



APAROKṢĀNUBHŪTI

Intimate Experience of the Reality



by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya

Commentary by
SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Mumbai-72.

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Preface to the 2nd Edition

In this Edition, diacritical marks are used for Transliteration of Saṁskṛt words in the 'Mantra's and commentary. Non-English words have been Italicised. This will help readers to identify and pronounce the words correctly. For easier reading, lines in 'Mantra's are split and re-arranged.

A key to the Transliteration and Pronunciation has been added in the beginning of the book.

Dt. 18.4.1991

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TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ॐ	om̐	home	ॐ	om̐	Rome
अ	a	fun	ट	ṭa	touch
आ	ā	car	ठ	ṭha	ant-hill
इ	i	pin	ड	ḍa	duck
ई	ī	feet	ढ	ḍha	godhood
उ	u	put	ण	ṇa	thunder
ऊ	ū	pool	त	ta	(close to) think
ऋ	ṛ	rig	थ	tha	(close to) pathetic
ॠ	ṝ	(long ṛ)	द	da	(close to) father
लृ	ḷ	*	ध	dha	(close to) breathe hard
ए	e	play	न	na	numb
ऐ	ai	high	प	pa	purse
ओ	o	over	फ	pha	sapphire
औ	au	cow	ब	ba	but
अं	aṁ	**	भ	bha	abhor
अः	aḥ	***	म	ma	mother
क	ka	kind	य	ya	young
ख	kha	blockhead	र	ra	run
ग	ga	gate	ल	la	luck
घ	gha	log-hut	व	va	virtue
ङ	ṅa	sing	श	śa	shove
च	ca	chunk	ष	ṣa	bushel
छ	cha	match	स	sa	sir
ज	ja	jug	ह	ha	house
झ	jha	hedg ^h og	ळ	(Note 1)	(close to) world
ञ	ña	bunch	क्ष	kṣa	worksheet
त्र	tra	three	ज्ञ	jña	*
ऽ	'	unpronounced अ (a)	ऽऽ	"	Unpronounced आ (ā)

Note 1: "ḷ" itself is sometimes used.

** Nasalisation of the preceding vowel.

* No English Equivalent.

*** Aspiration of preceding vowel.

INTRODUCTION

'*Aparokṣānubhūti*' a '*Prakriyā grantha*' is an introductory text book written by Ādi Śāṅkara and not a '*Śāstra Grantha*'. A '*Prakriyā Grantha*' is a book of definitions, a book of categories written in order to explain the deep truths given in the '*Śāstra*'. '*Aparokṣānubhūti*' is one of the fundamental text books in *Vedānta*, one must not be misled by its false look of simplicity. Though it looks simple, there is a wealth of profundity in it.

Aparokṣānubhūti helps the student to directly perceive the Truth, and hence the very text-book is called '*A-para-akṣa-anubhūti*'. '*Akṣa*' means 'eyes' '*Para-akṣa*' means 'somebody's eyes'. Hence *Parokṣa* means through the eyes of someone else or secondhand. '*Aparokṣa*' - means 'not second-hand, i.e. first hand'. '*Anubhūti*' means 'experience'. Direct experience of the Self within ourselves. The very name of the text-book thus indicates that here the emphasis is more on practice than on theory.

This book is a ready vehicle to enter into the path of meditation. The ideas in this book, being the fundamental points of *Vedānta*, are similar to the ones in, *Ātma Bodha* or *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, also by Ādi Śāṅkara. But *Aparokṣānubhūti* delves even deeper, for the advanced seeker to guide him to a direct experience of the Self. This book also gives enough material to logically convince us that what is emphasised is not a theoretical explanation but a practical guide book to those who can live the Spiritual values and come to experience, the *Ātman*, the Self within oneself.

APAROKSĀNUBHŪTI

“ श्री शंकराचार्यकृत-अपरोक्षानुभूतिः ”

श्रीहरिं परमानन्दम्	उपदेष्टारमीश्वरम्	।
व्यापकं सर्वलोकानाम्	कारणं तं नमाम्यहम्	॥१॥

Śrīharim paramānandam	upadeṣṭāramīśvaram	
Vyāpakam sarvalokānām	kāraṇam taṁ namāmyaham	(1)

Verse 1

I bow down in prostration to that *Śrī Hari*, the world perceptor, the Lord of the universe, the All-pervading, the cause of the whole Universe and the Supreme-Blissful Reality.

This is the opening Stanza. It is a prayer, an invocation. When a text is taken for studies, it is a practice to prostrate before the Lord. This has been the tradition for a very long time. Prayer is an act of surrender, surrender of the ego at the altar of the Lord. Where the ego is ended, there a state of inspiration dawns. In order to bring about the surrendering of the ego and the dawn of inspiration, teachers advise us to start off with a *maṅgalācaraṇa* a prostration to the Lord. Here Śaṅkara is prostrating to his teacher Govindācārya. To Śaṅkara, his teacher is not a mortal individual, but a person in whom the Great Truth stands revealed. It is through the mortal coil of the teacher that this Truth is communicated, but the real Teacher is *Srīpati, Nārāyaṇa* Himself. The human teacher is the vehicle through which the disciple listens to the words of Nārāyaṇa. Thus the concept of the teacher is not that the teacher is himself the Lord, but the teacher is the vehicle through which the disciples listen to the words of the Lord. So this *Maṅgalācaraṇa* is directed to both the teacher and the Lord. The Lord alone is the one who can instruct us in this great Reality.

‘*Śrī Hari*’ means the Lord who loots away all our misconceptions. He is a state into which the world of objects, emotions, and thoughts interpreted to us through the body, mind and intellect disappears. Just as the waking condition loots away the dream and the dream-created objects and experiences, so too the State of *Śrī Hari* loots away our misconceptions. Hence this state of the Supreme Self is said to be the state of Perfect Bliss - ‘*Paramānanda*’

Sorrow is the product of mental agitations. Lesser the agitations, lesser is the sorrow.

No agitation means no sorrow and hence the greatest happiness. Therefore, in terms of our mental experiences, the Supreme is pointed out as *Paramānanda*. The Lord is the protector, controller, regulator and Governor of the Universe. He is the one in whose presence the body, mind and intellect are functioning, in the absence there will be no function at all. He is the *Īśvara* or the Lord, the Lord of *Vāsanā's* (motivating factors in the emotional personality) in us, and in whose presence the *Vāsanā's* burst forth into manifestation. I prostrate to Him, who is the very Cause of the Universe, who is the All Pervading Reality, who is the Lord in the heart of everyone, who is pure Bliss, *Śrī Hari*, who is the Teacher Himself.

अपरोक्षानुभूतिर्वै	प्रोच्यते मोक्षसिद्धये	
सद्भिरेव प्रयत्नेन	वीक्षणीया मुहुर्मुहुः	॥२॥
<i>Aprokṣānubhūtirvai</i>	<i>procyate mokṣasiddhaye</i>	
<i>Sadbhireva prayatnena</i>	<i>vīkṣaṇīyā muhurmuḥ</i>	(2)

Verse 2

This 'Intimate experience (of Reality) - *Aparokṣānubhūti*' is expounded herein for the attainment of liberation; and it is worthy of being carefully looked into again and again by the good people.

This book is prescribed for gaining liberation from the matter equipments and their delusory play. I am ever-liberated already, only at present, my personality has been sunk within the matter equipment and from this identification I have to liberate myself. Liberation is from the physical body and its limitations and hungers and thirsts. At present I am limited by my emotional demands, and intellectually I am throttled by the intellect's perversions and its own lack of discrimination. My intellectual ideas, my emotional feelings and my physical appetites control me at present. I want to withdraw myself from these and learn to master my body, my passions, emotions and my intellectually distorted ideas.

Till now I have been living in the physical equipment, in the plant and the animal kingdoms, catering to the physical demands, after

rising intellectually and emotionally to the human plane, I have achieved to that extent more, but that is not the highest.

I still have to transcend the very intellect and go into the state of Pure Consciousness. In order to help us to transcend to the Supermanhood this book is prescribed. To gain freedom in myself and then to use the body, mind and intellect as a vehicle in the outer world to achieve something intellectually in the world. This is called liberation. This is the last stage in evolution. *Aparokṣānūbhūti* is a Science text-book, not in sense of an idea, secular Science, but a spiritual Science. We say that a secular Science is mastered when the concepts are mastered. But in a spiritual Science, it is not enough that the ideas are transferred to the grey matter in the intellect. In the spiritual sciences we have to first intellectually understand the concepts, apprehend them, and then experience them ourselves, within ourselves. Just as a prescription given by a physician alone will not cure a patient, unless patient takes the prescription, presents it to a chemist, gets the medicine, and then consumes it. Only then will the disease be cured and normal health restored. Similarly, this Science being the Science of the spiritual development has to be understood, assimilated, absorbed and experienced in order to reap its full benefit.

For all scientific study, certain qualities are required of the student in order to ensure their success. In this verse, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya indicates the qualification for a spiritual student, when he says "*Santah*" - The "good people", Śaṅkarācārya means those who are burning with an aspiration to live a life of nobler values and chastened ideals. They are those who are not satisfied by merely living in sensuality but who want to gain in life the maximum, demanding the greatest achievement. Only they are the ones who can put forth the necessary effort to master this most subtle science. This is not an easy path. It requires great efforts on the part of the seeker. Those who are not intellectually subtle, who refuse to question life, cannot progress on their path.

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण तपसा हरितोषणात् ।
साधनं प्रभवेत्पुंसाम् वैराग्यादिचतुष्टयम् ॥३॥

Svavarṇāśramadharmeṇa tapasā haritoṣaṇāt
sādhanam prabhavet puṁsām vairāgyādicatuṣṭayam (3)

Verse 3

By constant performance of one's own duties, and by austerities, and by devotion to *Lord Hari*, a person can gain the necessary four qualifications such as dispassion, etc.

Just as every student cannot go for higher Mathematics classes or Medicine or Engineering, unless there is the right aptitude in the student for the same, so too to enter into the courtyard of *Vedānta* a certain pre-disposition of the mind is required. Those who do not have this pre-disposition will not be able to live successfully the values indicated and reap a profitable return out of it. This is not to say that those who lack this disposition will be denied the study, but each seeker must check up within and should cultivate those qualifications that are lacking. Hence the teacher enumerates the necessary qualifications for an effective and fruitful study.

The Success of a seeker in spirituality depends on his '*varṇa*', '*āśrama*' austerities and devotion to *Lord Hari*. *Varṇa* is not the 'caste', which smacks of the tragic social vivisection. *Varṇa* of an individual is determined not by the caste of the parents but subtle '*vāsanā*'s if any *Varṇa* basically means the different subtle shades of texture and colour as employed in the yogic sense. *Varṇa* refers to the mental temperaments of '*Sattva*' '*rajas*' and '*tamas*'.

Āśrama is the station one occupies in life. The four '*āśramā*'s are categories as *Brahmacāri* (student), *Grhastha* (house-holder), *Vānaprastha* (retired one) and *Sannyāsi* (renunciate). The personality grouping, each one belongs to '*varṇa*' and the calling each one takes up '*āśrama*' is dependent on the inner emotional profile and his temperamental tendencies.

Tapas is the concentration, control and regulation of the thought-flow of the mind towards a noble goal. *Tapas* indicates the inner self-control while fulfilling our duties according to our status and social order.

Thus living a life of complete self-control and doing our duties sincerely, efficiently, while at the same time meditating, contemplating and concentrating on the Lord, we propitiate *Lord Hari*. Here propitiation means *Hari* is always in me, and by questioning

the mind by the methods mentioned above, the existing "Vāsanās" get exhausted, and no new Vāsanās are acquired. The mind then becomes contemplative. When the Vāsanās are reduced the agitations of the mind get reduced and Ātman, the consciousness starts shining more and more. The qualifications necessary for the seeker are discrimination (*viveka*), dispassion (*vairāgya*) discipline (*Ṣatka Sampatti*) and burning desire to liberate oneself from the thralldom of change, (*mumukṣutvam*). When these qualifications are there in a person he is fit to study this text book and contemplate upon these ideas.

ब्रह्मादिस्थिवरान्तेषु वैराग्यं विषयेष्वनु |
यथैव काकविष्टायां वैराग्यं तद्धि निर्मलम् ||४||

Brahmādīsthāvarānteṣu vairāgyam viṣayeṣvanu

Yathaiva kākaviṣṭhāyām vairāgyam taddhi nirmalam (4)

Verse 4

The pure and perfect dispassion is such a sense of aversion towards all the sense-objects, from the position of creator *Brahma* to an immobile object, as one would have towards the refuse of a crow.

Vairāgya means detachment. How is this to be developed without leaving lust, passion and attachment, to the world of objects around? Wherever I have attachment, the mind is not available for contemplation. Therefore, in order to release the mind for contemplation, I must get released from my anxiety, hunger, thirst and attachment to the world of objects around. What exactly is detachment? *Vairāgya* is the complete and constant detachment to all sense-objects in the world, from *Brahma* down to the world of a blade of grass. Just as we have complete detachment to the droppings of the crow so too *vairāgya* consists in developing complete detachment to the objects of the senses, whether heavenly or earthly. *Vairāgya* is an attitude of the mind. It is but natural for the mind and intellect to rebound whenever it thinks of the world of objects. Our minds may go to these objects unconsciously but the moment it contacts the world of objects it understands the hollowness and filthiness of such objects and so turns back from it. This mental attitude is called *Vairāgya*. A mind soaked in *Vairāgya* does not run to

the field of sense objects. Such a mind commands the highest meditation.

नित्यमात्मस्वरूपं हि दृश्यं तद्विपरीतगम् ।
 एवं यो निश्चयः सम्यग् विवेको वस्तुनः स वै ॥५॥

Nityamātmāsvārūpam hi dr̥śyam tadviparītagam

Evam yo niścayaḥ samyag viveko vastunaḥ sa vai (5)

Verse 5

Ātman in itself is alone, permanent; the "seen" is opposed to it - such a settled conviction is truly known as discrimination.

The Ātman, by its nature, is Consciousness, it was is the past, is in the present and will be in the future, in the same nature of illumination. All the experiences of the people who died in the past, the experience of all the living beings that are present and all the experiences of those that are to come in the future are all illumined by the same consciousness. This consciousness is the Eternal Illuminator. By its nature it is Eternal Pure Consciousness. Indeed Ātman is eternally permanent, but the objects of the world are perceived by the awareness through the mind and intellect, and they are all impermanent. The Awareness is Eternal and Changeless, but the objects of Awareness are the body, the mind and the intellect - these are the perceived objects (Dr̥śyam - the seen) These are opposed to the nature of the Eternal Ātman. They are ever finite. Ātman, the Self, is Infinite and the objects of the world are finite, everchanging, and decaying. One who has this great conviction that the Ātman, the Self, is eternally permanent because of the experience born out of contemplation and meditation, is said to have discrimination. That individual is said to have discrimination (*viveka*) who knows fully well that the perceived world of objects are ever changing and that the awareness that illumines them all is eternal. This discrimination to know, that the Self in me, is Eternal, Permanent and Changeless, while the world of objects, emotions and thoughts are ever changing, is called discrimination. i.e. 'Viveka'.

सदैव वासनात्यागः शमोऽयमिति शब्दितः ।
 निग्रहो बाह्यवृत्तीनां दम इत्यदिभिधीयते ॥६॥

Sadaiva vāsanātyāgaḥ śamo'yamiti śabditaḥ
Nigraho bāhyavṛttīnām dama ityadibhidhīyate (6)

Verse 6

Abandonment of desires at all times is called 'Śama' and restraint of the external functions of the organs is called 'Dama'.

At all times to renounce, to negate, to reject, the desires that crop up in the mind is 'Śama'. The desires in me prompt me to get agitated. Not to allow these desires to disturb my mind and then to renounce these desires at all times is called 'Śama'. 'Śama' is the control from within. ("manasaḥ śama iti ucyate") 'Dama' is to control the sense stimuli that enter into our bosom to cause agitations.

In stopping of all the desires that flow from the external world into the mind to disturb it is 'Dama'. 'Śama' is the control of the desires that disturb the mind from within. Mind should be disturbed neither from the outside world nor from the world within. Such a mind alone gains the tranquillity.

विषयेभ्यः परावृत्तिः परमोपरतिर्हि सा ।
सहनं सर्वदुःखानां तितिक्षा सा शुभा मता ॥७॥
Viṣayebhyah parāvṛtṭiḥ paramoparatirhi sā
Sahanam Sarvaduḥkhanām titikṣā sā śubhā matā (7)

Verse 7

Turning away completely from all sense objects is the height of *Uparāti* and the patient endurance of all sorrow or pain is known as *Titikṣā* which is conducive to happiness.

That condition of the mind when it does not run to and revel in the sense objects because it has been withdrawn from those fields is called *Uparāti*. In *Uparāti* the mind is withdrawn completely from its usual play in the world of objects. The mind is neither disturbed by desires because of the cultivation of 'Śama' nor agitated by the stimuli coming from the outer world because of the cultivation of 'Dama'. This quietude of the mind is called '*Uparāti*'. *Uparāti* is a pre-requisite not only in the spiritual field but also in the secular fields to achieve anything worthwhile. Any intellectual work demands

such a state of mind. So in order to work with the mind and intellect, the mind has to be trained not to get disturbed. This capacity is us to shut off at will the outer stimuli reaching the mind, and the power by which we prevent the desires from disturbing the mind is called *uparāti*. Even when the mind is not disturbed from the outer world or from the inner world, the mind in concentration can again be disturbed and its energies dissipated by several pin-pricks natural to life. When such pin-pricks come we should have enough stamina in us to lift ourselves above these. These disturbances are at our feet only and we should never allow our minds to be disturbed by them. This capacity to endure silently these vicissitudes of misfortunes and suffer them silently is called *Titikṣā*. The large-heartedness to suffer the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the whips and scorns of time, the insolence of office and the law's delay and the capacity to overlook them and then to rise above them is called *Titikṣā*.

निगमाचार्यवाक्येषु भक्तिः श्रद्धेति विश्रुता ।
चित्तैकार्यं तु सल्लक्ष्ये समाधानमिति स्मृतम् ॥८॥

Nigamācāryavākyaṣu Bhaktiḥ Śraddheti Viśrutā
Cittaikāgryam tu Sallakṣye Samādhānamiti Smṛtam (8)

Verse 8

The renowned '*Śraddha*' is to have full and implicit devotion in the sayings of the Scriptures and the Preceptor. To keep the single pointed mind constantly on the Truth, the Goal, is known as '*Samādhāna*'.

Śraddha is devotion to the '*Veda*'s and the teacher. '*Veda*'s stand for the printed books, the indirect knowledge. The *Ācārya* or the teacher stands for the direct knowledge. So *Śraddhā* is faith and devotion in direct knowledge as well as in the indirect knowledge. Devotion, love and total commitment to learn and assimilate and live that knowledge is called *Śraddhā*. When a boy loves a girl, he constantly thinks of her, and identifies with her. When she is unhappy, he is unhappy, when she is happy, he is happy. He comes to live in her. Similarly when a seeker gets devotion for the ideas described in the text book and to the ideas given out by the teacher, he tries

to assimilate them by repeatedly remembering them and learning to identify with those ideas. This capacity to assimilate the ideas contained in the Śāstra and those given by the teacher and thereafter to have a chastened view-point is called *Śraddhā*. All thoughts moving in one tip, all thoughts converging to a focus, which is none other than the Reality or the Lord, is called *Samādhāna*. The capacity to concentrate and contemplate upon the truth constantly and continuously and thereby to achieve the quietude of the mind is called *Samādhāna*. In short *Samādhāna* is the condition of the mind when the thoughts flowing through the mind get focussed on the one and the only Reality.

संसारबन्धनिर्मुक्तिः कथं स्यान्मे दयानिधे ।
 इति या सुदृढा बुद्धिः वक्तव्या सा मुमुक्षुता ॥९॥
Samsārabandhanirmuktiḥ katham syañme dayānidhe
Iti yā Sudṛḍhā buddhiḥ vaktavyā sā mumukṣutā (9)

Verse 9

“Oh ! Ocean of Mercy, how can the liberation from this world- and its bondage, come to me” such deep desire for liberation is termed *MUMUKṢUTĀ*.

The first line of the stanza should be put in quotation. It poses a question as to how, I, a limited entity can completely liberate myself from the bondage created in my personality by the *samsāra* which is the ever changing world of matter around me, the BMI. Temporary liberation can be gained in sleep. In sleep we come to experience complete liberation from the entanglements of the experiences of the waking state, from the play of matter. What we want here is total liberation from the realm of matter, which is ever changing. How can I get this total liberation? How am I to get complete freedom from the entanglements of my own flesh, my own mind and the intellect? O Lord! How can I get it? When will I gain this total liberation? This continuous anxiety in the mind, this burning passionate demand for release of our personality from our body, mind and intellect, this extremely firm conviction is called *MUMUKṢUTĀ*. This is the hunger for liberation.

उक्त-साधन-युक्तेन विचारः पुरुषेण हि ।
 कर्तव्यो ज्ञानसिद्धयर्थम् आत्मनः शुभमिच्छता ॥१०॥

Ukta-sādhana-yuktena vicārah puruṣeṇa hi
Kartavyo jñānasiddhyartham ātmanah śubhamicchata (10)

Verse 10

Endowed with the above qualifications, one, wishing for goodness, should take up the Enquiry for the purpose of gaining knowledge.

The one who has all these qualifications or predispositions of the mind, i.e. the one who has developed *Viveka*, *Vairāgya*, the six-fold qualifications, and *Mumukṣutā* in full degree, is the fittest person. But a seeker cannot have at a time all of these qualifications in the fullest degree. He must struggle hard to develop these qualifications in his mind. These are the right adjustments necessary in our personality. Only when the seeker develops these qualifications does he become fit to enquire into the nature of the Reality. Those who wish well by themselves must cultivate these qualifications and start enquiring into the nature of the Reality. To gain cultural beauty one should cultivate these six qualifications and then enter into the path of enquiry, the path of self-analysis and investigation in the process of contemplation. Right from now the teacher is trying to indicate as to what this enquiry is? How is the seeker to go on with this enquiry?

नोत्पद्यते विना ज्ञानं विचारेणान्यसाधनैः ।
 यथा पदार्थभानं हि प्रकाशेन विना क्वचित् ॥११॥

Notpadyate vina jñānam vicareṇānyā-sāadhanaiḥ
Yathā padārthabhānam hi prakāśena vinā kvacit (11)

Verse 11

Just as perception of things cannot be without light, so too, the dawn of knowledge is impossible without enquiry.

Dawn of knowledge is impossible without right enquiry. In Hindu religion there are hundreds of methods like *Japa*, *Tapa*, *Dhyāna*,

Meditation etc. All these are 'sādhanā's, no doubt, are methods for self-revelation, but without the enquiry the right apprehension, the final realization cannot come. The final knowledge or wisdom, of what exactly is the reality of life, what exactly is my own real nature, without a knowledge of which I cannot keep right contact with the world outside? The reality of life cannot be understood by any other method, other than right enquiry. All other methods may help one to develop the equipments of enquiry. But without this enquiry, knowledge cannot be gained. Just as the knowledge of the objects of the world outside, can never be had without light, so too without enquiry into the *Ātman*, the Self cannot be apprehended. It is not merely because of the light that the object is apprehended. Suppose I miss my purse. Though I search for it everywhere in the darkness I cannot get it. When I bring a torch and flash it on the table I see my purse there. For me to see the purse, the purse must exist and it should be illumined by light, then only will I be able to see it. The purse was all the time lying on the table, but I was unable to see it because it was covered by darkness. The light dispelled the darkness. The purse which was already there reveals itself to me in the presence of light. Similarly the *Ātman*, the Self is already in our personality, but at this moment it is covered by and enveloped by the mental agitations called ignorance. Without right enquiry, ignorance cannot be removed. Where ignorance is removed, the knowledge of the Reality shines by itself.

कोऽहं कथमिदं जातं	को वै कर्ताऽस्य विद्यते	
उपादानं किमस्तीह	विचारः सोऽयमीदृशः	॥१२॥
<i>Koham kathamidam jātam</i>	<i>ko vai kartāsyā vidyate</i>	
<i>Upādanam Kimastiha</i>	<i>vicārah so'yamidṛśah</i>	(12)

Verse 12

Who am I? How is this world created? Who is the creator? What is the material cause for this? This is the way of enquiry.

The teacher is telling us how we should start enquiring. This enquiry was preceded by tuning up of the mind. Then the enquiry should start thus: who am I? Who is experiencing this world outside? Is it the body, or the mind or the intellect or is it something other

than these equipments? Who is the one in me who is using these equipments? How are all beings born? How is the world of objects born? Who is the creator of all these? Who created the equipments of the BMI? Why have I come in midst of these various forms of OET? For what purpose did I come here? Is there a creator for this universe? If there is a creator, and the creator has created this world, from what material cause has the creator created this universe? For the creation of anything there must be three causes, the material cause, the instrumental cause and the efficient cause. In the case of a pot, mud is the material cause, the wheel, the instrumental cause and the potter, is the efficient cause. So too what is the material cause for this creation? What is the instrumental cause and what is the efficient cause? Without this kind of enquiry wisdom cannot be gained.

नाहं भूतगणो देहः नाहं चाक्षणस्तथा ।
 एतद्विलक्षणः कश्चिद् विचारः सोऽयमीदृशः ॥१३॥

Nāham Bhūtagaṇo dehaḥ nāham cākṣaṇastathā
Etadvilakṣaṇaḥ kaścid vicāraḥ so'yamīdrśaḥ (13)

Verse 13

I am not this body, the bundle of elements, nor am I the senses, I am something other than these. This is the way of enquiry.

Dawn of wisdom is impossible without right enquiry. The four questions of the earlier verse set the direction in which our enquiry should take place and this is called contemplation. These questions are answered in the following few verses. It appears as though Śāṅkara himself is the enquirer. The first question 'Who am I' is answered in this verse. This answer has come as a result of deep contemplation. I cannot be the body because the body is made up of five elements (*bhūtagaṇaḥ*). How can I be the body which is perishable, being made up of Calcium, Carbon and Phosphorous? The experiencer in me, the essential Life in me is constant, but the body is changing, perishing. I am the feeler of such modifications and body is the object. The subject and object cannot be the one entity. I cannot be the sense organs also, because these are the different parts of the body and also these are the instruments through which

I get the external stimuli. Since I am the subject and the body and sense organs are objects, I cannot be the body. I am the user of the body and the sense organs, just as the farmer is user of the sickle. The farmer is not the sickle and so too the body, the sense organs which are my instruments cannot be myself. I am different from the body and the sense organs. This is the process of our contemplation or enquiry.

अज्ञानप्रभवं सर्वं ज्ञानेन प्रविलीयते ।
 संकल्पो विविधः कर्ता विचारः सोऽयमीदृशः ॥१४॥

Ajñānaprabhavam sarvaṃ jñānena pravilīyate
Saṅkalpo vividhaḥ kartā vicāraḥ so'yamīdṛśaḥ (14)

Verse 14

All this, born out of ignorance, is dissolved at the dawn of knowledge. The various desires form the doer of action. This is the way of the enquiry.

