

वाक्यवृत्तिः

VAKYA VRITTI

*An Exposition on
“Tat Twam Asi”*

“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”

Reflections by

SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA

TEXT

25



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>
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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>
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23	<i>Mahabharata + Geeta Dhyanam</i>	46	<i>Chinmaya Pledge</i>

A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY

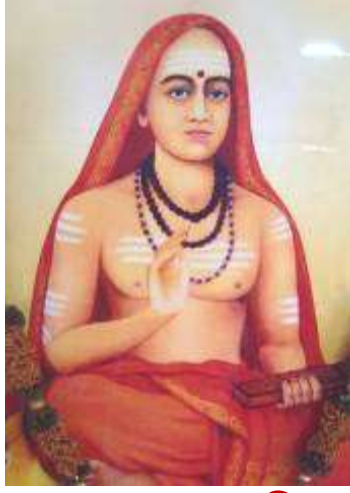
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This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal 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 Author, 24th October, 2018, Valmiki Jayanti Day

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
25



वाक्यवृत्तिः

VAKYA VRITTI

“An Exposition on Tat-Twam-Asi ”
by Sri Adi Shankaracharyaji

Reflections

by Swami Gurubhaktananda

7 Discussions: November 6th – November 20th, 2012

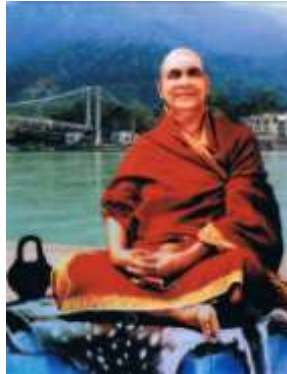
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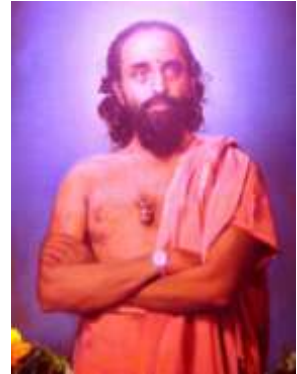
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Personal Dedication

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 Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj

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

3. To Pujya 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.

VAKYA VRITTI

“An Exposition on Tat-Twam-Asi”

VAKYA VRITTI
“An Exposition of Tat-Twam-Asi”

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DISCUSSION GROUP PROGRAMME

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE discussion is to ensure that each one of us understands the text well to be prepared for the talks Acharyaji has planned when we return to Powai.

The secondary objective is that each person in the group gets a chance to lead the discussion at some stage during the 7 sessions.

The material has been split into 13 sections, as shown in the Contents.

Presenters are given turns in Roll number order to cover all these sections.

Names of Group Members: (8 No.)

1	Kamlesh	2	Kobi
3	Jitendraji	4	Kalluriji
5	Krishnaji	6	Anandji
7	Manoj	8	Mayell

Planned Programme for Each Session:

Session	Day	Date	Discussion	Presenters
1.	Tuesday	6/11/12	#1, #2	Kamlesh, Kobi
2.	Thursday	8/11/12	#3.1, #3.2	Jitendraji, Kalluriji
3.	Saturday	10/11/12	#3.3, #3.4	Krishnaji, Anandji
4.	Tuesday	13/11/12	#4.1, #4.2	Manoj, Mayell
5.	Thursday	15/11/12	#5, #6	Kamlesh, Kobi
6.	Saturday	17/11/12	#7, #8	Jitendraji, Kalluriji
7.	Tuesday	20/11/12	#9, Sum Up	Krishnaji, All

Notes:

Each session will be split into two, one for each presenter.

The Presenters for each session should prepare themselves *in advance* to give a presentation of approximately 10 minutes, depending on the number of verses they have to present (varies for each section). This will be followed by a discussion for about 15 minutes, so that each presenter's portion will be about 30 minutes altogether, including the discussion.

On the last day (20th November) there is only one small section to cover. This gives us around 45 minutes to sum up the entire book.

- Group Co-ordinator

वाक्य वृत्तिः

VAKYA VRITTI

An Exposition of “Tat Twam Asi”

INTRODUCTION

AFTER THE BASIC text *Tattwa Bodha*, and then the more detailed *Vedanta Sara*, this text *Vakya Vritti* gives us a comprehensive understanding of the **Tat Twam Asi** Mahavakya.

This text provides additional detail on the Mahavakya and is intended for the student who is well prepared to begin Nididhyasana, the stage concerned with bringing the mind under control and focus using the *Brahmakara Vritti*. It is “for students who are ready to take off into contemplative flights.”

The Four Mahavakyas – a Summary:

i) **Prajnanam Brahma** – “*Consciousness is Brahman*”. This is the **Lakshana Vakya** – it defines the Ultimate Reality behind the ever-changing phenomenal world of things and beings. Its source is the *Aitreya Upanishad*, from the **RIG VEDA**.

ii) **Tat Twam Asi** – “*Thou art That*”. This is the **Upadesha Vakya**, which means the instruction or teaching of the Guru to his disciple. Its source is the *Chandogya Upanishad*, from the **SAMA VEDA**.

iii) **Aham Brahmasmi** – “*I am Brahman*”. This is the **Anubhava Vakya** – the student, begins earnestly to practice Nididhyasana or meditation to establish his identity with Brahman. Its source is the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, from the **YAJUR VEDA**.

iv) **Ayam Atma Brahma** – “*This Self is Brahman*”. This is the **Anusandhana Vakya**. The student in his seat of meditation realizes this truth subjectively in himself. Its source is the *Mandukya Upanishad*, from the **ATHARVA VEDA**.

This text of 53 verses is on the ‘Tat Twam Asi’ Mahavakya alone. It focuses on the hidden meaning of the two main words in the sentence, ‘That’ and ‘Thou’, and thereby paves the way to experience their identity.

The Value of Vakya Vritti:

Pujya Gurudev Chinmayanandaji expresses this succinctly in the words: “With the thoroughness of an artist, with the precision of a scientist, and with the delightful delicacy of a flower nodding to the warm breeze at springtime, Shankaracharya dissects the statement ‘Tat Twam Asi’. These verses are not merely to be intellectually digested, but meditated upon.”

On the liberated sage or Jivanmukta, Gurudev says: “He accepts everything, he rejects nothing; he reflects everything, he keeps nothing – like a mirror!”

Chapter One

(Verses 1-10, 10 no.)

CONTEXT OF “THOU ART THAT”

1.1 INVOCATION TO GOD & GURU

(Verses 01-02, 2 no.)

Verse 01: *General Invocation:*

सर्गस्थितिप्रलयहेतुमचिन्त्यशक्तिं
विश्वेश्वरं विदितविश्वमनन्तमूर्तिम् ।
निर्मुक्तबन्धनमपारसुखाम्बुराशिं
श्रीवल्लभं विमलबोधघनं नमामि

॥ १.१॥

1	<i>sarga-sthiti- pralaya hetum achintya shaktim,</i>	i) Sat : The Cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe – having inscrutable power to <u>become</u> that;
2	<i>vishweshwaram vidita vishwam ananta moortim;</i>	ii) Chit : the <u>all-knowing</u> Lord of the Universe, assuming endless forms;
3	<i>nirmukta bandhanam apaara sukha-amburaashim,</i>	iii) Anand : ever free (apparently), – a shoreless ocean of <u>happiness</u> ;
4	<i>shree vallabham, vimala-bodha-ghanam namaami.</i>	To that Beloved of Shree, (the all-pervading Vishnu), that Pure Consciousness Divine, do I bow down!

This first verse is the Mangalacharan. It is the **Vastu Nirdesh Mangalacharan** which honours the subject under discussion, namely, the Pure Consciousness.

Verse 02: *Guru Vandana:*

यस्य प्रसादादहमेव विष्णुः
मय्येव सर्वं परिकल्पितं च ।
इत्थं विजानामि सदात्मरूपं
तस्याङ्घ्रिपद्मं प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम्

॥ १.२॥

1	<i>yasya prasaadaat aham eva vishnuh,</i>	<i>I understand by his (the Guru's) Grace, that "I am the all-pervading essence (Vishnu) alone;</i>
2	<i>mayi eva sarvam pari-kliptam cha;</i>	<i>that upon myself, all this is merely a <u>superimposition</u>";</i>
3	<i>ittham vijaanaami sadaatma-roopam,</i>	<i>I have come to realize this about the world of multiplicity.</i>
4	<i>tasya angee-padman pranatah asmi nityam.</i>	<i>(Therefore), at the feet of my Guru, do I again and again <u>prostrate</u> myself!</i>

Another form of the invocation is the **Ashirvad Mangalacharan**, in which the blessings of the Guru are invoked prior to beginning the composition of the book.

1.2 THE GURU IS APPROACHED

(Verses 03-05, 3 no.)

