

SREE SANKARACHARYA'S
NIRVANA SHATAKAM

Commentary by
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NIRVANA SHATKAM

Nirvana Shatkām, otherwise known as Atma Shatkam, is a composition of Bhagawan Shankaracharya. Although we call it a composition, it is actually a declaration of his own direct and intimate experience of the Absolute Bliss of Self-Realisation. As such, this is not a text to be discoursed upon, but is something to be meditated upon and directly experienced by every sincere seeker and student of Advaita Vedanta.

Nirvana Shatkam means a bunch of six verses on the state of Absolute peace, tranquility, freedom and joy (निर्वृति). Atma Shatkam means six verses on the nature of the Self. One who is familiar with the Sanskrit language can well grasp the literal meaning of these verses because of their simplicity. But to experience and revel in the Truth revealed therein, one has to go through many lives of Sadhana.

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते । (Geeta VII - 19)

"At the end of numerous lives only a man knows me and reaches me".

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् । (Geeta VI - 45)

"After many lives of Sadhana, people attain the supreme Brahman." Man (the Jeeva) has to evolve slowly through endless aeons (yugas) of sincere study and devoted Self-application. Then, in one particular life, he gets totally purged of his ignorance and delusion. Such evolution culminates in the highest state of perfection-Self-realisation (Brahmi Sthiti). He becomes a "Perfect Man."

As these six verses represent the direct and intimate experience of such a Perfect one, they will make an immediate impact on the purified minds of sincere seekers who have acquired a deep insight into Vedanta. As such seekers have the wealth of discrimination (Viveka), dispassion (Vairagya) and capacity for reflection on the Self (Atma Vichara). They can, by reading directly appreciate their implications and, in their deep meditation, experience, the subtle truths of these verses.

In the practice of meditation (Dhyana Abhyas) the Sadhaka just listens, understands and appreciates the meaning of the words and sentences of the Teacher. No intellectual enquiry or analysis is done, as the teacher unfolds the words. As the deep import of the words is appreciated, the words themselves are laid aside. Once the essence of the words becomes the feeling (Bhavana) of the Sadhak, his mind will firmly abide in the Truth. This is "Samadhi."

However, other aspirants at earlier points in their spiritual path, can also benefit by drawing inspiration from this text, this being the vision of the ultimate reality from the stand point of a Man of Realisation. They can, in their daily meditation (Dhyana Abhyas) reflect on the meaning and significance of these verses and slowly imbibe the Truth in them. Meditation alone is the Means to the great Experience of Truth (Samadhi). For the benefit of such seekers these verses are explained here.

Before going into the text, it will be useful if we remember some of the basic concepts in Vedanta Sastra, and some of its technical terminology.

The embodied soul (jeeva) is infested with impurities (Mala), distractions (vikshepa) and veiling (Avarana). Performance of duties with dedication (Karma) and worship of the Lord (Upasana) are the means (sadhana) to remove these impurities and distractions respectively. Such inner purification alone will help the mind gain the necessary dispassion (vairagya) to practice yoga. This Yoga aims at the cessation of all thoughts and gain the experience of the essence of 'THOU' (Twam padartha). Vairagya again is inevitable in a seeker to make his mind abide in the form of the Lord (Bhagavadakara Vritti) in the practice of the path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga). This leads to the experience of 'THAT' (Tatpadartha).

According to Vedanta Sastra, in the practice of the path of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga) which points out the identity of 'That' (Tatpadartha) and 'Thou' (Twampadartha), the seeker gains the experience, or rather, his mind resolves and abides in a single unbroken chain of thought "I am Brahman". (Aham Brahmasmi iti Akhandakara vritti). But again dispassion for sense pleasures is the inevitable requisite in the seeker for a fruitful Sadhana, whether in Yoga or Bhakti or Jnana.