The second question in the enquiry is answered in this verse. The second question is 'How is this pluralistic phenomenon born?' How is it I am perceiving this phenomenal world? The answers are given in this verse. All these are born out of ignorance. The non-apprehension of the Reality has brought about the misapprehension of the ghost. This is the trick of the mind. When the intellect is not judging correctly, the mind will start its own projection. In my stupidity and ignorance, my mind imagines and projects a world according to my existing `vāsanā's. When the right knowledge dawns this pluralistic world projected by the mind disappears completely. In the knowledge of the post, the misconception of the ghost completely disappears. The post is all the time there, but I do not apprehend it. It was superimposed by my ignorance. When the torch-light illumined the post, the ghost was completely eliminated. This is the trick of the mind. Similarly, in my ignorance of my spiritual glory, I project a world of plurality and identify with it, and hence I become the perceiver, feeler, thinker, the limited ego, the sufferer of the Saṁsāra.

The enquiry is then directed towards - who the creator of this world is? Is there anyone who sits above the cloud manufacturing

the pluralistic world? Bhagvān Śāṅkara answers that the creator is You, You alone, you, identifying with the mind and its imagination create this world. In the example of the ghost and the post, the agitations of the mind created the ghost and in the same way your own agitations of the mind created this agitated world. When the agitations are ended, the world is no more seen, as in deep sleep. Where there is no mind there is no world.

एतयोर्यदुपादानम् एकं सूक्ष्मं सदव्ययम् ।
यथैव मृद्घटादीनाम् विचारः सोऽयमीदृशः ॥१५॥

Etayoryadupādānam

ekam sūkṣmam sadavyayam

Yathaiva mṛdghaṭādinām

vicārah so'yamīdṛśah (15)

Verse 15

'As the clay is the material cause for mud-pots, so too, the one Immutable, Subtle Existence (Reality) is the material cause for these two (ignorance and desire)'. This is the way of the enquiry.

The fourteenth stanza answered the 2nd and 3rd questions. The fourth question is : What is the material cause with which this universe is created by the creator? The non-apprehension (āvaraṇa) or the ignorance of the Reality, gives rise to the mis-apprehension (*vikṣepa*), the agitations of the mind with which the pluralistic phenomenal world has been projected. Of these two, the material from which these have been projected, without which the ignorance and its effect would not have been possible, should be the material cause. There must be an immutable Existence which is one without a second, which is subtle (that which is not comprehended by the mind and intellect). There should be a cause for this ignorance and the consequent agitations of the mind and that cause should be Pure Existence. This is because, as long as ignorance exists, the agitations exist. Existence is common in all of them. Since the world of plurality exists, there should be a cause for it. Existence is common in all things and beings. Mud is the material cause for all pots that have come from mud and so the pots exist in mud, and when the pots are broken, there is mud alone. Mud alone is the one reality in all the pots. Similarly there is one Immutable Existence which itself has become the ignorance and agitations of the mind. In *Viveka-*

cūḍāmaṇi it is said, the ignorance is nothing but the mind. So the ignorance and the agitation of the mind are different expressions of the Consciousness. Pot, Plate, cup, jug etc., are all different forms of mud, and are nothing but mud alone. So too, this Reality, the Existence which expresses itself in different forms is the *avidya* or ignorance as well as the agitations of the mind. This is the method of enquiry.

अहमेकोऽपि सूक्ष्मश्च	ज्ञाता साक्षी सदव्ययः	
तदहं नात्र संदेहः	विचारः सोऽयमीदृशः	१६
<i>Ahameko'pi sūkṣmaśca</i>	<i>jñātā sāksī sadavyayah</i>	
<i>Tadaham nātra samdehah</i>	<i>vicārah so'yamīdṛśah</i>	(16)

Verse 16

'I am One indeed, the Subtle, the Knower, Immutable Reality (Existence.), The Witness. So undoubtedly I am That (*Brahman*)'. This is the way of Enquiry.

Two verses earlier it was said that 'I am not the body and the sense organs, but am something other than them all. This pluralistic phenomenal world has been created because of my not-knowing my Real Nature, which says I am something other than the body and the sense organs'. This ignorance and the consequent agitations spring from the one Great Reality and the same Reality itself is the Ignorance and the various agitations and also the world of objects. Then who am I? Certainly I cannot be the mind and its agitations, I cannot be my own ignorance, because I know my ignorance and hence the knower is different from the known. So I am the One (*eka*), Subtle (*Sūkṣma*), Knower (*jñāta*), Witness (*Sāksī*), the Existence. (*Sat*), Immutable (*Avvyaya*). I am conscious of my mind and intellect and its agitations. I am conscious of the world of objects around me. If I am conscious of them, I am the knower of them all and hence I am not these. I am the knower of the foolishness in me and hence I am not the fool. This is the method of enquiry and the result of that enquiry leads me to the fact that I am one without a second, the Immutable Reality, Pure Existence. There is no trace of doubt about this conclusion about myself.

आत्मा विनिष्कलो ह्येकः देहो बहुभिरावृतः ।
 तयोरैक्यं प्रपश्यन्ति किमज्ञानमतः परम् ॥१७॥
Ātmā viniṣkalo hyekah deho bahubhirāvṛtaḥ
Tayoraikyam prapaśyanti kimajñānamataḥ param (17)

Verse 17

Ātman is one, indeed, without parts; while the body is made up of many parts. But still they consider these two as one! What more ignorance can there be than this?

It is easy for the teacher to say that I am verily the One, Infinite Reality. But how am I to experience it? How am I to come out of the identification with the body? The only method is to analyse myself, my personality. I have to discriminate between the Self (*Ātma*) and the Non-self (*Anātma*) and then identify myself with the *Ātma* and then laugh at the stupidity that makes me think that I am the *Anātma*. To come out of my stupidity, I have to watch the stupidity and laugh at my own stupidity. Who am I? I am that Self without parts. It is indeed the One *Ātman*, the Light of Consciousness, which is everywhere present equally. It is not divided in Itself. It is all-pervasive, and is not conditioned by anything, but my body is constituted of millions and millions of things. The body has got a shape but the *Ātman* is all-pervasive, formless, eternal. There is no distinction in the One Reality, but the body is constituted of different parts. *Ātman* is ever the same, One Reality at all times, but the body is constantly changing. How then can I recognise myself as this body? More than this, what stupidity can be there in man? Is it not stupidity to say my buffalo is myself!

आत्मा नियामकश्चान्तः देहो बाह्यो नियम्यकः ।
 तयोरैक्यं प्रपश्यन्ति किमज्ञानमतः परम् ॥१८॥
Ātmā niyāmakaścāntaḥ deho bāhyo niyamyakah
Tayoraikyam prapaśyanti kimajñānamataḥ param (18)

Verse 18

The *Ātman*, the Self, is inside and He is the Controller. The body is outside and is controlled. Yet they see identity in them! What more ignorance can there be than this?

Ātman, the Self in me, is the Controller, the Regulator of all the activities of my body, mind and intellect. At all times He is the controller, without Him, the BMI equipments are inactive, When *Ātman* is there, these equipments function. Therefore He is the Governor of these BMI equipments. He is within the body, in as much as he is subtle and the body is gross. He is the One who is functioning through these equipments, just as electricity is within the bulb and functioning through the bulb. Electricity is the controller of the light in the bulb. If electricity is not there, there is no expression of light through the bulb. The body is gross and it is the controller. Just as the bulb is controlled by electricity so too the BMI equipments are controlled by *Ātman*, the Self. But in our stupidity, we misunderstand that the body is the controller. There cannot be a greater stupidity than to conceive this body as the *Ātman*.

आत्मा ज्ञानमयः पुण्यः देहो मांसमयोऽशुचिः ।
तयोरैक्यं प्रपश्यन्ति किमज्ञानमतः परम् ॥१९॥

Ātmā Jñānamayah puṇyah deho māṁsamayo'suciḥ

Tayoraikyam prapaśyanti kimajñānamataḥ param (19)

Verse 19

The Pure Consciousness, *Ātman*, is auspicious, and the fleshy impure body is inauspicious. Yet they see identity in them ! What more ignorance can there be than this?

Ātman is nothing but a mass of Consciousness, knowledge Itself, not knowledge of something. The knowledge of a thing will depend upon the objects. When the consciousness becomes conscious of an object, we say it is the knowledge of an object. When objects are removed, It is Pure Consciousness. When light is illumining an object, it is called the illumined object. When the object is removed, the light is Pure Light. Light reflecting upon the object makes the object illumined. When all the objects are removed, the light becomes Pure Light. Similarly, knowledge is, when I am conscious of an object. This is called the knowledge of an object. Knowledge of an object

is knowledge conditioned by the object. But when the object is removed, it is Pure knowledge itself. Similarly *Ātman*, the Self is the illuminator in us, who illumines the objects, emotions and thoughts, and He is the Knowing Principle. It is Auspicious (*Punya*). It has no sorrows and tribulations of life. It has no death or disaster or change. But body is ever changing, perishing, decaying. The body is only a packet of filth, growing or decaying. It is full of holes and hence not holy. No part of the body is holy. It is full of filth. From birth to death, we carry only this filth. But *Ātman* is the holiest of the holy. In reality we are the holiest of holy, and it is utter stupidity to call ourselves as the body, which is the packet of filth. To call myself as the body is the height of ignorance.

आत्मा प्रकाशकः स्वच्छः देहस्तामस उच्यते ।
 तयोरैक्यं प्रपश्यन्ति किमज्ञानमतः परम् ॥२०॥

Ātmā prakāśakah svacchah dehastāmasa ucyate

Tayoraikyam prapaśyanti kimajñānamataḥ param (20)

Verse 20

The *Ātman*, the Illuminator is absolutely pure and the body, the illumined is inert. Yet they see identity in them! What more ignorance can there be than this?

Ātman is the illuminator (*prakāśaka*). It is in the light of Consciousness, I become conscious of all my experiences. My perceptions, the objects around me, my emotion and the thoughts are illumined by this Light of Consciousness, without which experiences are not possible. The sense organs and the mind and intellect will become dead matter, in His absence. The Self is the Purest of the Pure, meaning, it is not contaminated by any '*vāsanā*'s. The agitations created in the mind by the '*vāsanā*'s do not affect Him, whereas He is the illuminator of such agitations. He is ever pure. But the body is inert (*tāmasic*) and has no light of its own. It is inert and insentient like a pot. It is impure. Hence, a fool alone can recognise and misunderstand the one for the other. You cannot mistake a piece of charcoal for a piece of diamond. But a chemist sees it as one alone. But you cannot misunderstand it because so much of difference is there between a diamond and a piece of charcoal. Similarly the nature of the *Ātman* and the nature of the

body are far different and distinct from each other and still if one considers the Self as the body, can there be a greater ignorance than this?

आत्मा नित्यो हि सद्रूपः देहोऽनित्यो ह्यसन्मयः ।
 तयोरैक्यं प्रपश्यन्ति किमज्ञानमतः परम् ॥२१॥
Ātmā nityo hi sadrūpaḥ deho'nityo hyasanmayah
Tayoraikyam prapaśyanti kimajñānamataḥ param (21)

Verse 21

Verily *Ātman* is Eternal and of the nature of Ever Existence; and the body is transient and non-existence. Yet they see their identity. What more ignorance can there be than this?

The *Ātman*, the Self, the Light of Consciousness in me is Eternal. It is present in the past, present and future. It has neither beginning, nor an end. It remains as One at all times. It is not conditioned by time and space. That which is conditioned by time is only the intellect. The concept of time starts only from the intellect. The Consciousness which illumines the time which is in the intellect must be other than the time and the intellect, and hence not conditioned by time or the intellect. *Ātman* is '*sadrūpa*', that which remains as pure Existence, in all the periods of time, the past, the present and the future. But the body is ephemeral (*anitya*) never remaining the same. Even in a short period of time the body goes through several mutations; the catabolism and the metabolism go on in it. The old cells die away and the new cells are formed. The body is not real, it is unreal (*asat*). '*Asat*' is that which in the waking condition is there but that which is not there in the dream and deep sleep conditions. Only in the waking condition, and that too only when I am identifying myself with it, that the body exists for me. Hence the body is unreal and it is constantly changing. Still if I recognise this body as *Ātman*, the Self, can there be a greater ignorance than this?

आत्मनस्तत्-प्रकाशत्वम् यत्-पदार्थविभासनम् ।
 नाग्न्यादि-दीप्तिवद्-दीप्तिः भवत्यान्ध्र्यं यतो निशि ॥२२॥

Ātmanastat - prakāśatvaṃ yat-padārthāvabhāsanam
Nāgnyādi-dīptivad-dīptih bhavatyāndhyaṃ yato niśi (22)

Verse 22

The light of the *Ātman* illumines everything. But Its light is not like that of fire, etc, because in spite of Its light there is darkness at night.

The knowledge of objects (*padārtha Avabhāsanam*) is possible only because of the Self, the Light of Consciousness in us. It is in this light of Consciousness that we are aware of the objects of the world. The objects are there, the sense organs are there, but still something else should be there behind them to be aware of the sense objects which are in front of me. Mere presence of objects and eyes are not sufficient to see an object and to be aware of it. A dead man cannot see, though his eyes are there and though the objects are there in front of his eyes. Behind the eyes, there should be the mind and behind the mind, there should be the Light of Consciousness. I am aware of the objects when I am conscious of them. So to apprehend anything through the sense organs, the Light of Consciousness is essential and without this no perception is possible. The illuminator of objects, emotions and thoughts is the *Ātman*, in whose light we are aware that we are happy or unhappy. The one who illumines these goings-on (*vṛttis*) is the *Ātman*, the Consciousness. This light of consciousness which illumines our experiences is not like the light of fire. The light of the fire can illumine only objects that are there but the light of Consciousness also illumines objects that are not there, for we do become aware that the objects are not there. It is the light of Consciousness that illumines for us not only light but also darkness. When a room is dark we are aware it is dark. The awareness of the darkness is because of the Light of Consciousness, this Divine Light is the one which is not opposed to darkness whereas this Light of Consciousness, this Divine Light is the one which is not opposed to light as well as darkness. This Consciousness is the awarer in me who brings to me the awareness of things that exist and things that do not exist. He is the light of all lights; he is the Eternal Light. This Light of consciousness illumines for me the absence of objects in my deep sleep. So this Consciousness is the Light that is present in my waking, dreaming and deep sleep states and it is eternally present.

देहोऽहमित्ययं मूढः धृत्वा तिष्ठत्यहो जनः ।
ममायमित्यपि ज्ञात्वा घटद्रष्टेव सर्वदा ॥२३॥

Deho'hamityayam mūḍhaḥ dhṛtva tiṣṭhatyaho janah
Mamāyamityapi jñātvā ghaṭadrasṭeva sarvadā (23)

Verse 23

Though always knowing this body as 'This is mine' ... like a pot... an ignorant person remains deluded in the idea that 'I am the body'.

Through an illustration Śaṅkara urges us to understand and assert that we are not the body but the *Atman*, the Self, the Supreme Consciousness. Just as I say that this particular object is mine, so too constantly I say that this body is mine. Even a child and even the illiterate fool knows that the body is his. If my pot is broken, even if it is a tragedy I do not go to a doctor and complain to him about my tragedy, for I am separate from my pot. When I say this is my body, my mind, my intellect, they are not me, but they belong to me. Just as the buffalo, the pot, the house belong to me so too these BMI equipments belong to me, they are not myself. The body is not me, but belongs to me. But still the unthinking fool takes his body for himself even though he too declares that the body is his. Because this is my body, my body should be different from me. But the stupidity is that people still identify with the body and say they are the body. When my buffalo has dysentery I do not say I am suffering from dysentery. But when something happens to my body I say it has happened to me. Is this not stupidity at its worst? So the final conclusion is that I am not the body, but it is only my vehicle; I am the proprietor of it, and I can use it whenever I want it.

ब्रह्मैवाहं समः शान्तः सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणः ।
नाहं देहो ह्यसद्रूपः ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः ॥२४॥

Brahmaivāham samah śāntah saccidānanda-lakṣaṇah
Nāham deho hyasadrūpah jñānam-ityucyate budhaiḥ (24)

Verse 24

'I am That *Brahman*, the Ever-equanimous, Tranquil, and of the nature of Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss; and not this body, the unreal.' This, the wise call as real Knowledge.

If I am not the body, who am I, am I a Zero?. No, the wise people who have experienced the real nature of themselves have declared it to be *Brahman*. This is the final Knowledge to be gained in life. At this moment we have got the knowledge of ourselves that we are the physical body. It is because of this knowledge that I get the knowledge that I am the son of so and so, the husband of so and so, that I am a man, I am a woman etc. These are only my physical flesh and its relationship with others. When I play tennis, identifying myself with the body, I call myself a tennis-player. When I am in my office, I am an officer and not a tennis-player. Similarly with reference to my son, I am a father, and with reference to my wife, I am a husband. If this be so who am I, who is taking all these roles? I am the *Brahman*, the Pure Consciousness and not this body who played different roles identifying with them. I am the Supreme Consciousness, ever present everywhere, which illumines this body equipment. The BMI and their roles constantly change but I am not at all changing. I am the illuminator of the changes of these equipments. The serenity as well as the agitations of the sea are illumined by the Sun, but in the Sun such modifications are not there. Similarly I am the Consciousness which illumines the conditions of the BMI equipments. This awareness in me is the awareness everywhere present. Therefore I am not the BMI but the *Brahman*, the Supreme Consciousness. The pain of the body, the agitations of the mind and the restlessness of the intellect are illumined by me; I am the knower of them, but I am not these modifications. I am unconnected with all these problems of these equipments. I am the ever-peaceful, Serene *Brahman*, the Pure Consciousness. I am in nature, Pure Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. This Knowledge of my real nature is real Knowledge. This is what the wise seers declare.

निर्विकारो निराकारः	निरवद्योऽहमव्ययः	
नाहं देहो ह्यसद्रूपः	ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः	२५
<i>Nirvikāro nirākārah</i>	<i>niravadyo'hamavyayah</i>	
<i>Nāham deho hyasadrūpaḥ</i>	<i>jñānam-ityucyate budhaiḥ</i>	(25)

Verse 25

'I am the formless, changeless, and without any blemish, and undecaying; and I am not this body, the unreal'. This, the wise call as real Knowledge.

I, the Pure Consciousness is without any modifications. Since I am all-pervading, formless, shapeless I do not go through any modifications. Form means limitations. But I am limitless. This body has a form because there is space around it. Since other bodies also exist in space around this body, this body limits the other bodies and the other bodies limit this body. Space has no form and it is everywhere. So too Consciousness has no form and it is present everywhere. When water gets identified with the bottle it gets a form. So too when this I, the Consciousness identifies with the physical body it seems to take a form. Since Consciousness has nothing to limit it, it is formless (*nirākāra*). I, the Self, am free from all kinds of blemishes (*niravadya*). In Me, the Self, there is no trace of imperfection. The '*vāsanā*'s, of the mind and intellect equipment do not affect me, the Self. I am the illuminator of such '*vāsanā*'s. The world of objects cannot limit Me at any time. I am Pure Consciousness, all-pervading, I am ever-immaculate. Just as the waker is not affected by any kind of blemishes in his dream so too when I wake up to this Great Reality none of the blemishes of this imperfect world can ever touch Me. I am Immutable, I am the Pure Consciousness.

निरामयो निराभासः	निर्विकल्पोऽहमाततः	
नाहं देहो ह्यसद्रूपः	ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः	॥२६॥
<i>Nirāmayo nirābhāsaḥ</i>	<i>nirvikalpoḥam ātataḥ</i>	
<i>Nāhaṁ deho hyasadrūpaḥ</i>	<i>jñānam-ityucyate budhaiḥ</i>	(26)

Verse 26

I am devoid of all diseases, without any appearance, without any modification, and all pervading; and I am not this body, the unreal. This is called real Knowledge by the wise.

I am undecaying, deceaseless, and sorrowless. Sorrow comes when the mind is expecting something and is not getting it. When the things

get destroyed we get sorrow. The mind is that which demands things to complete itself. In Pure Consciousness there is no such desire or any acquisition; it is beyond any kind of destruction and therefore, it is beyond all *māyā* or sorrow. In the *Ātman* there is no kind of delusory misconception (*nirābhāsa*) from which all sorts of desires can spring. When misconceptions come, desires start and desires crop up, agitations start in the mind. None of the desires of the mind are Mine, the Pure Consciousness. I am full and all-pervading, and not this limited body, mind or intellect. All the lust, greed, passion are of the mind and not of Mine, the Pure Consciousness. I am full and all-pervading, and so I am neither body, nor the mind nor the intellect. I have awakened from this dream of stupidity into the greater wisdom. Wise men declare that this moment of awakening or realisation is real wisdom.

निर्गुणो निष्क्रियो नित्यः नित्यमुक्तोऽहमच्युतः ।
नाहं देहो ह्यसद्रूपः ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः ॥२७॥

Nirguṇo niṣkriyo nityaḥ nityamukto'ham acyutaḥ

- *Nāhaṁ deho hyasadrūpaḥ jñānam-ityucyate budhaiḥ* (27)

Verse 27

I am without any qualities, and actionless, eternal and ever liberated, and I am immutable. And I am not the body, which is unreal. This is known as real Knowledge by the wise.

The nature of the Self is again described. I, the Self, has no properties. Properties are for chemical substances. All substances in the world are perishable. So if there be an Imperishable Reality, It cannot be a substance, It cannot have properties. All perishable substances have got their own properties. Therefore, Imperishable Reality cannot be a substance and hence cannot have properties. It is the Light of Consciousness that illumines all properties of matter. The deities that we worship have '*guṇa*'s or properties, but the Infinite Consciousness does not have these properties. This great Truth has no activity. But It is the one which is present in all activities. All the movements of the BMI are possible only because of its grace. All the activities in the Universe are expressions of the Consciousness. Action presupposes a limitation. I should

have a body, or a hand to act or to lift a thing. But this Light of Consciousness is all pervasive, full and hence no action can take place in Him. We act because of thoughts; thoughts are the manifestation of 'vāsanā's. Where there is vāsanā there is action and where there is no vāsana there can be no action. In Ātman there is no vāsanā and hence there can be no trace of action in the Ātman. It is ever liberated (*nityamukta*). It is never conditioned. When you wake up from the dream you realise that the dream was in you and that you were not in the dream. While dreaming you are in the dream and when you wake up all the dream is in you. Similarly the moment you realise this Great Consciousness, you suddenly realise that you were never limited or conditioned and all the seeming conditions were in you and you were not in them. The BMI equipments were in Me, with My grace they were functioning and playing in Me, I was not conditioned by the BMI. I have never fallen into this stupid limitation (*acyuta*). These are not the definitions of the Reality, but only indications or pointers. When the mind is directed towards the meaning of these terms, the mind takes the flight and ends in itself because it can no longer sustain in these realms of experience of the BMI.

निर्मलो निश्चलोऽनन्तः शुद्धोहमजरोऽमरः ।
 नाहं देहो ह्यसद्रूपः ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः ॥२८॥

Nirmalo niścalo'nantaḥ śuddho'ham - ajaro'maraḥ
Nāhaṁ deho hyasadrūpaḥ jñānam-ityucyate budhaiḥ (28)

Verse 28

'I am stainless, immobile, endless, ever-pure, ageless and deathless and not the body which is unreal'. This is called real Knowledge by the Wise.

'Mala' is dirt or stain. A shirt is said to be dirty when something other than the material with which the shirt is made is on it. 'Mala' is 'otherness'. 'Otherness' is plurality -- the pluralistic phenomenal world. *Brahman* is 'Nirmala' because there is nothing other than *Brahman*. Hence it is ever stainless, ever pure.

'Niścala' - *Calanam* is movement. Movement is possible for a

limited thing only. I can move because I am not beyond me. I am a limited creature and therefore, I can move. My finger is limited and beyond both sides of the finger there is space where my finger can move. But within the finger, the finger itself cannot move because within it the finger is everywhere present. I can move to a point where I am not. The *Ātman* is all pervasive and therefore there is no movement in it. Hence it is called 'immobile' (*nīścala*). *Ātman* is 'ananta'-endless - unlimited, infinite.

Śuddha - The *Ātman* is pure (*śuddha*) and holy.

Ajara - Undecaying - Everything in the world is decaying, some slowly, some quickly. So in terms of the decaying ones known to us, *Ātman* is pointed out as the undecaying one.

Amara - Everything in the world is mortal, dying and perishing. Everything changes in itself, taking a new shape. The ending of one shape and the taking of another shape is called death and birth. *Ātman* is said to be deathless, immortal, and hence is called *Amara*.

We have to reflect (do *vicara* on) again and again on all these terms and when the reflection ends in understanding we apprehend and assert *Na'ham deho asad rūpo* - meaning 'I am not this body, which is of the nature of insentiency, inertness and unreality (*asad*). I have to assert that I am the *Ātman* and not the BMI. This is the nature of the Pure knowledge.

One of the Schools of *Budhism* said that according to the *Upaniṣad*'s and the *upanisadic* teacher's explanations 'I am not the body, not the mind, not the intellect, not the objects, emotions, thoughts interpreted by the BMI and so this state of the 'I' is the nature of Reality. They said that this Reality is a non-entity, a zero, for in this all things are negated. This, they thought, was the highest state. So they said *Brahman* is non-existence. Thus '*asad vāda*' started. The school of '*san vāda*' asserts that *Brahman* 'Is'. The 'isness' in objects and beings is *Brahman*. The 'existence' in things is *Brahman*. That is what *vedānta śāstra* postulates. Because of the practice of negation for a long period of time (as is indicated in stanzas 24-28) *Brahman* has come to be cognised as '*asad rūpa*' a state of non-objects, a state of sleep, darkness, night .. a state of nihilism. Śāṅkara took up his pen to blast all philosophies founded

on wrong premises and re-establish the *upaniṣadic* philosophy by showing the fallacy in the wrong premises, and the falsehood in the wrong conclusions of these thinkers.

If the ideas given out in this book are analysed properly and reflected upon carefully we come to the conclusion intellectually that when all the known are negated what is left over is only a total negative quantity. This is taken to be the Reality by the 'Asad-vādin's. The followers of these 'Asad-vādin's declared that Reality is non-existence. The third rate followers of these 'Asad-vādin's came to the conclusion that their Master *Buddha* said that there is no God. Thus atheism crept into *Budhism*.

When the author of '*Aparokṣānubhūti*' says that non-existence is the only Reality he means that the state of Perfection is a condition when the known varieties of existence are not there. This state is a state of Pure Existence. But *Budhists* mis-read and misunderstood this state and so declared that God is not there and that non-existence is the Reality and that nihilism alone is. Hence *Śāṅkara* had to destroy this wrong conclusion and hence this assertion.

स्वदेहे शोभनं सन्तम् पुरुषाख्यं च संमतम् ।
किं मूर्खं शून्यमात्मानम् देहातीतं करोषि भोः ॥२९॥

Svadehe śobhanam Santam puruṣākhyam ca sammatam

Kim mūrkhā śunyam ātmānam dehātītam karoṣi bhoḥ (29)

Verse 29

O Fool! Why do you imagine that the Self which is accepted (by *Śruti*) as *Puruṣa*, the Auspicious, which is in and yet beyond the body, to be a mere void and non-existent?