Verse 03: *The Qualified Disciple Approaches the Master:*

तापत्रयार्कसंतप्तः कश्चिदुद्विग्नमानसः ।
शमादिसाधनैर्युक्तः सद्गुरुं परिपृच्छति ॥ १.३॥

1	<i>taapa-traya arka santaptah</i>	<i>Scorched by the blazing sun of the three miseries,</i>
2	<i>kashchid udvigna maanasah;</i>	<i>dejected with the world and restless for release,</i>
3	<i>shamaadi saadhanaih yuktah</i>	<i>having acquired qualifications like self-control,</i>
4	<i>sadgurum pari-pricchati.</i>	<i>the student enquires of a noble teacher:</i>

The scenario of a sincere student approaching his beloved and revered Gururji is presented in this and the next verse. The humility as well as the fitness of the student is evident. Such an approach is termed as **Guru Upasadana**. The disciple yearns to be freed from the scorching misery of Samsara. He is restless for release.

Verse 04: *The Disciple Makes His Request With Humility*

शिशु उवाच ।
अनायासेन येनास्मान्मुच्येयं भवबन्धनात् ।
तन्मे संक्षिप्य भगवन्केवलं कृपया वद ॥ १.४॥

	<i>shishya uvaacha:</i>	<i>The disciple asks the Guru:</i>
1	<i>anaayaasena yena asmaan</i>	<i>"The means by which I may easily get</i>
2	<i>muchya iyam bhava bandhanaat;</i>	<i>liberated from the sorrows of this bondage –</i>
3	<i>tat me sankshipya bhagavan</i>	<i>to me, briefly, O Holy Teacher, please</i>
4	<i>kevalam kripayaa vada.</i>	<i>do thou explain merely out of your Grace."</i>

Verse 05: *The Guru Responds With Eagerness*

गुरुवाच ।

साध्वीते वचनव्यक्तिः प्रतिभाति वदामि ते ।

इदं तदिति विस्पष्टं सावधानमनाः शृणु

॥ १.५॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru answers:</i>
1	<i>saadhvee te vachana vyaktih</i>	<i>"Your question is indeed valid,</i>
2	<i>pratibhaati vadaami te;</i>	<i>and is so very clearly expressed by you.</i>
3	<i>idam tad iti vispashtam</i>	<i>I shall answer it exhaustively.</i>
4	<i>saavadhaana manaah shrinuh.</i>	<i>Do listen to it with full attention!"</i>

Finally, we see the confidence and readiness with which the Guru is willing to take up the request of the disciple. This can only come from one who is himself steeped in the knowledge of the Upanishads (Vedanta), i.e. a **Shrotriya**; and one who has his whole being firmly established in the pure Consciousness that we call Brahman, i.e. a **Brahmanishtha**.

With the above preliminaries handled in this section, the stage is set for the teaching to commence in the next.

Anubandha Chatushtaya:

It is usual for the author to include the following four references somewhere at the beginning of the text. They are:

i) **Adhikari**: "qualified Student"; (v3) **Samadhi Sadhanaih Yukta** – having cultivated all the means of liberation, the student humbly approaches the Guru and asks for his Grace.

ii) **Vishaya**: "subject"; (v1) **Vimala Bodhaghanam** – the Pure Consciousness Divine; verse 6 gives the precise subject dealt with in this book, the "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya.

iii) **Prayojana**: "purpose"; (v1) **Nirmukta Bandhanam** – to free one from bondage, and bestow a shoreless ocean of happiness;

iv) **Sambandha**: "relationship of text to purpose"; (v5) **Pratibhaati Vadami Te** – I shall answer it exhaustively.



1.3 THE TEACHING BEGINS

(Verses 06-10, 5 no.)

APPROACHING THE GURU and fulfilling all the qualifications to begin his study, the disciple is now ready to receive the instructions from him.

Verse 06: *The Direct Means*

गुरुवाच ।

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्योत्थं यज्जीवपरमात्मनोः ।

तादात्म्यविषयं ज्ञानं तदिदं मुक्तिसाधनम् ॥ १.६॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru continues:</i>
1	<i>"tat twam asi" aadi vaakya ittham</i>	<i>Statements such as 'Thou art That', etc,</i>
2	<i>yat jeeva-paramaatmanah;</i>	<i>relate the individual self to the universal Self.</i>
3	<i>taadaatmya vishayam jnaayam</i>	<i>The direct knowledge of that total identity</i>
4	<i>tad idam mukti-saadhanam.</i>	<i>is the immediate means to <u>Liberation</u>.</i>

The Guru starts with the **Vastu Sangraha Vakya**, stating the intention of the Mahavakya. Clearly, by doing so he has left the disciple a bit bewildered.

Verse 07: *Disciple: Please Discuss These (Vishaya Vighraha):*

शिष्य उवाच ।

को जीवः कः परश्चात्मा तादात्म्यं वा कथं तयोः ।

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यं वा कथं तत्प्रतिपादयेत् ॥ १.७॥

	<i>shishya uvaacha:</i>	<i>The disciple asks:</i>
1	<i>kah jeevah kah?</i> <i>parah cha aatmaa</i>	<i>What is the individualized self?</i> <i>What then is the universal Self?</i>
2	<i>taadaatmyam vaa katham tayoh;</i>	<i>How can they both be identical?</i>
3	<i>"tat twam asi" aadi vaakyam vaa</i>	<i>Statements like 'That thou art' –</i>
4	<i>katham tat pratipaadayet.</i>	<i>what is the basis behind their assertion?</i>

The disciple's mind is flooded with questions about all four things mentioned by the Guru – namely, the Jiva, Ishwara, their identity, and the logic or explanation of the Mahavakya **Tat Twam Asi**.

Verse 08: *Guru: You, the Jiva, Art Brahman*

गुरुवाच ।

अत्र ब्रूमः समाधानं कोऽन्यो जीवस्त्वमेव हि ।

यस्त्वं पृच्छसि मां कोऽहं ब्रह्मैवासि न संशयः ॥ १.८॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru replies:</i>
1	<i>atra broomah samaadhaanam,</i>	<i>I shall answer you to your satisfaction.</i>
2	<i>kah anyah jeevah tvam eva hi;</i>	<i>Who can be the Jiva other than yourself?</i>
3	<i>yah tvam pricchasi maam kah aham</i>	<i>You who ask me this question 'Who am I?' –</i>
4	<i>brahma eva asi na samshayah.</i>	<i>you alone art Brahman, without a doubt.</i>

The Guru realizes what he has to deal with and, as though sizing up the disciple, he affirms once again that the Jiva is none other than Brahman alone.

Verse 09: Disciple: Even Word Meanings I Do Not Comprehend

शिष्य उवाच ।

पदार्थमेव जानामि नाद्यापि भगवन्स्फुटम् ।

अहं ब्रह्मेति वाक्यार्थं प्रतिपद्ये कथं वद ॥ १.९॥

	<i>shishya uvaacha:</i>	<i>The disciple again asks:</i>
1	<i>padaartham eva jaanaami na-</i>	<i>Not even the word meanings do I grasp</i>
2	<i>aadi-api bhagavan sphutam;</i>	<i>clearly, O revered Teacher;</i>
3	<i>'aham brahma' iti vaakyartham</i>	<i>the sentence "I am Brahman" –</i>
4	<i>pratipadye katham vada?</i>	<i>how then can I comprehend its significance?</i>

Now the disciple, perhaps shaken up by the sudden claim made that he is Brahman, says, "Me . . . me *Brahman*! How can that be? I do not even understand the word meanings of the sentence; how then can I be expected to understand the sentence itself!"

Unknowingly, the disciple is stating the structure of the discussion that is to follow.

Verse 10 Guru: Importance of Meanings Recognized

गुरुवाच ।

सत्यमाह भवानत्र विज्ञानं नैव विद्यते ।

हेतुः पदार्थबोधो हि वाक्यार्थावगतेरिह ॥ १.१०॥

	<i>guroor uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru replies:</i>
1	<i>satyam aaha bhavaan atra</i>	<i>You have said the truth of the matter,</i>
2	<i>vijnaanam na iva vidyate;</i>	<i>and surely nobody can contradict it:</i>
3	<i>hetuh padaartha bodho hi</i>	<i>The knowledge of the word meanings is the cause</i>
4	<i>vaakyartha avagatah iha.</i>	<i>of understanding the full meaning of the sentence.</i>

The Guru has succeeded in his objective – he has aroused the interest of the disciple in what he wants to explain in this text, namely the literal and implied meanings of the words and then the sentence itself. This is the territory into which the text now moves.

Chapter Two
(Verses 11-27, 17 No.)
MEANING OF “THOU”

2.1 THE MISCONCEPTION OF THE BODY

(Verses 11-14, 4 no.)

Verse 11: *Guru: Don't You Recognise Your Own Self?*

गुरुवाच ।

अन्तःकरणतद्वृत्तिसाक्षिचैतन्यविग्रहः ।

आनन्दरूपः सत्यः सन्किं नात्मानं प्रपद्यसे ॥ २.११॥

	<i>guroor uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru continues:</i>
1	<i>antahkarana tad vritti</i>	<i>The <u>inner instrument</u> and its functions</i>
2	<i>saakshi chaitanya vigraha;</i>	<i>are illumined by the witnessing Consciousness,</i>
3	<i>aananda-roopah satyah san</i>	<i>whose essence is of the form of pure Bliss –</i>
4	<i>kim na aatmaanam prapadyate?</i>	<i>why do you not recognize this, your own Self?</i>

The question asked by the Guru has a tone of urgency as well as incredulity that one cannot recognize one's own Self within him.