To gain this dispassion there is no other path but the strict adherence to one's duties (Dharmapalan). Dharma is a discipline the very purpose of which is to restrain one's mind from adharmic thoughts and actions and guide it on the path of virtue. Dharma sustain a seeker's mind and helps him to restrict it only to right thinking and right action. Bhagavad Geeta emphasises Dharma thus:

स्वधर्मो निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः । (Geeta 3-55)

meaning that it is better to die in one's own dharma than to follow the unrighteous (Adharma or para dharma), though it may appear very comfortable and pleasing. But then it is only fraught with fear.

Thus, strict adherence to one's dharma is inevitable to gain the purity of mind, which is a pre-requisite in the path of enquiry, which alone will help in the elimination of the veiling (Avarana). One should not misunderstand when one reads this verse in Nirvana Shatkam:

न पुण्यं न पापं न सौख्यं न दुःखम्
न मन्त्रो न तीर्थं न वेदा न यज्ञाः ॥

If one takes the literal meaning and starts thinking: "to me there is no merit or demerit, as I am the all blissful Siva" , without undergoing the entire process of Sadhana, then such hollow talk of the absolute experience (Brahmajnana) will only become suicidal and self-destructive.

In dharma there is a limit, while in adharma there is absolutely no limit. So unless a seeker follows strictly his dharma, he is apt to transgress its limits any moment. The best way is to keep oneself to the disciplines of the Scriptures. Geeta emphasises-

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि॥(Geeta XVI - 24)

For the removal of the veiling (Avarana) Shastra prescribes the three sadhanas, viz. Sravana (listening), Manana (Reflection) and Nididhyasana (meditation).

Sravana (listening)

Doubt arises in the student's mind as to whether the theme of all the Upanishads in all the Vedas in iden-

tical, whether all of them reveal one and the same truth or different truths. In one given Upanishad itself, there are apparent contradictions and the student is not able to determine whether it reveals one particular truth - dwaita or Adwaita. By Sravana, the ascertainment takes place that all the Upanishads are only unveiling the identity between jeeva and Brahman (jeeva-Brahma-Aikyam). Thus by Sravana, this doubt known as pramana asambhavana is removed completely and clear determination of the topic and subject matter of the Upanishads takes place in the mind of the student.

Manana (Reflection)

Now, once the above determination has taken place, the student finds that his present experience contradicts this clear understanding. Living at the level of the Upadhis viz. body, mind etc., he fails to feel that he is that Infinite Consciousness. This is because one's faith is more on one's direct limited experience. It is so very limited and conditioned and still one takes it to be the greatest standard and authority for measuring each and every experience when this experience contradicts one's Knowledge, there arises in the mind Prameya Asambhavana.

'Prameya' means the truth revealed -the subject matter of the Upanishads - the Knowledge to be gained by a Seeker. The doubt is about this Knowledge:- "Is it really so? I am told that I am Brahman; but I can't believe it. I doubt its validity." Now, reflection (Manana) is inevitable. "Advaita Makaranda" is a beautiful text of reflection (Manana granth). The technique of reflection is to be learnt properly. Study of the scriptural texts (Sruti) under a teacher's guidance, one's own reasoning (Yukti) and getting mentally rooted in, or firmly abiding in, the deep import of the words of the scriptures and of the teacher (Anubhuti) are the aids to right reflection. When these three, Sruti, Yukti and anubhuti, are in harmony with the subject of manana, all doubts the subject (Prameya asambhavana) disappear.

Nididhayasana (Meditation)

Now the Seeker experiences a peculiar kind of obstruction. Even though he has no doubt about the Truth pointed out by the Sruti and the Teacher, still he feels a strange sense of incompleteness. This is the legacy from his past, long-standing habit of identification with the body - a habit that had been continuing through all the countless past lives.

Even when, just for a moment, the mind slips from its goal, immediate identification with the not-self (anatma) takes place; and again the same history of the jeeva repeats itself. He starts experiencing all the dualities and reacting to the outer situations. Such happening, is due to the erroneous notion (Viparita Bhavana). This erroneous notion is born of two factors.

