VERSE 60: *The Attributeless Brahman*

अनण्वस्थूलमह्रस्वमदीर्घमजमव्ययम् ।
अरूपगुणवर्णारिख्यं तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥६०॥

1	<i>Ananu asthoolam ahrisvam</i>	<i>Neither subtle nor gross; neither short</i>
2	<i>adeergham ajam avyayam;</i>	<i>nor long; without birth and without change;</i>
3	<i>aroopa-guna-varna-aakhyam</i>	<i>without form, attributes colour or change;</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti ava-dhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

In case we get the idea from Verses 57, 58 and 59 that God, beheld in all things, must have some physical characteristics, that idea is destroyed immediately by this verse where God is described as eluding any parameters by which we measure things physically.

- i) Along the **x-axis**, God is neither small nor big.

ii) Along the **y-axis**, God is neither short nor tall.

iii) Along the **z-axis**, God has no depth, that is, He is formless, which also means He has no colour (an attribute of form) and no name.

iv) Along the **t-axis**, that is, the time axis, He has no birth and death, i.e. changeless.

The choice of using the axes system is very appropriate as it symbolizes the approach of modern science, which places great value on graphical and numerical analysis of data. The hint given is that God is not something that can be placed under the microscope of a science laboratory.

Ramblings on Realisation

Acharyaji gave us a whole lecture on musings on the recent verses we have been studying. They bring out the pearls of wisdom embedded in these verses:

1. All the happiness (if it may be quantified), of all the people, enjoyed in all the past and that which is yet to be enjoyed in all the future, - if it is put together, will only form a tiny fraction of the bliss of the Self, the 'total' Bliss of God.

This is not one of the 7 wonders of the world; it is **the** wonder!

2. Sometimes the very search for God can lead us astray, if it is focused on *doing* only. The doing can be a distraction, the wanting can be a dissipation, and the searching can become an entertainment. So what is it that we have to do? Just *be*, that is all.

3. Then came an amazing narrative from Acharyaji, on the theme of just *Being*:

There was a great saint named Arunagiri Natha who was a devotee of Lord Muruga. He was very passionate in his early life, and used to fervently pray to his Lord to free him from passion. Eventually he fell prey to affliction of diseases. One day he was so swept by the power of lust that he was desperate to satisfy it. But he had no money. His sister, who raised him like a mother said to him, "If that is what you want, here I am." This gave him a deep shock. He ran out of the house, determined to end his life.

He climbed up the tower of the temple at Arunachala to commit suicide, but it is said that Lord Muruga held him as he was falling. Lord Muruga gave him the advice, "Just be!" He did not have to do anything, because anything we try to do will just take us away.

Arunagiri Natha took the hint, practised just this Sadhana, and discovered himself.

4. One saint named Vidyaranya Muni said beautifully, "Entering into great Upadhis, super-subtle bodies, such as the Deities, He becomes the Worshipful. And entering into lower bodies such as the human being, He becomes the worshipper. So the worshipped and the worshipper is actually one only. It is the one Self entering everywhere.

We give a form to God because we have a form. But that Lord is actually in our own heart. That is why when we do Pooja, we bring the offerings to our heart and then offer it into the fire.

5. Advaita is not against worship as people usually think. It is actually the culmination of all worship, the fulfillment of worship. The worship which started with action, finds its ultimate expression in Advaita, when the devotee becomes one with God. God in the form of the devotee is worshipping God, the Formless Absolute!

6. We are so used to *doing* things to get something that Advaita may even appear as being impractical to some people. Here it may be said that the opposite of doing is not 'undoing', but 'being'. It is very hard to just BE.

7. There is a well-planned methodology in Vedanta (or Advaita). It starts by stating the facts. Then it uses logic to prove those facts. Then it helps us to start experiencing them. And finally it takes us by the hand to revel in that experience. That is where we are in the present portion of this book.

8. There was an atheist. He wished everyone else to also be converted to his atheism. On the walls of his home he had written "God is nowhere". His little son, who was just learning to read, read the sign as "God is NOW HERE!"

That is how we can learn to see God. Touch the hair – it is God. Touch the nose – it is God. If we think that God is a powerful person sitting somewhere in Heaven, with many attendants looking after Him, then you will not find such a God. He will remain far away from you. To see God as butter in the milk, we have to understand that God is the very Existence in this world. We need to educate the intellect to let go of all ideas of Him, and just be. We must stop the Mind-search and begin the Heart-search.

A Few Hints on Meditation:

Acharyaji then took the lecture to a practical level. He asked us to try to meditate on the clapping created by one hand.

Another method was suggested: There is a buffalo. He wants to reach the green grass across the fence. So he pushes his big nose through the fence and breaks through it. His whole head gets in. With more pushing he gets his whole fat body in as well. But when he is almost in he finds that his tail cannot come through! Why? Now meditate on this...

These are useful ways to break through the mind-barrier.

Similarly, we can handle the “not short, not tall” description of this verse. Meditate on these two ideas together. It will help us to cross the mind-barrier. It is the mental concepts of time and space that keep us from recognizing the Self.

Doing such practices will help us a long way in just being ourselves, by taking us out of our mind.

In Vedanta, initially we give a name to God – *Satchidananda*. When we move on, we gradually start re-defining the names, and the student is led to the realms beyond the names. It is like this: the student is led to see the rope. Once he sees the rope, where is the need to then talk about the snake that was seen in its place!

If God is only one thing, how can it have a name? A name is only given in order to differentiate a thing from other things. Here, there is no ‘other’. So God cannot have a Name; it is a logical impossibility.

The section we are in at present is the section dealing with such abstract matters. We are truly expected to meditate on these abstractions, not analyse them with our intellect. Doing so, we shall go deep into them and slip into the state of God-realisation.

We can feel Sri Shankaracharya’s invitation getting more and more fervent and compelling!

VERSE 61: *The Self-luminous Brahman*

यद्भासा भास्यतेऽर्कादि भास्यैर्यत्तु न भास्यते ।

येन सर्वमिदं भाति तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत्

॥६१॥

1	<i>Yad bhaasaa bhaasyate arkaadi</i>	<i>By the light of which the sun, etc, are illumined;</i>
2	<i>bhaasyaih yah tu na bhaasyate;</i>	<i>but which is not illumined by those luminous orbs;</i>
3	<i>yena sarvam idam bhaati</i>	<i>that by which all this shines –</i>
4	<i>tat brahma iti ava-dhaarayet.</i>	<i>realize That to be Brahman.</i>

We are now entering the concluding phase of the text. The nature of the Self is so completely different from anything that we experience in this physical world, that we can hardly reach it through words. Yet that is what we are attempting through various analogies and similes. The author leaves us with a few final glittering similes with which he attempts to express the inexpressible. These analogies, taken from our experience of the world, take us pretty close to the Truth.

This verse continues the idea expressed in verses 28, 29, 41, 43 and 51, of the Self being self-luminous and not needing anything else to make it known.

1 We know the sun as the source of all illumination in this world. The moon reflects the light of the sun at night, and so also becomes one of the sources of illumination. Their luminosity, however, is only at the physical level.

2 The second Pada switches over to the philosophical meaning of the word 'Luminous' or 'Illuminate', where it means "being aware" or "to know", and we use the capital letter to differentiate it from its ordinary use.

These two great external sources of light are of no help in Illuminating the Self. In fact, they can be known to us only by the Light of the Self.

"By Which All This Shines"

3 i) As Knowers through Consciousness: Not only the sun and the moon but all other things, even abstract things, are available to us only because of Consciousness. Awareness or the conscious-principle in us enables us to know.

Acharyaji's input on this was that if I do not shed my light of consciousness on the sun, would the sun shine? No. Unless there is an observer, there cannot be an 'observed'. So the presence of consciousness is needed to show the existence of the sun. It can be extended to show that consciousness is the very vitality of the Cosmos, without which the latter cannot exist.

ii) As vehicles of Consciousness: We contribute to the existence of all things known to us. Were it not for our Consciousness, we would not even know of their existence.

An object becomes known only if I shed my light of consciousness on it, through my mind. The mind serves only as a 'conduit' for my consciousness to flow to the object and bring it to my awareness.