In the earlier stanza the nature of the Self is only said as '*nirvikāra*' -free from modifications, '*nirākāra*' without form, '*niravadya*' without any blemishes, '*avyaya*' immutable. Similarly all other words describe the nature of the *Ātman*, The Self. These are the processes of negation. In the preceding stanzas all possible qualities and properties are all denied in the Pure Absolute Self. It is natural for an intellectual student to come to the conclusion that the Absolute Self is total negation - a Zero -- a total negation of everything that exists and is perceived. This Reality, is present in your own body,

not somewhere above the clouds, but right here in your own body (suadeha -- in one's own body) and it is ever effulgent and auspicious (*śobhanam*). It is the source of all light in which you understand your body, your thoughts, your emotions. It is the Light of Consciousness which is in yourself. It is ever existent (*santam*). It is said to be the *Puruṣa* (*puruṣākhyaṁ*) It is accepted by the *Upaniṣadic Rṣi*'s (*sammataṁ*) and also acceptable to the Scriptures. In his own body, everyone is experiencing constantly the existence of the principle light, in which light alone everything is apprehended. The Scriptures speak of the *Puruṣa* and the *Prakṛti - Prakṛti*, the matter, the vehicle and *Puruṣa*, the Principle of existence. Even though this is within the body, it is beyond the body, though we can contact it within the body it is not limited by the body and hence it is *dehātīta*. This consciousness which is within the body, mind and intellect is also present everywhere at all times and so it is *dehātītam*'. Śaṅkara here is very impatient with those who refuse to see the Self which is self-evident. "*Paṣyannapi na paṣyati mūdhah*". 'Though endowed with sight you are not seeing it'. This disgust in Śaṅkara is the loving disgust for that person who having seen that state of Existence, still is not entering into it. He has come to a point where he has negated everything, but is refusing to understand that there is a Consciousness that knows the negation of everything. The Self is the Knowing Principle which knows the positive existence of the Non-existent. O Fool! Why are you calling this Truth which is self-evident in yourselves a *Śūnya*. When everyone has an existence in one's own self, how can one say that it is a zero?

स्वात्मानं शृणु मूर्खं त्वम् श्रुत्या युक्त्या च पुरुषम् ।
 देहातीतं सदाकारम् सुदुर्दशं भवादृशैः ॥३०॥

Svātmānaṁ śṛṇu mūrkhā tvam śrutya yuktyā ca pūruṣam

Dehātītaṁ sadākāraṁ sudurdarśaṁ bhavadrśaiḥ (30)

Verse 30

Please understand, Oh! Ignorant one, from the Scriptures and by reasoning, that the *Puruṣa*, the Self is beyond the body, is of the very nature of existence, and it cannot be comprehended by persons like you.

Śaṅkara does not leave the fool mentioned in the previous stanza high and dry. He calls him a fool only to make him understand the foolishness in his rationale and thereafter to come out of it. Here Śaṅkara explains to him his own Self (*Svātmānam*). He calls him again and again a fool only to wake him up from his drowsiness and then to make him reflect on the Truth. He is not giving here his opinions but explains what the Śruti has said in unmistakable terms. If one does not believe in the authority of the scriptures, he can yet depend on his reasoning, logic and rationale. By logic one can come to the conclusion that the Self is there. Just as electricity is present not only in the bulb but also everywhere in the circuit, so too the Self is present not only in embodiments but also everywhere. It is '*sadākāram*' meaning that it exists everywhere. It is of the nature of Existence. It is the existence in everything. The stone exists, the saint exists, the prophet exists, etc. All of them are different expressions, but in all of them Existence is the common denominator. This ever present Existence in things is its very nature (*sadākāram*). Its qualification is '*Svātmānam*' - one's own Self. This Existence which is present even in the nihilist cannot be denied by him. This Self is called *Puruṣa*. This *Puruṣa* not only transcends the body, but also is immanent and transcendental. This Self is the yoga of the Lord and the glory of his manifestation. Another qualification of this *Ātman* is that it is '*sudurdarśam*' - very difficult to recognise it or visualise it, and for people like this one (*bhavādrś*) it is not easy of comprehension, or experience.

अहं-शब्देन विख्यातः एक एव स्थितः परः ।
 स्थूलत्वान्नैकतां प्राप्तः कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान् ॥३१॥
Ahaṁ-śabdena vikhyātaḥ .eka eva sthitaḥ paraḥ
Sthūlatvānnaikatām prāptaḥ katham syād-dehakaḥ pumān (31)

Verse 31

The Supreme *Puruṣa* which is known as 'I' is one Transcendental Truth. On the other hand the gross bodies are many. How can this body be the Self?

In this verse Śaṅkara is taking up the rational approach. Even if we don't believe in the '*Śāstra*'s (scriptures) and the '*Veda*'s, the

very intellect, that God has given us, will tell us we are not the body, but something beyond the body.

'*Aham Śabdena Vikhyāta*' - It is declared by the term 'I'. When I ask you the question 'who is listening to me?' you will answer 'I'. Ask the question of anyone and the reply will be the same 'I'. Whether it is the father, or the mother, or the brother or the sister, the rich or the poor, the old or the young, the wise or the stupid, saint or sinner all will unequivocally say 'I'. This 'I' is common to all. When you ask me the same question I too will say, 'I' and not 'I, *Svāmi* Chinmayananda', son of so and so, *śiṣya* of so and so, or the Guru of so and so. All these terms Chinmayananda, son, *Sannyāsi*, *Śiṣya*, *Guru* etc. are all definitions of 'I'. With respect to my father I am son, and with respect to my son I am a father, with respect to a house holder I am *Sannyāsi*, with respect to the teacher I am a *śiṣya*, etc. All these words deal with the duties, station in life (*āśrama*), caste (*varṇa*) and professions etc. This I is the universally known one that needs no advertisement. Anywhere around the world 'I' is the same. This '*parā*' - the Supreme Truth is one only. In all bosoms, it is one only. Only the gross expressions are different. Bodies are different, the minds are different, the intellects are different. I designed the 'I' in terms of my body, mind and intellect and you designed your 'I' in terms of your body, mind and intellect. But the 'I' in me and 'I' in you and the 'I' in all are one and the same 'I' the Supreme Self. When that 'I' is apparently conditioned by the BMI it becomes the small with its curvature of crookedness, with a dot above it. Now supposing this 'I' is lengthened vertically making it meet the dot above it, it becomes the capital 'I'. The small 'i' in me is separated from the Supreme Self only because of its crookedness. When this crookedness is removed it becomes the real Supreme Self. When any one asks you about yourself you first start with Supreme Self 'I' and then condition it by qualifications like I am an Engineer, I am a carpenter, I am a Brahmin etc. These are delusions. Who are you? ... 'I'. This is *Jñānam*. This '*Para Puruṣa*' is one only and it is present everywhere. Just as gold bracelets, gold bangles, gold ear-rings, gold necklace, gold-ring are nothing but gold, so too all beings are universally nothing but the Supreme Self, the Reality. The Supreme one functioning through gross forms has become the many. The gross is only an adjunct and not a reality. The separateness is only in the vehicle that carries the 'I'. This 'I' is the Eternal Truth.

अहं द्रष्टृतया सिद्धः देहो दृश्यतया स्थितः ।
 ममायमिति निर्देशात् कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान् ॥३२॥

Ahaṁ draṣṭṛtayā siddhah deho dṛśyatayā sthitah

Mamāyamiti nirdeśāt katham syād-dehakaḥ pumān (32)

Verse 32

By expressions such as 'this is mine' etc., it is clearly established that 'I' the Self is a witness and the body is an object of perception. How can the body be the Self.?

Ask any one 'Who are You?' He will say, 'I am so and so'. Touching his body, ask him 'whose is this'? he will say, 'this is mine', (*Mama Ayam*) - *mama-my Ayam* - this. '*Mama ayam nirdeśāt*'. He declares that 'this is mine', This is a conclusion that he has arrived at intellectually and not because of Scriptures. When I say 'this is my wrist watch', I know I am different from the wrist watch. I am the subject and the wrist watch is the object. When I say this is my body, the 'I' is the subject and the body is the perceived. I am the subject experiencing this body, I am the perceiver of the body and the body is the one perceived by me. The wrist watch is not me. Similarly, the body is not me. I am conscious of my body, my mind, and my intellect and so I am the subject that perceives and the body, mind and intellect are the perceived, the objects of my perception. When I say my buffalo is jumping I am not jumping. Similarly when I say my mind is jumping I am not jumping. When I say my mind is unhappy, mind alone is unhappy and not I. When I say my intellect is clouded, it is the intellect that is clouded and not I. This 'I' is unaffected by any of the changes that take place in the body, mind or intellect. Thus from pure logic and reasoning we will have to conclude that I am the subject and all that I perceive are different from me. Similarly in me, the *Ātman*, the Self, the 'I' is perceiver, feeler, thinker; perceiving the world of objects, feeling the emotions and thinking the thoughts. Thousands of experiences take place in this world of mine. I am the perceiver of all these experiences and I am not these experiences. I am the illuminator of these experiences. I am the director of these experiences and let me enjoy what I direct. The Director is *Nārāyaṇa*. We are all actors in His picture. You may not like the poverty,

corruption, disaster, etc., but you cannot help it because the Director directs you to do so. The picture that he shows are in great demand. *Nārāyana*, the Director of this world cannot improve this world unless we demand a better world. When the demand is there the Director will have to produce the picture demanded. But ordinarily we confuse ourselves by believing that we are the things that we see. This confusion, this ignorance, this stupidity is called *Māyā*. The description can never be the described. The seer is never the seen. Seek Yourself. You are only what you see, devoid of all that you see as yourself.

अहं विकारहीनस्तु	देहो नित्यं विकारवान्	।
इति प्रतीयते साक्षात्	कथं स्थाद्देहकः पुमान्	॥३३॥
<i>Ahaṁ vikārahīnastu</i>	<i>deho nityaṁ vikāravān</i>	
<i>Iti pratīyate sāksāt</i>	<i>kathaṁ syād-dehakaḥ pumān</i>	(33)

Verse 33

'I' the Self, is changeless and the body is ever changing. This is a fact of direct experience. Therefore, how can this body be the Self?

In the preceding two verses the logic establishing that this body is not the Self was given. Here is a third argument logically given out. This 'I' in me is '*vikāra hīna*'. This I in me is free from modifications. In all stages of my life I am the same Consciousness. In childhood I had one set of experiences, in boyhood another set of experiences, in youth a different set of experiences, in middle age quite a different set of experiences and in old age yet another set of experiences. In all these varied experiences I declared myself as 'I' and 'I' alone. This 'I' remained the same in all experiences. Hence the 'I' is '*avikāravān*', the one without any changes or modifications. Like sunlight this 'I' is changeless, yet illumining the several changes that go on. But the body changes, cell by cell the body is replaced, the mind is replaced and the intellect too is replaced. In and through all changes of the BMI, 'I' am the illuminator never changing, but ever illumining everything. For knowing this 'I' I don't need a *Śāstri*, or a text-book or a scripture. This 'I' is directly known and experienced by everyone. Thus the three stanzas ending with

this one prove beyond doubt that 'I' am the changeless one amidst the ever-changing ones. This is not mere argument but an experience.

यस्मात्परमिति श्रुत्या तया पुरुषलक्षणम् ।
विनिर्णीतं विमूढेन कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान् ॥३४॥

Yasmāt-paramiti śrutyā

tayā puruṣa-lakṣaṇam

Vinirñītaṁ vimūdhena

katham syād-dehakāḥ pumān (34)

Verse 34

The men of wisdom have established the nature of *Puruṣa* by declaring that 'there is nothing higher than the *Puruṣa*'. Then, how can the body be the Self?

From this stanza onwards the Śruti is quoted. '*Yasmāt param nāparam asti kincit*' - *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*. '*Yasmāt*' - from which - '*nāparam*' - there is nothing greater Beyond it. That beyond which, there is nothing greater ever possible is the Pure Consciousness - says the *Upaniṣad*. That is the Supreme, beyond which there is nothing. - These words give us the *Puruṣa Lakṣaṇa*. *Lakṣaṇa* means the definition. The *Puruṣa* is indicated by the words - that beyond which there is nothing - meaning It alone exists in it. In Him *advaita* alone exists - oneness alone exists and not '*dvaita*'- duality. There is no trace of matter in Him. The Spirit is nothing but Spirit alone. Just as in waking there is no trace of the dream so too in the spirit there is no trace of the matter. Just as on waking, the dream merges with the waking and the dreamer merges with the waker, so too in this place of consciousness there is no experience of plurality at all - so says the *Svetasvatāropaniṣad*.

Vimūdhena - by the wise, by those who have left off all their foolishness. The wise conclude that there can be nothing beyond this Spirit, the *Puruṣa*, the Truth. In this *Puruṣa* there is no such thing as *Prakṛti*, the *Puruṣa* alone is the one Reality. So how can you come to understand that his body is the *Puruṣa*?

सर्वं पुरुष एवेति सूक्ते पुरुषसंज्ञिते ।
अप्युच्यते यतः श्रुत्या कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान् ॥३५॥

Sarvaṃ puruṣa eveti *sūkte puruṣa-samjñite*
Apyucyate yataḥ śrutyā *katham syād-dehakaḥ pumān* (35)

Verse 35

In the *PURUṢA SŪKTA* also it is clearly stated that everything in this universe is *Puruṣa* alone. When *ŚRUTI* is also asserting like that, how can the body be the Self?

The *Puruṣa Sūkta* describes in a poetic way the Cosmic Form of the Lord. This *Sūkta* is in the *Rig Veda*. *Puruṣa Sūkta* declares that all these that you are seeing are but the *Puruṣa* - '*Saravaṃ Puruṣa Eva*' - *Puruṣa eva idaṃ Sarvaṃ*'. Not only in the *upaniṣadic* portion of the *Veda's* but also in the *Karma Kānda* portion of the *Veda's* the student is made to chant that the glory of the Lord is that the Lord alone is all these. Everything manifest and unmanifest, moving and non-moving, living and non-living, static and dynamic, finite and infinite, destructible and indestructible is nothing but the *Puruṣa*. If that be the case how can the body be the Self, the Reality?

असंगः पुरुषः प्रोक्तः बृहदारण्यकेपि च |
 अनन्तमलसंश्लिष्टः कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान् ||३६||

Asaṅgaḥ puruṣaḥ proktaḥ *brhadāranyakepi ca*
Ananta-mala-samśliṣṭaḥ *katham syād-dehakaḥ pumān* (36)

Verse 36

Even *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* declares that the *Puruṣa* is totally unattached. How can this body, which is full of impurities, be the Self?

In the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* *Yagnavalkya* tells his wife, '*Asaṅgo Hi Ayam Puruṣa*' - This *Puruṣa* is unattached'. The Great Truth or Consciousness, identifying with the gross body and its function in the gross world, plays about as the waker, and thereafter the same *Puruṣa* gets identified with the subtle body (the mind-intellect) and becomes the dreamer, becoming aware of the dream world. Thereafter when the dream is ended, the same *Puruṣa* becoming one with deep sleep becomes aware of the absence of the objects of the dream world and the waking-world. In and through

all these movements, the experiencer apparently changed to become the waker, dreamer and deep sleeper, but the Consciousness which illumines all these three states of vivid experiences is not conditioned by any of these states. So this *Puruṣa*, the Consciousness is ever unattached, untouched by any of these states. He illumines all the three states. In his Light everything becomes illumined. This Principle of Consciousness that illumines the waking, dream and deep sleep states, is not conditioned, limited and coloured by the objects he illumines in waking and dream states, and by the absence of objects of the waking and dream in the deep-sleep state. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* hence declares that this *puruṣa* is not conditioned by the BMI equipments. So the *Ātman* is immaculate, Pure, without any dirt (*Vāsanās*). In Him there is nothing other than Himself. Its nature is one of Pure Consciousness. But this Physical body is ever contaminated by endless variety of impurities and imperfections. Every bit of the body is ever changing. It is only a bundle of filth. Though the Self illumines this filth, He is not contaminated by it. He ever remains the Holiest of the Holy. This is declared by the great Sage Yagnavalkya - How can the body be the *Ātman*, body and the *Ātman* being ever at variance with each other?

तत्रैव च समाख्यातः	स्वयंज्योतिर्हि पुरुषः	
जडः परप्रकाश्योऽयम्	कथं स्याद्देहकः पुमान्	॥३७॥
<i>Tatraiva ca samākhyātaḥ</i>	<i>svayaṁ-jyotiṛhi pūruṣaḥ</i>	
<i>Jadaḥ paraprakāśyo'yaṁ</i>	<i>katham syād-dehakaḥ pumān</i>	(37)

Verse 37

Again, in the same *Upaniṣad*, it is said that the *Puruṣa* is by nature Ever-Effulgent. How can this inert body which is illumined by other, be the Self?

In the same *Upaniṣad* it has been declared that this *Puruṣa* or Self is Self-Effulgent. It is the source of all light and this source of light is not from any source of light but it is Light Itself. In *Gītā* also the Lord declares, 'It is the Light of all lights - *'Jyotiṣam api tat jyoti'*'. So in all the scriptural texts it is declared that *Ātman* the Self is Light Itself. This light is not like fire, for when fire is not there, there is darkness. This is a Light which makes us aware of

the light as well as darkness. It is with this Light we become aware of the light of the fire, and also of the darkness occasioned by the absence of the light of the fire. It is light by which all of us become conscious of our inner and outer worlds. It is ever present everywhere in all bosoms. When this Light of Consciousness is not there, no outer or inner experience is ever possible. This light is the source of all lights. It is this Light that illumines even the Sun, for we become conscious of the presence of the Sun only with the help of this Light of Consciousness.

It is by the Light of Consciousness I become aware of my perceptions at the sense level, my feelings and emotions at the mental level and my thoughts, evaluations, judgments etc., at the intellectual level. This body is now moving, working, talking and becoming aware of the heat and cold, joy and sorrow, success and failure, praise and blame etc. only because Consciousness is functioning throughout, and not because any light of its own. The body is inert and insentient and has no light of its own, and no knowledge of its own. Once this consciousness stops functioning through this body, the body becomes as inert as a stone. How can this body which is inert be the Conscious entity? Only a fool, because of his lack of correct thinking considers the body as the *Ātman*. The inert body can never be the Pure Consciousness.

प्रोक्तोऽपि कर्मकाण्डेन ह्यात्मा देहाद्विलक्षणः ।
 नित्यश्च तत्फलं भुङ्क्ते देहपातादनन्तरम् ॥३८॥

Prokto'pi karmakāṇḍena hyātmā dehād-vilakṣaṇaḥ
Nityaśca taṭphalaṃ bhukṭe dehapātād-anantaram (38)

Verse 38

Even in the *KARMA-KĀNDA* of the scriptures, it is stated that the Eternal Self is different from the body and it enjoys the fruits of action after the demise of body.

The '*vedas*' are generally divided into two parts: the first part is called the *Karma Kānda* and the later part is called the *Jñāna Kānda*. The *Karma Kānda* portion of the '*veda*'s discusses the various rituals. The *Jñāna Kānda* portion explains the philosophy, the pure path of wisdom or knowledge. the *Karma Kānda* portion has its own distinct

philosophy which is different from the philosophy of the *Jñāna Kānda*. The foreigners get confused when they translate 'veda's into their language. They wrongly think that these two i.e. *Karma Kānda* and *Jñāna Kānda* are two religions. How can the scriptures of two religions be combined into one volume? Can Koran and the Bible be combined into one Book? The *Karma Kānda* and *Jñāna Kānda* are bound together and we call the bound one, the 'Veda's.

In *Karma Kānda* the philosophy is based upon the individual performing the *yajña*, *yaga* etc. And through these rituals the performer purifies himself, and as a reward of his performance he goes to heaven and enjoys immortality for a long period of time. Thereafter he comes back here when the 'apūrva' (the result of good actions) is exhausted. After coming back he once again performs good and noble actions and exhausts his negative 'vāsanā's and as a result of this he goes again to heaven and enjoys the *puṇya* (merit). This is the philosophy of the *Karma Kānda* (*dvaita*-Duality). In *Karma Kānda* the seeker performs the rituals and invokes the grace of the Lord and thus comes to enjoy His Presence. In *Jñāna Kānda* it is stated that by performing *Karma* the seeker purifies his mind, all 'vāsanā's get exhausted and in the peak moment of contemplation the seeker awakens to the plane of Supreme Consciousness. This is *advaita* (Monism). Thus *dvaita* is the basis of *Karma Kānda* and *advaita* is the basis of *Jñāna Kānda*. The champions of *Karma Kānda* will say that mantra-portion of the *Jñāna Kānda* are for mental purification to make the seeker fit for the *Karma Kānda*. The *Jñāna* Champions of *Jñāna Kānda* say that *Karma Kānda* portion of ritualism is meant to purify the seeker's mind which then becomes fit for contemplation on the Infinite Lord. Thus there seems to be a tug-of-war between these two champions.

In fact, so long as desires are there in the mind, *Karma Kānda* alone can help us. If I have a desire to drink milk I must do something physically to get the milk. Merely meditating on milk will not quench my desire for milk. But if I have *vairāgya* (total detachment) for the objects of this world and desire to totally liberate myself from the limitations of my body, mind and intellect, then the path for me is *Jñāna Kānda*. *Jñāna Kānda* discusses the methods by which one can exhaust his desires, remove his agitations of the mind, quieten the mind and get out of the entanglements of matter envelopments. It is the disposition of the mind that determines the path to be taken.

The student at this stage may get a doubt that the teacher is quoting only from the *Jñāna Kānda* portion and not from the *Karma Kānda* portion. To dispel this doubt the teacher here says that even in the *Karma Kānda* it has been stated that the *Ātman* is different from the body. The *Karma Kānda* says that after death the performer of rituals goes to heaven to reap the fruits of noble actions. Here, after death means, after the destruction of the body, Then in that case who goes to heaven? Definitely it is not this physical body. So even *Karma Kānda* points that there is a spirit separate from the physical body. All confusions in this world are because everybody is taking himself to be the physical body. If this misunderstanding is removed then all confusions end. So there is one who is really eternal, who is not the physical body, but is the one who enjoys all the results of the actions whether good, or bad in heaven or hell. This is not only the view of the *Jñāna Kānda* or the *Karma Kānda* but the view in all religions whether it is Hinduism or Christianity or Mohemmedanism. Hence we should shun all efforts of pampering the body. The body is to be done away with here itself.

लिंगं चानेकसंयुक्तम् चलं दृश्यं विकारि च ।
 अव्यापकमसद्रूपम् तत्कथं स्यात् पुमानयम् ॥३९॥

Lingam cānekasamyuktam calam drśyam vikāri ca
Avyāpakamasadrūpam tatkatham syāt-pumān-ayam (39)

Verse 39

Even the subtle body is made up of many parts, unstable, a modification and is an object of perception. It is limited and by nature unreal. How can it be the Self?

The previous stanza gives rise to a doubt. *Ātman* has no movement for it is all-pervasive. Then how can you say that it goes to heaven and enjoys the fruits of its actions? Now the teacher here says that it is not the *Ātman* that goes to heaven but the subtle body that goes to heaven. And the subtle body also is not the Self, the Pure Consciousness. The subtle body (M and I) is unreal, limited, not all-pervasive and inert. It is not available in all the three periods of time-present, past and future. It is ever changing and is not available in sleep. The M and I of the morning is not the same M and I

of the evening in the same individual. The convictions of the present hour are not the convictions of the next hour. It is ever changing. It has only an apparent existence. It is an object of my perceptions and hence it is insentient (jaḍam). I, the perceiver, is different from that, which I am perceiving. The subtle body is made up of seventeen constituents whereas the *Ātman* is one without a second. Hence the ever changing subtle body cannot be the *Ātman*.

एवं देहद्वयादन्यः	आत्मा पुरुष ईश्वरः	
सर्वात्मा सर्वरूपश्च	सर्वातीतोऽहमव्ययः	४०
<i>Evam deha-dvayād-anyaḥ</i>	<i>ātmā puruṣa īśvaraḥ</i>	
<i>Sarvātmā sarvarūpaśca</i>	<i>sarvātīto'ham-avyayaḥ</i>	(40)

Verse 40

Thus, I, the *Puruṣa* am something entirely different from these two bodies. I am the Self of everything, of all forms, beyond everything and Immutable, Lord of the Universe.

In the preceding verses, supported by the great declarations of the Scriptures (*śruti*), using logic, reasoning and intellectual observation the conclusion that the *Ātman* is neither the gross body nor the subtle body was arrived at. This Self, The Great *Puruṣa* is *īśvara*, the Lord, in whose presence all the activities take place. This Self which is other than the gross and subtle bodies, is the Self in all beings and things at all times, in all places. He is the one Self in all, the one Consciousness in me, you and everyone. What we are conscious of, changes from person to person, from time to time, but the Consciousness that illumines these changes is one and the same. Just as the mud can say, 'I am the Self in all pots', Similarly this *Ātman* can say 'I am the Self in all'. The Self in me is the Self everywhere. Matter is nothing but Consciousness in another form, just as ice and steam are nothing but water in another form. So matter is nothing other than Consciousness in grossified form. This Pure Consciousness can be experienced by transcending the BMI equipments. But here the dualists may feel that the Universe has come about from two factors, the *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* (matter and spirit). Both *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are eternal. The dualists point out that Conscious matter is present in the mineral kingdom. When

Ātman, the Self as Life pulsates through the *Mahāt Tatva* (the totality of matter), matter seems to gain life, a sentiency. My finger, which is nothing but Calcium, Carbon, and Phosphorus, moves, I know that the movement is because the finger is pervaded by Life. When Life departs from this finger, the finger begins to decay. Thus this Great Mighty Power which is something other than matter, gives warmth to matter and so matter starts dancing. So the dualists raise the objection that there are two aspects in this universe, the inert matter called *Prakṛti*, and the Dynamic Sentient Consciousness called *Puruṣa*. This is the theme of the following verse.

इत्यात्मदेहभागेन	प्रपञ्चस्यैव सत्यता	
यथोक्ता तर्कशास्त्रेण	ततः किं पुरुषार्थता	॥४१॥
<i>Ityātmadeha-bhāgen</i>	<i>prapañcasyaiva satyātā</i>	
<i>Yathoktā tarka-śāstreṇa</i>	<i>tataḥ kiṁ puruṣārthata</i>	(41)

Verse 41

Thus logically it is clear that granting the division between the Self and the body, there is a reality to the world of plurality. But what purpose is served by this?

You have concluded that the *Ātman*, the Self, and the body, the matter are distinctly different. The dualist also feels that the two are separate but concludes that both are eternal. They aver that both the spirit and matter are real. Body, the matter is as eternal as the Consciousness, the Spirit. So the world of matter is as much eternal as the Pure Consciousness. This is what the Dualists conclude. Even the *Tarka Śāstra* and all philosophies other than *advaita* arrive at the same conclusion. The dualist wants to know what Śaṅkarācārya has proved by these arguments, for that which the dualist has reached Śaṅkara also has reached. This is the objection raised by the dualists. It is the style of the commentator to anticipate and declare the objection of the opponent and then answer it. This in Sanskrit is called '*Khandana Mandana vāda*'. Logical and rational questions from other schools of philosophy are raised and answered with unerring logic, clear insight and subtle perceptions of philosophical depths. Now Śaṅkara starts answering the questions of the opponents.