1. Lack of discrimination (Aviveka) due to want of Knowledge. It is natural for everyone who is born here.
2. In the case of a man of discrimination, who, by Sravana and Manana, is fully convinced of the Truth of the Mahavakya "Aham Brahmasmi", but still does not experience it, the reason is past habit - habitual error (Adhyasa). This can be removed only by sincere and consistent practice (Abhyasa).

एवं निरन्तराभ्यस्ता ब्रह्मैवास्मीति वासना ।

हरत्यविद्याविक्षेपान् रोगानिव रसायनम् ॥ (Aimabodha - 37)

When one consistently practices and maintains the thought "Brahman alone is me", it removes all avidya and even this thought (Vrithi) also disappears. This is

called 'Brahma-Abhyasa'. Thinking, speaking and discussing about this truth alone is also Brahma-Abhyas. Quietly sitting in a lonely place and thinking about that alone is Nididhyasana. This eliminates the habitual error. A seeker actually gains nothing new in this way, as the Self is the ever-gained one. Pure Consciousness is the ever-present and ever-attained Reality - one's own Self.

Yet some times the Avarana and Vikshepa may cause the erroneous notion, obstructing the experience of the Self. Hence this Adhyasa has got to be removed by Abhyasa.

अध्यासोऽयं निरस्तव्यः । (Viveka Choodamani).

The natural Characteristics of a wise man become the guide lines for a seeker to strive for and practice.

सिद्धस्य लक्षणानि साधकस्य साधनानि उच्यन्ते ।

So also in Nirvana Shatkam, Bhagawan Sankaracharya's revelations of his own experience of the Truth, become the guide lines for a seeker to meditate on. This becomes effective and fruitful only when he has done proper Sravana and Manana (Vedanta Vichara), and has been strictly adhering to Dharma. "Dharmapalan" is inevitable in Bhakti and Jnana. Knowledge gained,

neglecting one's duty, is futile. For a Sadhak, strict observance of Dharma is a Sadhana in the early stages; but later on it becomes the second nature for him and also for the wise man. Only an unintelligent elephant soils itself again after a good bath. No intelligent person will allow himself to slip back into the old ruts of his past living after having purified himself through sincere Dharma-and Brahma-Abhyas.

Nirvana Shatkam has six verses. The last line of each verse asserts, or firmly declares, what 'I' really am. "Auspiciousness am I, auspiciousness am I" (Sivoham, Sivoham). In the first three lines of the first five verses, there is a total negation of what "I" am not.

'I' am the most auspicious one - pure Consciousness and bliss absolute (Chidananda roopah) which is one and the only one non-dual Truth (Advaya-Satya), on whom such a great superimposition (Adhyasa) of all the negated things has taken place. Although I am of the nature of **eternal Truth** (Sat Swaroppa), I feel perishable and dying. Although I am of the nature of pure Consciousness (Chit-Swarupa) I feel that I am ignorant. Although my essential nature is absolute bliss (Ananda Swarupa) I feel sorrowful and bound.

The question now is, "bound by what"? I am bound by my own numerous Karmas (Karma Bandhan). Only when I wield the upadhis and identify with them do I become the doer (Karta) and I want to be the enjoyer of the fruits (Bhokta). Thus I become bound by my Karmas. When the identification with the Upadhi vanishes, the doership (Karthrtwa) and enjoyership (Boktrtwa) also vanish. Thus, such identification with the body (Upadhi-tadatmya) only brings, in its wake, all the bondages - joy or sorrow, love or hatred, pursuit or withdrawal, merit or demerit, birth, growth or death etc. and the relationships like father or mother, Guru or Shishya, friend or enemy etc. In short, when there is identification with the not-self (Anatmani Atmabudhi), bondage begins - bondage of doership, enjoyership, ego, and the various relationships. Thus, I become the Jeeva, who has always duties (Karthavya) to perform, goals to achieve (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha - the four Purusharthas), and bound by various duties and responsibilities. One can get rid of this false notion, and bondage only through right understanding or Knowledge of the Self.