Viewed this way, what is the sun? It is a modification of the mind. The mind appears and sets in consciousness. It is 'Me' the Self that gives existence to my mind, and thus to the sun. In this sense, it is 'Me' that makes my whole world alive. As usual, Acharyaji took this idea to its humorous level by saying, "Only an Advaitin can ask 'What do you think of Me?' without any sense of pride!" He can say this because he sees himself only as the pure Self.

iii) As Mirrors of Consciousness: In childhood we must have tried this in fun – we used a mirror to reflect the image of the sun into the neighbour's room. The sun could not shine there directly, but through the mirror it reached there. So also, in the realm of Consciousness, we are the mirrors that are reflecting Consciousness to the sun and the moon (or any other object for that matter), and by doing so we become aware of their existence and their nature. Thus, all things become known to us because of Consciousness.

iv) **As Flow of Consciousness:** The eye sees the sun, but the sun does not know it. The mind sees through the eye, but the eye does not know it. Consciousness flows through the mind, but the ignorant mind does not know it. Consciousness illumines the mind to illumine the eye, which then illumines the sun. (here 'illumine' = "carries awareness to")

In short, this is the sequence of the flow of Consciousness:

CONSCIOUSNESS ⇨ MIND ⇨ SENSES (EYE) ⇨ OBJECT

v) **Consciousness Must be All-Pervading:** The verse "*Na Tatra Sooryo Bhaati Na Chandra Taarakam*" means exactly the same as this verse. If any part of the above chain in the flow of consciousness is removed, we will not see the sun. The message is Consciousness is Brahman; It is all-pervading.

Acharyaji ended his enlightening reflections on this verse with a remark at a personal level: In ordinary life, if someone praises us for our appearance, we feel very good about it and will surely thank the person for it. Here, is not Sri Shankaracharya *praising* us by saying that the Light of the Lord shines through us – through our mind and eyes? What a high compliment that is to us! And we barely give him a "*Thank You*" for it!

VERSE 62: *As Fire Permeates the Red-hot Iron Ball*

स्वयमन्तर्बहिर्व्याप्य भासयन्नखिलं जगत् ।

ब्रह्म प्रकाशते वह्निप्रतप्तायसपिण्डवत्

॥६२॥

1	<i>Swayam antah bahih vyaapya</i>	<i>Itself pervading everything inside and outside;</i>
2	<i>bhaasayan akhilam jagat;</i>	<i>illuminating the entire universe;</i>
3	<i>brahma prakaashate vanhi</i>	<i>Brahman shines, like the fire</i>
4	<i>pra-taptaa-yasa-pinda-vat.</i>	<i>whose glow permeates a red-hot iron ball.</i>

The context of this section is "Revelling in Freedom", and we are being taken on a "guided tour" of the Self by Sri Shankaracharyaji.

The Self is Satchidananda. In trying to express the triple nature of Satchidananda, all these colourful similes are brought in to assist us in having a clearer picture of what this supreme state really is. Each simile opens up our minds to more and more aspects of the radiant, infinite Self. The pageant is endless because the Self is Infinite.

"Vanhiprataptayah Pindavat": The Red-hot Iron Ball

A cold iron ball is a dull, unattractive object. However, in the presence of great heat, it cannot help but glow. We cannot see heat but we see its effect on a ball of iron.

The iron ball represents creation, and the heat represents the Self. It is the Self that imparts vibrancy and a glow in all creation.

Acharyaji reminded us of the danger of giving physical characteristics to the Self. Similes like the present one may put forward that impression.

The Story of Namdev

This interesting anecdote of Saint Namdev appears to add to the danger. In Namdev's experience, the Lord's characteristic was literally physically measured . . .

The story of this saint is well-known to Maharashtrians. There was a potter known to him, by the name of Ghorakhumba. This potter wanted to invite all the Mahatmas to his house. He invited Namdev also. Namdev knew of the practice of this potter-saint to test Mahatmas of how 'well-baked' they were by using the same technique as he used to test his clay pots to see if they were correctly baked. Namdev went there in order to disprove the potter's claim of using such a test.

As was his habit with pots, the potter struck each Mahatma on the head with his testing rod, and would then remark if he was 'well-baked' or not! Namdev waited at the end of the queue. The potter struck him also and declared him to be "not *pakka*, not fully baked". Namdev was most upset at this. He went to the Lord, with whom he could speak, and complained. The Lord also said that although Namdev was very devoted, he was still not *pakka*. The Lord asked him to go to a certain temple where he would meet a saint that would make him *pakka*.

The point about this story was that physical means were used to test spiritual realization! Such unusual cases have actually been recorded, defying all spiritual laws! Of course, it may well be said that the saint only used his stick as an excuse to state what he already knew intuitively by spiritual means.

C. ADMINISTERING THE MEDICINE:

(63-65)

Verses 63, 64 and 65 are taken together as they convey the same theme – Sri Shankaracharyaji is administering dosages of his medicine to aspirants in three different ways, each one acceptable in the teaching profession. He himself is of the third type.

i) The first type (v63) gives the medicine and then feels his job is over. It is up to the patient to take it and cure himself; that is not the doctor's problem.

ii) The second type (v64) gives the medicine, but also makes kind enquiries about the patient's progress thereafter.

iii) The third type (v65) is the one who forces it down the patient's throat. He will check everything to make sure the patient takes the medication to get cured.

VERSE 63: *As the Unreal Shine of a Mirage*

जगद्विलक्षणं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मणोऽन्यन्न किंचन ।

ब्रह्मान्यद्भाति चेन्मिथ्या यथा मरुमरीचिका

॥६३॥

1	<i>Jagad vilakshanam brahma</i>	<i>Brahman is counter-indicated by the universe.</i>
2	<i>brahmanah anyat na kinchana;</i>	<i>There exists nothing other than Brahman.</i>
3	<i>brahmaanyat bhaati chet mithyaa</i>	<i>If anything other than Brahman shines, it must be unreal,</i>
4	<i>yathaa maru-maree-chikaa.</i>	<i>just as the unreal mirage.</i>

VERSE 64: Reality Can Only Be Brahman, the Non-Dual

दृश्यते श्रूयते यद्यद्ब्रह्मणोऽन्यन्न तद्भवेत् ।
तत्त्वज्ञानाच्च तद्ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयम्

॥६४॥

1	<i>Drishyate shrooyate yat yat</i>	<i>All that is perceived or heard in this universe</i>
2	<i>brahmanah anyat na tat bhavet;</i>	<i>cannot possibly be apart from Brahman.</i>
3	<i>tattwa-jnaanaat cha tat brahma</i>	<i>Gaining the knowledge of Reality, one sees the world as only Brahman – as the</i>
4	<i>sach-chid-aanandam advayam.</i>	<i>non-dual, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.</i>

VERSE 65: As the Blind Do Not See the Sun

सर्वगं सच्चिदात्मानं ज्ञानचक्षुर्निरीक्षते ।
अज्ञानचक्षुर्नेक्षेत भास्वन्तं भानुमन्धवत्

॥६५॥

1	<i>Sarvagam sach-chid-aanandam</i>	<i>Satchidananda Atman is present everywhere;</i>
2	<i>jnaana-chakshuh nir-eeekshate;</i>	<i>It can be perceived only by the Eye of Wisdom;</i>
3	<i>ajnaana-chakshuh na eeksheta</i>	<i>obscured by ignorance, one cannot see It,</i>
4	<i>bhaasvantam bhaanum andhavat.</i>	<i>just as a blind man cannot see the sun, however resplendent it shines.</i>

“Marumaree Chika” – The Mirage Simile

This beautiful simile in verse 63 tells us clearly what is meant by saying, “One should be seeing only Brahman. If one sees anything else, it is a false appearance”

Let us take a deeper look at this simile. There are three facts about a mirage:

- The desert is sand, and the mirage is water.
- We know that in a desert there is nothing but sand alone.
- If you see anything else in a desert besides sand, it has to be false, it simply cannot be true.

Now let us apply this lovely simile to the desert of the Vedantic world:

i) The desert sands stand for Brahman. The world of objects is the mirage that appears as ‘water’.

ii) The spiritual doctor tells us that Brahman alone is real. Nothing else is real. This is exactly the case with the desert sands.

iii) If we see the ‘water’ of worldliness then that can only mean one thing. We have accepted as real something which is unreal, which only appears to be real. This is what Vedanta says about this world of names and forms. It does not say that they do not exist, but it says that their existence is temporary, until knowledge dawns and then it is seen clearly that Brahman alone exists.