Verse 12: *The Real “You”*

सत्यानन्दस्वरूपं धीसाक्षिणं बोधविग्रहम् ।

चिन्तयात्मतया नित्यं त्यक्त्वा देहादिगां धियम् ॥ २.१२॥

1	<i>satya-aananda-swaroopam,</i>	<i>Eternal Knowledge-Bliss,</i>
&	<i>dhee saakshinam,</i>	<i>the Witness of the intellect,</i>
2	<i>bodha-vigraha;</i>	<i>an embodiment of pure knowledge –</i>
3	<i>chintaya aatma tayaa nityam</i>	<i>always ponder and think yourself to be this.</i>
4	<i>tyaktvaa deha-aadigaam dhiyam.</i>	<i>Give up the idea that the Self is the body etc,</i>

The Guru pinpoints where the problem lies – in the intellect, where a misconception has taken place – due to the power of ignorance. That makes the individual identify himself with his limited body and mind. The Guru teaches that the quickest way to escape from this delusion is to meditate on the opposite, i.e. the truth that we are the eternal Being or Satchidananda.

Verse 13: *The Nature of the Gross Body*

रूपादिमान्यतः पिण्डस्ततो नात्मा घटादिवत् ।
वियदादिमहाभूतविकारत्वाच्च कुम्भवत्

॥ २.१३॥

1	<i>roopa-aadi maanyatah pindah</i>	<i>The gross body has form, touch, etc, hence</i>
2	<i>tatah na aatmaa ghata-aadivat;</i>	<i>it cannot be the Self; it is like the pot, etc,</i>
3	<i>viyadaadi mahaa-bhoota</i>	<i>made of the great elements such as space, etc,</i>
4	<i>vikaaratvaat cha kumbhavat.</i>	<i>and is subject to changes just as the pot is.</i>

If that is too difficult, then we have to go to the other end of the problem and take a closer look at the body. We are asked to recognize that it is made only of the gross elements, and that like a pot, it is quite an inert object.

Verse 14: *Disciple: What is the Self in Detail?*

शिष्य उवाच ।
अनात्मा यदि पिण्डोऽयमुक्तहेतुबलान्मतः ।
करामलकवत्साक्षादात्मानं प्रतिपादय

॥ २.१४॥

	<i>shishya uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Disciple queries:</i>
1	<i>anaatmaa yadi pindah ayam</i>	<i>If the gross body is considered as “not-Self”</i>
2	<i>ukta hetu balaan matah;</i>	<i>by the strength of these arguments,</i>
3	<i>kara amalaka-vat saakshaat</i>	<i>then, as clearly as an amalaka fruit in my hand,</i>
4	<i>aatmaanam prati-paadaya.</i>	<i>do thou exhaustively explain what is the Self.</i>

The disciple’s interest is aroused. He is impressed by the Guru’s argument, and now wants to move ahead to learn more about the Self – and even experience It’s reality as a ‘fruit in his hand’. He still thinks in terms of *seeing* the Self as he sees his body!

2.2 THE SEER IS NEVER THE SEEN

(Verses 15-17, 3 no.)

Verse 15: *“I am Not the Body!”*

गुरुवाच ।
घटद्रष्टा घटाद्भिन्नः सर्वथा न घटो यथा ।
देहद्रष्टा तथा देहो नाहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.१५॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru Answers:</i>
1	<i>ghata-drishtaa ghataad-bhinnah</i>	<i>The perceiver of a pot is distinct from the pot;</i>
2	<i>sarvathaa na ghatah yathaa;</i>	<i>and just as he can never be the pot,</i>
3	<i>deha-drishtaa tathaa 'dehah</i>	<i>so also you, who perceive the body – “The body</i>
4	<i>na aham' iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>I am not!”, is how you should firmly feel about it.</i>

The guru immediately has to correct the disciple and teach him that the Self is not something he will be able to see as a fruit in his hand. Unlike a pot, the Self cannot be seen with the eyes. The seer of the body has got to be subtler than the body.

Verse 16: “I am Not the Senses, Mind or Prana!”

एवमिन्द्रियदृङ्नाहमिन्द्रियाणीति निश्चिनु ।
मनोबुद्धिस्तथा प्राणो नाहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.१६॥

1	<i>evam indriya-drishta 'na aham</i>	<i>So too, you who perceive the senses – “I am not</i>
2	<i>indriyaani,' iti nishchinu;</i>	<i>the senses,” should be your firm feeling; in the</i>
3	<i>manah-buddhih tathaa praanah</i>	<i>same way, “The mind, intellect and the Prana –</i>
4	<i>'na aham,' iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>I am not these,” is how you should firmly feel.</i>

This takes us to the “Seer-seen” relationship which we studied in *Drg Drishya Viveka*. Essentially this is a process of Negation. The seer of the gross objects is one or more of the five senses; the seer of the senses is the mind; the seer of the mind is the inner witness; and the ultimate ‘Seer’ is the Self, which can have no seer above it.

Verse 17: “I am Not Even a Combination of Them!”

संघातोऽपि तथा नाहमिति दृश्यविलक्षणम् ।
द्रष्टारमनुमानेन निपुणं सम्प्रधारय

॥ २.१७॥

1	<i>sanghaatah api tathaa 'na aham'</i>	<i>Similarly, “I am not” the combination of these.</i>
2	<i>iti drishya vilakshanam;</i>	<i>Thus know well that you are their ‘Seer’;</i>
3	<i>drishtaaram anumaanena</i>	<i>by inference, they are the ‘Seen’;</i>
4	<i>nipunam sampradhaaraya.</i>	<i>you are entirely distinct from them.</i>

In the 3 verses of this section, the Guru teaches the disciple the three levels to be negated and transcended. Firstly, the Self is shown to be beyond gross objects. Then It is shown to be beyond even the subtle body-objects such as Prana, mind and intellect. And thirdly, it is shown that even a combination of the subtle and the gross cannot be the Self.

In this way, the student’s search for the Self is taken from the outer, gross Annamaya Kosha, then past the three inner subtle Koshas – viz. Pranamaya, then Manomaya, and then Vijñanamaya. At the end of this section, only the Anandamaya Kosha remains to be peeled off, and that begins in the next section.

2.3 “I AM HE”

(Verses 18-22, 5 no.)

THE COMMON MESSAGE of all these five verses is “I am He”. By this method, the darkness of Avidya or Ignorance, namely, the Anandamaya Kosha, is also peeled off. What then remains is the Self. On arriving at this understanding, we come to the real, intended meaning of the word ‘Thou’ in the Mahavakya.

These verses are intended to be used to guide us in our meditation. They are very practical aids, and should not be considered only as theory. They indicate the route that a Sadhaka takes in his struggle to assert his true Being, the Self, in the midst of the obstacles that stand in his way.

Verse 18: *Enlivening the Body and Senses*

देहेन्द्रियादयो भावा हानादिव्यापृतिक्षमाः ।

यस्य सन्निधिमात्रेण सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.१८॥

1	<i>deha-indriya-aadayoh bhaavaa</i>	The <u>inert entities</u> like the body and the senses,
2	<i>haa-naa aadi</i> <i>vyaapritikshamaah;</i>	through acceptance and rejection (perceiving and expressing), are able to function
3	<i>yasya sannidhi-maatrena</i>	because of the presence of that One alone –
4	<i>‘soham’ iti avadhaaraya.</i>	‘I am That One’ , thus you should firmly think.

The first aid is for him to see that his personal limitations or Upadhis are really inert objects. In the presence of the Self, they get energized to perform their functions. Everything owes its sentiency to the Self. Things borrow the light of the Self to function. Inert objects are always dependent on the Self to appear sentient.

Verse 19: *Enlivening the Inner Instruments*

अनापन्नविकारः सन्नयस्कान्तवदेव यः ।

बुद्ध्यादींश्चालयेत्प्रत्यक् सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.१९॥

1	<i>anaapat nirvikaarah san</i>	That One changeless innermost Self,
2	<i>aya-skaantavad eva yah;</i>	like a magnet moves iron filings (in its presence),
3	<i>buddhi-aadeen chaalayati pratyak</i>	moves the intellect, etc, that are within –
4	<i>‘soham’ iti avadhaaraya.</i>	‘I am That One’ , thus you should firmly think.

This verse gives a more graphic picture of how this energizing actually takes place. We are asked to imagine the Self to be a magnet and all the Upadhis to be small iron filings attracted to it in its presence, and magnetised by it. The iron filings do not possess magnetism of their own, but borrow it from the magnet.

Verse 20: How the Inert Appears as Sentient

अजडात्मवदाभान्ति यत्सान्निध्याज्जडा अपि ।
देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणाः सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.२०॥

1	<i>ajadaa, aatma-vad, aabhaanti;</i>	As conscious and dynamic, as though they are the Self, they appear to be.
2	<i>yat saannidhyaat, jadaa api;</i>	This is due only to the presence of <u>That One</u> , though inert in themselves
3	<i>deha-indriya-manah-praanaah</i>	are the body, senses, mind and Prana –
4	<i>'soham' iti avadhaaraya.</i>	'I am That One', thus you should firmly think.

This verse takes us further in our understanding of the enlivened functioning. The hint is given here that when we are unaware of the Self's role in performing the functions through our Upadhis, we think we are doing them ourselves. We develop the first signs of an independent individuality called the Ego-sense.