This composition begins with the negation of the Upadhis and helps a seeker to free himself from his identi-

fication with them, which is his bondage. Thereafter is the negation of like & dislike for, only when there is a mind, these two (Raga & Dwesha) pursuit and withdrawal (Pravrti & Nivrti), merit and demerit (Punya & Papa) etc. are possible. Thus without the mind, there cannot be any of the things, feelings or relationships mentioned in the text.

Nirvana Shatkam begins with the negation of all Upadhis, particularly the subtle body. The gross body alone cannot exist and function without the subtle body. The causal body (Karan Sarira) in its natural form presents no problem, as there is complete ignorance or non-recognition in deep-sleep. All problems begin only with the subtle body, which remain even after death to take up a new body.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ (Geeta XV - 9)

"Presiding over the sense organs and the mind (subtle body) he (the jeeva) enjoy the sense objects."

The subtle body expresses through the gross body; and the latter experiences everything through the former.

In the gross body which is asleep or dead there is no sorrow. Hence Bhagawan Sankara negates the subtle body at the very beginning of the text.

We know that in the intellect (Buddhi) alone is the sense of doership(कर्तृत्व भावना)while in the mind is the sense of being instrumental (करणत्व भावना). The memories of the past is Chitta (चित्त) . The ego (अहंकार) is that which identifies with all the other three, as "my memory", "my determination", "my feeling" etc. Now all of them are negated in the very beginning of the Shatkam.

Though these verses are not meant for common intellectual discussion, because of their depth and subtlety, still in order to understand and have a glimpse of the beauty and order in which that Master-mind Bhagawan Shankaracharya composed them, one has to make a sincere study of this composition. Then one can see that it is not a total negation of everything, but the recognition of the ONE behind everything - the support of everything.

In every composition of Bhagawan Shankaracharya, one can find that, he never for a moment loses sight of the

goal; and there is always an orderly and systematic thought development. This is worthy to be deeply appreciated and cultivated by a Sadhak, or else his mind will stray at random and his reflections will be unproductive.

With this much back-ground discussion, we shall now get into the text.

Verse No.1

मनोबुद्ध्यहंकारचित्तानि नाहं
न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे न च घ्राणनेत्रे ।
न च व्योमभूमिर्न तेजो न वायुः
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥१॥

मन बुद्धि अहंकार
चित्तानि न अहम् = I am not the mind, intellect,
ego and memory (the four
aspects of what is known as
Antah Karana)

न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे
न च घ्राणनेत्रे = Nor (am I the five organs of
perception), the ear, tongue,
nose, eyes (and Skin).

न च व्योमभूमिः
न तेजः न वायुः = Nor (the five elements) the
space, earth, fire, air (and
water)

चिदानन्दरूपः शिवः
अहम् शिवः अहम् = I am pure Knowledge and
Bliss, I am Siva, Auspicious-
ness itself.

Here we see that Bhagawan Sankaracharya, in communicating his experience of the Self, declares first what the "Self" is not, in the first three lines. In the last line, he affirms what the 'Self' is.

Our inner instrument (antakarana) comprises four aspects each having its own function. The **mind** that thinks or imagines, the **intellect** that discriminates and decides, the **ego** that mistakes itself to be the self, doing and enjoying things, and the **memory** that recollects past experiences. This Antakarana, and the five senses (organs of hearing, touch, seeing, tasting & smell) along with their cause, (the satwic aspects of the five elements in their subtle form called Tanmatras), constitute what is called the **subtle body**. This entire subtle body (Sukshma Sarira) is here negated as not being the true Self. Obviously the True Self (Atma) being the illuminator, or the enlivener of everything else including the subtle body, cannot be those illumined objects.

Then what is the true Self, the real 'I'? The affirmation comes from Bhagawan Sankara: "I am of the nature of Pure Consciousness and bliss supreme - the one Reality behind everything - I am Siva - the auspicious". When

we constantly and sincerely start practising chanting the verses and reflecting on them in this way, the mind slowly acquires a certain calmness, purity and clarity and becomes capable of such subtle perceptions. These verses are said to have helped some of the great and saintly revolutionaries of our freedom-struggle, who were at times subjected to physical torture in jails. They helped them in switching off their minds from the suffering of the physical body. Such is the power of these verses.