Sri Shankaracharyaji has chosen his simile so carefully here that it is beyond any argument!

The Master Instructor At Work:

"Brahman is everywhere" – this is the medicine he is giving to us, his patients.

i) **The First Type of Doctor:** In verse 63, he administers this medicine. He also tells us that if we do not see Him everywhere, that is a disease in us. "If we see anything other than Brahman, we are still sick."

ii) **The Second Type of Doctor:** Then in verse 64, he comes to check on us if we have taken his medicine. If we really have, that is, if we have gained the knowledge of the Reality, then our sickness should have left us. We should be seeing everything as Brahman and nothing else. A confident spiritual doctor knows that the signs of progress lie in how much we recognize God in all beings. He keeps checking that when he administers the medicine. When we can see the Lord in all, we are fully cured.

iii) **The Third Type of Doctor:** In verse 65, when he sees that we are still not seeing Brahman, it tells the doctor that we have not taken the medicine as prescribed. He realizes some cheating has gone on! Then he tells us clearly what our disease is – we are *blind*. That is the only reason why we cannot see the Self everywhere.

And, being the experienced doctor that he is, he knows exactly WHY we have avoided taking his medicine.

The next verse tells us why man generally is not prepared to take this medicine very seriously, although it is the only thing that will really cure him.

Now let us see why most people are actually avoiding the medicine...

D. THE TOUGHNESS OF SADHANA:

(66-67)

VERSE 66: *As Molten Gold is Freed of Dross*

श्रवणादिभिरुद्दीप्तज्ञानाग्निपरितापितः ।

जीवः सर्वमलान्मुक्तः स्वर्णवद्योतते स्वयम्

॥६६॥

1	<i>Shravan-aadibhih ud-deepta</i>	<i>By listening to the scriptures, and so on, is kindled</i>
2	<i>jnaana-agni pari-taapitah;</i>	<i>the fire of Knowledge, in the heat of which</i>
3	<i>jeevah sarvamalaat muktah</i>	<i>the impurities of individuality are freed,</i>
4	<i>svarna-vat dyotate swayam.</i>	<i>just as the smelting of gold frees it from its dross.</i>

The reason for avoiding the medicine is quite clear – it is unbearable to take it! To do Sadhana, to observe restraint of our senses, to give up all the sense pleasures, etc, is too difficult for the majority of people. Who is willing to undergo this "heating in the furnace of Knowledge"? It is too unpleasant. Only those who are truly sincere and have a great yearning for God will willingly go through such self-denial.

The fire of knowledge is kindled by Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. But who is prepared to undergo these disciplines? Rare is the person who practices these disciplines with the right attitude, with humility and with no impure motive behind it. And such a person alone eventually succeeds and becomes free of all impurities and shines like gold!

What further commentary is needed for sincerity?

“Swarnavat Dyotate Swayam” Gold Shines Forth:

The beauty of these similes is again and again seen to be the right simile for the right situation. In nature, what do we see that needs to be heated in order to be extracted in pure form? The mining of gold is a brilliant example. And for South Africans this is an easily understood example, as South Africa is the largest gold-producing country in the world.

The gold ore contains the tiny gold nuggets in the midst of solid rock. The whole ore has to be heated to a very high temperature in furnaces. Then, with both in liquid form, the gold separates from the rock completely, and is siphoned off as it sinks below the molten rock. When cooled down to form gold bars, it has a beautiful golden shine.

In the same way, the Jiva is Consciousness (the gold) mixed with the impurities of Vasanas, as well as ignorance together with all its effects (the subtle and gross body). This Jiva (the raw gold ore) has to be smelted down through the rigorous processes of Sadhana. After undergoing this “heating” process, the impurities of Abhava, Asambhavana and Viparita Bhavana are removed and the pure gold Consciousness shines forth in the realized sage who is produced by this process.

Tapas & Titiksha

We remind ourselves of these qualities about which we learnt in *Tattwa Bodha* in detail. The smelting treatment is needed to remove all the impurities we have accumulated due to incorrect living for many births. Rigorous Sadhana is needed over a prolonged period. Patience is needed by the aspirant. He cannot much from a little Sadhana, done half-heartedly. The capacity to stick it out at all costs is essential on the spiritual path.

VERSE 67: *As the Sun Destroys Darkness*

हृदाकाशोदितो ह्यात्मा बोधभानुस्तमोऽपहृत् ।
सर्वव्यापी सर्वधारी भाति भासयतेऽखिलम्

॥६७॥

1	<i>“Hrid-aakaasha” uditah hi aatmaa</i>	<i>The Self, which verily rises in the “heart-space”,</i>
2	<i>bodha-bhaanuh tamah apahrit;</i>	<i>is the sun of knowledge that destroys all darkness;</i>
3	<i>sarva-vyaapee sarva-dhaaree</i>	<i>It pervades everything; It sustains everything.</i>
4	<i>bhaati bhaasayate akhilam.</i>	<i>It shines by Itself, and makes all else shine.</i>

We see in this verse a neat assembly or combination of all the major metaphors that have been used in the recent verses, used with great skill to bring the entire text to a grand conclusion in this penultimate verse. The metaphors include:

i) the luminous sun which stands for the Self, which is also self-effulgent (v41); ii) the rising sun at dawn, which resembles the lifting of the dark veil of ignorance and the emergence of the light of Knowledge of the Self (v43); iii) the all-pervading nature of the Self, seen in the simile of Space used to describe the heart – “*Hrid-Akasha*” (v 52); and, iv) the lighting up of the intellect due to its closeness to the Self (28).

Chapter 9

Verse 68 (1 no.)

“CONCLUSION”

VERSE 68: The Promise of Fulfillment

दिग्देशकालाद्यनपेक्ष्य सर्वगं
शीतादिहृन्नित्यसुखं निरंजनम् ।
यः स्वात्मतीर्थं भजते विनिष्क्रियः
स सर्ववित्सर्वगतोऽमृतो भवेत्

॥६८॥

1	<i>Dig-desha-kaal-aadi apekshya sarvagam</i>	<i>That which does not depend upon direction, space and time, and is present everywhere;</i>
2	<i>Sheet-aadi hrit nitya- sukham niranjanam;</i>	<i>That which is the destroyer of heat and cold; eternal Bliss and stainless;</i>
3	<i>Yah swaatma-teertham bhajate vi-nishkriyah</i>	<i>he who worships at the holy shrine of such a Being, in his own Self, renouncing all activities,</i>
4	<i>sah sarvavit sargatah amritah bhavet.</i>	<i>such a one becomes all-knowing, all-pervading and immortal.</i>

The change in the meter of the final verse signals the conclusion of the text. The splendid spiritual feast of *Atma Bodha* is brought to an end here with a verse that is like a dessert after the meal. In this verse the whole spiritual journey is summed up as follows:

i) **1 Transcending All Limitations:** The breaking down and release from all the Upadhis that limit us to the narrow confines of experience through this body, mind and intellect, and confined also to the limitations of time.

ii) **2 Overcoming all Pairs of Opposites:** represented by heat and cold and so on.

iii) **2 Bringing the being to a stainless state:** (Niranjan); this represents the states of Chitta Shuddhi and Chitta Ekagrata (purity of mind and one-pointedness of mind).

iv) **3 Considering Self as Highest Teertha:** This is the culmination of the spiritual quest by taking the Atman to be the highest place of pilgrimage to do one's worship.

v) **3 Renunciation of all activities:** Activities refer only to the Tamasic and Rajasic activities. Sattwic activities may be continued as per the Prarabdha of the realized sage.

4 The verse also describes the essence of the destination reached:

i) One becomes all-knowing;

ii) One experiences the all-pervading nature of the Self;

iii) One attains immortality. One is no longer identified with the body, etc, which have a limited existence from birth to death, but is now identified with the eternal Self.

Thus ends this great text which explains the basic concepts of Vedanta very clearly, studded as it is with numerous striking similes to help us visualize these abstract concepts.