Verse 21: Illuminating All Modifications of Mind

अगमन्मे मनोऽन्यत्र साम्प्रतं च स्थिरीकृतम् ।
एवं यो वेत्ति धीवृत्तिं सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.२१॥

1	<i>agaman me manah anyatra</i>	"My mind went elsewhere; however,
2	<i>saampratam cha sthree-kritam;</i>	it has been brought to rest now."
3	<i>evam yah veti dhee-vrittim</i>	That One who illuminates such modifications –
4	<i>'soham' iti avadhaaraya.</i>	'I am That One', thus you should firmly think.

Normally, we are not aware of what causes our mind to fluctuate between restlessness and restfulness. We think it is due to our ego sense. However, if we are alert enough we can watch our own mind. Then we discover that it is the Self that illumines the mind and its modifications, using it as its instrument. When we watch ourselves in this manner, using the intellect to study how the mind functions, we become aware of the false ego and its self-centred demands very easily. But we have to train the intellect to do this.

Verse 22: Illuminating the Intellect & Its Functions

स्वप्नजागरिते सुप्तिं भावाभावौ धियां तथा ।
यो वेत्त्यविक्रियः साक्षात्सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.२२॥

1	<i>svapna-jaagarite suptim</i>	Illuminator of dream, waking, and deep sleep;
2	<i>bhaava-abhaavau dhiyaam tathaa;</i>	of presence or absence of intellect's functions;
3	<i>yah veti avikriyah saakshaat</i>	That changeless One who is directly cognized –
4	<i>'soham' iti avadhaaraya.</i>	'I am That One', thus you should firmly think.

Here we go deeper than even the intellect. We are taught to become aware of the fluctuations even of the intellect. Who can keep watch over the intellect? A small portion of the mind is trained to work as a witness, observing all the finer workings of the intellect. This witness may be thought of as the higher aspect of the intellect itself, there being no other part of the mind that can perform this self-introspective function.

This witnessing of the mind is itself such a subtle function, that in some texts it is written with a capital as 'Witness' and treated as if it were the Self. It is very closely related to the Self, but due to the thought of "I am" it cannot be equated to the Self.

Thus, to summarise, this section takes us to the brink of identifying with what is meant by the term 'Thou'. The next section gives us the actual meaning.

2.4 "SOHAM" – NATURE OF THE REAL "ME"

(Verses 23-27, 5 no.)

WE BEGIN IN THIS section, a few powerful exercises including affirmations asserting our true identity as the Self or Pure Consciousness. The nature of Pure Consciousness is described as Sat-Chid-Ananda, i.e. pure Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Verses 23 – 25 contain an affirmation each, relating to these 3 characteristics of the Self.

Verse 23: *CHIT: "I am a Mass of Consciousness"*

घटावभासको दीपो घटादन्यो यथेष्यते ।

देहावभासको देही तथाहं बोधविग्रहः

॥ २.२३॥

1	<i>ghata avabhaasakah deepah</i>	<i>Just as a lamp that illumines a pot</i>
2	<i>ghataad anyah yathaa ishyate;</i>	<i>is always different from the illumined pot;</i>
3	<i>deha avabhaasakah dehee</i>	<i>so also, there is an illuminator of this body –</i>
4	<i>tathaa 'aham bodha vigrahaah'.</i>	<i>"I am a homogeneous mass of Consciousness".</i>

"I am a mass of Consciousness".

This is the first affirmation. The Self as Consciousness is the aspect which knows. It is the "I know" which we feel deep inside our being. It is a homogeneous mass pervading and surrounding us completely within and without, and distinct from anything gross like our body. The closest comparison to it would be the space element, which is also all-pervading and homogeneous. This, however, is only a comparison as space is an inert void, a vacuum containing no matter, gross in nature, and measured in physical dimensions of length, breadth and depth.

Verse 24: ANANDA: “Nothing is Dearer Than the Self”

पुत्रवित्तादयो भावा यस्य शेषतया प्रियाः ।

द्रष्टा सर्वप्रियतमः सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.२४॥

1	<i>putra vitta-aadayoh bhaavaa</i>	<i>Beings and things such as children and wealth</i>
2	<i>yasya sheshatayaa priyaah;</i>	<i>are dear for the sake of That One</i>
3	<i>drishta sarva-priya-tamah</i>	<i>who is the sole Seer and dearest of all –</i>
4	<i>‘soham’ iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>‘I am That One’, thus you should firmly think.</i>

“Nothing is dearer to me than the Self”.

This is the second affirmation, and refers to the Ananda aspect. The nearness and dearness of the Self gets reflected in all our relationships and possessions, and generally it is contaminated by the Ego-sense. When freed from the Ego, the Ananda is so strong that the Self becomes the sole attraction of our life. This verse directs all our energies towards the Self with single-pointed devotion and dedication.

Verse 25: SAT: “I Shall Never Cease to Exist”

परप्रेमास्पदतया मा न भूवमहं सदा ।

भूयासमिति यो द्रष्टा सोऽहमित्यवधारय

॥ २.२५॥

1	<i>para-premaa pada tayaa</i>	<i>The dearest of all, for whom there is the anxiety,</i>
2	<i>‘maa na bhoovam aham, sadaa</i>	<i>‘May I never cease to be; may I always</i>
3	<i>bhooyaasam,’ iti yah drishta</i>	<i>be’, That supreme Seer –</i>
4	<i>‘soham’ iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>‘I am That One’, thus you should firmly think.</i>

“I shall never cease to exist”.

This is the third affirmation, and is an offshoot of the third aspect of the Self, namely, Existence. The Self is indestructible as It is unchanging. This unchangeability is our essential nature, and so everyone feels life very dear to them. No one likes to die. Again, due to contamination of this feeling in the presence of the Ego, this immortality is sought in the wrong region – in the body and mind which the Ego identifies with. True immortality is attained only when we realize it in our Self, not in the body.

Verse 26: “I Am, I Am”

यः साक्षिलक्षणो बोधस्त्वंपदार्थः स उच्यते ।

साक्षित्वमपि बोद्धृत्वमविकारितयात्मनः

॥ २.२६॥

1	<i>yah saakshi-lakshanah bodhah</i>	<i>The Self, which appears as the Witness,</i>
2	<i>‘tvam’-padaarthah sah uchyate;</i>	<i>is that which is meant by the word ‘Thou’.</i>
3	<i>saakshi-tvam api boddha-tvam</i>	<i>Even the witnessing is but the illumining power,</i>
4	<i>avikaaritayaa aatmanah.</i>	<i>free from all changes, of the Self.</i>

Conclusion: The indicative meaning of ‘*Thou*’ is concluded in this and the next verse. This verse indicates It directly from the standpoint of the Self, from what It is; and the next verse indicates It from the standpoint of the Upadhis, from the not-Self, by what It is not.

Saakshi or Witness-ship is the name given to the Self when we speak of It in association with the Upadhis of body and mind. It is the closest in practical terms that most of us come to experiencing the nature of the Self, short of actually realizing It, which is rather rare. The mental effort is to assert “*I am, I am*”.

Verse 27: “Not This, Not This”

देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणाहङ्कृतिभ्यो विलक्षणः ।
प्रोज्झिताशेषशब्दभावविकारस्त्वंपदाभिधः ॥ २.२७॥

1	<i>deha-indriya-manah-praana-</i>	<i>From body, senses, mind, Prana</i>
2	<i>ahamkritibhyah vilakshanah;</i>	<i>and from the Ego sense – totally distinct;</i>
3	<i>projjhita ashesha shad-bhaava</i>	<i>absolutely free from the six modifications</i> <i>(which material things must necessarily undergo);</i>
4	<i>vikaarah ‘tvam’-pada aabhidhah.</i>	<i>This, the Self, is the indicative meaning of the</i> <i>term ‘Thou’.</i>

From the opposite end, i.e. from the end of Ignorance, we have to first bring down the barriers of the Upadhis. We eliminate what the Self is not in order to reach the Self as it is. Here the mental effort is to assert “*I am not this, I am not this*” (Neti-Neti).

What remains after this Sadhana is the Pure Self, which is the implied meaning of “*Thou*” in the sentence “That *Thou* Art” (**Tat *Twam* Asi**).



Chapter Three
(Verses 28-36, 9 No.)
MEANING OF “THAT”

WE NOW MOVE ON to the literal and implied meaning of the word **TAT** in “**Tat Twam Asi**” – “**THAT**” in “*That Thou Art*”. There are two stages in obtaining the implied meaning. These are discussed under two sections:

3.1 ASSESSING THE “LITERAL” MEANINGS

(Verses 28-30, 3 no.)

In this section, we learn of two ways of dealing with the literal meanings of ‘That’, namely, negation and assertion. Applying them, we arrive at the implied meaning of ‘That’.