इत्यात्मदेहभेदेन

देहात्मत्वं निवारितम् ।

इदानीं देहभेदस्य

ह्यसत्त्वं स्फुटमुच्यते

॥४२॥

Ityāṭma-dehabhedena

dehāmatvaṃ nivāritam

Idānīm dehabhedasya

hyasattvaṃ sphuṭam-ucyate (42)

Verse 42

Thus by the differentiation between the body and the Self, the idea that 'the body is the self' is negated. Now the unreality of the body as a separate entity will be explained.

By establishing the clear distinction between the body, the matter and the *Ātman*, the Pure Self, Śāṅkara points out that *Ātman* is something other than the body and that the body is not the *Ātman*.

The body, the world of matter, is not the Pure Self because the body is perishable, inert, ever changing and never constant. But the Self is imperishable, immutable, permanent, constant and eternal. Śāṅkara is resorting to this kind of logic only to take the mind's attention away from the body, from the world of matter. The idea that 'I am the body' is very strong. To wean the individual from the idea that he is the body and to show that he is not the body, this argument is advanced. The body belongs to me, which means that I am other than the body. I am the owner of the body and I dwell in the body. Only to show that the *Ātman*, the Self, is something other than the body Śāṅkara argued thus far. Now he goes to prove that the idea that the Self is separate from the body is not to show that the world of matter as well as the Pure Consciousness are Eternal truths but to take the mind away from the identification with the body. Now Śāṅkara goes to prove that body is also not at all different from Consciousness. The enquiry about the reality of the body itself starts from the following stanza.

चैतन्यस्यैकरूपत्वात्

भेदो युक्तो न कर्हिचित् ।

जीवत्वं च मृषा ज्ञेयम्

रज्जौ सर्पग्रहो यथा

॥४३॥

Caitanyasyaika-rūpatvāt

bhedo yukto na karhicit

Jivatvaṃ ca mṛṣā jñeyam

rajjau sarpa-graho yathā (43)

Because the consciousness is one everywhere, it is improper to attribute distinctions to It. The sense of 'Jīva' is to be understood as a delusion even as the idea of a snake in a rope.

The Pure Consciousness is ever the one without a second, present in you, in me and in all things and beings of the world. There is no distinction in this Consciousness. It is present everywhere and is the same everywhere. The sunlight illumines equally the poor man's cottage and the rich man's mansion. The difference exists only in the objects the sunlight illumines and not in the sunlight. In the same way there are no distinctions in the *Ātman* at any time. Just as there cannot be a holy sunlight, auspicious sunlight, unholy sunlight, so too there cannot be a trace of distinction in the *Ātman* which is one without a second. If the Consciousness, the *Ātman* is one without a second then the individuality that I am the body, I am the mind, I am the intellect, I am the Perceiver, feeler, thinker is false. Just as the waker understands that the dream body, dream mind, dream intellect and the dream PFT are all false for the dream itself is false, so too even the duality we perceive, the PFT we come to cognise, the fact that I am the speaker and you are the listeners are all false from the stand-point of the man of realization rooted in this Consciousness. Just as an individual when he wakes up understands that the dream is false so too when we wake up to this plane of Supreme Consciousness we too will understand that all that we perceived, felt and thought as a limited PFT are all false. At dusk because of dull light we mistake the rope for the snake, so too, because of the dullness occasioned by ignorance we mistake the BMI and the world of matter for the Reality. The serpent in the rope is only a projection of our mind. The snake has no reality at all. So too the *Ātman* alone is the Reality and the world perceived by the BMI is false. The rope alone exists and the snake is an illusion. So too the Pure Consciousness alone exists, and the world perceived is an illusion created by the mind-intellect equipment.

रज्ज्वज्ञानात्क्षणेनैव यद्ब्रह्मज्जुर्हि सर्पिणी
भाति तद्वच्चितिः साक्षाद् विश्वाकारेण केवला

|

॥४४॥

Rajiv-ajñānāt kṣaṇenaiva yadvadrajjurhi sarpiṇī
Bhāti tadvaccitiḥ Sākṣād viśvākāreṇa kevalā (44)

Verse 44

At the very instant of the ignorance of the rope, it appears as a snake, so too, the pure and the Changeless Consciousness Itself appears as the world of plurality because of ignorance.

Not apprehending the rope as the rope, in the dark, when I walk and when suddenly something touches my feet, I jump and cry it is a snake, though it is only a rope. My ignorance of the rope made me misapprehend the rope as the snake. The moment I apprehend the rope the misapprehension that it is a snake disappears. So too, as long as the *Ātman*, the Self, which is the God Principle in us is not understood so long we will recognise that we are the limited entity, the BMI. The non-apprehension of the Reality causes the mis-apprehension of the world of matter. Actually only one homogenous mass of Consciousness exists both within and without. The Pure Consciousness alone appears as the universe, just as the rope appears as the snake to the ignorant.

उपादानं प्रपंचस्य ब्रह्मणोऽन्यन्न विद्यते ।
 तस्मात्सर्वप्रपंचोऽयम् ब्रह्मैवास्ति न चेतरत् ॥४५॥
Upādānam prapañcasya brahmano'nyanna vidyate
Tasmāt-sarva-prapañco'yam brahmaivāsti na cetrat (45)

Stanza 45

The substratum for the whole universe is nothing but *Brahman*. Therefore, the whole universe is *Brahman* and nothing else.

The world is called '*Prapañca*' because it is made up of five elements, space, air, fire, water and earth. The material cause for the gross world of objects and beings is *Brahman* and nothing but *Brahman*. For any creation there must be three causes, the material cause, the instrumental cause and the efficient cause. In the creation of the pot, the mud is the material cause, the wheel is the instrumental cause, and the potter is the efficient cause. The intelligent entity who makes use of the instrumental cause to convert the material cause

into an ultimately created thing is called the efficient cause. The teacher here says that *Brahman* is the material cause for the play of matter and energy which has burst forth into infinite names and forms in the succession of time. Other than the *Brahman*, there is nothing ever possible as the material cause for the entire world of plurality. Before the world was created, there must have been an intelligent creator. Before the world sprouted there was the seed in which there was the possibility of the gigantic tree in the potential form. There cannot be a tree without a seed. So too this universe must have arisen from something other than itself. Supposing the world comes into existence tomorrow, today the world should have been in the Potential condition, as Pure Existence, the material cause. For any creation to come into existence, it should have been in existence in the Potential conditions as the Cause. So the universe has come into being only because it existed as the Potential universe, as the very Cause. This Cause is called *Brahman*. So before creation there should have been only this Cause which is the universe in its potential condition. When we say the world is created, the world becomes the effect.

So the whole world of plurality I am perceiving now is nothing other than *Brahman*, the cause.

Before gold ornaments came into existence there was only gold and from gold, ornaments came into existence. So too all these BMI equipments came into existence from the *Brahman* and *Brahman* is their cause. In as much as the effect is not different from the cause, these BMI equipments are nothing but *Brahman*.

व्याप्यव्यापकता मिथ्या	सर्वमात्मेति शासनात्	
इति ज्ञाते परे तत्त्वे	भेदस्यावसरः कुतः	४६
<i>Vyāpya-vyāpakatā mithyā</i>	<i>sarvam-āmeti Śāsanāt</i>	
<i>Iti jñāte pare tattve</i>	<i>bhedasyāvasaraḥ kutaḥ</i>	(46)

Stanza 46

By the declaration of *Śruti* that 'Everything is *Ātman*' it is clear that the idea of pervading and pervaded is false. When the supreme Reality is known thus, where is the room for differentiation?

The *Śruti* and all the experienced teachers have declared that *Brahman*, the Pure Consciousness pervades the whole universe, and

that the objects and beings of the universe are all pervaded by the *Brahman*. The sugar crystal is pervaded by sugar. The crystal of sugar is nothing other than sugar. In the same way *Brahman* pervades all names and forms of this Universe. Just as sugar-crystals are crystals of sugar we are all crystals of *Atman* and hence the individuality. Hence the BMI equipments are nothing but *Brahman*. At present we recognise the world of plurality and therefore, we accept the world of plurality. For our convenience only, our teacher told us that the world of plurality is pervaded, penetrated by, enveloped by, covered by and clothed by the Infinite Consciousness. In fact the relation as pervader and pervaded itself is false. In fact the one Pure Consciousness alone exists. If this pervader and pervaded relationship had not been there, then in that case there would have been no existence of the teacher and taught. That is why the teacher said that the *Brahman* pervades the universe. The dream is pervaded by the waker; the dream is incorporated in the waking and the waker is ever present in the dream also. The dream is sustained and maintained by the waker's mind only. When the dreamer wakes up the whole of the dream resolves itself in the waker's mind. Similarly this Infinite Consciousness at this moment is said to pervade the whole universe. But when this statement is reviewed from the stand-point of the Non-dual Truth which is one without a second then the statement itself is false. When we awake to the Reality, the distinction between the pervader and pervaded disappears. The universe then is nothing but *Brahman*, the Infinite Consciousness.

श्रुत्या निवारितं नूनम् नानात्वं स्वमुखेन हि ।
 कथं भासो भवेदन्यः स्थिते चाद्वयकारणे ॥४७॥

Śrutyā nivāritam nūnam nānātvaṁ Svamukhena hi
 Katham bhāso bhavedanyaḥ sthite Cādvaya-kāraṇe (47)

Verse 47

Śruti, by its own direct statements has totally negated the multiplicity of the universe. When the Non-dual cause is thus an established fact how can there be anything other than That?

The Śruti's have emphatically denied that the pluralistic world of minerals, mountains, trees, animals and human beings together constituting the world of multiplicity does not exist even as a trace in the Pure Reality. The great seers, saints and sages have

corroborated this with their personal experience. When there is no duality as the devotee and the Lord, how can the devotee say he is experiencing God? When the dream merges itself in the waking how can the waker say that the dreamer is different from the waker. So too when you transcend this place of consciousness and wake up to the plane of God-consciousness, how can you experience duality or multiplicity? This is what all 'Śruti's declare.

दोषोऽपि विहितः श्रुत्या मृत्योर्मृत्युं स गच्छति ।
 इह पश्यति नानात्वम् मायया वञ्चितो नरः ॥४८॥
Doṣo'pi vihitaḥ śrutyā mṛtyormṛtyuṁ sa gacchati
Iha paśyati nānātvam māyayā vancito naraḥ (48)

Verse 48

And also the Śruti has pointed out the mistake of entertaining idea of duality by saying that whosoever, deceived by māyā, sees multiplicity here, goes from death to death.

A deluded individual, who, overcome by ignorance and its consequent non-apprehension, apprehends mis-apprehension and sees plurality in this world. He recognises the plurality because of māyā. Man is confused or cheated by this infinite power called Māyā. Māyā is itself the ignorance and ignorance is caused by 'vāsanā's. Māyā is the total ignorance and avidya is individual ignorance. Because of avidya there is the non-apprehension of Reality. Non-apprehension of Reality is there because of 'vāsanā's and 'vāsanā's give rise to the causal body, and these 'vāsanās project a multiple world of plurality. The avidya or casual body projects a mind and intellect and the mind projects this multiple world. Pushed by our own 'vāsanā's we see a multiple world.

ब्रह्मणः सर्वभूतानि जायन्ते परमात्मनः ।
 तस्मादेतानि ब्रह्मैव भवन्तीत्यवधारयेत् ॥४९॥
Brahmaṇaḥ Sarvabhūtāni jāyante paramātmanah
Tasmādetāni brahmaiva bhavanītiyavadhārayet (49)

Verse 49

All beings are born of *Brahman*, the Supreme Self. Therefore, one should understand that they are essentially *Brahman* alone.

From this verse onwards, the teacher describes that the seeming plurality is nothing but *Brahman* alone. How do you say so? In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, it is said that from *Brahman* everything has come. In *Brahman* everything exists. Into *Brahman* alone everything goes. From the *Paramātman*, the *Brahman*, from that Great Reality, is this multiple universe born. The waves have their birth in the Ocean, are supported by the ocean, exist and play about in the ocean and ultimately dissolve into the ocean. All waves are nothing but the ocean in expression. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* thunders forth that the Great Truth is the one from which everything is born, that in which everything exists, that into which everything goes back. That alone is the ultimate cause, that *Brahman* alone is the Reality. The great Truth must be realised. Based on this statement from the *Śruti*, *Śaṅkara* says here that all these things in this universe have come from *Brahman* and therefore these things and beings are nothing but the *Brahman*. This *Brahman* is to be realised in the mind. But mere understanding will not do. At his moment we know that these things are born from *Brahman*. But all plurality we experience is nothing but the *Brahman* from which all these have come from. Just as the sweetmeats in the different shapes of animals are nothing but sugar and sugar alone, but with different names and varying shapes, so too the myriad multiplicity that we come to cognise in this universe, is nothing but *Brahman* alone. Although we are experiencing plurality, it is nothing but the *Brahman*.

ब्रह्मैव सर्वनामानि	रूपाणि विविधानि च	
कर्माण्यपि समग्रानि	बिभर्तीति श्रुतिर्जगौ	॥५०॥
<i>Brahmaiva Sarvanāmāni</i>	<i>rupāṇi vividhāni ca</i>	
<i>Karmānyapi samagrāṇi</i>	<i>bibhartīti Śrūtirjagau</i>	(50)

Verse 50

The *Śruti* declares that *Brahman* alone shines as different names and forms. All activities are nothing but *Brahman*.

It is an idiom in *Vedānta Śāstra* to indicate the world of objects we perceive, as world of names and forms. Wherever there is a form there is a name, and there cannot be a name without a form. When mud takes a particular shape it gets a name. The cup, the saucer, the milk-pot, the water-jug, the honey-pot etc. are all nothing but clay in different forms and shapes. Each one's name is different from the other. The different shapes of sweet-meat in the shapes of animals, like the dog, cat, camel, lizard, scorpion etc. born out of sugar are nothing but sugar alone. The shape of the cat is different from the shape of the dog and that of the camel is different from that of the lizard. The essence in all these shapes which differ from each other is nothing but sugar. Similarly the common essence in all names and forms of this universe is nothing but Brahman, the Pure Consciousness. The 'Śruti's have declared that even with regard to activities that we do, all the activities from breathing onwards, whether it is divine, human, animal, whether it is noble, criminal or cruel are all sustained by this Great Reality. The matter that constitutes the pluralistic world is nothing but Consciousness grossified and through grossified Consciousness when Consciousness functions, there emerge the living beings. So in this universe there is nothing but this Consciousness. When I function through an angry mind, I am angry and when I function through a quiet mind I become a quiet person. The angry man and the quiet man are all expressions of me only. So too when *Brahman* functions through its own grossified form of matter envelopments, though the envelopments differ from each other, they are all nothing but the Brahman.

सुवर्णज्जायमानस्य सुवर्णत्वं च शाश्वतम् ।
 ब्रह्मणो जायमानस्य ब्रह्मत्वं च तथा भवेत् ॥५१॥

Suvarṇājjāyamānasya suvarṇatvaṃ ca śāśvatam
Brahmaṇo jāyamānasya brahmatvaṃ ca tathā bhavet (51)
 Verse 51

The only permanent factor in all the golden ornaments is gold; so too in all things and beings born of *Brahman* the one permanent factor is their essential nature of *Brahman*.

That which is born out of gold must always remain in gold. It cannot become copper. Even though the naked forms of different

ornaments are different, all of them are in essence nothing but gold. Similarly the entire world of names and forms born out of *Brahman* must be nothing other than *Brahman*. Gold ornaments can never exist other than gold, because they are born out of gold. Similarly in this world, all are nothing but the one Infinite Reality. So all are nothing but *Brahman* alone. The gold chain, the nose-ring, the ear-ring, the ring, the bangle are all gold and gold only. When from them gold is removed what remains is nothing. So from the world of names and forms if *Brahman* is removed what remains is nothing.

स्वल्पमप्यन्तरं कृत्वा जीवात्म-परमात्मनोः ।
योऽवतिष्ठति मूढात्मा भयं तस्याभिभाषितम् ॥५२॥

Svalpamapyantaram kṛtvā jīvātma-paramātmānoḥ
Yo'vatiṣṭhati mūḍhātma bhayaṁ tasyābhibhāṣitam (52)

Verse 52

Due to ignorance, if a person entertains the least distinction between *Jīvātman*, the individual Self and the *Paramātmān*, the Supreme Self, then he is sure to be afflicted by fear.

In this Great Reality, which is one without a second, if you make even the slightest distinction you will become frightened. Fear is only when you recognise something other than you. In aloneness there is no fear. You are not afraid of yourself. When you see something other than you, you feel fear. When I am alone, with myself, there is no fear at all. At present we are afraid, every moment, that we may lose our security, that we may lose our job. All these are because I see something other than me. Fear cannot be for myself. When I think I am different from God, I am separated from God. Then I am afraid of God. This fact is clearly declared in the *Upaniṣads*. Hence we should recognise the oneness between us and God. The seeming duality between us and God is false for it is born out of ignorance, wrong understanding. Let us remove this delusion and come to experience the oneness with the Infinite Lord.

यत्राज्ञानाद्भवेद् द्वैतम् इतरस्तत्र पश्यति ।
आत्मत्वेन यदा सर्वम् नेतरस्तत्र चाण्वपि ॥५३॥

Yatrājñānāt bhavet dvaitam itaras-tatra paśyati
Ātmatvena yadā sarvam netarastatra cānvapi (53)

Verse 53

When duality appears due to non-apprehension of Reality, there one sees another. When everything is known as the Self, there one does not perceive another, in the least.

When I do not recognise the Reality, the Post, I see the ghost in it. I am threatened by its long hands, its burning eyes and its bleeding mouth. But when I discover the post, I recognise that the burning eyes are nothing but the post, the long hands are nothing but the post, and the bleeding mouth is also the post. In the post, there are neither the long hands, nor the burning eyes, nor the bleeding mouth.

Similarly when the duality is transcended and the Reality is experienced, then one realises that the pure Self alone exists. Except the Self, no one has any existence. When you see the post, the ghost is not available. Thus everything is nothing but the Self.

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि ह्यात्मत्वेन विजानतः ।
 न वै तस्य भवेन्मोहः न च शोकोऽद्वितीयतः ॥५४॥
Yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāni hyātmatvena vijānataḥ
Na vai tasya bhavenmohaḥ na ca śoko'dvītiyataḥ (54)

Verse 54

A person who has realised that all beings are nothing but the Self alone, to him there is no delusion, nor any misery, since there is no second.

To the one who has realised the fact that all the world of plurality, the perceptions, emotions and thoughts are all nothing but the *Ātman*, the Self alone, to him there is no experience of duality. One who has reached this understanding, that all these are nothing but the play of one Consciousness, to him there is no experience of duality. Just as the one who has awakened from the dream realises that the entire dream is nothing but the waking mind's modification, so too the one who has awakened to that plane of Consciousness of

the deathless, imperishable state of Immortality, to the one who has understood that the perceptions, emotions and thoughts are nothing but the one expression of the Infinite Consciousness, to him there is no experience of duality born out of misconception. He has not a trace of sorrow. He is only experiencing the non-dual Reality, the One Consciousness alone. He has nothing to desire other than himself, because there is nothing other than himself and hence there is no trace of sorrow for him. Śaṅkara explains only the idea that is in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*. For the one who experiences only one Consciousness everywhere, to him where is the delusion and its consequent *saṁsāra* or sorrow?

अयमात्मा हि ब्रह्मैव	सर्वात्मकतया स्थितः	
इति निर्धारितं श्रुत्या	बृहदारण्यसंस्थया	॥५५॥
<i>Ayamātmā hi brahmaiva</i>	<i>sarvātmakatayā sthitah</i>	
<i>Iti nirdhāritam śrutya</i>	<i>brhadāraṇya-saṁsthayā</i>	(55)

Verse 55

The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* has clearly established that this Self, which is *Brahman* alone, is the Self of everything.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad* also declares the same fact that this individual Self alone is the Self everywhere. The Consciousness in me by which I become conscious of my thoughts, itself is the Consciousness present everywhere as pure *Brahman*. It is the same Consciousness in me that is present everywhere at all times. So this *Upaniṣad* has declared that the *Ātman*, the *Brahman* is present everywhere. Thus the *Ātman*, the Consciousness in me by which I become conscious of my joys and sorrows is the Consciousness by which everyone comes to know all his experiences. In this Consciousness there is no distinction. It is one without a second.

अनुभूतोऽप्ययं लोकः	व्यवहारक्षमोऽपि सन्	
असद्रूपो यथा स्वप्नः	उत्तरक्षणबाधतः	॥५६॥
<i>Anubhūto'pyayam lokah</i>	<i>vyavahāraṁśamo'pi san</i>	
<i>Asadrūpo yathā svapnah</i>	<i>Uttarakṣaṇabādhatāh</i>	(56)

Though this waking state of daily transactions is experienced by us, it is unreal, like a dream, because it is contradicted.

In this verse, the teacher declares that this visible universe, is in fact unreal. This is a point the *Vedāntic* student has to swallow with difficulty until he himself realises this fact by his own experience. No doubt this fact has been drilled into the *Vedāntin's* mind through irrefutable logic, convincing rationale, and crystal clear reason. The *vedāntin* too nods acceptance. But still the consequence of this philosophy is not so easy to grasp. Though we understand the philosophy, we are unable to accept its conclusion and so want to avoid it. Supposing a girl falls in love with a boy, and the boy too loves her and so they decide to get married. But the parents of the girl, her relatives and friends convincingly tell her that the boy is a criminal who has cheated many other girls. They urge her to give up the idea of marrying the boy. Though the girl may nod to all that they say, though she is intellectually convinced that the boy is a cheat, yet she does not want to accept the conclusions of others. She does not want to give up the boy for she has a great fascination for the boy, and this is but natural. Similarly Śaṅkara, and teachers like Śaṅkara and even the *Śruti* through several arguments of logic and reason tell us that we are not the body, mind, intellect, but the Consciousness alone. They also tell us that this Consciousness functions everywhere and that this world is nothing but the formless, shapeless *Brahman*, and *Brahman* alone. Their conclusion is that this world that is projected through the medium of the BMI equipments is unreal. But this conclusion is rather difficult to accept because at this moment we feel that the world is very real to us. However much we say, tell a dreamer that the dream and dream objects, and the dream experiences are nothing but projections of the waker's mind, as long as the dreamer is in the dream-world he will not accept what we say. Unless he wakes up he will not see the unreality of the dream. This world that we cognise and experience has a transactional value and a transactional existence.

Though this world has pragmatic value, yet it is unreal. Our present Conclusions are that we are experiencing this world and that it has pragmatic value and hence it is real. But Śaṅkara says, that though our argument appears to be correct it is unreal. This world is like

the dream experiences. We may argue that the world exists. Existence is generally postulated on two factors. viz., 1) It can be experienced. 2) It has got a pragmatic value. A non-existent thing cannot have these two factors. Then how can you say that this world is unreal, for we find this world satisfies these two conditions. This is the glory of the wonderful *Māyā*. Though this world satisfies these two conditions yet it is unreal. The world of dream has a pragmatic value for the dreamer. The dream hunger is appeased by dream food. But when I wake up from the dream, the dream food cannot appease my waking-state hunger. The dream has only an 'asat' value. It is unreal. Similarly though the waking state also has a pragmatic value, it is only 'asat' when we wake to the realisation of the One Infinite Consciousness. This waking world is also unreal for, at any moment it can be negated, just as we wake up we negate the dream world. So too when I wake up to the Infinite plane of Consciousness, this seemingly real world also is negated. So this world is unreal.

स्वप्नो जागरणेऽलीकः	स्वप्नेऽपि न हि जागरः	।
द्वयमेव लये नास्ति	लयोऽपि ह्युभयोर्न च	॥५७॥
<i>Svapno jāgarane' līkaḥ</i>	<i>svapne'pi na hi jāgarah</i>	
<i>Dvayameva laye nāsti</i>	<i>layo'pi hyubhayorna ca</i>	(57)

Verse 57

The dream state is unreal in waking, and the waking state is absent in dream. And again these two states of waking and dream are totally absent in deep sleep. This deep sleep state is not available either in waking or in dream state.

That the world is unreal is established in another way. In *Vedānta Śāstra* 'sat' means that which is in existence in the past, present and the future without any modification. That which is real should be permanently in existence in all the three periods of time. The question now is how this world can be negated, for it is not unreal. The dream world is not there in the waking state. The waking world is denied totally in the dream world. So the waking world is not real with respect to the dream world. In deep sleep, both the dream and waking worlds are not there. So the waker and the waking world are real only in the waking. The dreamer and dream world are real

only in the dream. The deep-sleeper and the sleep are available only in sleep. In the waking state both the dreamer and the deep-sleeper are not there. In the dream, the waker and the deep-sleep are not there. In the deep sleeper the waker and the dreamer are not there. So each state of experience is negated in the other states and they cannot satisfy the definition of 'sat' as that which is present in the present, past and future. Here each state of experience is negated in another state and hence all the three states are unreal. Further this Self, this Consciousness is the changeless substratum whereas all these states are ever-changing and hence these states cannot be real. Further for changes to take place, there should be a changeless substratum. This changeless substratum is the Pure *Brahman*. Hence I, the *Brahman*, am real and this world is unreal.

त्रयमेवं भवेन्मिथ्या गुणत्रय – विनिर्मितम् ।
 अस्य द्रष्टा गुणातीतः नित्यो ह्येकश्चिदात्मकः ॥५८॥

Trayamevaṁ bhavenmithyā Guṇatraya-vinirmitam
Aśya draṣṭā guṇātītaḥ nityo hyekaścid-ātmakaḥ (58)

Verse 58

Thus the three states created by the three 'guṇa's are unreal. The Real Witness who is beyond these 'guṇa's is the one Eternal Consciousness.

All these three states viz. the waking, the dream and the deep sleep, on awakening to the one Reality become unreal (*mithyā*). All these three states are nothing but apparent illusions that do not exist in Reality. Had they been a Reality they would have been available for our experiences at all times. But here each one is negated in the other plane of Consciousness, hence all the three states are apparent illusions, like the snake seen on the rope. When I see the snake, the rope is not comprehended. The snake is caused by the delusion of the mind. So too all these three states, waking, dreaming and deep sleep are apparent illusions born out of the delusion of the mind because of the ignorance of the Reality. These three states are created by the three 'guṇa's *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. These three 'guṇa's are the climatic conditions of the mind. In the *Sātvic* condition the mind is quiet, crystal clear; when *Rajas* is there

the mind is disturbed and agitated and in *Tamas* the mind is in a state of sleep. *Sattva* is unactivity, *Rajas* is activity, and *Tamas* is inactivity. These are the conditions of the mind. So the three different planes of existence are the creation of the three '*guṇa*'s and all of them are false. But the Consciousness which *illuminates* all these three planes of existence is available in all the three periods of time and is never negated. This Consciousness is the 'I', the *Brahman*, the Reality. The one who totally identifies himself with this Consciousness and detaches himself from the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, is the one who has transcended the three '*guṇa*'s and he is no more bound by the three '*guṇa*'s.