THE OVERALL THOUGHT-FLOW

OF ATMA BODHA

Verse 1:	1. INVOCATION	5
Verses 2 – 5:	2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF	8
Verses 6 – 9:	3. THE WORLD	14
Verses 10 – 14:	4. THE UPADHIS	19
Verses 16 – 24:	5. AN ERROR OF MISAPPREHENSION	24
	15: The Problem Outlined	24
	16-17: What is Discriminative Enquiry?	25
	18-22: Cultivating Witness-ship	28
	23-24: Mind is Responsible	32
Verses 25 – 37:	6. THE BIRTH OF THE EGO	34
	25: The Fundamental Error	34
	26-27: How the Ego Thrives	35
	28-29: Supremacy of the Self	37
	30-33: 'Neti-Neti': Doctrine of Negation	39
	34-37: Nididhyasana	43
Verses 38 – 53:	7. TOWARDS REALISATION	48
	38-39: Samadhi: Savikalpa & Nirvikalpa	48
	40-46: Emerging Out of Ignorance	50
	47-50: The Universal Attitude	58
	51-53: Freedom Beyond Limitations	63
Verses 54 – 67:	8. REVELLING IN FREEDOM	68
	54-55: Merits of the Realised State	68
	56-62: Attributes of Brahman	70
	63-65: Administering the "Medicine"	79
	66: The Toughness of Sadhana	81
	67: Summation	82
Verse 68:	9. CONCLUSION – The Promise of Fulfillment	82



1. INVOCATION

Verse 1: “Tapas” is the auspicious word with which the text begins. This is therefore taken as an invocation. The Anubandha Chatusthaya is given fully. The characteristics of the person who is ready for this path are given – peacefulness, desirelessness and aspiration. This is tantamount to Sadhana Chatusthaya.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

Verses 2-5: The path of Vedantic enquiry is direct, taking the route “as the crow flies”. However, its starting point is a well-prepared mind. Knowledge of the Self is most important. Hence, this is where the text begins.

Action on its own does not bring liberation. At some point the seeker has to come to knowledge of the Self, for knowledge is the only antidote for ignorance.

This means removal of Ignorance through Self-knowledge is the way forward. When that is achieved, the self-luminous Self shines forth as it is now unobstructed, just as the clearing of clouds allows the sun to be seen.

3. THE NATURE OF THE WORLD

Verses 6-9: The text turns its attention now to the world, with all its attachments and aversions. It is seen as a dream. As soon as the dream ends, the unreality of the world is experienced. The dream will only end when Brahman is realized.

The world is also seen as a mental projection upon the Self. The objects in the universe, the stars and the planets, are like bubbles in water – they come and go back into their source, the Self. The world is ever-changing, but the substratum, the Self, is constant.

4. ASSOCIATION WITH THE UPADHIS

Verses 10-14: The idea is now developed of how the Self, which is ever pure, appears to be tainted. This is traced to its association with the body, mind and intellect – known collectively as the Upadhis. This is a major concept in Vedanta and is the arena for the basic Vedantic Sadhana.

By explaining the origin of the gross, subtle and causal bodies, it is shown that they are not the Self but the Self dwells in them. The Self gets a colouring from them, in the same way as clear water gets coloured or flavoured.

5. AN ERROR OF MISAPPREHENSION

Verse 15: *Wrong Identification.* The spiritual problem or predicament of human beings is stated very precisely in this verse as being identification with the Upadhis or limiting adjuncts. This identification appears to taint the Self, that is, gives it attributes which it does not possess. We generally identify with this tainted self, and not the true Self.

Verses 16-17: *Discriminative Enquiry.* The solution lies in using the human intellect to discriminate between the truth and the untruth, the real and the unreal, and thereby re-program the pattern of our thinking.

Verses 18-22: *Cultivating Witness-ship.* When discrimination begins, the seeker is able to develop the ability to be a Witness of all his actions and thoughts. He separates himself from the Upadhis bit by bit, by learning how to observe them, to study their ways, and avoid falling into their clutches.

Verses 23-24: *Mind is Responsible*. Clarity is given in these verses on how the mind is responsible for the delusion.

6. THE BIRTH OF THE EGO

Verse 25: *The Birth of Ego*. In this single verse, the author states how the 'indiscriminate blending' or 'unholy wedlock' between the Jiva (the individual soul) and the Intellect produces the fundamental error by which we become identified with all that is unreal in relation to the Self. This is a very important verse.

The blending is unavoidable – it is how the human being was created to function. However the blending, from being 'indiscriminate', can be made 'discriminate'. In the verses from 26 to 37, the focus is on training the intellect to do so.

Verses 26-27: *How the Ego Thrives*. The first step in this training process is to recognize the ways in which the ego seeks to perpetuate itself. This is covered here.

Verse 28-29: *Supremacy of Self*. By learning that the Self does not need anything else to reveal it, we are taught not to allow the ego to hijack the function (and the glory) that belongs to the Self.

Verses 30-33: *'Neti-Neti' the Doctrine of Negation*. A process is now offered to the seeker to relentlessly negate everything that is not the Self in a systematic manner, starting with that which is grossest to that which is subtle. The gathering of the knowledge which will execute this step successfully is called Sravana.

Reflecting thoroughly on the knowledge obtained through Sravana is called Manana. This is explained in verses 32 and 33. It calls for a firm conviction that these externals are perishable and unreliable, and cannot give us the happiness we seek.

Verses 34-37: *Nididhyasana*. With Manana bringing firm conviction, Nididhyasana or meditation can begin. These verses teach the student the qualities of the Self upon which one has to meditate. This eventually brings the student to realize "I am Brahman".

7. TOWARDS REALISATION

With the realization of the Self being accomplished, the nature of the text takes a distinct turn. What follows are observations from that privileged platform. From here onwards, there are some beautiful insights into what life is like after realizing the Supreme.

Verses 38-39: *From Savikalpa to Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. Having come to this advanced stage of negating all the Upadhis by the "I am Brahman" thought, this thought itself is now renounced and the student is taken to the ultimate realization of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Verses 40-46: *Emerging Out of Ignorance*. The immediate focus is on how the new experience differs from the old (or ordinary) consciousness. Some of the most exquisite similes are used in these verses to indicate how different the state of realization is from ordinary human consciousness.

Verses 47-50: *The Universal Attitude*. We now get a glimpse of how the realized sage views this world, how he relates to each and every object as though it were he himself. The poetry gets more and more intensely sublime, with a climax in verses 49 and 50.

Verses 51 – 53: *Freedom Beyond Limitations*. In these verses the same universal theme is continued, but with an emphasis on the freedom experienced in the Self-realised state. From here onwards the student can only marvel at the sheer beauty and pageantry of every verse, as it oozes out the fragrance of true divinity lived in flesh and blood!

8. REVELLING IN FREEDOM

The author invites us to join in the spiritual party he has laid out for us. We need to shut our intellects and open our hearts to live the great experience that it is to realize the Self. What better guide can we hope to have than the inestimable Sri Shankaracharya for this meditative tour!

When these verses go through us without any blockage from our mind and intellect, then we can know that we are 'close' to clarity.

Verses 54-55: *Merits of the Realised State.*

Verses 56-62: *All-pervasiveness of Brahman.*

Verses 63-65: *Administering the "Medicine".*

Verse 66: *The Toughness of Sadhana.*

Verse 67: Summation

9. CONCLUSION

Verse 68: The Promise of Fulfillment



ATMA BODHA
“Knowledge of the Self”
by Sri Adi Shankaracharya

Split-Sandhee Samskrit Format
(to Assist Beginners in Identifying the Words)

Chapter 1 INVOCATION

तपोभिः क्षीण-पापानां, शान्तानां वीतरागिणाम् ।
मुमुक्षूणाम् अपेक्ष्य-ओ ज्यम्, आत्म-बोध-ओ विधीयते ॥१॥

Chapter 2 Knowledge of the SELF

बोध-ओ ज्य साधनेभ्य-ओ हि, साक्षान् मोक्ष-ऐ-क साधनम् ।
पाकस्य वह्निवज्-ज्ञानं, विना मोक्ष-ओ न सिध्यति ॥२॥

अविरोधितया कर्म, न-आ-विद्यां विनिवर्तयेत् ।
विद्या-ऽविद्यां निहन्त-य एव, तेजस्-तिमिर-सङ्घ-वत् ॥३॥

अव-च्छिन्न(ह) इव-आ-ज्ञानात्, तन्-नाशे सति केवलः ।
स्वयं प्रकाशते ह-य आत्मा, मेघा-पार्ये-ऽशुमान् इव ॥४॥

अज्ञान कलुषं जीवं, ज्ञान-आ-भ्यासाद् विनिर्मलम् ।
कृत्वा ज्ञानं स्वयं नश्येज्-, जलं कतक-रेणु-वत् ॥५॥