Verse 28: *Introduction to Word Meaning of ‘That’*

गुरुवाच ।
 त्वमर्थमेवं निश्चित्य तदर्थं चिन्तयेत्पुनः ।
 अतद्व्यावृत्तिरूपेण साक्षाद्विधिमुखेन च ॥ ३.२८॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru continues:</i>
1	<i>‘tvam’ artham evam nishchitya</i>	<i>Having thus ascertained the meaning of ‘Thou’,</i>
2	<i>‘tat’artham chintayet punah;</i>	<i>one should reflect upon what is meant by ‘That’;</i>
3	<i>atad vyaavritti-roopena</i>	<i>– employing both the method of negation,</i>
4	<i>saakshaat viddhi mukhena cha.</i>	<i>and also the method of scriptural assertion.</i>

Firstly, let us see what the literal or word meaning of ‘That’ is. Just as in the case of the individual we took ‘This’ to mean the individual self or Jiva, in full association with the Vyashti Upadhis of the body and mind (the microcosm), so also in the case of ‘**That**’ we have to take it to mean the universal self or Ishwara, in full association with its own vast Upadhis, namely the entire gross and subtle body Samashti Prapancha (the macrocosm).

As we first associated the Jiva with smallness and limited knowledge, so also we associate Ishwara with vastness and unlimited knowledge, i.e. omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. When compared at this word meaning level, the two are in direct contrast to each other. One is left wondering how there can ever be an identity between them!

The identity is seen if we negate the contradiction and assert the non-contradictions.

Verse 29: What Has to be Negated

निरस्ताशेषसंसारदोषोऽस्थुलादिलक्षणः ।

अदृश्यत्वादिगुणकः पराकृततमोमलः

॥ ३.२९॥

		<i>This is what needs to be negated from the literal 'That':</i>
1	<i>nirasta ashesha samsara doshah;</i>	<i>i) which is free from all impurities of Samsara or worldliness;</i>
2	<i>asthoola-aadi lakshana;</i>	<i>ii) which is defined as 'neither gross nor subtle';</i>
3	<i>adrishyatva-aadi gunakah</i>	<i>iii) which has qualities such as 'imperceptibility', etc;</i>
4	<i>para-akrita tamah malah.</i>	<i>iv) which is beyond the <u>taint</u> of action and darkness.</i>

The Method of Negation

On closer examination, we use the method of negation indicated in this verse to remove the contradictory parts of the literal meaning. The Upadhis (the term *Prapancha* is preferred when dealing with the macrocosm) with which Ishwara is associated, namely, His glory, greatness and vastness which we behold in this magnificent creation, both gross and subtle. By freeing 'That' from these grand associations bestowed by the grand Prapancha, we are left with just the Pure Consciousness, exactly as we did in the case of the Jiva. Then alone the two are seen to be identical. This is the method of Negation of the Prapancha.

Verse 30: What Has to be Asserted

निरस्तातिशयानन्दः सत्यप्रज्ञानविग्रहः ।

सत्तास्वलक्षणः पूर्ण परमात्मेति गीयते

॥ ३.३०॥

		<i>This is what needs to be asserted in 'That':</i>
1	<i>nirasta atishaya aanandah</i>	<i>i) it has no greater <u>Bliss</u> than Itself;</i>
2	<i>satya prajnaana vigraha;</i>	<i>ii) it is a pure embodiment of eternal <u>Consciousness</u>;</i>
3	<i>sattaa vilakshanah poornah</i>	<i>iii) it has <u>Existence</u> as its specific definition –</i>
4	<i>param-aatma iti geeyate.</i>	<i>such an Absolute Being is what is <u>retained</u> (in 'That').</i>

The Method of Assertion

The other method is of asserting the true nature of the Self with respect to the Samashti Prapancha, i.e. the totality of the universe. Again, as we saw in verses 23-25, the method is to assert the three qualities in Satchidananda, i.e. Sat, Chit and Ananda. These are the inherent characteristics of 'That', the Self, when separated from everything else superimposed on It.

Pujya Gurudev gives a very good analogy to show how Existence becomes a specific definition for the Self. The existence of an object never dies. For example, a tree is chopped down; the tree disappears but the trunk is still there. The trunk is 'destroyed' when planks are created from it. The planks are 'destroyed' but furniture is appears from them. Thus the 'existence' of the tree remains, although it takes different forms.

When we see the three underlying qualities named Satchidananda, then we have come to the implied meaning of 'That' at the Samashti level, by the method of assertion.

3.2 EVALUATING THE “IMPLIED” MEANING

(Verses 31-36, 6 no.)

THIS SECTION COVERS the second stage of obtaining the implied meaning of ‘That’. Six meditational exercises are given which point to the Presence (Immanence) of the Self in the outer world of names and forms. All six verses are summed up in the table below, making it unnecessary to have comments for each verse:

Verse No.	No.	SAMSKRIT TERMS	ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS
31	1	<i>Sarvajnatvam;</i>	<i>Omniscient;</i>
	2	<i>Sampoorna Shaktita;</i>	<i>Omnipotent;</i>
	3	<i>Pareshatvam;</i>	<i>Supreme Lord;</i>
32	4	<i>Yat Jnanaat Sarva Vijnaanam;</i>	<i>Knowing which all is known;</i>
	5	<i>Aneka Drishtaantah;</i>	<i>Indicated by Many Similes;</i>
33	6	<i>Yat Ananyam Pratijnyaya;</i>	<i>Known to be Without Limitation;</i>
	7	<i>Kaaryatwam Prapanchasya;</i>	<i>Plurality is Its Effect;</i>
34	8	<i>Yat-Vijijnaasya</i>	<i>The sole object of Contemplation;</i>
35	9	<i>Jeeva-Atman Pravesha;</i>	<i>Present in all Living Beings;</i>
	10	<i>Niyantritvam;</i>	<i>Controller of all Living Beings;</i>
36	11	<i>Karmanaam Phala-Daatritvam;</i>	<i>Dispenser of Fruits of Karmas;</i>
	12	<i>Jeevaanaam Hetu-Kartritvam;</i>	<i>The Agent/Prompter of Karmas;</i>

When we next look out of the window of our eyes at the world sprawled out in front of us, we will be looking to spot these qualities out there. Perhaps, now that we have become aware of these super-human Lordly characteristics, with a little conscious effort we can try seeing them. Or, it may be easier when we sit still in contemplation to ponder over these descriptions of the magnificent Lord hidden in Nature.

In every sitting, the Lord’s glory is sure to capture our imagination. He is the stunning Beauty in all of Nature, whether it is in the garden outside the window or the mountain peaks far away on the horizon. Contemplating His immanence in the manifested world is a must for a Vedantin.

If we ever thought Vedanta was ‘dry’, such contemplation will make us re-consider our opinion – and in the process redefine the boundaries of God’s Home. We are sure to stand aghast at His incredible Beauty and Lordship in Nature.

We are given plenty of food for meditation. How very thoughtful and caring of Sri Adi Shankaracharya to direct our attention in this manner!

The heightened experience of this grand world of God is something we as Vedantins will certainly look forward to. To the extent we apply ourselves to this pleasant task, we shall behold with breathlessness the deeper and deeper glories of the Lord . . . and with every such experience, the splendour of the implied meaning of “THAT” will stretch out wider and more colourfully on the canvas before our eyes!

Verse 31: Brahman's Immanence in Creation

सर्वज्ञत्वं परेशत्वं तथा सम्पूर्णशक्तिता ।
वेदैः समर्थ्यते यस्य तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय ॥ ३.३१॥

1	<i>sarvajnatvam para eeshatvam</i>	<i>As all-knowing, as the Supreme Lord,</i>
2	<i>tathaa sampoorna shaktitaa;</i>	<i>and as the supremely all-powerful;</i>
3	<i>vedaih samarthyate yasya</i>	<i>that which is expounded in all the Vedas –</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>

Verse 32: Brahman: As the Ultimate Thing to be Known

यज्ज्ञानात्सर्वविज्ञानं श्रुतिषु प्रतिपादितम् ।
मृदाद्यनेकदृष्टान्तैस्तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय ॥ ३.३२॥

1	<i>yad jnaanaat sarva vijnaanam</i>	<i>That by knowing which all else becomes known;</i>
2	<i>shrutishu prati-paaditam;</i>	<i>which has been explained in the scriptures;</i>
3	<i>mrid-aadi aneka drishtaantaih</i>	<i>through numerous similes such as mud, etc;</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>

Verse 33: Brahman: As the Effects Seen in the World

यदानन्त्यं प्रतिज्ञाय श्रुतिस्तत्सिद्धये जगौ ।
तत्कार्यत्वं प्रपञ्चस्य तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय ॥ ३.३३॥

1	<i>yad anantyam pratijnaaya</i>	<i>In their efforts to prove That as limitless,</i>
2	<i>shrutih tat siddhaye jagau;</i>	<i>the scriptures support that proposition</i>
3	<i>tat kaaryatvam prapanchasya</i>	<i>which call the world of plurality as Its effects –</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>

Verse 34: Brahman: As the Sole Object of Contemplation

विजिज्ञास्यतया यच्च वेदान्तेषु मुमुक्षुभिः ।
समर्थ्यतेऽतियत्नेन तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय ॥ ३.३४॥

1	<i>vijijnaasya-tayaa yat cha</i>	<i>As the sole object of deep contemplation</i>
2	<i>vedaanteshu mumukshubhih;</i>	<i>for sincere seekers of liberation, in the Upanishads</i>
3	<i>samarthyate atiyatnena</i>	<i>That is clearly expounded with much effort –</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>

Verse 35: Brahman: As Jiva, Entering and Controlling

जीवात्मना प्रवेशश्च नियन्त्रित्वं च तान् प्रति ।

श्रूयते यस्य वेदेषु तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय

॥ ३.३५॥

1	<i>jeevaatmanaa pravesah cha</i>	<i>As having entered each creature as the Jiva;</i>
2	<i>niyantritvam cha taan prati;</i>	<i>and known to be their controller;</i>
3	<i>shrooyate yasya vedeshu</i>	<i>is That of which one hears about in the Vedas –</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>

Verse 36: Brahman: As Dispenser of the Results of Action

कर्मणां फलदातृत्वं यस्यैव श्रूयते श्रुतौ ।

जीवानां हेतुकर्तृत्वं तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवधारय

॥ ३.३६॥

1	<i>karmanaam phala daatritvam</i>	<i>As the sole paymaster for all action;</i>
2	<i>yasya eva shrooyate shrutau;</i>	<i>declared as such in the Upanishads (Srutis);</i>
3	<i>jeevaanaam hetu kartritvam</i>	<i>as the very “doer” of all actions of the Jiva –</i>
4	<i>tad brahma iti avadhaaraya.</i>	<i>upon That Brahman you should firmly meditate.</i>



Chapter Four

(Verses 37-48, 12 No.)