Now, just as the entire subtle body is negated as 'not-Self' in this verse, the entire gross physical body is negated in the next verse.

Verse.2

न च प्राणसंज्ञो न वै पञ्चवायुः
 न वा सप्तधातुर्न वा पञ्चकोशाः ।
 न वाक्पाणिपादं न चोपस्थपायू
 चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥२॥

न च प्राणसंज्ञः	= and (I am) not the Prana
न वै पञ्चवायुः	= not indeed the five vital airs
न वा सप्तधातुः	= not indeed the seven materials
न वा पञ्चकोशाः	= surely not the five sheaths
न वाक्पाणिपादम्	= not the organ of speech, nor hand nor leg.
न च उपस्थपायू	= and not the genital organ, nor the anus.
चिदानन्दरूपः.....	= I am of the nature of pure
शिवःअहम्	knowledge and bliss. I am Siva (the most auspicious). I am Siva.

One who sees an object cannot be that object. One who is aware of a certain thing is different from that thing. Therefore, I, who am aware of the Prana (प्राणसंज्ञः), am not that Prana. The five-fold modifications of this Prana energy, functioning in each individual being, are known as the five vital airs (Panchavayuh). They control the five vital physiological processes.

- They are :
- (1) **Prana**, controlling the respiratory system
 - (2) **Apana**, controlling the excretory system
 - (3) **Vyana**, controlling the circulatory system.
 - (4) **Udana**, controlling the reactions and final ejection of Prana from the physical body.
 - (5) **Samana**, controlling the digestive system.

The seven material components of the physical body (Sapta dhatuh) are :- the Skin, flesh, fat, blood, muscle, bone and marrow.

The five sheaths (Pancha Kosha) are the exterior veils that block the vision of the inner Self (Antaratma). They are :-

- (1) The food sheath (Annamaya Kosha) or the material physical body.
- (2) Vital air sheath (Pranamaya Kosha) or the energy that keeps going the five physiological functions.
- (3) Mental sheath (Manomaya Kosha)
- (4) Intellectual sheath (Vijnanamaya Kosha) (Antah Karana)
- (5) Bliss Sheath (Anandamaya Kosha), also known as causal body (Karana Sarirah), the abode of all vasanas that prompt the jeeva to act.

Organ of speech, hand (for grasping), leg (for movement), anus (for evacuation) and genitals (for reproduction) are the five organs of action (Karmendriyah).

All the above together (Panchapranas, Sapta dhatus, the Pancha Koshas and Karmendriyas) constitute the gross physical body of the Jeeva (Sthula Sarirah). This entire physical body is negated as 'not-self' (Anatma) in this verse, as it is something that the inner Self, the Pure Consciousness sees or is aware of.

The affirmation of what the Real Self, is "Chitananda Roopah Sivoham Sivoham", comes as a refrain at the end of each negation. This helps the meditator tune himself to what he really is, viz, the subject in the midst of objects, the Seer in the midst of the Seen, the illuminator in the midst of the illumined - the very substratum for all these.

As the seeker, in meditation begins appreciating the truth of the pregnant words of these verses, his inner perceptions may become clearer and sharper. The grand vision of Truth may unfold before his inner eye. He would then become the Witness (Sakshi) or the Seer (Drashta) and everything else including his gross and subtle bodies would become the objects witnessed or seen by him.

As the nature of the various objects seen is not the nature of the Seer, the characteristics and the qualities of the body (colour, form, likes, dislikes, desire, anger, greed, jealousy etc.) do not belong to the seer. This is stated in the next verse.

Verse.3.