Chapter 3 The Nature of the WORLD

संसारः स्वप्न-तुल्य-ओ हि, रग-द्वेष-आ-ऽदि संकुलः ।
स्वकाले सत्य-वद् भाति, प्रबोधे सत्-य असद् भवेत् ॥६॥

तावत् सत्यं जगद् भाति, शुक्तिका-रजतं यथा ।
यावन्-न ज्ञायते ब्रह्म, सर्व-आ-धिष्ठानम् अद्वयम् ॥७॥

उपादाने अखिल्-ऽ-आधारे, जगन्ति परमेश्वरे ।
सर्ग-स्थिति-लयान् यान्ति, बुद्बुदान्-ई-व वारिणि ॥८॥

सच्-चिद्-आत्मन्-य अनुस्यूते, नित्ये विष्णौ प्रकल्पिताः ।
व्यक्त-ओ विविधाः सर्वा, हाटके कटक्-आ-ऽदि-वत् ॥९॥

Chapter 4 The UPADHIS or Conditioners

यथ-ऽ-आ-ऽकाश-ओ हृषीकेश-ओ, नान-ऽ-ओ-पाधि गत्-ओ विभुः ।
तद् भेदाद् भिन्नवद् भाति, तन्-नाशे केवल-ओ भवेत् ॥१०॥

नान-ऽ-ओ-पाधि-वशाद् एव, जाति-नाम्-आश्रम्-आदयः ।
आत्मन्-य आरोपिता-स् तोये, रस-वर्ण-आ-ऽदि भेदवत् ॥११॥

पञ्ची-कृत महा-भूत, सम्भवं कर्म सञ्चितम् । शरीरं सुख-दुःखानां, भोग्- <u>आ</u> -ऽयतनम् उच्यते	॥१२॥
पञ्च प्राण मन्- <u>ओ</u> बुद्धिः, दश्- <u>ए</u> -न्द्रिय- <u>स्</u> अमन्वितम् । अपञ्ची-कृत भूत्- <u>ओ</u> -त्थं, सूक्ष्म- <u>आ</u> -ङ्गं भोग-साधनम्	॥१३॥
अनाद्- <u>य</u> अविद्या-ऽनिर्वाच्या, कारण- <u>ओ</u> -पाधिर्-उच्यते । उपाधि-त्रितयाद् अन्यम्, आत्मानम् अवधारयेत्	॥१४॥

Chapter 5 An Error of MISAPPREHENSION

पञ्च कोश- <u>आ</u> -ऽदि योगेन, तत् तन्मयः इव स्थितः । शुद्धात्मा नील वस्त्र- <u>आ</u> -ऽदि, योगेन स्फटिक्- <u>ओ</u> यथा	॥१५॥
वपु- <u>स्</u> तुष्- <u>आ</u> -ऽदिभिर्ह कोशै- <u>र्</u> , युक्तं युक्त्य- <u>आ</u> -वधाततः । आत्मानम् अन्तरं शुद्धं, विविच्यात् तण्डुलं यथा	॥१६॥
सदा सर्व-गत्- <u>ओ</u> ऽप्- <u>य</u> आत्मा, न सर्वत्र- <u>आ</u> -वभासते । बुद्धौ एव- <u>आ</u> -वभासते, स्वच्छेषु प्रति-बिम्बवत्	॥१७॥
देह- <u>ए</u> -न्द्रिय मन्- <u>ओ</u> बुद्धिः, प्रकृतिभ्य- <u>ओ</u> विलक्षणम् । तद्-वृत्ति साक्षिणं विद्याद्, आत्मानं राजवत् सदा	॥१८॥
व्यापृतेष्-व् इन्द्रियेष्-व् आत्मा, व्यापार्-ई-व्- <u>आ</u> -विवेकिनाम् । दृश्यते ऽश्रेषु धावत्सु, धावन् इव यथा शशी	॥१९॥
आत्म चैतन्यम् आश्रित्य, देह- <u>ए</u> -न्द्रिय मन्- <u>ओ</u> धियः । स्व-क्रीयार्थेषु वर्तन्ते, सूर्या-लोकं यथा जनाः	॥२०॥
देह- <u>ए</u> -न्द्रिय गुणान् कर्माणि, अमले सच्-चिद् आत्मनि । अध्यस्यन्त- <u>य</u> अविवेकेन, गगने नीलत्- <u>आ</u> -दिवत्	॥२१॥
अज्ञानान्-मानस्- <u>ओ</u> -पाथेः, कर्तृत्- <u>आ</u> -ऽदिनि च- <u>आ</u> -आत्मनि । कल्यन्ते अम्बुगते चन्द्रे, चलन्- <u>आ</u> -ऽदि यथ- <u>आ</u> -म्भसः	॥२२॥
राग्- <u>ए</u> -च्छा-सुख-दुःख- <u>आ</u> -दि, बुद्धौ सत्यां प्रवर्तते । सुषुप्तौ न- <u>आ</u> -स्ति तन्-नाशे, तस्माद् बुद्धे- <u>स्</u> तु न- <u>आ</u> -ऽत्मनः	॥२३॥
प्रकाश- <u>ओ</u> ऽर्कस्य तोयस्य, शैत्यम्-अग्नेर् यथ- <u>ओ</u> -ष्णता । स्वभावः सच्-चिदानन्द, नित्य-निर्मलत्- <u>आ</u> -ऽत्मनः	॥२४॥

Chapter 6 The Birth of the EGO

आत्मनः सच्-चिद्-अंश- <u>श्</u> च, बुद्धे- <u>र्</u> वृत्ति- <u>र्</u> इति द्वयम् । संयोज्य च- <u>आ</u> -विवेकेन, जानाम्-ई-ति प्रवर्तते	॥२५॥
आत्मन्- <u>ओ</u> विक्रिया न- <u>आ</u> -स्ति, बुद्धे- <u>र्</u> बोध- <u>ओ</u> न जात्- <u>व</u> इति । जीवः सर्वमलं ज्ञात्वा, ज्ञाता द्रष्ट- <u>ए</u> -ति मुह्यति	॥२६॥

रज्जु-सर्प-वद् आत्मानं, जीवं ज्ञात्वा भयं वहेत् । न- <u>आ</u> -हं जीवः परात्म्- <u>ए</u> -ति, ज्ञात- <u>श्च</u> चेन्-निर्भय- <u>ओ</u> भवेत्	॥२७॥
आत्मा-ऽवभासयत्- <u>य</u> एक- <u>ओ</u> बुद्ध- <u>य</u> , आदीन्- <u>ई</u> -न्द्रियाण- <u>य</u> अपि हि । दीप्- <u>ओ</u> घट- <u>ऽ</u> -आदि-वत् स्वात्मा, जदै- <u>स्</u> तै- <u>र्</u> न- <u>आ</u> -वभास्यते	॥२८॥
स्वबोधे न- <u>आ</u> -न्य बोध- <u>ए</u> -च्छा, बोध-रूप-तया-ऽऽत्मनः । न दीपस्य- <u>आ</u> -न्य दीप्- <u>ए</u> -च्छा, यथा स्वात्म प्रकाशने	॥२९॥
निषिध्य निखिल्- <u>ओ</u> -पाधीन्, न- <u>ए</u> -ति न- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>ई</u> -ति वाक्यतः । विद्याद्-ऐक्यं महा-वाक्यै- <u>र्</u> , जीवात्म परम्- <u>ऽ</u> -आत्मनोः	॥३०॥
आविद्यकं शरीर्-आदि, दृश्यं बुद्-बुद्-वत् क्षरम् । एतद् विलक्षणं विद्याद्, अहं ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -ति निर्मलम्	॥३१॥
देह- <u>आ</u> -न्यत्वान्-न मे जन्म-, जरा-कार्श्य-लय- <u>ऽ</u> -आदयः । शब्द- <u>ऽ</u> -आदि विषयैः सङ्ग- <u>ओ</u> , निर्-इन्द्रिय-तया न च	॥३२॥
अमनस्त्वान्-न मे दुःख, राग-द्वेष-भय- <u>ऽ</u> -आदयः । अप्राण- <u>ओ</u> ह- <u>य</u> अमनाः शुभ्र- <u>(ः)</u> , इत्- <u>य</u> आदि श्रुति-शासनात्	॥३३॥
निर्गुण- <u>ओ</u> , निष्क्रिय- <u>ओ</u> , नित्य- <u>ओ</u> , निर्विकल्प- <u>ओ</u> , निरञ्जनः । निर्विकार- <u>ओ</u> , निराकार- <u>ओ</u> , नित्य-मुक्त- <u>ओ</u> ऽस्मि निर्मलः	॥३४॥
अहम् आकाश-वत् सर्वं, बहि- <u>र्</u> अन्त- <u>र्</u> गत्- <u>ओ</u> ऽच्युतः । सदा सर्वसमः शुद्ध- <u>ओ</u> , निःसङ्ग- <u>ओ</u> निर्मल- <u>ओ</u> ऽचलः	॥३५॥
नित्य शुद्ध विमुक्त- <u>ऐ</u> -कम्, अखन्द- <u>आ</u> -ऽनन्दम् अद्वयम् । सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं यत्, परं ब्रह्म- <u>आ</u> -हम् एव तत्	॥३६॥
एवं निरन्तर- <u>आ</u> -भ्यस्ता, ब्रह्म- <u>ऐ</u> -व- <u>आ</u> -स्म- <u>ई</u> -ति वासना । हरत्- <u>य</u> अविद्या विक्षेपान्, रोगान् इव रसायनम्	॥३७॥