यद्वन्मृदि घटभ्रान्तिम् शुक्तौ वा रजतस्थितिम् ।
तद्वद्ब्रह्मणि जीवत्वम् भ्रान्त्या पश्यति न स्वतः ॥५९॥

Yadvanmṛdi ghatabhṛāntim śuktau va rajatasthitim
Tadvadbrahmaṇi jīvātvam bhrāntyā paśyati na svataḥ (59)

Verse 59

Just as mud is seen as a 'pot', and mother-of-pearl is misunderstood as silver, so too *Brahman* is mistaken as *Jiva*, due to ignorance, and it is not so in reality.

The problem before the seeker is that though he understands that the Consciousness is the witness of all the states and that the three states cannot be real, how is he to experience this waking world, which he is so poignantly conscious, to be unreal? Though the arguments establish the illusion of the states of existence yet the conclusion is very painful. How is it the world which I see is unreal and the Consciousness is real? If all these are *Brahman*, how is it we are not experiencing it? Śaṅkara is here clearing this doubt.

This multiple world is nothing but an illusion, a projection of the mind, an imagination of the mind, due to the lack of right understanding. The dreamer does not know he is the waker. Due to ignorance, he concludes that the dreamer and the dream world are real and it is only when he wakes up that he understands that the dream world was only a projection of his mind. Similarly when one wakes up to this great Reality he will experience the apparent illusory nature of this seemingly real world. Just as we see the pot

and fail to recognise the mud with which it is made, so too we fail to recognise the reality which appears like the universe now for us. Pot is nothing but mud. A piece of shell which is the mother of pearl is mistaken for a piece of silver and when we take it and examine it we understand it is only shell and not silver. Though it was only shell we saw silver in it. It is the imagination of the mind which causes the illusion that the mud is the pot and the mother of pearl is the piece of silver. So too the idea that I am the *Jīva* is only a projection of the mind. In Reality, not a trace of matter exists, neither do the *jīvahood* or the pluralistic world exist in *Brahman*.

यथा मृदि घटो नाम	कनके कुण्डलाभिधा	
शुक्तौ हि रजतख्यातिः	जीवशब्दस्तथा परे	॥६०॥
<i>Yātha mṛdi ghato nāma</i>	<i>kanake kuṇḍalābhidhā</i>	
<i>Śuktau hi rajatakhyaatih</i>	<i>jīvaśabdastathā pare</i>	(60)

Verse 60

Just as pot is only a name of clay, ear-ring is only a name of gold or the idea of silver is an illusion about mother-of-pearl, so too the word 'Jīva' is nothing but a name of Brahman, the Supreme.

The jars, pots, cups, plates and pitchers are all nothing but mud alone and still we see them as different shapes and are aware of the purposes for which they are used. The one gold alone is seen as different ornaments. Similarly one *Brahman* alone is present everywhere. Boy, girl, man, women are the different conditions in the *Upadhi's* (equipments) but in fact that are all nothing but *Brahman* only. Only because of incorrect thinking we take these '*Jivatma's*' as different entities. The body, mind and intellect are nothing but *Brahman*. Though the mother of pearl appears as silver yet it is a piece of shell, so too, though *Brahman* appears as the BMI yet the B M I are nothing but the *Brahman*. Though the one *Brahman* alone exists we say that the *Brahman* conditioned by the BMI is the *Jīvātman*. If B M I are all *Brahman* how can we say *Brahman* conditions *Brahman*? The fact is that these B M I, O E T are all but the play of the *Brahman*, the Reality. All these are the play in *Māyā*. In reality *Paramātma* has not become *Jīvātma* but we alone with our mind see the *Paramātma* as the *Jīvātma*. The limitation is purely of our own making.

यथैव व्योम्नि नीलत्वम् यथा नीरं मरुस्थले ।
 पुरुषत्वं यथा स्थाणौ तद्वद्विभ्रं चिदात्मनि ॥६१॥

Yathaiva vyomni nīlatvam yathā nīraṁ marusthale
Puruṣatvaṁ yathā sthāṇau tadvadviśvaṁ cidātmani (61)

Verse 61

The blueness in the sky, the mirage waters in the desert, and the form of man seen in a post, are illusory, so too the universe seen in the Absolute Consciousness, the Self, is illusory.

The sky appears blue in colour. In reality the blue colour is not at all there in the sky, it is only an illusion. Yet we experience the blue colour. We see water in the mirage, in the desert, but in fact there is no trace of water in the desert. Yet there is the optical illusion by which we see the water there. This water cannot wet even a grain of sand in the desert. The blueness in the sky, and the water seen in the mirage of the desert are all illusions perceived by the projections of the mind. In the dull light we see a ghost in the post, though in reality a ghost cannot be in the post. The post is never contaminated by the ghost. In the same way we are perceiving and experiencing the whole universe of names and forms in pure *Brahman*. The Self, the Pure Consciousness is never contaminated by the universe. The existence of the universe is only in the perceiver's mind. When we look through the BMI equipments we experience this pluralistic world. Non-apprehension of Reality alone creates this mis-apprehension of this multiple universe.

यथैव शून्ये वेतालः गन्धर्वाणां पुरं यथा ।
 यथाकाशे द्विचन्द्रत्वम् तद्वत्सत्ये जगत्स्थितिः ॥६२॥

Yathaiva śūnye vetālah gandharvāṇāṁ puram yathā
Yathākāśe dvicandratvam tadvatsatye jagat-sthitiḥ (62)

Verse 62

Just as the ghost in an empty space, a celestial city in the heavens, the appearance of two moons in the sky are unreal, so too the existence of this Universe in the Truth, is unreal.

When you are going alone in lonely place sometimes you see a ghost. In such places even a fall of a leaf will frighten you, making you think that a ghost has made this noise. In a jungle too such a thing will happen. The ghost is a product of the imagination of the mind. Sometimes when you look at the clouds you start seeing there big towns, streets, market places, sky-scrapers, and people moving about. Actually these things are not there in the clouds, in the sky, but are illusions created by the imaginative power of the mind. What is seen is pure hallucination. When our eyes are defective we start seeing two moons in the sky where there is only one moon. One of the two moons is a reality whereas the other one is unreal. The second is not there in reality, yet we see it. Similarly when we look at the world outside, in detail, there seems to be a world. This duality is created by the imperfections of the instrument by which we see the world, and not because the duality is real. In Pure Consciousness there is no trace of duality. In Pure *Brahman*, which is one without a second, there is no trace of this pluralistic world. The world that we see is created by the distorted equipment, the mind and intellect.

यथा तरङ्गकल्लोलैः जलमेव स्फुरत्यलम् ।
 पात्ररूपेण ताम्रं हि ब्रह्माण्डौघैस्तथात्मता ॥६३॥

Yathā taraṅgakallolaiḥ jalameva sphuratyalam

Pātrarūpeṇa tāmrāṁ hi Brahmāṇḍaughais – tathātmatā (63)

Verse 63

As the water alone appears in the form of waves and tides, as the copper alone appears to be vessels, so too the Self alone appears as the universe.

All the small, waves, big waves, beautiful waves, the ripples etc are all different forms of nothing other than water only. According to their size and shape we give names to them and come to perceive them. They are in fact nothing but water. Copper vessels of different sizes and shapes are called by different names. Essentially all these vessels are nothing but copper. Similarly the whole cosmos we are experiencing is nothing but Pure *Atman* alone. Just as the expression

of water differs as big waves, small waves, billows, ripples, etc., just as the expressions of copper also differ as pot, plate, vessel, cup, vase etc so too the Reality which is one without a second expresses itself as different forms and names. Essentially the whole universe is nothing but the *Brahman* alone. The imperfection of our instruments are responsible for this perception of plurality.

घटनाम्ना यथा पृथ्वी	पटनाम्ना हि तन्तवः	
जगन्नाम्ना चिदाभाति	ज्ञेयं तत्तदभावतः	६४
<i>Ghaṭanāmnā yathā pṛthvī</i>	<i>patanāmnā hi tantavaḥ</i>	
<i>Jagānnāmnā cidābhāti</i>	<i>jñeyam tattadabhāvataḥ</i>	(64)

Verse 64

It is the clay that appears in the name of a pot, it is the thread alone that looks like cloth; so too it is the Pure Consciousness alone that appears as the Universe. I should be understood by negating the names.

The earlier stanza indicated that all these that we perceive are nothing but the modification of *Brahman*. Just as waves and ripples are modifications of the same water, just as vessels, plates, cups etc. are modifications of copper, just as all pots are modifications of mud, so too the universe of different names and forms are modifications of one Pure *Brahman*.

Mud in different forms is the pot, vase, cup etc. Thread woven in a particular form is the cloth. When we look at the cloth we fail to see the thread in it though cloth is nothing but thread and thread alone.

Similarly the one Consciousness alone is all these. We see this world of multiplicity because of our desire for objects, because of our identification with them, and because of our anxiety to make use of the objects. The pure Consciousness has to be recognized by negating the names and forms. So long as we are identified with the BMI and look through them, we manifest ourselves as the PFT and come to perceive the world of the OET. OET is nothing but the Pure Consciousness itself, misinterpreted by the imperfect instruments, the BMI. But when one transcends this BMI, he recognizes this universe as only one non-dual Pure *Brahman*.

Thus all these verses from 59 to 64 explain to us the relation between the *Brahman* and the world. They also point out that this world is nothing but the *Brahman*, and the plurality we perceive is a misinterpretation of the *Brahman* by the imperfect equipments, the BMI.

सर्वोऽपि व्यवहारस्तु	ब्रह्मणा क्रियते जनैः	
अज्ञानान्न विजानन्ति	मृदेव हि घटादिकम्	॥६५॥
<i>Sarvo'pi vyavahārastu</i>	<i>brahmaṇā kriyate janaiḥ</i>	
<i>Ajñānānna vijānanti</i>	<i>mṛdeva hi ghaṭādikam</i>	(65)

Verse 65

All transactions are undertaken by the people in and through *Brahman* only. Due to ignorance, they do not know it, just as a pot is used for different purposes, without knowing that it is essentially mud alone.

All our activities, transactions, contacts etc., are done in and through *Brahman* only. When this Life Principle is not present in an organism, then that organism has no more any activities in the world. Thus we are all the manifestations of the one Great Reality. If that be so, how come we are not experiencing it? This is because of ignorance ('*ajñānāt*'). Because of the non-apprehension of the Reality we are not experiencing it. Though all the activities are his expressions only, and though in and through all activities we are experiencing *Brahman* only, because of this non-apprehension we are not actually experiencing it. Electricity was in existence even before the Scientists discovered its presence. So too all effects in the universe are nothing but the one Great Reality. Though we are transacting constantly with the pot, saucer, pitcher, cup etc. which are nothing but mud, we do not apprehend mud, not because the mud is not there, but because our attention is only on the form, shape and name. When our attention is withdrawn from the form and name and fixed on the mud we can apprehend the mud. So when our mind is perfected to penetrate in and through these transactions of ours, withdrawing it from its modifications then we can experience the Pure Consciousness.

कार्यकारणता नित्यम् आस्ते घटमृदोर्यथा ।
 तथैव श्रुतियुक्तिभ्याम् प्रपञ्चब्रह्मणोरिह ॥६६॥

Kāryakāraṇatā-nityam āste ghaṭamṛdoryathā
Tathaiva śruti-yuktibhyām prapañca-brahmaṇoriha (66)

Verse 66

There is a relationship of cause and effect between mud and pot, so also the relationship between the *Brahman* and the world has been established by Scriptures and logic.

The whole Universe is nothing but an expression of the Cause-Effect relationship. All Scientific enquiries are based upon this fundamental Truth, that the whole phenomenal world is wedded to this one principle of cause and effect relationship. Enquiry into cause and effect relation is called Science. This Cause-Effect Relationship is there always between *Brahman* and the world of Plurality, just as mud is the cause and the pot is the effect. Mud alone, in another form, is the pot. So the effect is nothing but the change in form and modification of the cause. The cause is inherently and concurrently present in the effect.

Since the Universe that has risen from the *Brahman* cannot be anything other than *Brahman*, *Brahman* in grossified form is called the Universe. So too the Body, Mind and Intellect are nothing but a modification of Pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness in another form is called matter and energy. The play of matter and energy is the universe.

Mud is not separate from the jar, the jar is not the cup, the cup is not the saucer, all are different things arising out of mud alone. So when from the Infinite Eternal Truth the world has emerged out, everything in this universe, every bit of it, even the least in it, is nothing but the Infinite Eternal Truth. This conclusion, we have arrived at through logic, reasoning, comparison and through reference to the Scriptural and *Upaniṣadic* declarations. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says, 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma' - All this is *Brahman* indeed.

गृह्यमाणे घटे यद्वत्
वीक्ष्यमाणे प्रपञ्चेऽपि

Gṛhyamāṇe ghate yadvat

Vīkṣyamāṇe prapañce'pi

Verse 67

मृत्तिका भाति वै बलात् ।

ब्रह्मैवाभाति भासुरम्

mṛṭṭikā bhāti vai balāt

brahmaivābhāti bhāsuram (67)

॥६७॥

When a pot is seen in fact it is the mud alone we are perceiving, so too when we observe the world, it is the Ever-effulgent *Brahman* that is seen (in and through the objects).

When with scientific acumen and intellectual sharpness I probe, enquire and analyse the reality of the pot, I come to understand that it is nothing but mud alone. So long as I am not thinking about the mud, the pot is only a pot. But when I start enquiring into the antecedents of the pot, from where it has come, in what it exits, into what it goes back, I come to the conclusion that the pot is nothing but mud in a particular shape. Similarly when I deeply think about this world, this world of plurality, it will become evidently clear that these are all nothing but mud in a particular shape. Similarly when I deeply think about this world, this world of plurality, it will become evidently clear that these are all nothing but *Brahman.*, the ever-shining Consciousness, playing upon the mind-intellect equipment. Now to me the world is my wife, my house, my children, my community, my country, my contacts etc.. But when I begin to enquire into the cause of all these, the substratum for all these, this world will reveal itself as nothing but the *Brahman.*

सदैवात्मा विशुद्धोऽपि

यथैव द्विविधा रज्जुः

Sadaivātma viśuddho'pi

Yathaiva dvividhā rajjuh

Verse 68

ह्यशुद्धो भाति वै सदा ।

ज्ञानिनोऽज्ञानिनोऽनिशम्

hyaśuddho bhāti vai sadā

jñānino-'jñānino-'niśam (68)

॥६८॥

Just as a rope is seen differently, as a rope or as a snake, so also the Self, which is Ever-pure, is seen differently, by the wise

as Pure, and by the ignorant as impure (world of objects).

A rope can be looked at two different ways. One who does not recognise the rope, sees in it as a snake. The other who sees the rope, sees nothing but the rope. One sees a ghost on the post whereas another sees the post as the post. Both are looking at the one object only but their apprehensions differ. One who apprehends the objects correctly is a wise one, whereas the one who apprehends the objects wrongly is called as an ignorant one (*Ajñāni*).

When my mind-intellect equipment is unable to understand the Reality, it imagines the pluralistic world. In this case I become an ignorant man (*Ajñāni*). When I recognise the universe as nothing but the Pure Consciousness I am called a Wise one (*Jñāni*). When I look at the Reality through the equipments of the B M I, I recognise myself to be the P F T perceiving the world of the O E T. The wise ones withdrawing themselves from the B M I, look at the *Ātman*, the Consciousness and recognise only the play of the *Ātman* everywhere. *Ātman*, the Self, is ever pure. None of the 'vāsana's of the BMI or of the world of plurality can ever touch or taint the Self. To the ignorant, this very *Ātman*, in as much it is viewed through the goggles of B M I, is seen and interpreted as the world of objects, emotions and thoughts, sorrow-ridden and pain-ridden. How can this be? Just as to a prepared student the examination is easy and to an unprepared student the same examination is difficult, so too, to the ignorant the *Ātman* appears as the ever-changing plurality full of pain and sorrow whereas to the wise it is an expression of the one Infinite Pure *Brahman*.

यथैव मृन्मयः कुम्भः तद्वदेहोऽपि चिन्मयः ।
आत्मानात्मविभागोऽयम् मुद्घैव क्रियतेऽबुद्घैः ॥६९॥

Yathaiva mṛṇmayah kumbhah tadvaddeho'pi cinmayah
Ātmānātma-vibhāgo'yam mudhaiva Kṛiyate-'budhah (69)

Verse 69

Just as a mud-pot is all-mud, similarly, this body is all-Consciousness. The distinction, therefore, of the Self and the non-self is made in vain by the ignorant people.

“The effects are nothing but the cause itself in different forms.”
So the effect, the pot, is nothing but the mud, the cause, itself in

another form. Minus mud, the pot has no existence. Mud in that specific form is called the pot. Therefore, pot is merely a form-and-a-name; in essence it is nothing other than mud.

Similarly, this body is nothing but the Higher Consciousness; The dream-body of an individual is realised, on waking up, as nothing but the waking-mind.

The Self, the Pure Existence, when perceived as this physical form, It is called the body. When once the intellect is transcended the seeker awakes to the Higher State, the mis-apprehensions, the equipments-of-experience, and the objects-of-experience, all merge into the one Transcendental Reality.

The non-apprehension of the Reality, gives rise to the mis-apprehensions. The perceiver-feeler-thinker, the ego, mis-apprehends Truth as objects, emotions, and thoughts. It is only the ignorant one, ignorant of the Pure Self, in the state of non-apprehension of the Essence, that, in vain, makes the distinctions of Self and non-self. The waves are never separate from, and are nothing other than, the ocean.

सर्पत्वेन यथा रज्जुः	रजतत्वेन शुक्तिका	
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन	देहत्वेन तथात्मता	७०
<i>Sarpatvena yathā rajjuh</i>	<i>rajatatvena śuktikā</i>	
<i>vinirnītā vimūdhena</i>	<i>dehatvena tathātmatā</i>	(70)

Verse 70

A piece of rope is mistaken for a serpent; a piece of shell is mis-understood to be silver, so too the ignorant wrongly understand the *Ātman* as the body.

It is very common for people to imagine or recognise the rope as a serpent with all its qualities. Similarly one who is ignorant of the mother-of-pearl imagines it to be the piece of silver. All these are because of the wrong evaluations of a misguided intellect. This is because of the misinterpretations of matter envelopments in us. In the same way the utterly stupid one thinks that the *Ātman* is the body. The body is understood as the gross, subtle and causal bodies. But the one who recognises the *Ātman* that is present everywhere

recognises that this body also is Pure Consciousness. It is the lack of correct thinking that makes us mistake the body for the *Atman*.

घटत्वेन यथा पृथ्वी	पटत्वेनैव तन्तवः	
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन	देहत्वेन तथात्मता	॥७१॥
<i>Ghaṭatvena yathā Pṛthvī</i>	<i>paṭatvenaiva tantavaḥ</i>	
<i>vinirñitā vimūdhena</i>	<i>dehatvena tathātmatā</i>	(71)

Verse 71

Just as mud is understood to be pot; threads are mistaken for cloth, so too the ignorant has mistaken the *Atman* as the body.

When our attention is on the pot and the qualities of the pot, we fail to see the mud with which it is made. So too when we look at the cloth we fail to see the thread which is the substratum of the texture of the cloth. The cloth is nothing but the thread. When from the cloth thread is removed, the cloth ceases to exist. Similarly the foolish one considers the body as the *Atman*. The wise one understands that the body is nothing but the *Atman*. Even when we are seeing the body we are seeing only the Reality, Consciousness. It is the Consciousness that expresses itself apparently as the body. In fact there is only one Consciousness.

कनकं कुण्डलत्वेन	तरङ्गत्वेन वै जलम्	
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन	देहत्वेन तथात्मता	॥७२॥
<i>Kanakam Kuṇḍalatvena</i>	<i>araṅgatvena vai jalam</i>	
<i>vinirñitā vimūdhena</i>	<i>dehatvena tathātmatā</i>	(72)

Verse 72

Gold is mistaken for an ear-ring; water of the ocean is perceived as waves, so too the ignorant has mistaken the *Atman* as the body.

Gold is understood as ornaments like the ear-ring because our attention is on the form, shape, name etc. of the ornaments like the ear-ring. So gold is not recognized as gold. All gold ornaments cannot be other than gold, and yet we perceive not gold. So too the ocean of water is not recognised as water but as

a massive play of the waves. So when the attention and focus are on the names and forms we forget the material by which the object is made. So too the foolish people consider that the body is the *Ātman*. Forgetting my real nature, which is the Infinite Reality, I consider myself to be body. This is because of ignorance.

पुरुषत्वेन वै स्थाणुः	जलत्वेन मरीचिका	
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन	देहत्वेन तथात्मता	७३
<i>Puruṣatvena vai sthāṇuḥ</i>	<i>jalatvena marīcikā</i>	
<i>vinirṇītā vimūdhena</i>	<i>dehatvena tathātmatā</i>	(73)

Verse 73

A post is mistaken for a person; sand of the desert is considered to be mirage waters, so too the ignorant has mistaken the *Ātman* to be the body.

The post that is there in the path is mistaken for the ghost or a thief. When you see the thief, immediately you remember the policeman. In the imagination of the mind, the real fact of the post is not recognised. Those who have black money will see the same post as the flying-squad. A lover looking at the post sees it as his beloved. The fact is, each according to his fancy projects what is there in his fancy on the post and sees that projection. According to our own individual '*vāsanā*'s we imagine and project many things and come to suffer them in our lives. The hot, scorching desert is sometimes, misunderstood as the big pool of water. Really speaking it is only a desert. Similarly we fail to recognise the *Ātman* as the *Ātman* and misunderstand it to be the body. All these examples prove that Truth can be perceived only on correct enquiry. Similarly on enquiry we come to the conclusion that we are not the body, but the Eternal, Pure Consciousness alone.

गृहत्वेनैव काष्ठानि	खड्गत्वेनैव लोहता	
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन	देहत्वेन तथात्मता	७४
<i>Gṛhatvenaiva kāṣṭhāni</i>	<i>khadgatvenaiva lohata</i>	
<i>vinirṇītā vimūdhena</i>	<i>dehatvena tathātmatā</i>	(74)

Verse 74

A heap of timber is considered as a house; a piece of steel is understood to be a sword, so too the *Ātman* is mistaken to be the body by the ignorant.

Many wooden pieces put together is really the house. But the house is only wood. Wood arranged in a particular shape, form, in a particular arrangement and order becomes the house. The house when analysed comes to be seen as nothing but several wooden pieces. Iron when smelted, melted and forged into a particular shape becomes the sword. The sword from the hilt to the sharp tip is nothing but iron. But those who see the sword do not recognise it to be the iron. When once I understand it to be iron, even while using it my knowledge that it is iron will not desert me. Similarly the ignorant one mistakes the body for the *Ātman* whereas the wise one, even when he is playing through the equipment of the body, mind and intellect, remembers that all these are nothing but the *Brahman*.

यथा वृक्षविपर्यासः जलाद्भवति कस्यचित् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥७५॥
Yathā vṛkṣaviparyāsaḥ jalādbhavati kasyacit
Tadvadātmāni dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (75)

Verse 75

Just as one sees the inverted image of trees in water, so also ignorant persons entertain the idea of body in the Self, due to ignorance.

If one the banks of a pond of water there is a row of trees, one can see the reflection of the trees in the water. The reflection in the water is the inverted image of the trees. It is an illusion produced by the reflecting surface of the water. To look at the real trees one has only to lift his head away from the image. So too in the *Brahman* the misconception that I am the body is caused only because of my ignorance. Non-apprehension of the Truth causes the mis-apprehension of the Truth. The body is the inversion of the *Brahman*. *Brahman* is all-pervading, the body is limited; *Brahman* is unborn, the body is born; *Brahman* is undying, the body is dying; *Brahman* is unchanging, the body is ever changing.

if in spite of this one mistakes this body to be the *Brahman* then it is nothing but utter stupidity.

पोतेन गच्छतः पुंसः सर्वं भातीव चञ्चलम् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥७६॥

Potena gacchataḥ pumsaḥ sarvaḥ bhātīva cañcalam
Tadvadātmāni dehatvam Paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (76)

Verse 76

Just as to a man who is travelling in a boat, everything appears to be in motion, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

It is an illusion, always experienced by everyone, that when he is in a moving vehicle, everything near him appears to be moving in the opposite direction, and everything away appears to be moving in the same direction as the vehicle is moving. But we all know that the trees and the buildings on the wayside are, in fact, not moving; they only appear to be moving.

In the same way, the *Ātman*, the Self, when riding in the vehicles of the body, mind and intellect, in its identification with the realm of time, experiences the world of constant change.

Time is the concept of the intellect; and time keeps constantly changing. When Consciousness functions through this vehicle of change, it can perceive nothing but change.

Even when we recognise a rod, immersed in a trough of water, as having bent, we know that the rod is not bent; all the same, it appears to be bent because of the refraction due to the medium of water through which we are perceiving the rod. When Consciousness, the Self, looks out through the medium of time, It appears to perceive the world-of-change.

पीतत्वं हि यथा शुभ्रे दोषाद्भवति कस्यचित् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥७७॥

Pītatvaṁ hi yathā śubhre doṣādbhavati kasyacit
Tadvadātmāni dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (77)

Verse 77

Just as to an individual who has a defect (suffering from jaundice), white objects appear to be yellow in colour, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

The yellow colour perceived is true to the perceiver, while everybody else is seeing that very same piece of cloth as pure white! We are not questioning the honesty of the perceiver. But the apparent experience of yellow colour perceived is due to a defect in the perceiver — he is suffering from jaundice. Similarly, due to the non-apprehension (ignorance) of the Self, the perceiver constantly experiences that the body is his Self.

चक्षुर्भ्यां भ्रमशीलाभ्याम् सर्वं भाति भ्रमात्मकम् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥७८॥

Cakṣurbhyāṃ bhrama-śīlābhyām Sarvaṃ bhāti bhramātmakam
Tadvadātmani dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (78)

Verse 78

To a person who has defective eyes, everything that he sees appears to be defective. So, too, does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

Even when we press the eyeball a little on the upper outer corner, everyone of us can experience that we see double, and when the pressure is released, the double that we had seen with the defective eyes, merges to be one with the object.

If you can rotate your eyeball round and round, all things that you are seeing will appear to be going round and round; the apparent movement of the objects is only because of the movement of the eyeballs. Infact, things are not moving as are perceived with the defective eyes.

In the same way, it is a defective perception through the body, mind and intellect that helps us to experience misapprehensions of Truth as objects, emotions, and thoughts.

अलातं भ्रमणेनैव वर्तुलं भाति सूर्यवत् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥७९॥

Alātaṁ bhraṃaṇenaiva Vartulaṁ bhāti sūryavat

Tadvadātmāni dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (79)

Verse 79

Just as a fire-brand, on being rotated, appears to be circular like the sun, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

We behold a fiery, circular glow, when a lit-up torch, is whirled fast. If a burning jaw-stick is whirled between the palm, in a dark room, many lit-up designs can be seen, but all of them are nothing but the impressions so created in the observer's mind because of the fast movement of the stick. When the rotation is stopped, all the patterns get absorbed, and they disappear into one single glowing tip.