न मे द्वेषरागौ न मे लोभमोहौ
मदो नैव मे नैव मात्सर्यभावः ।
न धर्मो न चार्थो न कामो न मोक्षः
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥३॥

न मे द्वेषरागौ	= I have neither disliking nor liking
न मे लोभमोहौ	= I have neither greed nor delusion
मदः नैव मे नैव मात्सर्यभावः	= I have indeed neither pride nor jealousy
न धर्मः न च अर्थः	= I have no duty (to perform) nor any wealth (to acquire).
न कामः न मोक्षः	= I have no craving (for pleasure) and not being bound) I have no liberation either.

चिदानन्द = I am of the nature of pure
Consciousness and bliss, I am
all auspiciousness, I am Siva.

As long as man imagines that he is his body or mind, he reacts with the objects persons and situations around him. Then he manifests his own likes and dislikes according to his Vasanas, entertains desires, nurses his ego, and falls a pray to greed, delusion, pride, jealousy etc. These constitute the dirt (Mala) and the veiling (Avarana) and cause mental agitations (Vikshepa) which block the vision of his true identity.

In this verse the Teacher means to say: "as I have negated and transcended the physical and subtle bodies (Upadhis), none of the above dross can touch me or remain with me".

Further, the four goals of man (Purusharthas), viz. (1) Performance of duties (Dharma), (2) earning wealth (Artha), (3) enjoying pleasures (Kama) and (4) seeking liberation (Moksha) apply only to those who have the sense of doership since they identify themselves with their upadhis, due to the ignorance of their true iden-

tity. I have no ignorance and therefore I am free from all these Purusharthas. When Bhagawan Sankara says "I have no Artha & no Kama" we can accept the statement.

But when he says "I have no Dharma" or "I have no Moksha", we naturally get surprised and confused. So we have to reflect on this statement in some depth, because the Acharya cannot be wrong. Performance of one's own duties (Swadharma) and a life of virtue (Sadharana Dharma) are enjoined by the Scriptures for the embodied Jeevas only; not for a Realised Soul who has transcended his Upadhis and has become one with the Infinite, the Supreme Brahman. In the same way, all bondages (Bandhah) of worldly life and its problems belong to the body-mind-intellect equipment (upadhis) only and not to the pure Consciousness (Atma). I, the pure Sat-Chit-Ananda Atma have no bondage at all. Then where is the question of liberation (Moksha) for me? I am already liberated (Muktah). I am full and complete. I am one with the Infinite, pure Consciousness.

Verse. 4.

न पुण्यं न पापं न सौख्यं न दुःखम्
न मन्त्रो न तीर्थं न वेदा न यज्ञाः ।
अहं भोजनं नैव भोज्यं न भोक्ता
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥४॥

न पुण्यं न पापम्	= (I have) neither virtue nor vice
न सौख्यं न दुःखम्	= Nor pleasure nor pain
न मन्त्रः न तीर्थम्	= Nor the sacred chants nor pilgrimage
न वेदाः न यज्ञाः	= Nor the scriptures nor the sacrificial rituals.
अहं भोजनं न एव भोज्यं न भोक्ता	= I am neither the act of enjoying, nor the enjoyable object nor the enjoyer.
चिदानन्द	= I am pure knowledge and Bliss, I am Siva, the auspiciousness itself.

When man takes himself to be the embodied Jeeva, he is subject to impurities (likes, dislikes etc.) and agitations (anger, greed etc.). He is then drawn either to good actions and the resulting temporary happiness (punya) or to evil actions and the resulting suffering (Papa). Pleasure and pain are the experienced things (Bhojyam) and the jeeva is the experiencer (Bhokta). The experience itself is 'Bhojanam'.

If he is predominantly virtuous (Sattwic) in nature, he may avoid doing evil deeds and take more and more to virtuous living, thus accumulating more and more 'punya'. Such virtuous living includes recitation of sacred verses (mantras), going on pilgrimage to holy places (Tirtha), study of scriptures (Vedas) and performing sacrifices (Yajnas), all for his inner purification.