Chapter 7 Towards REALISATION

विविक्त-देशे आसीन्- <u>ओ</u> , विराग्- <u>ओ</u> विजित्- <u>ए</u> -न्द्रियः । भावयेद् एकम् आत्मानं, तम् अनन्तम् अनन्यधीः	॥३८॥
आत्मन्- <u>य</u> एव- <u>आ</u> -खिलं दृश्यं, प्रविलाप्य धिया सुधीः । भावयेद् एकम् आत्मानं, निर्मल- <u>आ</u> -ऽकाश-वत् सदा	॥३९॥
रूप-वर्ण- <u>आ</u> -ऽदिकं सर्वं, विहाय परमार्थ-वित् । परि-पूर्ण चिदानन्द, स्वरूपेण- <u>आ</u> -वतिष्ठते	॥४०॥
ज्ञातृ-ज्ञान-ज्ञेय भेदः, परे न- <u>आ</u> -ऽत्मनि विद्यते । चिदानन्द- <u>ऐ</u> -क रूपत्वाद्, दीप्यते स्वयम् एव हि	॥४१॥
एवम् आत्म- <u>ऽ</u> - <u>आ</u> -रणौ ध्यानम्, अथने सततं कृते ।	

उदित्- <u>आ</u> -वगति-ज्वाला, सर्व- <u>आ</u> -ज्ञानेन्-धनं दहेत्	॥४२॥
अरुनेण्- <u>ए</u> -व बोधेन, पूर्वसन्-तमसे हते । तत् आविर्-भवेत् आत्मा, स्वयम् एव- <u>आं</u> -शुमान् इव	॥४३॥
आत्मा तु सततं प्राप्त- <u>ओ</u> , ऽप्- <u>य</u> अप्राप्त-वद् अविद्यया । तत् नाशे प्राप्त-वद् भाति, स्व-कण्ठ- <u>आ</u> -भरणं यथा	॥४४॥
स्थाणौ पुरुष-वद् भ्रान्त्या, कृता ब्रह्मणि जीवता । जीवस्य तात्त्विके रूपे, तस्मिन् दृष्टे निवर्तते	॥४५॥
तत्त्व स्वरूप- <u>आ</u> -नुभवाद्, उत्पन्नं ज्ञानम् अञ्जसा । अहं मम्- <u>ए</u> -ति च्- <u>आ</u> -ज्ञानं, बाधते दिग्-भ्रम्- <u>आ</u> -ऽदि-वत्	॥४६॥
सम्यग् विज्ञानवान् योगी, स्वात्मन्- <u>य</u> एव- <u>आ</u> -खिलं स्थितम् । एकं च सर्वम् आत्मानम्, ईक्षते ज्ञान-चक्षुषा	॥४७॥
आत्म- <u>ऐ</u> -व्- <u>ए</u> -दं जगत् सर्वम्, आत्मन्- <u>ओ</u> ऽन्यन्-न किञ्चन । मृद्- <u>ओ</u> यद्वद् घट- <u>आ</u> -ऽदीनि, स्वात्मानं सर्वम् ईक्षते	॥४८॥
जीवन्मुक्त- <u>स्</u> तु तत् विद्वान्, पूर्व- <u>ओ</u> -पाधि गुणां- <u>स्</u> -त्यजेत् । स(:) सच्-चिद्-आदि-धर्मत्वं, भेजे भ्रमर-कीट-वत्	॥४९॥
तीर्त्वा मोह- <u>आ</u> -र्णवं हत्वा, राग-द्वेष- <u>आ</u> -ऽदि राक्षसान् । योगी शान्ति-समायुक्त(:), आत्म राम- <u>ओ</u> विराजते	॥५०॥
बाह्य- <u>आ</u> -नित्य सुखा-सक्तिं, हित्- <u>आ</u> -ऽत्म सुख-निर्वृतः । घट-स्थ-दीप-वच्-छश्वद्, अन्तर्-एव प्रकाशते	॥५१॥
उपाधि-स्थ- <u>ओ</u> ऽपि तद्-धर्मै- <u>र</u> , अलिप्त- <u>ओ</u> व्योम-वन्-मुनिः । सर्वविन्-मूढ-वत् तिष्ठेद्, असक्त- <u>ओ</u> वायु-वच्-चरेत्	॥५२॥
उपाधि विलयाद् विष्णौ, निर्-विशेषं विशेष-मुनिः । जले जलं वियद् व्योम्नि, तेज- <u>स्</u> तेजसि वा यथा	॥५३॥

Chapter 8 Revelling in FREEDOM

यल्-लाभान्-न्- <u>आ</u> -पर- <u>ओ</u> लाभ- <u>ओ</u> , यत् सुखान्-न्- <u>आ</u> -परं सुखम् । यज्-ज्ञानान्-न्- <u>आ</u> -परं ज्ञानं, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥५४॥
यद् दृष्ट्वा न्- <u>आ</u> -परं दृश्यं, यद् भूत्वा न पुन- <u>र</u> भवः । यज्-ज्ञात्वा न्- <u>आ</u> -परं ज्ञेयं, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥५५॥
तिर्यग्-ऊर्ध्वम् अधः पूर्णं, सच्-चिद्-आनन्दम् अद्वयम् । अनन्तं नित्यम् एकं यत्, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥५६॥
अतद्-व्यावृत्ति रूपेण, वेदान्तै- <u>र</u> लक्ष्यते ऽव्ययम् । अखण्ड- <u>आ</u> -ऽनन्दम् एकं यत्, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥५७॥

अखण्ड- <u>आ</u> -ऽनन्द रूपस्य, तस्य- <u>आ</u> -ऽनन्द लव्-आश्रिताः । ब्रह्माद्या- <u>स्</u> तारतम्येन, भवन्त- <u>य</u> आनन्दिन्- <u>ओ</u> ऽखिलाः	॥५८॥
तद्युक्तम् अखिलं वस्तु, व्यवहार- <u>श्</u> चिद्-अन्वितः । तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्म, क्षीरे सर्पि- <u>र्</u> इव- <u>आ</u> -खिले	॥५९॥
अनण्- <u>वू</u> अस्थूलम् अहस्वम्, अदीर्घम् अजम् अव्ययम् । अ-रूप-गुण-वर्ण- <u>आ</u> -ऽख्यं, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥६०॥
यद् भासा भास्यते ऽर्कादि, भास्यै- <u>र्</u> यत्-तु न भास्यते । येन सर्वम् इदं भाति, तद् ब्रह्म- <u>ए</u> -त्- <u>य</u> अव-धारयेत्	॥६१॥
स्वयम् अन्तर्-बहिर्-व्याप्य, भासयन् अखिलं जगत् । ब्रह्म प्रकाशते वह्नि, प्रतप्त-आयस पिण्ड-वत्	॥६२॥
जगद् विलक्षणं ब्रह्म, ब्रह्मण्- <u>ओ</u> ऽन्यन्-न किञ्चन । ब्रह्म- <u>आ</u> -न्यद् भाति चेन्-मिथ्या, यथा मरुमरी-चिका	॥६३॥
दृश्यते श्रूयते यद्-यद्, ब्रह्मण्- <u>ओ</u> ऽन्यत् न तद् भवेत् । तत्त्व-ज्ञानाच्-च तद् ब्रह्म, सच्-चिद्-आनन्दम् अद्वयम्	॥६४॥
सर्वगं सच्-चिद्-आनन्दं, ज्ञान-चक्षु- <u>र्</u> निर्-ईक्षते । अज्ञान-चक्षु- <u>र्</u> न- <u>ए</u> -ईक्षेत, भास्वन्तं भानुम् अन्धवत्	॥६५॥
श्रवण्-आदिभि- <u>र्</u> उद्दीप्त, ज्ञान्-आ-ग्नि परि-तापितः । जीवः सर्वमलान्-मुक्तः, स्वर्ण-वद् द्योतते स्वयम्	॥६६॥
हृद्-आकाश- <u>ओ</u> -दित्- <u>ओ</u> ह- <u>य</u> आत्मा, बोध-भानु- <u>स्</u> तम्- <u>ओ</u> -पहत् । सर्व-व्यापी सर्व-धारी, भाति भासयते ऽखिलम्	॥६७॥