It is the constant thought-movement, glowing in the light of Consciousness, that gives us the pattern of circumstances in an ever-changing dynamic world of objects, emotions, and thoughts. When the thought-flow ceases, all the world patterns that we were perceiving merge into the One-mighty-mass-of-Consciousness Divine, the *Ātman*, the Self.

महत्त्वे सर्ववस्तूनाम् अणुत्वं ह्यतिदूरतः ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥८०॥

Mahattve sarva-vastūnām aṇutvaṁ hyatidūrataḥ

Tadvadātmāni dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (80)

Verse 80

Just as all things of large dimension and magnitude appear to be very small and insignificant due to great distances, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

The large objects appear small when perceived from a point of observation far removed from the object, because of the error of judgement caused by the vast distance. As one moves nearer and nearer the object, that which appears as a mere swelling on the horizon grows to be, in its true nature, a mighty mountain on whose

peaks the passing clouds linger to rest. In the realm of time and space, delusions abound, and these illusory perceptions veil our direct experience of the Pure Self.

सूक्ष्मत्वे सर्ववस्तूनाम्	स्थूलत्वं चोपनेत्रतः	
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम्	पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः	८१
<i>Sūkṣmatve sarva-vastūnām</i>	<i>sthūlatvaṁ copanetrataḥ</i>	
<i>Tadvadātmani dehatvam</i>	<i>paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ</i>	(81)

Verse 81

Just as tiny objects, when viewed through lenses (microscope), would appear enlarged and magnified to our vision, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

The lenses in the microscope can magnify and make imperceptibly tiny objects readily gross enough to perceive clearly. So too when *Ātman* is seen through the equipments of the sense-organs, mind and intellect, It appears as the body and the vivid world of objects.

The distortion of the tiny object of observation when under a microscope is the same as the *Ātman* when viewed through the equipments. Subtle *Ātman* is recognised and experienced as the gross body and its endless objects of experiences.

Ātman the Self is ever all-pervading, both within and without. But when our Awareness looks out through the Body-mind-intellect vehicles, we do not recognise the Self, but perceive only a world of objects-emotions and thoughts: the body-world.

काचभूमौ जलत्वं वा	जलभूमौ हि काचता	
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम्	पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः	८२
<i>Kācabhūmau jalatvaṁ vā</i>	<i>jalabhūmau hi kācataḥ</i>	
<i>Tadvadātmani dehatvam</i>	<i>paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ</i>	(82)

Verse 82

Just as a sheet of glass is mistaken for a sheet of water, and often

a spread of water is mistaken for a sheet of glass, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

The glassy surface of a sheet of glass can be, from a distance, in a thoughtless glance, mistaken for a spread of stagnant water. Similarly, a splash of water glistening in a dim light can be mistaken for a sheet of glass. When the real is not carefully ascertained through diligent enquiry, it can be misconceived as something else. This is called in philosophy as "ignorance" (*Avidyā*). The non-apprehension of the reality gives rise to misapprehensions.

In the non-apprehension of the Self, called spiritual ignorance, man comes to maintain the mis-apprehensions of the body as the Self. When a post is not seen as a post, we misunderstand it as a ghost.

Spiritual "ignorance" gives rise to the misconceived idea that the body is me, the Self.

यद्वदग्नौ मणित्वं हि मणौ वा वह्नितां पुमान् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥८३॥

Yadvadagnau maṇitvaṁ hi maṇau vā vahnitāṁ pumān
Tadvadātmani dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (83)

Verse 83

Just as fire is misunderstood as a jewel, and a bright jewel as a glowing cinder, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the *Ātman* as the body.

This is a famous example in our scriptures, and this has become clear to us due to the exhaustive way this analogy has been dealt with in the elaborate *Pancadaśi*.

When a tiny lamp, in a dark night, is seen from afar through the vegetation, it can appear to glimmer and twinkle as a jewel; but on enquiry we shall discover the reality.

So too, a precious jewel in the dark can be mistaken for a glowing cinder, because of the fiery brilliance of the jewel. Here again, on closer enquiry and intelligent investigation, we shall easily discover the nature of the jewel.

In a thoughtless haste, we jumped into a wrong conclusion that we are the body and that there is nothing beyond the body. On full study, closer observation, and intelligent enquiry, we shall easily discover that the body is merely an "object" of Awareness. The Subject is Pure Consciousness alone.

अभ्रेषु सत्सु धावत्सु सोमो धावति भाति वै ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥८४॥

Abhreṣu satsu dhāvatsu somo dhāvati bhāti vai
Tadvadātmāni dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (84)

Verse 84

The moon appears to be moving when seen through the moving clouds. So too, the deluded misunderstands the *Ātman* to be the body.

In spite of all the scientific knowledge we have, it is common experience that when we look at the moon through the clouds the moon appears to be moving. The intellect may say the moon is not moving but the perceptual experience is that the moon appears to be moving. When our attention is on the clouds the moon appears to be moving and when our attention and focus is on the moon the clouds appear to be moving. In the same way, so as long as our attention is on the three bodies, perishable, changeable, variable, finite and mutable the idea that we are the body, mind, intellect will be there. When we shift our attention from the body, mind, intellect to the *Ātman* the Consciousness, suddenly we find we are the changeless, immutable, eternal, perfect, all-pervasive and unlimited *Ātman*, the Pure Consciousness.

Hence the one who identifies himself with the body, mind and intellect and looks through these equipments is said to be deluded one and it is he who misunderstands the *Ātman* to be the body.

यथैव दिग्विपर्यासः मोहाद्भवति कस्यचित् ।
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥८५॥

Yathaiva digviparyāsaḥ mohād-bhavati kasyacit
Tadvadātmani dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (85)

Verse 85

Sometimes there will be confusion about direction due to ignorance. In the same manner, the ignorant one mistakes the *Ātman* to be body.

When the intellect is unable to perceive an object, then it projects and imagines something in place of the object it tried to perceive. Ignorance in itself is not a satisfying function of the intellect. The intellect must know. If it does not know, it will try to know what it wants to know. This is the trick of the mind or the intellect. In trying to know it mis-understands and mis-conceives. Ignorance is the non-apprehension of the Truth and the consequent misapprehension. When the Pure Consciousness is not apprehended then the mind starts its misconceptions. Until the ignorance is removed, the misconceptions will continue. Because I look at the world through ignorance or non-apprehension which in its turn creates the flow of the thoughts in the mind-intellect equipment I begin to experience the pluralistic phenomenal world. When it is dark, I am confused about the directions. When I am at the cross-roads I am not familiar with, I lose the sense of direction. If the sun is there in the sky I can try to find the direction. But the sun is hidden by the clouds. Hence in order to know the direction I ask another person walking along. If that person tells me that one direction, then with reference to this one I can comprehend the other directions. Similarly when the real nature of the *Ātman* is realised, all the misconceptions of the body, mind and intellect are removed. Just as it is enough for me to know at least one direction, which in turn will help me remove all misconceptions of all directions, so too if the One *Ātman* is experienced all misconceptions of the body, mind, intellect and its consequent sorrows are all removed.

यथा शशी जले भाति चञ्चलत्वेन कस्यचित् ।
 तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वम् पश्यत्यज्ञान-योगतः ॥८६॥

Yathā śāśī jale bhāti cañcalatvena kasyacit
Tadvadātmani dehatvam paśyatyajñāna-yogataḥ (86)

Verse 86

The reflection of the moon in the disturbed water, appears to be shaking; so too, the ignorant mistakes the *Ātman* to be the body.

Suppose the moon is shining in the sky and there is a tank in which there is water. Then one can see a clear reflection of the moon in the water. But if the water is disturbed, the reflection appears to be shaking and trembling. The moon appears to be shattered. In the same way the light of Consciousness is not involved in the joys and sorrow of the individual but when the light of Consciousness functions through the mind and intellect equipment it gets reflected in the mental pool where the thoughts dance. Then it appears as though it is dancing. Just as the disturbance in water in no way affects the moon so too the disturbance in the mind and intellect equipment in no way touches the infinite Consciousness.

एवमात्मन्यविद्यातः	देहाध्यासो हि जायते	
स एवात्मा परिज्ञातः	लीयते च परात्मनि	॥८७॥
<i>Evam-ātmanyavidyātaḥ</i>	<i>dehādhyāso hi jāyate</i>	
<i>Sa evātmā pariññātaḥ</i>	<i>līyate ca parātmāni</i>	(87)

Verse 87

Thus when the Self is not known, the idea that I am the body, persists, when the Self is known, the same will dissolve in the Supreme Self.

From stanza 70, Ādi Śankara has been illustrating that the body is not the *Ātman*. This line of thought gets concluded with this stanza. From a review of these stanzas (70-87) we come to understand that when the *Ātman*, the Self, is not apprehended, misapprehension of the *Ātman* takes place. This is purely because of the spiritual ignorance. We mistake the body to be the *Ātman*. Body is a superimposition (*Adhyāsa*) on the *Ātman*, just as a ghost is a superimposition on the post. Ignorance of the post gives rise to the idea of the ghost. Then I cling to this idea that it is the ghost and so get frightened by it. In the same way I, having projected the body, mind, intellect because of my spiritual ignorance, get identified with the BMI and behave in the world as though I am a limited individual. This is called superimposition. (*Adhyāsa*).

Just as the ghost vision ends and along with it the ghost-created fears and sorrows also end when I understand the truth of the post, so too when the individual realises his own self, subjectively, the O E T, PFT and BMI, he recognised earlier, get merged in the Self giving him the non-dual experience.

सर्वमात्मतया ज्ञातम्	जगत्थावरजङ्गमम्	
अभावात्सर्वभावानाम्	देहानां चात्मता कुतः	॥८८॥
<i>Sarvamātmatayā jñātam</i>	<i>jagat-sthāvara-jaṅgamam</i>	
<i>Abhāvāt sarvabhāvanām</i>	<i>dehānām cātmatā kutaḥ</i>	(88)

Verse 88

Everything sentient and non-sentient, of the world is known to be self only. How can the body be the self, when the whole universe itself is unreal?

When the dream is ended and I wake up, I realise that all objects in the dream including my dream body have all become myself. To such a man who has awakened from the dream, how can any identification with the dream body exist? Identification with the dream body can continue only so long as the dream body exists. When the dreamer wakes up, the dream no longer exists. In the same way when a seeker realises that all things in the universe are nothing but the *Ātman*, the Self, only during such moments of meditation he withdraws his consciousness from the body, mind and intellect and hence he is not aware of the objects, emotions and thoughts. He experiences only the *Ātman*. Thus to the one who has awakened to the state of Pure Consciousness the misinterpreting equipments of the body, mind and intellect are no more there and so to him the whole world is unreal. What is permanent and unchanging alone is real, and what is ever-changing and impermanent is unreal. The world is constantly changing and is ever-impermanent and hence it is unreal.

आत्मानं सततं जानन्	कालं नय महामते	
प्रारब्धमखिलं भुञ्जन्	नोद्वेगं कर्तुमर्हसि	॥८९॥

Verse 89

Oh! Most Intelligent One, spend your time in realising the Self at all times. While experiencing the fruits of past actions, you need not be anxious of anything.

To realise the Self at all times one must be excruciatingly scientific minded and ever diligent in the pursuit of this Self. Having experienced the Self, go on working hard experiencing all the *prārabdha* living through all the destinies of the body, meeting the challenges of life, as and when they reach, without ever protesting, without ever describing anything, or courting anything or wanting anything. Accept all that comes your way, reject nothing, keep nothing either physically or mentally with you, and reflect every circumstance you are in. Carry the cross of life cheerfully. Whatever might happen to your physical self, never get agitated, but accepting calmly everything that comes your way looking at all these as a mere witness, refuse to worry about anything. Worry is the enemy of man. But you should also remember that you cannot have happiness all the 365 days of the year. Problems, worries, disappointments and sorrows are all the constituents of life, they are the effects carved by *Prārabdha*. You are the *Ātman*, the *Brahman*. The Self at all times illumines the mind. You will mind your mind only when you identify with the mind. Withdraw the Self from the mind. Supposing in the dream you are employed, remember in the waking state you are unemployed. Understand all that you experience is a long-drawn dream when you wake up. Hence, O intelligent one, spend your time treating all this as a happy game and when the time to quit the B M I comes, happily withdraw from these limitations and live the life of the Spirit. Even after realisation you will continue in the equipments of the B M I, for the momentum gathered by these equipments in their pilgrimage of ignorance has to get exhausted. Realise, it is this momentum, that will take care of your equipments and propel them through the flux of time. Thus, a man of realisation awakening to the God-consciousness, from the plane of the B M I, functions in and through them, ever-conscious of his Higher Nature allowing his *prārabdha* to get exhausted through his equipments.

उत्पन्नेऽप्यात्मविज्ञाने प्रारब्धं नैव मुञ्चति ।
इति यच्छ्रूयते शास्त्रे तन्निराक्रियतेऽधुना ॥९०॥

Utpanne 'pyātmavijñāne Prārabdham naiva muñcati

Iti yacchrūyate śāstre tannirākriyate 'dhunā' (90)

Verse. 90

Even after realisation, the *PRĀRABDHA* actions are not dissolved. This statement of the Śāstra is being refuted now.

From this stanza onwards Śāṅkara discusses, *Prārabdha*. In this book and in *Vivekacūdāmani* Śāṅkara vehemently declares the truth that for a man of realisation there is no *Prārabdha*. The scriptural texts tell us that the *Sañcita* and the *Āgāmi 'vāsanā's* can be burnt down in the fire of knowledge whereas *Prārabdha* has to be lived out. *Prārabdha* is for the body and not for the soul. Body is inert and it cannot therefore feel the flux of *prārabdha*. In the case of a realised soul, all *'vāsanā's* have ended and hence he has no *prārabdha*. To make ordinary people understand this subtle point it is generally said that the *prārabdha* is for the body. We generally say even great Mahātmās like Rama kṛṣṇa, Ramana, Jesus Christ lived out their *prārabdha*. From the stand-point of the realised soul they are ever in the quiescent state of Transcendental Infinity which is one without a second. In such a non-dual experience how can there be an experience of the *prārabdha*? The men of realisation have not thought of the B M I and hence they are indifferent to what happens to their body. Whether it stays or goes they are unaffected. From the stand-point of the on-looker who looks at the realised soul going through the destinies of the BMI there is *prārabdha* but from the stand-point of the realised soul there is only one non-dual experience and hence there can be no *prārabdha* for the realised soul.

तत्त्वज्ञानोदयादूर्ध्वम् प्रारब्धं नैव विद्यते ।
देहादीनामसत्यत्वाद् यथा स्वप्नो विबोधतः ॥९१॥

Tattvajñānodayādūrdhvam prārabdhāṃ naiva vidyate
Dehādīnām -asatyatvād yathā svapno vibodhataḥ (91)

Verse 91

Just as the dream is unreal for the waker, so too after realisation, the bodies are unreal and therefore there is no *Prārabdha*.

When the knowledge of the Self dawns in us we come to experience the Pure and Changeless Awareness in ourselves free from the entanglements of the B M I. When an action is done, the reaction of the result comes, if such be the case, how is it, Śaṅkara says here, that there is no *prārabdha* for a realised soul? This is because, when once we have withdrawn ourselves from the equipments of the BMI they are no longer in us and hence *Prārabdha* which can affect only the BMI is rendered lifeless for, the individual has awakened to the Pure Consciousness. This is just as, when a dreamer wakes up to the waking plane, he is totally and completely freed from the onslaught of the dream objects. The dream objects can condition, limit and affect only the dreamer, but when the dreamer becomes the waker they cannot affect him, for from the waking stand-point the dream is only an illusion.

Prārabdha means destiny. Destiny is the result of past action. At every moment, we are the products of our past. We carry our past with us in the form of '*vāsanā*'s. The '*vāsanā*'s control or regulate our thoughts and emotions and consequently our actions too. Thus in order to fulfill our '*vāsanā*'s created out of our past actions, we take up the right type of body and enter into the right type of environment. Therefore the past affects us in the form of our causal body, the '*vāsanā*'s. And this causal body, '*vāsanā*'s, naturally, controls and regulates all our expressions, emotions, thoughts and actions. The man of realisation is one, who has transcended his '*vāsanā*'s. So the causal body in his case has ended. Therefore how can we say he has *Prārabdha*? *Prārabdha* can exist only so long as '*vāsanā*'s exist. A man of realizations has no '*vāsanā*'s, what so ever. The *prārabdha* cannot be for the body, for the body is inert. The *Ātman* cannot have *prārabdha* for it never acts. Hence there is no *prārabdha* for the man of realisation. Yet why should the teachers of spirituality and the scriptures say that a man of realisation has to go through *prārabdha*? This is only to convince the ignorant who seeing the realised one going through the joys and sorrows of life ask why a realised one should go through these joys and sorrows.

So the *śāstra* says that the physical body of the realised soul is functioning because of its *prārabdha* only to cater an explanation to the ignorant person's question.

The intelligent one again asks the question as to what happens to the present life of the realised soul. The past and the future (*sancita* and *āgāmi*) are burnt out but the present is still there. To answer this point *Śāṅkara* in *Vivekacūdāmaṇi* gives a beautiful example. —

A hunter thinking that his target is a tiger shoots an arrow at it. After the arrow leaves the bow, he realised that the target is not a tiger but a cow. He cannot now call back the arrow. The arrow will go and strike the target unless the target itself moves away. The arrow that is released has to expend its energy in the same direction in which it has taken its flight. Similarly, considering myself as the body, mind and intellect and therefore an ego, I demand and will for myself a certain type of future, with certain objects, emotions and thoughts and thus I take up a physical equipment to fulfill my demand and willing. But suddenly due to my *puruṣārtha*, I regain the understanding that I am Pure Consciousness and hence I withdraw myself from the wrong understanding that I am the body, mind and intellect or the ego and rediscover my real nature of the Spirit. But this assemblage, B M I and the ego, like the arrow, having taken its flight has to exhaust itself. Even though the hunter pities the cow, he cannot help seeing the cow getting killed by his own arrow. So too the realised one, withdrawing himself from the B M I and the ego, helplessly watches the whole game of life but never gets involved in it. Now, here in this book *Śāṅkara* has proved that his *prārabdha* is only from the stand-point of the observer and not from the stand-point of the realised one. It is the students who want the teacher and so they superimpose on their teacher, the realised one, the *prārabdha* and watch it expending itself out. Thus each one of us is not only a product of one's own *vāsanā*s but also the product of other's *vāsanā*'s too. So when one realises, the individual *vāsanā*'s are transcended, and there is no *prārabdha* for him, but, the samasti *prārabdha*, the other's *vāsanā*'s are superimposed on him and so this has to expend itself out.

कर्म जन्मान्तरकृतम्	प्रारब्धमिति कीर्तितम्	
तत्तु जन्मान्तराभावात्	पुंसो नैवास्ति कर्हिचित्	॥१२॥

Karma janmāntarakṛtam

prārabdhamiti kīrtitam

Tattu janmāntar-ābhāvāt

pumso naivāsti karhicit (92)

Verse 92

The actions of the previous (other) births are known as *Prārabdha*. For the realised, there is no question of other births, so the *Prārabdha* also does not exist.

That which was done in the past is '*karma Janmāntara kṛtam*'. This stanza defines *Prārabdha*. *Prārabdham* means result of past actions. Here past need not only be the past life. Even here we can experience the result of our past actions. If I touch fire I immediately experience the result, which is burning. This feeling of the burning sensation is not because of the '*purva janmāntara kṛta karma phala*', but the result of the action done right now. If I touch a live wire now, it is not as if I will get the result of the act in the next birth, Right now, here itself, now itself I will get the shock. Certain actions mature into fruits immediately. Certain other actions mature in time, some slowly, some gradually, and some quickly. The result that accrues out of the actions done is called *Prārabdham*. In realisation the realised one has conquered the time element, for the time element is the evaluation of the intellect and the realised one has transcended the mind and intellect equipment. So *Prārabdha* which can take place only in a field of time cannot affect the realised one for he has transcended the time-element. *Prārabdha* is the past action that yields its fruit in the present. The past can punish the ego which functions through the B M & I. The past can condition only the B M I equipment and its identification. Supposing a policeman goes to serve an arrest warrant on an individual. He enters the house and finds the body of the individual, but finds it is a dead body. On whom can he serve the warrant? So too when a seeker has transcended the B M I as a result of realisation, whom can the *prārabdha* affect?

स्वप्नदेहो यथाध्यस्तः

तथैवायं हि देहकः

।

अध्यस्तस्य कुतो जन्म

जन्माभावे हि तत् कुतः

॥१९३॥

Svapnadeho yathādhyaṣṭaḥ

tathaiṣāyaṃ hi dehakah

Adhyaṣṭasya kuto janma

janmābhāve hi tat kutah (93)

Verse 93

Just as the body of a dreamer is superimposed, so too, this body of the waker is also superimposed (illusory). Where is the birth for the superimposed? And in the absence of birth where is existence (of *Prārabdha*)?

This verse advances forth another argument to prove that a man of realisation has no *prārabdha*. The body of the dreamer, the dream and the dream world are all really only a superimposition on the waker. The dream body is not there in the waking. So too, in my ignorance, I identify myself with the BMI which is projection of my ignorance and live through the destinies of the B M I. From the stand-point of the Supreme Reality, this physical body is only another dream, another projection caused by 'vāsanā's. For purposes of gathering experiences I identify with the body. Thus this body is nothing but a superimposition on the Supreme Consciousness. That which is a delusory projection has no birth. The ghost has no birth. From the stand-point of the post, the ghost is only a superimposition. So long as one is in delusion he can say when the ghost was born, when it grew etc. But when the delusion has ended how can there be the ghost? So how can this body have a birth, for it is a projection. an illusion? If that be the case where is the question of a *prārabdha*? Not only that there is no *prārabdha*, but also there is no *āgāmi* or *sañcita*. *Sañcita* means accumulated 'vāsanā's of the past. The past is there only with reference to the present birth. When there is no birth at all, and when the body is only a superimposition, how can there be any *prārabdha*? With reference to a past body only we say there is '*prārabdha karma*' and with reference to the future body we say there is '*āgāmi Karma*'. In a man of realisation who has transcended time, time-past, time-present, time-future, how can there be results of the past action, the results of the actions done in the present and the result of the actions to be done in the future?

उपादानं प्रपञ्चस्य	मृद्भाण्डस्येव कथ्यते	
अज्ञानं चैव वेदान्तैः	तस्मिन्नष्टे क्व विश्वता	॥१४॥
<i>Upādānaṁ prapañcasya</i>	<i>mṛdbhāṇḍasyeva kathyate</i>	
<i>Ajñānaṁ caiva vedāntaiḥ</i>	<i>tasminnaṣṭe kva viśvatā</i>	(94)

Just as the mud is said to be the material cause for the pot, so too, in *vedānta*, the Ignorance is said to be the cause for the world. When that is destroyed, where is the universe?

The concept of birth is only in the realm of ignorance. The world of changes, the world of plurality, the world of happiness etc., are all constituted of objects, emotions and thoughts. The perception of objects, emotions and thoughts are all because of the mind and intellect. The mind and intellect are the products of the 'vāsanā's. So the material cause of the world of plurality is the 'vāsanā's born out of ignorance. Ignorance is the non-apprehension and the misapprehension of the reality. So the cause for the universe is ignorance just as mud is the cause for the pot. Since we are aware of our ignorance and in as much as ignorance is the cause for the universe, Awareness or Consciousness is ultimately the material cause of the Universe. Hence the Lord says, 'the entire universe is only a portion of me!' The universe is the result of the dream of *Nārāyaṇa*. The world is the dream of the total causal body.

All mud in the world has not become pots. All gold in world has not become ornaments. All Consciousness has not become the universe. Just as there is still mud in the world inspite of the presence of several pots, just as there is still gold waiting to be explored, unearthed, discovered and refined, so too a greater portion of the Consciousness has not yet manifested as the world.

From the stand-point of the mud all pots are nothing but mud. So too from the stand-point of Consciousness all this universe is nothing but the Consciousness. So inspite of all the equipments we possess, we are still the uncontaminated form of Consciousness. God cannot lose Himself to become the world. Only an infinitesimal part of the Lord has become the universe. Milk can become the curds. Milk modifies itself to become the curds. From the curds the milk cannot be extracted, either by processes known or unknown. The infinite is changeless. If it were to change then we will have to conclude that in creation the Infinite is dead and the world is born. Since the Infinite is changeless it cannot undergo any change. Just as the post has not changed to become the ghost so too the Infinite has not changed to become the universe. Just as the ghost is only a superimposition on the post, so too the world is a superimposition

on the Infinite. When ignorance is ended the non-apprehension of the Reality and the consequent mis-apprehension into the world gets ended. So when the individual has rediscovered the all-pervading Infinite Consciousness, the Reality, how can there be a state of experience of plurality?

यथा रज्जुं परित्यज्य	सर्पं गृह्णाति वै भ्रमात्	
तद्वत्सत्यमविज्ञाय	जगत्पश्यति मूढधीः	॥१५॥
<i>Yathā rajjūm parityajya</i>	<i>sarpaṃ grhṇāti vai bhramāt</i>	
<i>Tadvat-satyam-avijñāya</i>	<i>jagatpaśyati mūḍhadhīḥ</i>	(95)

Verse 95

Due to delusion, ignoring the rope the serpent is seen, so too, forgetting the Truth, the ignorant sees the world.

By not recognising the rope as a rope, we leave the rope-reality and in its place, because of intellectual confusion, we misunderstand the rope to be the serpent. Similarly, without knowing the Truth, the Reality, due to our non-apprehension of our Reality-Divine we see the world of plurality. We are ignorantly wise, and stupidly intellectual. This is not a contradiction. Śaṅkara says that people are not unintelligent. Though they have subtlety they use it only in a certain direction. They refuse to use this subtlety to realise the Highest Reality, and hence they are called the deluded ones. The stupid *Jīva*, the individuality, refuses to understand the reality and so misunderstands itself to be the body, mind and intellect, and hence recognises the world of objects, emotions, and thoughts. Thus from ignorance alone has this plurality emerged. For a man of realisation who has ended his ignorance how can there be *Prārabdha*?

रज्जुरूपे परिज्ञाते	सर्पभ्रान्तिर्न तिष्ठति	
अधिष्ठाने तथा ज्ञाते	प्रपञ्चः शून्यतां व्रजेत्	॥१६॥
<i>Rajjurūpe parijñāte</i>	<i>sarpa-bhrāntirna tiṣṭhati</i>	
<i>Adhiṣṭhāne tathā jñāte</i>	<i>prapañcaḥ śūnyatām vrajet</i>	(96)

Verse 96

When the reality of the rope is understood, the snake cannot remain, when the Substratum is known, the world vanishes into nothingness.

The serpent was never actually there in the rope in the past, nor is it there in the present nor shall it ever be there in the future. The rope is ever a rope. Never has it been a serpent at any time. If you see a serpent in a rope, it is only because of your ignorance of the rope. When the reality of the rope is understood, the delusory serpent cannot remain.