MEANING OF THE MAHAVAKYA

“Samshaya (doubt) and Vipareeta (past impressions) are some of the deep-rooted mental blocks because of which an individual gets totally walled away from gaining a clear and direct experience of the Self. These are some of the most terrible mental blocks which permanently hold the mind in leash from gaining an intimate spiritual vision and direct realization of the Self.”

– Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji

4.1 THE “IMPLIED” MAHAVAKYA

(Verses 37-42, 6 no.)

Verse 37: *Statement of Meaning of Mahavakya*

तत्त्वंपदार्थौ निर्णीतौ वाक्यार्थश्चिन्त्यतेऽधुना ।

तादात्म्यमत्र वाक्यार्थस्तयोरेव पदार्थयोः

॥ ४.३७॥

1	<i>'tat-tvam'-padaarthau nirneetau</i>	<i>The meaning of the terms (words) 'That' and 'Thou' have been finally determined.</i>
2	<i>vaakyarthah chintyate adhuna;</i>	<i>The meaning of the full commandment (sentence) shall be discussed now.</i>
3	<i>taadaatmyam atra vaakyarthah</i>	TOTAL IDENTITY is here deduced as the meaning of the <u>sentence</u>
4	<i>tayoh eva padaarthayoh.</i>	<i>from the word meanings of the above <u>two words</u>.</i>

This is the **Anuvada Vritti**, the statement which indicates the meaning of the Mahavakya. After having determined the direct and implied meanings (or Vakyaartha and Lakshyartha) of the words 'Tat' and 'Twam' individually, we are ready to bring this knowledge together and look at the meaning of the entire sentence '**Tat Twam Asi**', and see what it instructs us. What emerges is a deep, intrinsic identity, not a superficial one.

Verse 38: *The Depth of the Meaning Sought*

संसर्गो वा विशिष्टो वा वाक्यार्थो नात्र सम्मतः ।

अखण्डैकरसत्वेन वाक्यार्थो विदुषां मतः

॥ ४.३८॥

1	<i>samsargah vaa vishishta vaa</i>	Through sequence of words or their expansions ,
2	<i>vaakyarthah na atra san matah;</i>	the sentence meaning here is not arrived at.
3	<i>akhanda ekarasatvena</i>	An INFINITE BEING , consisting of bliss only –
4	<i>vaakyarthah vidushaam matah.</i>	this, according to the wise, is its true meaning.

The literal, superficial approach to get the sentence meaning is formally eliminated by using two such methods which do not yield the sentence's true meaning. They are:

i) **Samsarga**: “sequence of words”. The Mahavakya does not indicate a meaning obtained just by stringing words together with their literal meanings. Samsarga is the most ordinary form of sentence construction, e.g. “I was there and I heard your discourse”. One simply accepts these words at face value, without the need to look deeper.

ii) **Visishtah**: “mutual relationship” or “expansion by qualifications”. An example is “blue lotus”, where the literal meanings are sufficient. Together, they mutually qualify or expand the meaning of each other. This is not the type of oneness in “Tat Twam Asi”.

“Tat Twam Asi” is not such a simple kind of sentence. We cannot use these two methods. Nothing short of the correct implied meaning is needed. Everything points to the Infinite Being as the correct implied meaning to be taken for both words.

Verse 39: This is That, and That is This

प्रत्यग्बोधो य आभाति सोऽद्वयानन्दलक्षणः ।

अद्वयानन्दरूपश्च प्रत्यग्बोधैकलक्षणः

॥ ४.३९॥

1	<i>pratyak bodhah yah aabhaati</i>	The witness consciousness (“ This ”) that <u>shines</u> within
2	<i>sah advayaananda lakshanah;</i>	is the Absolute Bliss (“ That ”) indicated outside.
3	<i>advayaananda roopah cha</i>	Conversely, the Absolute Bliss in <u>manifested form</u>
4	<i>pratyak bodhah eka lakshanah.</i>	is the witness consciousness indicated within.

Pratyag-Bodha is ‘This’, the witness consciousness within each individual Jiva.

Advayaananda is ‘That’, the universal Bliss Consciousness pervading the universe.

The first line of this verse effectively tells us that ‘This’ is ‘That’; that the witness consciousness or knowing principle in the **Jiva** is in fact the Absolute non-dual Reality.

The second line effectively tells us that ‘That’ is ‘This’; that the universal Bliss Consciousness of **Ishwara** takes the form of or expresses Itself in man as the indwelling consciousness. ‘That’ and ‘This’ are (‘Asi’) identical. This is the meaning indicated.

Verse 40: The End of False Notions

इत्थमन्योन्यतादात्म्यप्रतिपत्तिर्यदा भवेत् ।

अब्रह्मत्वं त्वमर्थस्य व्यावर्तेत तदैव हि

॥ ४.४०॥

1	<i>ittham anyonya taadaatmya</i>	As explained above, when the mutual identity
2	<i>pratipattih yadaa bhavet;</i>	between the two words is comprehended,
3	<i>abrahmatvam ‘tvam’-arthasya</i>	then the idea ‘ I am not Brahman ’, held by ‘Thou’,
4	<i>vyaavarteta tad eva hi.</i>	shall come to an immediate end then and there.

On comprehension, the ego sense or the false identity dissolves or merges into the ‘One Blissful Eternal Brahman’. This dissolution is the first and only result of realisation.

In practical terms, for realisation to happen, it is only necessary for one’s ignorant idea of “**I am not Brahman**” to be destroyed. “I am not Brahman” is called Bheda Jnana, as it is a knowledge that is due to solely to seeing distinction. Distinction is what brings about all the sorrow, and sense of alienation from the world. It keeps us away from the Truth which is “**I am Brahman**”. The destruction of Distinction is itself Realisation!

Verse 41: The Result: ‘Twam’ is Taken to Be ‘Tat’

तदर्थस्य पारोक्ष्यं यद्येवं किं ततः शृणु ।
 पूर्णानन्दैकरूपेण प्रत्यग्बोधोवतिष्ठते ॥ ४.४१॥

1	<i>‘tat’-arthasya paarokshyam</i>	True, so far, the meaning of ‘That’ is known indirectly ;
2	<i>yadi evam kim tatah? shrunu:</i>	that being so, what next? (How to make it direct ?) Listen:
3	<i>poornaananda eka-roopena</i>	The all-full, One mass of Bliss, without a second,
4	<i>pratyak bodhah avatishthate.</i>	is itself the witness consciousness, i.e. <u>That is This!</u>

Witness consciousness or ‘This’ can be grasped only because it connects us to the objects of the world. We are familiar with consciousness as the illuminator of the objects of the world and of the thought-objects in the mind. That is our common experience of consciousness. It is very difficult to grasp what Consciousness means without having objects for it to *know*. In other words, we can know only ‘This’ but not ‘That’.

Seeing this difficulty in the student, the teacher assures him that ‘That’ *is* ‘This’. There are no ‘objects’ in Brahman for our Consciousness to grasp. Consciousness without objects is something incomprehensible to us. It can only be comprehended *after* one realizes the Truth. For this reason, sages also call it “objectless Consciousness”.

Hence, the best that this verse can tell us is that the two are the same! There is no substitute for direct experience of Consciousness as identical to the inner witness. Direct experience is for those who have purified themselves wholly, and who are intelligent enough to grasp the subtleness contained in this deeper meaning of the Mahavakya. The eligible one is a very specially trained student who has intense yearning as well as the necessary purity of heart to discover his essential true nature as the Self.

Verse 42: The Summary of the Analysis

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यं च तादात्म्यप्रतिपादने ।
 लक्ष्यौ तत्त्वंपदार्थौ द्वावुपादाय प्रवर्तते ॥ ४.४२॥

1	<i>‘tat-tvam-asi’-aadi vaakyam cha</i>	The great statements like ‘ That Thou Art ’
2	<i>taadaatmya pratipaadane;</i>	thus establish the identity of what is meant
3	<i>lakshyau ‘tat-tvam’-padaarthau dvau</i>	by the two terms ‘Thou’ and ‘That’
4	<i>upaadaaya pravartete.</i>	by taking recourse to their <u>implied meaning</u> .