But for man of Realisation, who had already undergone the complete process of inner purification by appropriate spiritual practices (Sadhanas) and come to experience and abide in the Supreme Self (Atmanubhava), mantras, Tirthas, Vedas and Yajnas become irrelevant thereafter. He would no longer be in the realm of the Triputi (triple factors) of Bhojanam, Bhojyam and

Bhokta - all of which will then fuse into one Supreme Experience.

Thus, once the vision of the ONE, non-dual Brahman as his own Real Self, dawns, all dualities or multiplicities vanish and he would revel in that one Supreme Experience."

Verse. 5.

न मे मृत्युशङ्का न मे जातिभेदः
पिता नैव मे नैव माता न जन्म ।
न बन्धुर्न मित्रं गुरुर्नैव शिष्यः
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥५॥

न मे मृत्युशङ्का = I have no fear of death
न मे जातिभेदः = nor (Have I) any distinction of Caste.
पिता न एव मे = I have neither father
न एव माता न जन्म = nor mother nor (even) birth
न बन्धुः न मित्रम् = nor relation nor friend
गुरुः न एव शिष्यः = (I have) no teacher and no disciple.
चिदानन्द..... = I am pure Knowledge & Bliss, I am all auspiciousness, I am Siva.

Identified with the Upadhis (Body, mind and intellect), one cannot utter this subtle verse, for, it is meaningless to say "I have no death, no birth, no caste, no fear etc". or "I have no father no mother, no guru and hence I need not respect them".

When, with the blessings of the Lord, of the scriptures and of my Guru, I have been able to attain the spiritual perfection and to experience the ONE NON-DUAL BRAHMAN, then indeed I can say I have neither doubt nor fear, neither birth nor death, neither friend nor foe, neither father nor mother, neither Guru nor Shishya. For then, I would have broken free from my individual little Self and become one with the all pervading Divinity (निर्गुण ब्रह्म) . The Lord of the Universe (सगुण ब्रह्म) is the initiator, Guru and all the Guru-parampara (ज्ञानप्रदाता) . I have now passed beyond the realm of Maya and become one with the all pervading pure Consciousness. Hence Pure Knowledge, Absolute bliss and Auspiciousness alone am I.

Verse. 6.

अहं निर्विकल्पो निराकाररूपः
विभुर्व्याप्य सर्वत्र सर्वेन्द्रियाणाम् ।
सदा मे समत्वं न मुक्तिर्न बन्धः
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥६॥

अहं निर्विकल्पः	= I am devoid of dualities and
निराकाररूपः	am formless.
विभुः व्याप्य सर्वत्र	= I exist everywhere pervading
सर्वे इन्द्रियाणाम्	all the senses.
सदा	= always
मे समत्वम्	= I am same
न मुक्तिः न बन्धः	= (I have) neither freedom nor
	bondage.
चिदानन्द....	= I am pure Knowledge and
	Bliss. I am Auspiciousness, I
	am Siva.

I am free from all dualities, as I have no form. Everything, including the sense organs, is pervaded by me, yet I am beyond them also. Therefore to me there is oneness, equality (समत्वम्) alone. As I have no bondage, I have no liberation either.

We, as seekers, only express as "We thought we were bound, but we understand we are ever liberated. Even when we mistook ourselves to be bound, we were really free only."

Conclusion :

This is Nirvana Shatkam in its order and sequence of thought development. It is the direct experience of a man of Self-Realisation (सिद्धपुरुषः) - His revelation of the state of unbroken bliss and absolute freedom and equipoise - "I am pure Consciousness, eternal bliss - the ever-auspicious one" (चिदानन्द). There is no super-imposition (अध्यास) at all. It is a state of complete and absolute freedom from this world (प्रपञ्चोपशम). The world, as is known to us in the waking, dream and deep sleep states has no reality for a "Siddha Purusha". Therefore he has no duties, responsibilities or purusharthas.

This subtle state can be appreciated and experienced only by one who has attained the purity of mind and has had sufficient Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana. Eventhough these verses are the declarations of a man of Realisation, chanting them and reflecting deeply on them as the highest state to be experienced, could be an invaluable Sadhana for any Seeker of liberation.