The B M I, P F T and O E T, all put together constitute the world. Once the Supreme Truth is gained, this world can never be. The confusing equipments of the B M I are not in the transcendental Reality. The world of OET cannot be in the highest place of Consciousness. When one has awakened to that Reality, the world has to vanish into nothingness.

Substratum always means the Truth. The substratum for the serpent is the rope. The substratum for the ghost is the post. The substratum for the painting is the canvas. The substratum for the ornament is gold. Substratum means the Ground, the Platform, the very basis. Thus when the substratum, the *Ātman* is realised in ourselves, the pluralistic phenomenal world shall become null and void.

देहस्यापि प्रपञ्चत्वात्	प्रारब्धावस्थितिः कुतः	।
अज्ञानिजनबोधार्थम्	प्रारब्धं वक्ति वै श्रुतिः	॥१७॥
<i>Dehasyāpi prapañcatvāt</i>	<i>prārabdhāvasthitiḥ kutah</i>	
<i>Ajñāni-jana-bodhārtham</i>	<i>prārabdham vakti vai śrutih</i>	(97)

Verse 97

Even this body being a part of the universe, how can there be any *Prārabdha*? The Scripture talks about *Prārabdha*, for the easy understanding of the ignorant.

The B M I, P F T and the O E T together constitute the *Prapañca*, the ever changing perishable phenomenal world. So when the Reality of the *Ātman* is apprehended, how can the body which is a part of the Phenomenal world come to exist In the dusk you mistook the rope to be the snake and the post for the ghost. When you switch on the torch and then realise the post will you still say that you are seeing the smile of the welcoming ghost in the post, even though you accept that the ghost has disappeared? With the disappearance

of the ghost, everything connected with the ghost totally, completely comes to an end.

Similarly, as long as I was identifying myself with my body, mind and intellect I recognised my *prārabdha* and submitted to it. When I realise the Truth, ignorance gets ended and with it the BMI cease to exist and so how can there be any *prārabdha*? If this be the case why did the *Śāstra* say that *prārabdha* exists even for a realised soul? It is only for the popular understanding of the ignorant who have not got the scientific *vedāntic* understanding, at the earlier stage of understanding, that the *Śāstras* introduce this in this way. But when the understanding that Truth alone remains, dawns, he will himself come to understand that there can be no *prārabdha*, for *prārabdha* is only at the plane of plurality in a concept of time. When a student does not know what a chair is, the teacher draws the picture of a chair and then explains its use to the understanding of the lesser intellects. Later when he refers to the chair he need not draw the picture. So too to the lesser intellects when the '*śāstra*'s explain the nature of realisation with reference to the actions they say there is *prārabdha* for the man of realisation. But, when once the student evolves and gains subtlety of understanding, the teacher points out the truth in which there is admixture of no otherness.

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ।
 बहुत्वं तन्निषेधार्थम् श्रुत्या गीतं च यत् स्फुटम् ॥९८॥

Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin-dr̥ṣṭe parāvare

Bahutvaṁ tanniṣedhārtham śrutya gītaṁ ca yat sphuṭam (98)

Verse 98

'When the Supreme is seen, all his actions are destroyed'. The *Śruti* has clearly expressed the actions in plural to negate the *Prārabdha* also.

The first line of this verse is the second line of the eighth stanza of the second section of the second chapter of the *Mundākopaniṣad*. *Śruti* says that having realised Him who is both the High (*para*) and Low (*apara*), there shall thereafter be none of the experiences of ignorance with that seer of wisdom. The knots of the heart (ignorance,

desires, actions) are broken as under; all doubts as to which is real and which is *Adharma*, all such doubts get themselves solved with the experience of Reality. Such a one cannot be caught within the web of past actions and the present reactions and thus brought to be bound to the wheel of life and death. The ego alone is responsible for the egoistic actions. Naturally it was the ego that was suffering the consequences of its actions. But when the Ego gets merged with the Reality there is no actor any more and so there can be no enjoyer of the reactions. *Prārabdha* is the reactions and so how can there be any *prārabdha* for the realised one.

When one realises the Truth, ignorance (*avidyā*) is gone. When ignorance goes no desires can come; when the desires are not there, there cannot be actions; desire-prompted actions cannot be there. All actions, here means, the *sañcita*, *āgāmi* and *prārabdha* - the actions of the accumulated past that has now come to action, and that which has to come in the future and that which is operative now - all these are totally denied in the state of realisation.

The plural - actions - is indicated only to enlighten us that it includes in its gamut all the actions *sañcita*, *āgāmi* and *prārabdha*. The plural indicates that none of the '*vāsanā*'s will ever remain. If '*Śāstras*' say *prārabdha* exists for a man of realisation and Śāṅkara says it does not exist, then the tradition declares that between the two, the *Śāstra* alone gains authority. That is why Śāṅkara here quotes the Scripture itself to clinch the point in question.

उच्यतेऽज्ञैर्बलाच्चैतत्	तदानर्थद्वयागमः	
वेदान्तमतहानं च	यतो ज्ञानमिति श्रुतिः	॥९९॥
<i>Ucyate jñairbalāccaītat</i>	<i>tad ānarthadvayāgamah</i>	
<i>Vedāntamatahānam ca</i>	<i>yato jñānamiti śrutiḥ</i>	(99)

Verse 99

Still, if the ignorant persist about the existence of *Prārabdha*, then, they will involve themselves in two absurdities (impossibility of liberation and the futility of knowledge) and also they will be foregoing the declarations of the *Śruti* which declares the possibility of knowledge.

If the student without proper understanding maintains the idea that there is *prārabdha* for the man of realisation, the consequences of such a version will be two wrong and contradictory conclusions contrary to *Vedāntic* declarations. In case you say that *prārabdha* is still there for the realised soul, then *mokṣa* becomes meaningless, *mokṣa* or liberation becomes a myth and Self-Realisation (*Ātma Svarūpa*) a delusion. The '*upaniṣad*'s declares that '*Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavati*') - The knower of the *Brahman* becomes the *Brahman*. This declaration is contradicted if *prārabdha* is acquiesced for a realised soul. A realised soul realises his true nature -- The Self which is one without a second. Supposing you say a man of realisation has *prārabdha* '*vāsanā*'s even after he experiences realisation then there are two truths, not only the truth of *Brahman*, but also the truth of *Brahman* plus '*vāsanā*'s (*prārabdha* '*vāsanā*'s) and to express these '*vāsanā*'s he should have a body, mind and intellect and then a world, which is the field for his experiences and world of objects, emotions and thoughts for him to experience. If *prārabdha* is accepted, then the man of a realisation has *prārabdha* - *vāsanā*-prompted activities, which the *Śāstra* and scriptures are not prepared to accept. If the theory of *prārabdhā* for a man of realisation is accepted then the religion of *Vedānta* will be destroyed, for *Vedānta* is built on the edifice that man of realisation has no *vāsanā* prompted actions. '*Śāstra*'s say that *prārabdha* is there for a realised soul only to explain the theory of action to the ignorant one who is still in the lower classes of the School of Spirituality. The śruti says that a knowledge of the *Brahman* takes you to the non-dual state. If *prārabdha* theory for a man of realisation is accepted then the state he reaches is not a state of non-duality. Thus *śāstra* is contradicted.

From the next verse onwards Śāṅkara explains to us what prerequisites are necessary for gaining the final experience of non-dual *Brahman*. The rhetorical portion is over. It is explained that the *Ātman*, the Self, is separate from the body, mind and intellect. When it says it is separate it does not give to the B M I a separate existence apart from the *Brahman* but only points out that the B M I is only a superimposition on the *Ātman*. Superimposition is nothing but projection through delusion and identification with the projected one. A first hand experience of the Truth proves that the BMI is nothing but the projected delusory part of the Truth. Now the practical aspect of realising this truth is discussed. The practical

mind of the Āryan is not merely satisfied and fascinated by a glorious and beautiful theory but wants practical methods by which the Great Truth can be experienced. In India religion is not a bundle of superstitions to be fumigated from time to time, but a beautiful Science. The man who goes to religion is not an escape from life. He goes not there to beg, borrow or ask for forgiveness or for grace, but to evolve to the highest level where he understands that he and his Father are one and the same. The techniques or methods by which this Great Truth is experienced is called 'sādhana'. This vedāntic Sādhana is discussed from the following stanza.

त्रिपञ्चाङ्गान्यथो वक्ष्ये पूर्वोक्तस्य हि लब्धये ।
 तैश्च सर्वैः सदा कार्यम् निदिध्यासनमेव तु ॥१००॥

Tripañcāṅgānyatho vakṣye pūrvoktasya hi labdhaye

Taiśca sarvaiḥ sadā kāryam nididhyāsanam-eva tu (100)

Verse 100

For the attainment of the aforesaid liberation, I shall now expound the fifteen steps with the help of which one has to practice the profound meditation at all times.

Thus in order to gain a vivid subjective experience of what has already been said in the earlier stanzas a pure, Scientific and technical method, a fifteen-point programme is given here by Śāṅkara. These fifteen stanzas are to be pursued diligently by all seekers who wish to gain this subjective experience. The practice of these fifteen values is said to be profound meditation. This profound meditation is to be undertaken as a duty, as a must by the seeker. The succeeding stanzas tell us what these fifteen limbs of sādhana are.

नित्याभ्यासादृते प्राप्तिः न भवेत्सच्चिदात्मनः ।
 तस्माद्ब्रह्म निदिध्यासेत् जिज्ञासुः श्रेयसे चिरम् ॥१०१॥

Nityābhyaśādṛte prāptiḥ na bhavet-saccīdātmanah

Tasmādbrahma nididhyāset Jijñāsuḥ śreyase ciram (101)

Without constant practice, the Self which is of the nature of Pure Existence-Consciousness Bliss, cannot be attained. Therefore, the sincere seekers should always meditate on *Brahman*, for their own good.

Without constant practice, consistency of pursuit and the will to pursue at all costs, one cannot reach the goal, which is to experience the *Ātman*, the Reality, the Great Truth. Therefore, the seeker has to meditate on the *Brahman* constantly and continuously. To perform this meditation what are the pre-requisites? These are discussed in the following stanzas. To reach the pinnacle of Truth one must have burning aspiration, unbending will and a readiness to pour, at the altar of what is sought, everything he possesses, and a spirit of sacrifice of an uncommon and unusual degree. The seeker must be prepared to sustain himself for long periods of time.

यमो हि नियमस्त्यागः	मौनं देशश्च कालतः	
आसनं मूलबन्धश्च	देहसाम्यं च दृक्स्थितिः	१०२
<i>Yamo hi niyamastyāgaḥ</i>	<i>maunam deśaśca kālataḥ</i>	
<i>Āsanam mūlabandhaśca</i>	<i>dehasāmyam ca drksthitiḥ</i>	(102)

प्राणसंयमनं चैव	प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा	
आत्मध्यानं समाधिश्च	प्रोक्तान्यङ्गानि वै क्रमात्	१०३
<i>Prāṇasamyamanam caiva</i>	<i>pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā</i>	
<i>Ātmadhyānam samādhiśca</i>	<i>proktānyāṅgāni vai kramāt</i>	(103)

Verse 102-103

1) The control of the senses (*yama*), 2) the control of the mind (*niyama*), 3) renunciation (*tyāga*), 4) silence (*mouna*), 5) space (*deśa*), 6) time (*kāla*), 7) posture (*āsan*), 8) sucking in the anus (*mūlabandha*), 9) holding steady the body (*deha-samyam*), 10) steadiness of gaze (*drksthiti*), 11) control of *prāṇa* (*prāṇa-samyamana*), 12) the withdrawal of the mind (*pratyāhāra*) 13) continuous reflection (*dhāraṇa*), 14) contemplation on the Self (*dhyānam*), and 15) total absorption

(*samādhi*) — these are the items declared in a series.

As promised by Śāṅkara earlier¹, here he is enumerating the fifteen “steps”, or programmes of spiritual practices (*sādhana*). These include the Eight-step (*Aṣṭāṅga yoga*) of *Pāṇjali*.

Through a little self control of the sense organs and renunciation of desires for sense indulgence, the mind gets controlled and it becomes silent and quiet when space-time concepts become harmless. With right posture, we learn to hold the body steady and our gaze becomes fixed, when all our '*Prāṇa*'s get controlled. Thereafter, withdrawal of the mind from all its wanderings becomes easy; concentration comes naturally; contemplation and total absorption become effortless and spontaneous.

Even though the above is the direct meaning of the terms, Śāṅkara now takes up each of these familiar terms and, with his masterly touch, gives each a new depth of rich suggestions.

सर्वं ब्रह्मेति विज्ञानात् इन्द्रियग्रामसंयमः ।
यमोऽयमिति संप्रोक्तः अभ्यसनीयो मुहुर्मुहुः ॥१०४॥

Sarvaṁ brahmeti vijñānāt indriyagrāmasaṁyamah
Yamo'yamiti samproktaḥ abhyasaniyo muhurmuḥuḥ (104)

Verse 104

By the direct knowledge that “All this is *Brahman*” to gain a life of easy restraint of all the senses is rightly called *yama*; this should be practised again and again.

Sense control is not possible as long as we live in our present state of Consciousness. In our present state, sense hungers are natural and not to get charmed by sense-objects would be almost unnatural!

But when the awareness of the One Self comes, in that *Brahmic* state, sense organs cannot seek sense-objects passionately, as in the Self there are neither objects nor organs of perception. In short, to intellectually appreciate the insistence of the scriptures that “All this is *Brahman*” and sincerely try to turn our attention to this Seat of Sacred Life in our bosom, is to turn our attention entirely away from the sense-world.

This natural sense-control that is effortlessly gained by an ardent seeker when he practices to turn his attention to the Divine Self within is true and enduring *yama*.

According to Pātanjali, *yama* includes “non-killing (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satyam*), non-stealing (*asteya*), self-control (*brahmācārya*), and non-receiving (*apprigraha*). All these are automatically and effortlessly gained when the seeker comes to accept and diligently seeks to gain the knowledge of “All this is *Brahman*”.

सजातीयप्रवाहश्च	विजातीयतिरस्कृतिः	
नियमो हि परानन्दः	नियमात्क्रियते बुधैः	१०५
<i>Sajātiyapravāhaśca</i>	<i>vijātiyatiraskṛtiḥ</i>	
<i>Niyamo hi parānandaḥ</i>	<i>niyamātkriyate budhaiḥ</i>	(105)

Verse 105

To maintain a continuous flow of thoughts of the same species, by rejecting the influx of all dissimilar thought currents, is called *niyama*, which is a great Bliss-experience. This is regularly practised by the wise.

According to Pātanjali, *niyama* consists of “external” and internal purification, contentment, penance, study of *Veda*’s and worship of God.”

But watch for the way of description of Ādi Śāṅkara. It, at first, staggers us with its unfamiliar uniqueness, and when we again reflect upon the significance, and perhaps practise it in ourselves a little, all of a sudden a bloom of secret understanding, as it were, opens up in us. When the condition Śāṅkara describes is brought about, we shall find all the five factors enumerated by Patanjali have already become fulfilled in us, without our conscious efforts.

To maintain in our mind and unbroken flow of similar thoughts upon the nature of the Changeless, Infinite Self by effectively policing to stop all dissimilar thoughts - thoughts of the pluralistic world, rushing in to disturb the exciting rhythm of the quietened mind at peaceful rest in the Self — is called *niyama*, a state of dynamic quietude in the mental level. When a seeker’s mind has come to steadily get lost in the contemplation upon the nature

of the Self, it is known as being established in *niyama*.

त्यागः प्रपञ्चरूपस्य चिदात्मत्वावलोकनात् ।
त्यागो हि महतां पूज्यः सद्यो मोक्षमयो यतः ॥१०६॥

Tyāgaḥ prapañcarūpasya cidāmatvāvalokanāt
Tyāgo hi mahatām pūjyah sadyo mokṣamayo yataḥ (106)
Verse 106

Real renunciation (*tyāga*), always so respectfully honoured by the noble sages, is the rejection of the illusory universe, on realising that the universe is nothing but the *Ātman*, the Pure Consciousness.

Just abandoning the wealth, home, job, woman, or children is not true renunciation. On awakening from a dream, when one realises that all he had experienced in the dream was all nothing but the waking-mind only, then the waker's attitude of disinterest towards what he had possessed therein and what all he had perceived around him in his dream-state, is true renunciation. Thus, Śāṅkara insists that on realising that "all this that we perceive, feel, and think as objects, emotions, and thoughts, is an apparent play in the Pure Consciousness", then that individual's total disinterestedness in the non-existent world of unreal perceptions is true renunciation.

This kind of a mental state of total renunciation, painless and natural, is respectfully honoured by the noble sages everywhere. One who has awakened will have no interest in the objects of pleasure or power, in his own earlier dream-world. On awakening to the Supreme State of Pure Consciousness, in the exploding realisation of the illusoriness of the world of plurality, the sage gives it-all up in a true, enduring, and joyous state of renunciation.

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।
यन्मौनं योगिभिर्गम्यम् तद्भजेत्सर्वदा बुधः ॥१०७॥

Yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha
Yanmaunam yogibhīrgamyam tad-bhajet-sarvadā budhah (107)

The wise sage should ever remain in that Silence (*mouna*), "from which mind along with speech returns without comprehending It", and this State of Silence within can be attained by meditators (*'yogin's*).

The man of spiritual realisation remains in that inner Silence, which is a state beyond the senses and their perceptions, the mind and its emotions, and the intellect and its thoughts. The term "silence" used here is not the inert silence of sleep or the awesome silence of the grave. This is a state of Consciousness which is beyond the realm of the ego, the "experiencer" of the pluralistic world of finite things and beings.

This state is indicated in the *Upaniṣad* as "That from which the sense-abilities and mental faculties pantingly return without ever comprehending It."

If thus all our outer and inner instruments of knowledge are totally incompetent to reach and become aware of It, is this state unattainable? It would seem so. But here Śāṅkara comforts us: "this State of Silence can be attained by seekers through meditation".

वाचो यस्मान्निवर्तन्ते	तद्वक्तुं केन शक्यते	
प्रपञ्चो यदि वक्तव्यः	सोऽपि शब्दविवर्जितः	१०८
<i>Vāco yasmān-nivartante</i>	<i>tadvaktuṁ kena śakyate</i>	
<i>Prapañco yadi vaktavyaḥ</i>	<i>so'pi śabda-vivarjitah</i>	(108)

इति वा तद्भवेन्मौनम्	सतां सहज-संज्ञितम्	
गिरा मौनं तु बालानाम्	प्रयुक्तं ब्रह्मवादिभिः	१०९
<i>Iti vā tadbhaven-maunam</i>	<i>satām sahaja-samjñitam</i>	
<i>Girā maunaṁ tu bālānām</i>	<i>prayuktam brahmavādibhiḥ</i>	(109)

Verse 108-109

Who can describe That (Self) from which words return?* If the phenomenal world of plurality were to be described, that too is

* Words return without being able to express - Ed.

beyond words. This is another definition of "Silence" (*mouna*) which is natural to all men of wisdom. The gross silence by restraining speech is prescribed for the ignorant by the teachers of *Brahman*.

When a Master lives in That State of Consciousness, It is beyond words and so is indescribable. Again, even were he to use his power of speech to describe this world, then also words are not competent to describe this. This world, to the wise, has no existence (*asat*), and yet, to the ignorant, it alone has existence (*sat*). So we cannot assert that it is *asat*, nor can we prove that it is *sat*. It has only a relative reality, as a dream: while dreaming, the dream has a reality to the dreamer. To the ego, while in the *Jīva* -state, the world of plurality has a reality which is not when *Jīva* wakes up.

In *Māndukya Kārika* it is beautifully argued. If the world of plurality (*prapañca*) has existence, it should be available even in sleep. It is not, therefore, it has no absolute existence. We cannot say that the world is non-existent; because it is fully experienced by the waker's mind. In fact, it can neither be described as existing, nor as non-existing. It is only an illusion, having only, perhaps, relative-reality.

Realising this fact, the wise comes to a state which is Silence, and this inner, pure silence is the very nature of the Self, so natural (*Sahaja*) for the wise. This is real *mounam* (vow of silence).

The grosser suffocating silence through diligently restraining speech is an elementary exercise prescribed for the extrovert seekers, by the wise.

आदावन्ते च मध्ये च जनो यस्मिन्न विद्यते ।
येनेदं सकलं व्याप्तम् स देशो विजनः स्मृतः ॥११०॥

Ādāvante ca madhye ca jano yasminna vidyate
Yenedam sakalam vyāptam sa deśo vijanaḥ smṛtaḥ (110)

Verse 110

That State is "space" (*deśa*), wherein the universe (*jana*) never is, either in the beginning or in the middle or in the end (*vijana*), but which pervades all these; this is the solitary *Brahman* state.

Now Śaṅkara tries to define and bring out the term *deśa* (place) indicated in the enumeration of the fifteen-steps to Realisation. People and their universe of things and beings (*jāna*) are not there in the Self, which transcends the phenomenal world perceived through the body mind-intellect equipments. Hence it is *Vijāna*, the solitude of the Self.

Just as on waking from dream, in the waking state there is no dream-world at all and the waker realises that the entire dream was pervaded by the waking-mind, so too on awakening to the Self, the wise realises that the phenomenal world was all pervaded by the Self. The world was but a disturbance in the Consciousness Divine. This state is '*deśa*' (place) to be sought.

कलनात्सर्वभूतानाम्	ब्रह्मादीनां निमेषतः	
कालशब्देन निर्दिष्टः	ह्यखण्डानन्द कोऽद्वयः	१११
<i>Kalanāt sarvabhūtānām</i>	<i>brahmādinām nimeṣataḥ</i>	
<i>Kāla-śabdena nirdiṣṭaḥ</i>	<i>hyakhaṇḍānanda ko'dvayaḥ</i>	(111)

Verse 111

The One non-dual, indivisible Bliss State (*Brahman*) is indicated by the term "time" (*kāla*), as it conjures up, in a twinkling of the eye, all beings, from *Brahma* (Creator) downwards.

Time (*kāla*) mentioned as the next means, is being interpreted by Śaṅkara as *Brahman* alone. The entire universe of names and forms is brought forth, made to play out and disappear, all with the effortless ease of the twinkling of an eye, by *Brahman*, in *Brahman*. This Supreme state, when It comes to express as the total desires in all minds, becomes God, and God becomes the Creator, Sustainer, and Annihilator of all plurality.

This conjuring up of the world (*Kalana*), as our dream comes to being in our own waking mind, exists, and gets merged into our mind, is Time. To seek this source of time-experience is the seeker's highest path.

सुखेनैव भवेद्यस्मिन् अजस्रं ब्रह्मचिन्तनम् ।
 आसनं तद्विजानीयात् नेतरत् सुखनाशनम् ॥११२॥

Sukhenaiva bhaved-yasmin ajasram brahma-cintanam
Āsanam tad-vijānīyāt netarat sukhanāśanam (112)

Verse 112

That should be understood as the “right posture” (*āsan*), in which meditation upon *Brahman* will flow spontaneously, with unbroken, effortless ease. *Āsan* is not any of the postures which destroy one’s comfort.

The moment a student hears the word “*āsan*”, he thinks of the difficult twists of the body and the painful postures prescribed in *Hatha Yoga*. That is a very gross external *sādhana*. But when the seeker has gained mental purity sufficiently to try meditation successfully, to him “*āsan*” must have a subtler and deeper significance.

Śaṅkara provides it to the seekers. Any posture in which our single-pointed mind can, undisturbed, continuously turn its entire attention in the direction of the Self within, that is *āsan*.

In order that the student may not have even a trace of doubt, the *Ācārya* points out explicitly that *Āsan* is not any painful posture of the body.

सिद्धं यत्सर्वभूतादि विश्वाधिष्ठानमव्ययम् ।
 यस्मिन्सिद्धाः समाविष्टाः तद्वै सिद्धासनं विदुः ॥११३॥

Siddham yatsarvabhūtādi viśvādhiṣṭhānamavyayam
Yasmin-siddhāḥ Samāviṣṭāḥ tadvai siddhāsanam viduḥ (113)

Verse 113

That which is famously known as the beginning of all beings, That which is the immutable substratum for the entire world of happenings, That in which the men-of-realisation stay merged, That is to be understood as *Siddha-āsan*.

In this and in the following verse, we have the deeper interpretations of two of the famous 'āsan's: *siddhāsan* and *mūlabandha-āsan*.

To remain merged in the Higher State of Consciousness, the Self, the *Brahman*, and to stay therein well-established, is *siddha-āsan*.

To awake to that Supreme State of Pure Consciousness, which is the sole substratum for the entire universe of beings and things and to remain in that *siddha-state* (state of fulfillment) as the Self is the *siddha-āsan*.

The idea is: don't stop with a mere external body adjustment and call it *siddha-posture*.

यन्मूलं सर्वभूतानाम्	यन्मूलं चित्तबन्धनम्	
मूलबन्धः सदा सेव्यः	योगोऽसौ राजयोगिनाम्	॥११४॥
<i>Yanmūlaṁ sarvabhūtānām</i>	<i>yanmūlaṁ cittabandhanam</i>	
<i>Mūlabandhaḥ sadā sevyah</i>	<i>yogo'sau rāja-yoginām</i>	(114)

Verse 114

That Supreme, which is the root of all existence, upon which the mind is to stay in contemplation, is termed as "sucking in the root". This is to be practised by *Raja-yogins*.

Everything springs from Him, and He alone nourishes all to act in their fields of work. He is the life in the living. To hold the mind's attention directed to this Self, from whom, in His grace, stems forth all activities, is the "binding your mind to Him" (*mūla-bandha*). Just as roots (*mūla*) of a tree hold it safely and nourish every cell in the tree, the Self as Existent Consciousness (*Satcit*) lends existence and consciousness to all living beings.

To restrain the mind's attention upon this inner state and to let the mind get merged therein is to reach that Infinite State of total awakening. This is pursued diligently and continuously by all students of *Raja-yoga* of Pātanjali, until each gets "bound to the root" — totally merged into the Supreme State of Pure Consciousness (*mūla-bandha*).

अङ्गानां समतां विद्यात्	समे ब्रह्मणि लीनताम्	
नो चेन्नैव समानत्वम्	ऋजुत्वं शुष्कवृक्षवत्	॥११५॥

Angānam samatām vidyāt same brahmaṇi jīnatām
No cennaiva samānatvam rjutvam śuskavrṛksavat (115)

Verse 115

Merging into the homogeneous mass of Pure Consciousness (*Brahman*) is known as the "holding steady" of the body (*dehasāmya*). Merely straightening the body and holding it steady, as a dired up tree, is not "poise of body" (*samānatvam*).

To steady the body at the physical level and hold it without any movement is prescribed as a beginning to the elementary students in meditation. But the final goal to be gained is for the individualised ego in the meditator to glide into the State of Pure Consciousness, a State of Objectless Pure Awareness. To awake into that state and get the body and the world rubbed out of our awareness is the real "holding the body in steady poise".

Śaṅkara here ridicules those who merely hold the body steady and motionless, for this is by itself as unproductive as a dry tree standing steady in its own death and decay.