This summary statement concludes the explanation of the “implied” Mahavakya.

4.2 THE “DIRECT” MAHAVAKYA

(Verses 43-45, 3 no.)

Verse 43: *The State of the Explanation So Far*

गुरुवाच ।

हित्वा द्वौ शबलौ वाच्यौ वाक्यं वाक्यार्थबोधने ।

यथा प्रवर्ततेऽस्माभिस्तथा व्याख्यातमादरात् ॥ ४.४३॥

	<i>gurooh uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Guru continues:</i>
1	<i>hitvaa dvau shabalau vaachyau</i>	<i>Discarding the two qualified literal meanings</i>
2	<i>vaakyam vaakyartha bodhane;</i>	<i>the Mahavakya reveals the implied meaning.</i>
3	<i>yathaa pravartate asmaabhih</i>	<i>What these meanings are has, by this text,</i>
4	<i>tathaa vyaakhyaatam aadaraat.</i>	<i>already been thoroughly commented on.</i>

Now, we turn to the ‘Direct Meaning’ of the sentence (not the words).

In Chapters 2 and 3 we have already identified and discarded the direct word meanings of ‘Thou’ and ‘That’. Then in v38 of this Chapter, we discarded the direct meanings used by the two methods, **Samsarga** and **Visishta**, and took up the implied meanings in order to arrive at the meaning of the Mahavakya. Now why are we going back to the direct meanings?

The reason is that we have not yet explained why we dropped the direct meanings in the context of the sentence meaning. Now, from the vantage point of knowing the meaning of the Mahavakya using the implied meanings, we are in a position to clearly explain why the direct meanings are dropped. It may only be for the sake of completeness, but it shows how thorough Sri Shankaracharya is in his analysis. He does not want to leave any loopholes in building up his argument.

Verse 44: *The Direct Meaning of ‘Thou’*

आलम्बनतयाभाति योऽस्मत्प्रत्ययशब्दयोः ।

अन्तःकरणसंभिन्नबोधः स त्वंपदाभिधः ॥ ४.४४॥

1	<i>aalambanatayaa bhaati yah</i>	<i>That by which as a limited ‘being’ appears the Jiva,</i>
2	<i>asmat-pratyaya-shabdayoh;</i>	<i>the individual who is described i) by the word ‘I’,</i>
3	<i>antahkarana sambhinna bodhah</i>	<i>ii) expressing itself through the inner equipment –</i>
4	<i>sah ‘tvam’-pada abhidhah.</i>	<i>that is the direct meaning of the word ‘Thou’.</i>

In this verse we look at the direct meaning of ‘Thou’ as it applies to the sentence; and in the next verse we examine the direct meaning of ‘That’ as it applies to the sentence.

At the individual or Vyashti (microcosmic) level, the **Jiva** dwells in its limited body and mind Upadhis, appearing as though it were a limited being. It becomes logically clear that such a meaning is untenable and has to be discarded due to its absurdity. In reality the Atman or Self is unlimited and not different from the Supreme Self.

Verse 45: *The Direct Meaning of ‘That’*

मायोपाधिर्जगदोनिः सर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणः ।
परोक्ष्यशबलः सत्याद्यात्मकस्तत्पदाभिधः

॥ ४.४५॥

1	<i>maayaa upaadhih jagat yonih,</i>	Expressing through Maya, the ‘cause of the world’;
2	<i>sarva-jnatva-aadi lakshanah;</i>	is Ishwara described as i) omniscient, etc;
3	<i>paarokshya shabalah,</i> <i>*satya-aadi aatmakah;</i>	ii) known only indirectly (mediate); and iii) having the nature of Existence, etc* –
4	<i>‘tat’-pada abhidhah.</i>	that is the <u>direct meaning</u> of the word ‘ That ’.

* **Satya, etc** – refers to ‘Satyam, Jnanam and Anantam’, the qualities of Brahman as described in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (Text 36).

At the universal or Samashti (macrocosmic) level, we have **Ishwara**, the Creator of the Samashti who is the ‘Cause of the Universe’. Ishwara is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent in his far superior and vaster Upadhis. This is the direct meaning of the word ‘That’ in ‘*Thou art That*’.

Ishwara and Jiva in Harmony

Ishwara has a divine plan for each individual. He works towards the common goal set for all Jivas, which is the evolution of the species. The Jiva fits into Ishwara’s plan of action perfectly. Knowledge of the Jiva’s destiny makes life more meaningful. It becomes filled with purpose, joy and happiness. There is peace of mind in living in harmony with Nature (Ishwara). The highest ideals flourish when the partnership between Jiva and Ishwara is understood in this light.

Thus, the unlimited implied meanings of ‘Tat’ and ‘Twam’, if understood correctly in the above manner, greatly enhance the limited direct meaning of ‘Twam’ by making life on earth more meaningful, purposeful and oriented towards evolution. Jiva gradually learns to shed its egoism and function under the direction and plan of Ishwara.

4.3 “BHAGA LAKSHANA” RELATIONSHIP

(Verses 46-48, 3 no.)

BHAGA LAKSHANA IS THE NAME of the method of analysis which is applicable to the “Tat Twam Asi” Mahavakya. All the hard work of this text has already been done. Now we have come to the naming ceremony, the rush for who takes the credit. The winner is being announced – it is *Bhaga Lakshana*! The analysis is done in two stages:

Verse 46: *Stage 1: Contradictory Literal Meanings are Dropped*

प्रत्यक्परोक्षतैकस्य सद्वितीयत्वपूर्णता ।
विरुध्यते यतस्तस्माल्लक्षणा सम्प्रवर्तते

॥ ४.४६॥

1	<i>pratyak parokshata ekasya</i>	i) One factor known directly and also indirectly; and
2	<i>sadviteeyatva poornataa;</i>	ii) having qualities of duality as well as Oneness –
3	<i>viroodhyate yatah tasmaat</i>	such contrariness is clearly not possible. Hence,
4	<i>lakshanaa sam-pravartate.</i>	the implied meanings alone have to be selected.

There cannot be identity between Jiva and Ishwara at the level of literal word meaning – the two clearly have totally different roles to fulfil. The Jiva at best can be a perfect partner in the hands of Ishwara, but cannot become Ishwara.

The reason for the above is that the Upadhis exist at this level, and the Upadhis of the two, Jiva and Ishwara, are poles apart. Ishwara plays His role at the Samashti (Cosmic) level, while Jiva plays its role at the very limited Vyashti (individual) level. The former is omniscient, the latter is ‘Alpa’, i.e. having very limited knowledge.

Taking their Upadhis into account, both Jiva and Ishwara have to function in the realm of Duality. That is perhaps the only common ground for them. Their roles are so vastly different that the only meaningful relationship between them would be as worshipper and worshipped, Ishwara being the worshipped and Jiva the worshipper. Everything else about the two are contradictory.

For there to be identity, the contradictions have to be dropped.

Verse 47: Stage 2: Implied Meanings are Adopted

मानान्तरविरोधे तु मुख्यार्थस्य परिग्रहे ।
मुख्यार्थेनाविनाभूते प्रतीतिर्लक्षणोच्यते

॥ ४.४७॥

1	<i>maanaantara virodhe tu</i>	As it conflicts with other evidences,
2	<i>mukhya-arthasya aparigrahe;</i>	the direct word meanings are not acceptable;
3	<i>mukhya-arthena avinaabhoote</i>	The sense that is consistent with other proofs,
4	<i>prateetih lakshanah uchyate.</i>	i.e. the implied meaning, has to be accepted.

When an inconsistency such as seen above is encountered in establishing an identity, then the next meaning to go to is the Lakshyartha or suggestive or implied meaning. That is what we did in verses 37-42. In this verse an explanation is given of the **three methods** available under Lakshana Vritti, the categories of analyzing a sentence using implied meanings. Among these three, one alone is applicable to our sentence “Tat Twam Asi”. Which one and why is indicated in the next verse. The three methods available are:

i) **Jahal-Lakshana:** “Total Rejection Method”. The entire direct word meaning is rejected and the indicative meaning is adopted. This does not apply to ‘Tat Twam Asi’.

ii) **Ajahal-Lakshana:** “Total Acceptance Method”. The entire direct word meaning is accepted and, in addition, something is added to make it meaningful. This also is not applicable to ‘Tat Twam Asi’.

iii) **Jahal-Ajahal-Lakshana:** “Part-Rejection and Part-Acceptance Method”. This is also termed *Bhaga Tyaga Lakshana* (Partial Rejection) or simply **Bhaga Lakshana**. In this method, the contradictory parts are rejected and the common parts are accepted.

These three methods are discussed in greater detail in *Vedanta Sara* (Text 22).