Chapter 9 CONCLUSION

दिग्-देश-काल्-आद्- <u>य</u> अनपेक्ष्य सर्वगं, शीत्-आदि हन्-नित्य-सुखं निरञ्जनम् । य- <u>स्</u> स्वात्म तीर्थं भजते विनिष्क्रियः, स(:) सर्ववित् सर्गत्- <u>ओ</u> ऽमृत्- <u>ओ</u> भवेत्	॥६८॥
--	------



ATMA BODHA
“Knowledge of the Self”
by Sri Adi Shankaracharya

Split-Sandhee English Transliterations

Chapter 1 INVOCATION

tapōbhiḥ kṣīṇa-pāpānām, śāntānām vītarāgiṇām |
mumukṣūṇām apēkṣy-ō : 'yam, ātma-bōdh-ō vidhīyatē ||1||

Chapter 2 Knowledge of the SELF

bōdh-ō : 'nya sādhanēbhy-ō hi, sākṣān mōkṣ-ō-ka sādhanam |
pākasya vahnivaj-jñānam, vinā mōkṣ-ō na sidhyati ||2||

avirōdhitayā karma, n-ā-vidyām vinivartayēt |
vidyā-: 'vidyām nihant-ya ēva, tējas-timira-saṅgha-vat ||3||

ava-cchinna(h) iv-ā-jñānāt, tan-nāsē sati kēvalaḥ |
svayam prakāśatē h-y ātmā, mēghā-pāyēṁ: 'śumān iva ||4||

ajñāna kaluṣam jīvaṁ, jñān-ā-bhyāsād vinirmalam |
kṛtvā jñānam svayam naśyēj-, jalam kataka-rēṇu-vat ||5||

Chapter 3 The Nature of the WORLD

saṁsāraḥ svapna-tuly-ō hi, raga-dvēṣ-ā-: 'di saṁkulaḥ |
svakālē satya-vad bhāti, prabōdhē sat-ya asad bhavēt ||6||

tāvat satyam jagad bhāti, śūktikā-rajataṁ yathā |
yāvan-na jñāyatē brahma, sarv-ā-dhiṣṭhānam advayam ||7||

upādānē akhil-: 'ādhārē, jaganti paramēśvarē |
sarga-sthiti-layān yānti, budbudān-ī-va vāriṇi ||8||

sac-cid-ātman-ya anusyūtē, nityē viṣṇau prakalpitāḥ |
vyaktay-ō vividhāḥ sarvā, hāṭakē kaṭak-ā-: 'di-vat ||9||

Chapter 4 The UPADHIS or Conditioners

yath-: 'ā-: 'kās-ō hr̥ṣīkēs-ō, nān-: 'ō-pādhi gat-ō vibhuḥ |
tad bhēdād bhinnavad bhāti, tan-nāsē kēval-ō bhavēt ||10||

nān-: 'ō-pādhi-vaśād ēva, jāti-nām-āśram-ādayaḥ |
ātman-y ārōpitā-s tōyē, rasa-varṇ-ā-: 'di bhēdavat ||11||

pañcī-kṛta mahā-bhūta, sambhavaṁ karma sañcitam |

śarīraṁ sukha-duḥkhānāṁ, bhōg-ā-'yatanam ucyatē ||12||

pañca prāṇa man-ō buddhi(ḥ), daś-ē-ndriya-s amanvitam |
apañcī-kṛta bhūt-ō-tthaṁ, sūkṣm-ā-ṅgaṁ bhōga-sādhanaṁ ||13||

anād-ya avidyā-'nirvācyā, kāraṇ-ō-pādhir-ucyatē |
upādhi-tritayād anyam, ātmānam avadhārayēt ||14||

Chapter 5 An Error of MISAPPREHENSION

pañca kōś-ā-'di yōgēna, tat tanmaya(ḥ) iva sthitaḥ |
śuddhātmā nīla vastr-ā-'di, yōgēna sphaṭik-ō yathā ||15||

vapu-s tuṣ-ā-'dibhiḥ kōśai-ra, yuktaṁ yukty:'-ā-vadhātataḥ |
ātmānam antaraṁ śuddhaṁ, vivicyāt taṇḍulaṁ yathā ||16||

sadā sarva-gat-ō:'p-ya ātmā, na sarvat-ā-vabhāsatē |
buddhau ēv-ā-vabhāśēta, svacchēṣu prati-bimbavat ||17||

dēh-ē-ndriya man-ō buddhi(ḥ), prakṛtibhy-ō vilakṣaṇam |
tad-vṛtti sākṣiṇaṁ vidyād, ātmānaṁ rājavat sadā ||18||

vyāpṛtēṣ-v indriyēṣ-v ātmā, vyāpār-ī-v-ā-vivēkinām |
dṛśyatē :'bhrēṣu dhāvatsu, dhāvan iva yathā śaśī ||19||

ātma caitanyam āśritya, dēh-ē-ndriya man-ō dhiyaḥ |
sva-kṛiyārthēṣu vartantē, sūryā-lōkaṁ yathā janāḥ ||20||

dēh-ē-ndriya guṇān karmāṇi, amalē sac-cid ātmani |
adhyasyant-ya avivēkēna, gaganē nīlat-ā-divat ||21||

ajñānān-mānas-ō-pādhēḥ, kartṛtv-ā-'dini c:'-ātmani |
kalpyantē ambugatē candrē, calan-ā-'di yath:'-ā-mbhasaḥ ||22||

rāg-ē-cchā-sukha-duḥkh:'-ādi, buddhau satyāṁ pravartatē |
suṣuptau n-ā-sti tan-nāśē, tasmād buddhē-s tu n-ā-'tmanaḥ ||23||

prakāś-ō:'rkasya tōyasya, śaityam-agnēr yath-ō-ṣṇatā |
svabhāvaḥ sac-cidānanda, nitya-nirmalat-ā-'tmanaḥ ||24||

Chapter 6 The Birth of the Ego

ātmanaḥ sac-cid-amśa-ś ca, buddhē-ra vṛtti-ra iti dvayam |
saṁyōjya c-ā-vivēkēna, jānām-ī-ti pravartatē ||25||

ātman-ō vikriyā n-ā-sti, buddhē-r bōdh-ō na jāt-v iti |
jīvaḥ sarvamalaṁ jñātvā, jñātā draṣṭ:'-ē-ti muhyati ||26||

rajju-sarpa-vad ātmānaṁ, jīvaṁ jñātvā bhayaṁ vahēt |

n-ā-ham jīvaḥ parātm-ē-ti, jñāta-śa cēn-nirbhay-ō bhavēt ||27||

ātmā-:'vabhāsayat-y ēk-ō buddh-ya, ādīn-ī-ndriyāṇ-y api hi |
dīp-ō ghaṭ-:'ādi-vat svātmā, jadai-s tai-ra n-ā-vabhāsyatē ||28||

svabōdhē n-ā-nya bōdh-ē-cchā, bōdha-rūpa-tayā-:'tmanah |
na dīpasy-ā-nya dīp-ē-cchā, yathā svātmā prakāśanē ||29||

niṣidhya nikhil-ā-pādhīn, n-ē-ti n-ē-t-ī-ti vākyataḥ |
vidyād-aikyaṁ mahā-vākyai-r, jīvātma param-:'ātmanōḥ ||30||

āvidyakaṁ śarīr-ādi, dṛśyaṁ bud-buda-vat kṣaram |
ētaḥ vilakṣaṇaṁ vidyād, ahaṁ brahm-ē-ti nirmalam ||31||

dēh-ā-nyatvān-na mē janma-, jarā-kārśya-lay-:'ādayaḥ |
śabd-:'ādi viṣayaiḥ saṅg-ō, nir-indriya-tayā na ca ||32||

amanastvān-na mē duḥkha, rāga-dvēṣa-bhay-:'ādayaḥ |
aprāṇ-ō h-y amanāḥ śubhra(ḥ), it-y ādi śruti-śāsanāt ||33||

nirguṇ-ō, niṣkriy-ō, nity-ō, nirvikalp-ō, niranjanaḥ |
nirvikār-ō, nirākār-ō, nitya-mukt-ō :smi nirmalaḥ ||34||

aham ākāśa-vat sarvaṁ, bahi-ra anta-r gat-ō :cyutaḥ |
sadā sarvasamaḥ śuddh-ō, niḥsaṅg-ō nirmal-ō :calaḥ ||35||

nitya śuddha vimukt-ai-kam, akhand-ā-:'nandam advayam |
satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yat, paraṁ brahm-ā-ham ēva tat ||36||

ēvaṁ nirantar-ā-bhyastā, brahm-ē-v-ā-sm-ī-ti vāsanā |
harat-y avidyā vikṣēpān, rōgān iva rasāyanam ||37||

Chapter 7 Towards REALISATION

vivikta-dēśē āsīn-ō, virāg-ō vijit-ē-ndriyaḥ |
bhāvayēd ēkaṁ ātmānaṁ, tam anantaṁ ananyadhīḥ ||38||

ātman-ya ēv-ā-khilaṁ dṛśyaṁ, pravilāpya dhiyā sudhīḥ |
bhāvayēd ēkaṁ ātmānaṁ, nirmal-ā-:'kāśa-vat sadā ||39||

rūpa-varṇ-ā-:'dikaṁ sarvaṁ, vihāya paramārtha-vit |
pari-pūrṇa cidānanda, svarūpēṇ-ā-vatiṣṭhatē ||40||

jñātr-jñāna-jñēya bhēdaḥ, parē n-ā-:'tmani vidyatē |
cidānand-ai-ka rūpatvād, dīpyatē svayam ēva hi ||41||

ēvaṁ ātm-:'ā-raṇau dhyānam, athanē satataṁ kṛtē |
udit-:'ā-vagati-jvālā, sarv-ā-jñānēn-dhanaṁ dahēt ||42||

arunēṇ-ē-va bōdhēna, pūrvaṁsan-tamasē hṛtē |

tat āvir-bhavēt ātmā, svayam ēv-ām-śumān iva ||43||

ātmā tu satatam prāpt-ō, :p-y aprāpta-vad avidyayā |
tat nāsē prāpta-vad bhāti, sva-kaṇṭh-ā-bharaṇam yathā ||44||

sthāṇau puruṣa-vad bhrāntyā, kṛtā brahmaṇi jīvatā |
jīvasya tāttvikē rūpē, tasmin dṛṣṭē nivartatē ||45||

tattva svarūp-ā-nubhavād, utpannam jñānam añjasā |
aham mam-ē-ti c-ā-jñānam, bādhatē dig-bhram-ā:-'di-vat ||46||

samyag vijñānavān yōgī, svātman-y ēv-ā-khilam sthitam |
ēkam ca sarvam ātmānam, īkṣatē jñāna-cakṣuṣā ||47||

ātm-ai-v-ē-dam jagat sarvam, ātman-ō :n'nyan-na kimcana |
mṛd-ō yadvad ghaṭ-ā:-'dīni, svātmānam sarvam īkṣatē ||48||

jīvanmukta-s tu tat vidvān, pūrv-ō-pādhi guṇām-s-tyajēt |
sa(h) sac-cid-ādi-dharmatvaṁ, bhējē bhramara-kīṭa-vat ||49||

tīrtvā mōh-ā-rṇavam hatvā, rāga-dvēṣ-ā:-'di rākṣasān |
yōgī śānti-samāyukta(h), ātma rām-ō virajāte ||50||

bāhy-ā-nitya sukhā-saktim, hitv-ā:-'tma sukha-nirvṛtaḥ |
ghaṭa-stha-dīpa-vac-chaśvad, antar-ēva prakāśatē ||51||

upādhi-sth-ō :pi tad-dharma-ra, alipt-ō vyōma-van-muniḥ |
sarvavin-mūḍha-vat tiṣṭhēd, asakt-ō vāyu-vac-carēt ||52||

upādhi vilayād viṣṇau, nir-viśēṣam viśēn-muniḥ |
jalē jalam viyad vyōmni, tēja-sa tējasi vā yathā ||53||

Chapter 8 Revelling in FREEDOM

yal-lābhān-n-ā-par-ō lābh-ō, yat sukhān-n-ā-param sukham |
yaj-jñānān-n-ā-param jñānam, tad brahm-ē-t-ya ava-dhārayēt ||54||

yad dṛṣṭvā n-ā-param dṛśyam, yad bhūtvā na puna-ra bhavaḥ |
yaj-jñātvā n-ā-param jñēyam, tad brahm-ē-t-y ava-dhārayēt ||55||

tiryag-ūrdhvam adhaḥ pūrṇam, sac-cid-ānandam advayam |
anantam nityam ēkam yat, tad brahm-ē-t-ya ava-dhārayēt ||56||

atad-vyāvṛtti rūpēṇa, vēdāntai-ra lakṣyatē :vyayam |
akhaṇḍ-ā:-'nandam ēkam yat, tad brahm-ē-t-y ava-dhārayēt ||57||

akhaṇḍ-ā:-'nanda rūpasya, tasy-ā:-'nanda lav-āsritāḥ |
brahmādyā-s tāratamyēna, bhavant-y ānandin-ō :khilāḥ ||58||

tadyuktam akhilam vastu, vyavahāra-ś cid-anvitaḥ |

tasmāt sarvagataṁ brahma, kṣīrē sarpi-ra iv-ā-khilē ||59||

anaṇ-y asthūlam aḥṣvam, adīrgham ajam avyayam |
a-rūpa-guṇa-varṇ-ā-'khyam, tad brahm-ē-t-y ava-dhārayēt ||60||

yad bhāsā bhāsyatē :rkādi, bhāsyai-ra yat-tu na bhāsyatē |
yēna sarvam idaṁ bhāti, tad brahm-ē-t-y ava-dhārayēt ||61||

svayam antar-bahir-vyāpya, bhāsayan akhilaṁ jagat |
brahma prakāśatē vahni, pratapt-āyasa piṇḍa-vat ||62||

jagad vilakṣaṇaṁ brahma, brahmaṇ-ō :nyan-na kiñcana |
brahm-ā-nyad bhāti cēn-mithyā, yathā marumarī-cikā ||63||

ḍṛśyatē śrūyatē yad-yad, brahmaṇ-ō :nyat na tad bhavēt |
tattva-jñānāc-ca tad brahma, sac-cid-ānandam advayam ||64||

sarvagaṁ sac-cid-ānandaṁ, jñāna-cakṣu-r nir-īkṣatē |
ajñāna-cakṣu-r n-ē-ikṣēta, bhāsvantaṁ bhānum andhavat ||65||

śravaṇ-ādibhi-ra uddīpta, jñān-ā-gni pari-tāpitaḥ |
jīvaḥ sarvamaṇ-muktaḥ, svarṇa-vad dyōtatē svayam ||66||

hṛd-ākāś-ō-dit-ō h-r ātmā, bōdha-bhānu-s tam-ō-pahṛt |
sarva-vyāpī sarva-dhārī, bhāti bhāsyatē :khilam ||67||

Chapter 9 CONCLUSION

dig-dēśa-kāl-ād-ya anapēkṣya sarvagaṁ,
śīt-ādi hṛn-nitya-sukhaṁ nirañjanam |
ya-sa svātma tīrthaṁ bhajatē viniṣkriyaḥ,
sa(h) sarvavit sargat-ō :mṛt-ō bhavēt ||68||