Verse 48: *Accepting Bhaga Lakshana*

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्येषु लक्षणा भागलक्षणा ।
सोऽयमित्यादिवाक्यस्थपदयोरिव नापरा

॥ ४.४८॥

1	<i>'tat-tvam-asi'-aadi vaakyeshu</i>	<i>In the statement like 'Thou art That' etc,</i>
2	<i>lakshanaa "bhaaga lakshanaa";</i>	<i>Bhaga Lakshana</i> <i>method has to be employed;</i>
3	<i>'sah ayam' iti-aadi vaakyastha</i>	<i>as in the sentence 'He is this man', etc.</i>
4	<i>padayoh iva, na aparaa.</i>	<i>No other method can be applied.</i>

This is precisely the method that applies to the 'Tat Twam Asi' Vakya.

The contrary parts due to the Upadhis of both Jiva and Ishwara are rejected. The common parts in both of them are retained, namely, the 'witnessing-Consciousness' in Jiva and the 'One Mass of Bliss' of Ishwara. Now identity between the two can be established based on this implied meaning. This we have already seen in verse (42).

Once the intellectual understanding of the above meaning has been grasped, the student is asked to practice Vedantic Sadhana as indicated in the next section...



Chapter Five

(Verses 49-53, 5 No.)

REALISATION OF TRUTH

(Verses 49-53, 5 No.)

REALISATION OF TRUTH

5.1 SADHANA FOR REALISATION

(Verses 49-51, 3 no.)

Verse 49: *The Levels of Vedantic Sadhana*

अहं ब्रह्मेतिवाक्यार्थबोधो यावद्दृढीभवेत् ।

शमादिसहितस्तावदभ्यसेच्छ्रवणादिकम्

॥ ५.४९॥

1	<i>'aham brahma' iti vaakyartha</i>	<i>'I am Brahman' – this experience till it is gained</i>
2	<i>bodhah yaavat, dridhee bhavet;</i>	<i>personally, one has to do the following Sadhana:</i>
3	<i>shama-aadi sahita taavat</i>	<i>values of self-control, etc (Shat Sampat); together</i>
4	<i>abhyase cha shravan-aadikam.</i>	<i>with practice of Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana.</i>

This text is primarily to explain “Tat Twam Asi”. Chapters 1 and 5 are simply included for the sake of completeness, to illustrate the full process of learning and practice. For this reason, they are treated with scant details.

Vedantic Sadhana is practised at various levels and depends on the stage reached by the student. The levels of progress are simply named in this verse as follows:

i) **Sadhana Chatushtaya:** The student has to develop the “**Fourfold Means**”, namely, the values of discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold virtues and a burning yearning for liberation. The sixfold virtues, known as Shad Sampati, are self-control, sense-control, mastery of the mind, endurance, faith and one-pointedness of mind.

ii) **Sravana:** He receives the “**Knowledge of the Self**” by listening to the teacher or doing daily study of the scriptures.

iii) **Manana:** He does daily “Reflection” on what he has thus heard or read. By this he clears all his doubts and prepares himself for the next stage.

iv) **Nididhyasana:** He practises intense “**Meditation**” upon the knowlwdge of the Self and raises his consciousness to higher and higher levels until Savikalpa Samadhi and then Nirvikalpa Samadhi is attained.

* * * * *

Verse 50: Perfection in Sadhana through Grace

श्रुत्याचार्यप्रसादेन दृढो बोधो यथा भवेत् ।

निरस्ताशेषसंसारनिदानः पुरुषस्तदा

॥ ५.५०॥

1	<i>shrutih-aachaarya-prasaadena</i>	<i>By the grace of the scriptures and one's Guru,</i>
2	<i>dridhah bodhah yadaa bhavet;</i>	<i>when one gets a firm experience of the Self,</i>
3	<i>nirasta ashesha samsaara</i>	<i>and is free from all the taints of worldliness,</i>
4	<i>nidaanah purushah tadaa.</i>	<i>such a man is said to have realized the Self.</i>

By practicing the above Sadhana under the guidance and direction of the scriptures and one's Guru, by their Grace, the student gains direct experience of the Supreme Self. Having thus realized the Self, he becomes free of all Ajnana or ignorance, which is the root cause of the entire experience of the world of Plurality.

Through the Grace of a spiritual teacher, when a seeker gains a clear and direct experience of the Supreme Self as expounded in the scriptures he, the realized one, becomes free from all ignorance.

Such an accomplished sage receives the following as the fruit of his Sadhana.

Verse 51: The Fruits of Sadhana

विशीर्णकार्यकरणो भूतसूक्ष्मैरनावृतः ।

विमुक्तकर्मनिगडः सद्य एव विमुच्यते

॥ ५.५१॥

1	<i>visheerna-kaarya-karanah</i>	<i>i) No more conditioned by his gross and subtle <u>bodies</u>;</i>
2	<i>bhoota-sookshmaih anaavritah;</i>	<i>ii) free from the grip of gross and subtle <u>objects</u>,</i>
3	<i>vimukta-karma-nigadah</i>	<i>iii) released from the charm of all <u>actions</u> –</i>
4	<i>sadya eva vimuchyate.</i>	<i>such a man gets immediately liberated.</i>

Three characteristics stand out in the student who attains this blessed state. More details are given in the last section of such a state, but here we simply list the three essential changes that take place in his personality:

i) **Freedom from the Upadhis**: He is no longer conditioned by his gross or subtle bodies (the Upadhis);

ii) **Freedom from Sense Attractions**: His life is not 'embraced' or ruled by the gross or subtle elements; that is, he is not attracted by sense objects, whether gross or subtle in form.

iii) **Freedom from Karma**: He is not impelled to perform actions. If he does act he does so with an attitude that frees him from all Karmic fruits attached to them. His actions do not bind him.

5.2 JIVANMUKTI & VIDEHAMUKTI

(Verses 52-53, 2 no.)

THE BOOK CONCLUDES WITH these two verses on the Jivanmukta and the Videhamukta. Much has already been studied of this part of Vedanta. Here it is only required that we acknowledge and honour such sages for the role they play in our spiritual unfoldment. They represent a time-honoured spiritual tradition which we have to be very grateful for. Without them Vedanta would be on shaky ground. It is the living sages who bring the greatest glory and protection to the great philosophy of Vedanta.

Verse 52: The Jivanmukta: Living Through Prarabdha

प्रारब्धकर्मवेगेन जीवन्मुक्तो यदा भवेत् ।
किञ्चित्कालमनारब्धकर्मबन्धस्य संक्षये ॥ ५.५२॥

1	<i>praarabdha karma vegena</i>	<i>Due to the compelling force of Prarabdha,</i>
2	<i>jeevanmuktah yadaa bhavet;</i>	<i>the liberated in life remains under its power</i>
3,	<i>kinchit kaalaman</i>	<i>for some time until these Karmas</i>
4	<i>aarabdha karma</i> <i>bandhasya sankshaye.</i>	<i>begin to produce their results,</i> <i>after which he is completely freed from them.</i>

The subject of Karma always intrigues the common man. He is therefore interested in how a saint handles his Karma. In the case of a realised saint, all his past and future Karmas are wiped off the slate, as it were. He is no longer accountable for them as 'he' as an individual no longer exists! His Karma files have to be closed.

However, it is said that Prarabdha still has to be experienced until exhausted. Even this is viewed differently by sages. They are indifferent even to their Prarabdha. They have risen so much above body-consciousness that Karma, which is created by the body, has no effect on them any longer.

The Jivanmukta, upon the exhaustion of Karma, becomes known as a Videhamukta...

Verse 53: The Videhamukta: Freedom from the Body (Death)

निरस्तातिशयानन्दं वैष्णवं परमं पदम् ।
पुनरावृत्तिरहितं कैवल्यं प्रतिपद्यते ॥ ५.५३॥

1	<i>nirasta atishaya aanandam</i>	<i>Then, the never-ending immeasurable Bliss,</i>
2	<i>vaishnavam paramam padam;</i>	<i>called the supreme 'Abode of Vishnu',</i>
3	<i>punah aavritti-rahitam</i>	<i>whence there is no return –</i>
4	<i>kaivalyam pratipadyate.</i>	<i>that state of Absolute Oneness he comes to gain.</i>

Saints do not place any value on the occurrence of death. They are indifferent to it. They live always in the Divine Consciousness, above the relative plane of this world. To them, what does it matter whether they are in the body or not. They are free completely.

It is the common man who gives a lot of attention to the death of a liberated saint. For this reason, various practices have arisen when a saint passes away.

1. To begin with, a saint's death is named differently. It is called "Mahasamadhi", not death. It refers to the state of Samadhi which the saint has been so accustomed to entering into while living. Death represents the last entry into this state.

2. The saint's physical remains are also treated in a different way if the saint has had an outstanding influence in society. He is not cremated, but his body is interred, meaning it is positioned in a lotus posture and embalmed with oils, salt, etc, that will preserve it for time immemorial.

3. When step 2 is taken, it is always accompanied by the construction of a large shrine over the spot where the body is interred. This place is considered to be especially holy by disciples of the saint. Special worship is done at this shrine, especially on the occasion of his Punya Tithi Aradhana, or anniversary of his death according to the lunar almanac.

May glory be to such luminaries that dot the spiritual skies! May their blessings be upon all those who seek the same Union that they have attained by grasping the meaning of "Tat Twam Asi" fully and then living up to the identity it stands for!

॥ इति परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्य
श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्यविरचिता
वाक्यवृत्तिः समाप्त ॥

Om Tat Sat!