दृष्टिं ज्ञानमयीं कृत्वा पश्येद्ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ।
 सा दृष्टिः परमोदार न नासाग्रावलोकिनी ॥११६॥
Dr̥ṣṭim jñānamayīm kṛtvā paśyed-brahmamayaṁ jagat
Sā dr̥ṣṭiḥ paramodārā na nāsāgrāvalokinī (116)

Verse 116

Raising the ordinary gross-vision into the subtle-vision of knowledge, one should learn to see the world as Pure Consciousness (*Brahman*). That is the noblest of visions, and not that which is turned towards the tip of one's own nose.

Earlier, in enumerating the fifteen-steps, we were told of "steadiness of gaze", and here, Ācārya Śaṅkara is giving the deeper significance of that *sādhanā*. We may start with the practise of "steady gaze", which will help to quieten the mind a bit and with that quiet mind contemplating upon the Self, the mind must get merged into that state, and the entire world of objects should roll away from the meditator's awareness. When the mind thus reaches

the Higher State of Consciousness, the mind ends, and all becomes One *Brahman*. This is the noblest of visions.

Merely gazing at the tip of one's own nose will not take us anywhere in the spiritual life of awakening into the Bliss-state.

द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यानाम्	विरामो यत्र वा भवेत्	
दृष्टिस्तत्रैव कर्तव्या	न नासाग्रावलोकिनी	॥११७॥
<i>Drastr-darśana-drīyānām</i>	<i>virāmo yatra vā bhavet</i>	
<i>Dṛṣṭistatraiva kartavyā</i>	<i>na nāsāgrāva-lokinī</i>	(117)

Verse 117

Or, one should turn one's vision (attention) to That alone, where the separateness of the Seer-seen-seeing ceases, and not to the tip of one's own nose.

The *Ācārya* feels that he has not emphasised his point sufficiently in the previous verse and therefore dedicates one more verse to the description of the spiritual exercise called "steady gaze" (*dṛksthiti*). At this moment, our entire mental attention, under the enormous pressures of our past (*Vāsanā's*) is ever getting dissipated among the world of outer objects, etc. To gather them from the outer and turn the entire attention to the Self is the true *sāadhanā*. "Gaze" here must be understood as "attention"; our gaze turns to where our attention is called.

This gaze must be made spiritual by turning our attention to the Spring of Life in us, the depth of Consciousness in our bosom. There, in the One without-a-second, there can be no subject-object distinctions: just as on awakening, the dreamer-dreamt-and dreaming all merge into one waker.

चित्तादिसर्वभावेषु	ब्रह्मत्वेनैव भावनात्	
निरोधः सर्ववृत्तीनाम्	प्राणायामः स उच्यते	॥११८॥
<i>Cittādi-sarva-bhāveṣu</i>	<i>brahmatvenaiva bhāvanāt</i>	
<i>Nirodhaḥ sarvavṛttīnām</i>	<i>prāṇāyāmaḥ sa ucyate</i>	(118)

Verse 118

To quieten all thought disturbances (citta) by realising them as nothing but ripples in the Consciousness Supreme and thus that they are all Brahman is true *Prāṇāyāma*.

Prāṇa is a technical term used in our scriptures to indicate "all expressions of life (Self) in the physical body." To control *Prāṇa* (*prāṇāyāma*) therefore is not only regulating the inhalation and exhalation, but controlling and ending all wild manifestations of life's dynamism at the outer physical level.

To realise that all thoughts, etc. are all only *Brahman* in essence, is to see Him everywhere. Thought cannot be without an object; and objects of the world will not become at once thoughts in a mind. When I become Conscious-of-an-object, there arises a thought. Our attention at this moment is upon the fascinating object, and so we remain at the thought-level. To give up objects and to realise all these are Consciousness alone is the Supreme State.

When once this is recognised, when this is lived vividly, the mind dissolves and all external expressions of life in the gross body become automatically controlled. This is *prāṇā-yāma*. Mere regulating of the breath is only *śvāsa-yāma*; Śaṅkara calls it as "persecuting the nose" (*ghrāṇa-pīdanam*) in the following verses.

निषेधनं प्रपञ्चस्य	रेचकाख्यः समीरणः	
ब्रह्मैवास्मीति या वृत्तिः	पूरको वायुरीरितः	॥११९॥
<i>Niṣedhanam prapañcasya</i>	<i>recakākhyah samīraṇah</i>	
<i>Brahmaivāsmīti yā vṛttiḥ</i>	<i>pūraako vayurīritah</i> (119)	

ततस्तद्वृत्तिनैश्चल्यम्	कुम्भकः प्राणसंयमः	
अयं चापि प्रबुद्धानाम्	अज्ञानां घ्राणपीडनम्	॥१२०॥
<i>Tatastadvṛtti-naiścalyam</i>	<i>kumbhakah prāṇasaṅyamah</i>	
<i>Ayam cāpi prabuddhānām</i>	<i>ajñānām ghrāṇapīdanam</i> (120)	

Verse 119-120

The negation of the world of plurality is to be considered as *recaka* (breathing out), continuous thought of "I am *Brahman*" is called *puraka*

(Breathing in), and the steadiness in that thought thereafter is called *Kumbhaka* (Holding the breath within). This is true *prāṇāyāma* to the wise, while the ignorant merely tortures his nose.

In *Prāṇāyāma* exercises, in the language of *Yogasūtra*, to take in the breath slowly in *puraka*, to hold it in, is *kumbhaka*, and to release it slowly is *recaka*. This is generally practised by students of *prāṇāyāma* at the physical level and they call it as breath-control. Śāṅkara gives us a deeper insight into what is really important.

To reject and not allow the world of objects to come and intrude upon our attention is *recaka*; to turn the entire mental and intellectual attention to the Self within is *puraka*; and to steadily hold the mind in that poise is *kumbhaka*. This is the *prāṇāyāma* of the wise. However, to the fools, breath-control is merely torturing the nose !!

विषयेष्वात्मतां दृष्ट्वा मनसश्चित्ति मज्जनम् ।
प्रत्याहारः स विज्ञेयः अभ्यसनीयो मुमुक्षुभिः ॥१२१॥

Viṣayeṣvātmatām dr̥ṣṭvā manasaściti majjanam

Pratyāhārah sa vijñeyah abhyasaniyo mumukṣubhiḥ (121)

Verse 121

To dissolve the mind in the Consciousness, knowing the expression of one's Self in all the objects is known as '*Pratyāhāra*'. This should be practised by all the seekers diligently.

Pratyāhāra means self-withdrawal i.e. to withdraw the mind that is now occupied in the external world of objects into your own bosom and thereafter to apply it for higher purposes. Killing the mind, by subduing it or completely exhausting it by *Prāṇāyāma* is, not *Pratyāhāra*. *Pratyāhāra* consists in recognising in all sense-objects ('*viśaya*'s) the *Ātman*, the Self as their very essence. The sense objects are nothing but the projections of our own Consciousness, through the mind-intellect equipments. If this understanding that the sense objects are nothing but the manifestations of *Ātman*, the Self alone, and that the contact with the sense-objects is nothing but the contact of the Self alone, is there, then *Pratyāhāra* is achieved. Self-withdrawal is not the dullening of the mind, or the deadening the mind by never allowing it to go out. Let the mind go out. Wherever it goes let it experience only the presence of the Divine.

In the medium of divinity alone can the mind have any cognition of, or experience of any objects. The mind appreciates Existence everywhere. In Identification with objects we overlook the principle of Existence. So to be constantly aware of the presence of the Lord as Existence in every sense perception and thus bathing that mind in the awareness is called *Pratyāhāra*, Self-withdrawal. The *mumukṣu* - is the one who has got the burning aspiration for liberation. Such a *mumukṣu* is expected to practice all these twelve steps.

यत्र यत्र मनो याति	ब्रह्मणस्तत्र दर्शनात्	
मनसो धारणं चैव	धारणा सा परा मता	॥१२२॥
<i>Yatra yatra mano yāti</i>	<i>brahmaṇastatra darśanāt</i>	
<i>Manaso dhāraṇam caiva</i>	<i>dhāraṇā sā parā matā</i>	(122)

Verse 122

Having the Vision of *Brahman*, on whatever object the mind may fall, to steady the mind is known as "*Dhāraṇā*" and this is the highest concentration.

Dhāraṇā is concentration. How are we to develop concentration? Keeping before oneself a ball of mud and looking at it as God to worship it ringing the bell, offering flowers to it, doing Japa on it, to prostrate to it - these are the common practices we see in religious rituals. They are no doubt useful, but they are only external aids to help our mind to gain concentration. Concentration is not tying down the mind to a certain point but allowing the mind to move everywhere and anywhere and trying to see, wherever it moves, the presence of the *Ātman*, the Self. Let the mind go wherever it likes, but, then and there itself, let the seeker experience the presence of *Brahman*. This indeed is concentration. Let the mind appreciate the names and forms it perceived, but along with it, let it also feel the presence of *Brahman*. Concentration is not the one that people generally do by artificially looking at a picture of a deity and then complain that when they see the face of the deity the feet are not seen and when they concentrate on the feet of the deity they do not see the face of the deity. Concentration is the technique of feeling in one's own mind a constant and continuous atmosphere of perennial divinity wherever the mind may land. The constant and continuous awareness of the Lord's

presence everywhere in and through all the seeker's experience within and without is called *Dhāranā* or concentration.

ब्रह्मैवास्मीति सद्वृत्त्या निरालम्बतया स्थितिः ।
 ध्यानशब्देन विख्याता परमानन्ददायिनी ॥१२३॥
Brahmaivāsmīti sadvṛtṭyā nirālatayā sthitiḥ
Dhyānaśabdēna vikhyātā paramānanda-dāyini (123)

Verse 123

By constant knowledge that 'I am *Brahman*', not to rest on anything for any support is known by the term '*Dhyāna*' and this is the bestower of Supreme Bliss.

There is a subtle difference between '*Dhāranā*' and '*Dhyāna*'. Many overlook this difference and fail to recognise this difference. Constant awareness of the Presence of the Divine in all our experiences within and without is *Dhāranā*. People generally think meditation (*DHYĀNA*) is the act of remembering the Lord everywhere. This is only a beginning. This is the first step in meditation. Really speaking meditation consists in constantly feeling that the seeker himself is *Brahman*, in thinking that this one before him is *Brahman* or that which he is feeling is *Brahman*. The '*Sadvṛtti*', the righteous thought - the divine thought which brings in the seeker the awareness that all this is *Brahman* and he also is *Brahman* - this condition of the mind, which no more depends upon any of the objects, which no more courts any of these objects - is called *Dhyāna* -meditation.

First you start recognising the objects in an atmosphere of divinity-inside and outside. Thereafter your concentration becomes excellent in appreciating the Divinity at all times and everywhere. Thus, when you meditate on the aura, meaning glow - which is the presence of divinity around-concentrating on the *Ātman* everywhere in all the forms that rise in your mind, there is then the awareness of Consciousness. When the seeker no more recognises or experiences in his mind the thoughts or forms of the world outside, when he is no longer depending on any support when only the aura, the awareness pure, is felt and experienced by him, that state is said to be Meditation (*Dhyāna*).

Mind, when it moves forward from one object to another it wears crutches. The crutches are its support. they are the five different steps of the mind, namely, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Whenever the mind moves, it puts its steps and it steps on one object or the other totally depending on one stimulus or the other. To lift the mind away from its support, the stimuli, to make it constantly and continuously attentive, alert, watchful and vigilant and be aware of the Consciousness alone, that Consciousness in which all objects are bathed, is *Dyāna*, Meditation. This condition when the individual himself experiences himself as nothing but the awareness-constantly and continuously is declared (*Vikhyātam*) as *Dhyāna* meditation. This meditation will shower upon the meditator the supreme sense of fulfilment and completeness of happiness.

Meditation on a chosen form is not *Dhyāna*, it is only *Dhāranā*. As a result of *Dhāranā* one enters into *Dhyāna*.

निर्विकारतया वृत्त्या	ब्रह्माकारतया पुनः	
वृत्तिविस्मरणं सम्यक्	समाधिर्ज्ञान -संज्ञकः	१२४
<i>Nirvikāratayā vṛtṭyā</i>	<i>brahmākāratayā punah</i>	
<i>Vṛttivismaranam samyak</i>	<i>samādhirjñāna-samjñakah</i>	(124)

Verse 124

Because of one idea that everything is Brahman, to have no other modification and to dissolve all thought is known as '*Samādhi*' which is a state of mindless-ness.

We have to understand that the objects of the world are not merely objects, but objects in a medium of *Brahman*, objects playing in an ocean of *Brahman*. Meditation consists in identifying oneself not with the object but with the *Brahman* in which the object is playing through the *Vṛtti* 'I am *Brahman*'. When I experience the *Brahmākāra vṛtti* I totally and completely give up the *Brahmākāra vṛtti* and live only as the *Brahman*. This continuous awareness that I am the *Brahman* which admits no otherness in itself for any length of time is called '*Samādhi*' or '*Jñānam*' — which is the first hand experience - '*Aparokṣānubhūti*'. this subjective experience of the *Brahman* comes when the seeker ends even the *vṛtti* that He is *Brahman* and lives as *Brahman* itself. In the one who has become.

the *Brahman* there is no thought that He is the *Brahman*, for the subjective state par excellence-is the state when no thoughts exist, when even the thought that he is *Brahman* does not exist.

Dhāranā is recognising constantly and continuously that all objects are *Brahman* and *Dhyāna* is the act of lifting one's mind from the world of objects and positioning it on *Brahman* and then to identify totally and constantly with the *Brahman* and thereafter to experience that He is the *Brahman*. When the meditator shifts his attention from the *Vṛtti* ('I am *Brahman*' and drops the *Vṛtti* totally and stays as nothing but *Brahman* he is said to be in '*Samādhi*').

Just as salt doll immersed in a salt solution to measure the depth of the solution gets completely melted and becomes one with the salt solution losing its identity, the seeker developing in himself the *vṛtti* that he is *Brahman* gives up the *vṛtti* itself melting himself into the *Brahman*. The total merger into the *Brahman* where there is no entity to say that he has merged is called *Samādhi*. This *Samādhi* is called '*Aparokṣānubhūti*', where the seeker experiences what the '*Sāstra*'s and '*Veda*'s stammer in their inability to express the Infinite.

इमं चाकृत्रिमानन्दम् तावत् साधु समभ्यसेत् ।
वश्यो यावत् क्षणात् पुंसः प्रयुक्तः सन् भवेत् स्वयम् ॥१२५॥

Imaṃ cākṛtrimānandam tāvat sādhu samabhyaset
Vaśyo yāvat kṣaṇāt puṃsaḥ prayuktaḥ san bhavet svayam

Verse 125

This, one should practise constantly, until one gets full control over oneself, and thus will be able to enter into that blemishless Bliss, in an instant, at will.

The aspiring one who practices these fifteen '*sādhanā*'s gets the natural bliss (*ānanda*). Ordinary bliss is '*kr̥tr̥ma*' a created one, the manipulated one, which is the product of the mind. Uncreated *Ānanda* is our nature.

The *Ānanda*, the bliss that we are enjoying is created by objects. This bliss or happiness that we are enjoying is dependent on the fulfilment of the claims of one or the other sense organs or the mind or the intellect. The known happiness is now only the gratification of the senses. Hence the student might conclude that when he realises the *Brahman*, he will gain the Bliss absolute. Upto this state there

was only happiness created out of thoughts. The desire for an object created in the mind an agitation for the object. When the object was procured the agitation ended, and the joy of having the object was experienced. In all these conditions the mind is at play with the thought of joy. The joy we get is not brought from the objects. It comes from the mind, from ourselves. Though this joy in us is unlimited, what we experience is limited for it is dependent on the thought for its expression. When the thought gets totally eliminated and when no more thoughts spring, this happiness which is our very nature, is naturally felt and experienced. This natural happiness which is our very nature is called *Svarūpānanda*. The Self that we experience in meditation is the ocean of the Bliss of Consciousness, which is uncreated natural and not a product of any effort. Until this natural Bliss is experienced the seeker is expected to practice all these fifteen '*sādhana*'s. The fifteenth step is the cumulative effect of all the preceding fourteen steps. These fifteen steps when put into practice culminates not only in giving the seeker the unending Bliss but also enables him to command it spontaneously, irrespective of time, place, circumstance or condition, for the seeker himself is that Bliss.

ततः साधननिर्मुक्तः सिद्धो भवति योगिराट् ।
 तत् स्वरूपं न चैतस्य विषयो मनसो गिराम् ॥१२६॥

Tataḥ sādhananirmuktaḥ *siddho bhavati yogirāṭ*
Tat svarūpaṁ na caitasya *viśayo manaso girām* (126)

Verse 126

Then such a person, the master of all *Yogi*'s, becomes perfect, devoid of any more further practices. The nature of such a person cannot be an object either for the mind or for the speech.

When one can at his will, command such an equipoise of his mind that he can experience the Infinite Joy, which is his nature, there is no *sādhana* for him thereafter. There the fifteen steps become naturally spontaneous for him, spontaneously natural for him. There is, thereafter, no question of practising them anymore. A child is a *sādhak* in walking and hence he has to practice walking. But when he has learnt walking thoroughly thereafter he need not practice walking for walking comes to him naturally and spontaneously. A

person who wishes to sleep puts forth the efforts to get sleep but when once he falls asleep all his trials and efforts to get sleep totally get ended. So too when one has awakened to state of Consciousness, he has achieved what he has to achieve. The state of such an individual cannot be explained or described. Such a state is not a state of perception, emotion or thought. It is a state beyond the mind, which the mind cannot comprehend. His nature cannot be defined for as the 'Upaniṣad's declare 'Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavati' - The knower of the *Brahman* becomes the *Brahman*. Just as the knower of the waker becomes the waker, the knower of the dream becomes the dreamer, the knower of the sleep becomes the sleeper, so too the knower of the *Brahman* becomes the *Brahman*. The infinite cannot be explained by the finite. *Brahman* is not an object to be explained, it is the very subject. Hence the 'Upaniṣad's say 'yato vāco nivaratante aprāpya manasā saha' - From where the words return without reaching along with the mind.'

समाधौ क्रियमाणे तु	विघ्नान्यायान्ति वै बलात् ।	
अनुसंधानराहित्यम्	आलस्यं भोगलालसम्	॥१२७॥
<i>Samādhou kṛiyamāṇe tu</i>	<i>vighnānyāyānti vai balāt</i>	
<i>Anusandhānarāhityam</i>	<i>ālasyaṃ bhogalālasam</i>	(127)

लयस्तमश्च विक्षेपः	रसास्वादश्च शून्यता ।	
एवं यद्विघ्नबाहुल्यम्	त्याज्यं ब्रह्मविदा शनैः	॥१२८॥
<i>Layastamaśca vikṣepaḥ</i>	<i>rasāsvādaśca śūnyatā</i>	
<i>Evam yadvighnabāhulyam</i>	<i>tyājyaṃ brahmavidā śanaiḥ</i>	(128)

Verse 127 and 128

When a seeker is practising *Samādhi* thus, unavoidably there will be obstacles, namely, lack of consistency, inertia, desire for enjoyment.

A seeker after *Brahman* should reject and slowly get rid of the unavoidable obstacles, like sleep, dullness, agitations, enjoying the joyful state, blankness.

In these two stanzas Ādi Śāṅkara is enumerating the obstacles that come while practicing meditation. In Buddhist literature

volumes have been written on the obstacles that occasion the seekers when they enter into meditation. When one tries to avoid these obstacles externally, several others will crop up internally. These obstacles are:-

1) Absence of constant thinking or spirit of enquiry. While reading scriptures, inspiration and enthusiasm to know the scriptures go away.

2) Idleness; Because of this obstacle, seekers postpone their spiritual practices.

3) Desire for sensual pleasures: The seekers interest in sense-objects becomes intense and so they tend to forget the Lord in their excessive indulgence in the sense-pleasures. To avoid this the seeker should educate the mind and help it remember the Lord.

4) Sleep: when the seekers enter into meditation and *samādhi* automatically sleep comes and they doze off.

5) Dullness or '*Tamas*': while reading the scriptures the mind gradually becomes dull and as a consequence fails to understand and grasp the correct import of the subtle ideas. The mind gets confused as a result of this.

6) *Ras-āsvāda*: while meditating the mind will start enjoying extreme happiness and thereafter the mind gets bogged in this happiness and refuses to move out of it. The joy that he imagines is the result of his stilling his mind and so the joy is a product of an activity and so is dependent on an external agent. The mind that comes to depend too much on this joy comes to suffer.

7) *Vikṣepa*: Distraction: when the seeker is meditating the suppressed and repressed impressions and urges in the mind especially those of anger, attachment, ambition and sensuality etc. which the seeker was expressing for millions of years from unicellular organism onwards will erupt and deluge the mind with its consequence. When the *Prārādbha* '*vāsanā*'s and *āgāmi* '*vāsanā*'s are overcome the *sañcita* '*vāsanā*'s, namely the unconscious layer full of the animalistic instincts gather in its experiences in earlier equipments, will come out and distract the seeker's attention. Through watchfulness, attention and vigil the seeker should overcome this obstacle. The trouble given by the obstacle is portrayed in the '*purāṇa*'s as the disturbances caused by Ramba, Menaka, Ūrvaṣi and Tilottama (the

tempresses sent by Indra, the King of the Gods) to the austerities practiced by sages and 'Rṣi's.

8) *Śūnyatva*: Blankness: this is the experience of void. This is the lack of positive experience of the Reality or Truth. The Buddhists stopped their spirituality at this stage and so they called this state *Nirvāna*.

By a proper enquiry into these with a spirit of watchfulness, awareness, attention and vigil these obstacles can be eliminated. These eight obstacles pointed out by Śāṅkara fall under four classes in *Vedānta*. They are 1) *Laya*, 2) *Vikṣepa*, 3) *Kaṣāya*, 4) *Rasāsvāda*. *Laya*, *Vikṣepa* and *rasāsvāda* are taken up by Śāṅkara. *Kaṣāya* is summed up by Śāṅkara while dealing with other obstacles among the eight he has enumerated above. Each preceding one is the cause of the succeeding one.

भाववृत्त्या हि भावत्वम् शून्यवृत्त्या हि शून्यता ।
 ब्रह्म-वृत्त्या हि पूर्णत्वम् तथा पूर्णत्वमभ्यसेत् ॥१२९॥
Bhāvavṛtṭyā hi bhāvatvam śūnyavṛtṭyā hi śūnyatā
Brahmavṛtṭyā hi pūrṇatvam tathā pūrṇatvam-abhyaset (129)

Verse 129

By thinking of any object the mind will be full of That alone; By thinking of void the mind will be void. By entertaining the thoughts of *Brahman* the mind also will be full of That alone. Therefore one should think of *Brahman* alone always.

As you think so you become. The remedy for overcoming the obstacles is given here. The instrument through which this is to be worked out is the thought. When a thought of an object is maintained continuously and intensively in ourselves we get identified with the object. When I think of my country continuously for a long time I become one with the country. When a pregnant woman thinks continuously of the child in her womb and when it comes out of her womb, she gets totally identified with it. She develops intimate love with it and thereafter she cannot eat or drink without the child. The child's happiness is her happiness. The child's problems become her problems. So too when I continuously contemplate on an idea

and get identified with it I my self become one with it. When I constantly think of the value of Love I become Love. As you think, so you become. Similarly if you are contemplating on the void, you will become the void. Similarly if you contemplate on the thought that all this is nothing but *Brahman*, that all the names and forms are nothing but *Brahman* and all these perceivable objects have come from *Brahman*, exist in *Brahman* and are supported by *Brahman* and ultimately get dissolved in *Brahman* you will certainly become the all-full *Brahman*.

Mere negation that I am not the body, not the mind, not the intellect is not enough. This negative thought must arise out of the positive thought that I am the all-pervasive, all-Full, all-blissful *Sat Chit Ānanda*, the *Paramātmān*. All the obstacles are looked upon as a play of the one *Ātman* alone and I am the illuminator of all these obstacle-thoughts. If this is realised then, these obstacles cannot obstruct me in my realisation.

ये हि वृत्तिं जहत्येनाम् ब्रह्माख्यां पावनीं पराम् ।
वृथैव ते तु जीवन्ति पशुभिश्च समा नराः ॥१३०॥
Ye hi vṛtīm jahatyenām brahmākhyām pāvanīm parām
Vṛthaiva te tu jīvaṅti paśubhiṣca samā narāḥ (130)

Verse 130

Those men, who reject and give up this supreme idea of *Brahman*, which is purifying, live in vain on this globe like beasts.

Vain is the life of the person, whoever he be, who does not contemplate on this wonderous idea, the *Brahman*, which is the holiest of holy.

The glory of human life consists not in eating, and drinking, indulging and mating, procuring and possessing, acquiring and aggrandising, marrying and begetting but in realising the *Brahman*. Eating, mating, drinking are common to all species. Greatness does not consist in merely doing these. The buffalo, the tiger and the donkey too do these. In what way are we better then these quadrupeds? Those who go through this pilgrimage of life, laying waste all their powers, faculties and abilities in earning, spending,

acquiring and indulging do not gain the true object of life. They lead then but an animal life. Some say they are serving others and hence they are great. If that be the case even the cattle serve us, their dung acts as a disinfectant and also as manure, their milk act as our food, their physical existence is exploited by us in turning out work with them, their skin give us shoes, their bones fertilise the field, their meat fill the bellies of the human population. When they die, their physical structures have mineral value whereas our physical structures have only nuisance value.

The human equipment is given to us only to evolve to the divine level, to become superhuman and divine. If instead of utilising it to achieve this goal, we wallow in the gutters of sensuality, eating, and mating and indulging we are burning our god-given heritage. When men fails to make use of his equipment to realise the divine, he becomes worse than the animal. The noblest capacity, the most enduring thing one can do is to meditate on the *Brahman* and realise the god-hood.

ये हि वृत्तिं विजानन्ति ज्ञात्वापि वर्धयन्ति ये ।
ते वै सत्पुरुषा धन्याः वन्द्यास्ते भुवनत्रये ॥१३१॥

Ye hi vṛttim vijānanti jñātvāpi vardhayanti ye
Te vai satpuruṣā dhanyāḥ vandyāste bhuvanatraye (131)

Verse 131

Those blessed persons, who know this state of *Brahman* and develop it more and more are indeed noble and worthy of respect from all.

So as a glorification of this Great *Vṛtti* (thought), the thought on *Brahman*, Śaṅkara says that those who give up this *vṛtti*, and fail to contemplate on it, live like cattle, propelled, compelled and impelled by their instincts and not by their rationale or discriminative power. They cease to be homo-sapiens, for they fail to contemplate on this Great Truth. On the other hand those who apprehend this great *Brahman*, contemplate and meditate on It, and thereafter practice it and increase more and more this *vṛtti* in the mind, slowly come to realise that they are not the body, the mind or the intellect but the *Brahman* that sustains all these.

Then slowly these blessed souls dance into the experience of *Brahman*. Such souls who constantly and continuously contemplate on this enchanting *vṛtti* of the *Brahman* and pursue it at all times are called 'Sat-puruṣa's. They are the good people, the ever-blessed ones, the chosen people who come to be worshipped by people of all times and all climes in all the three worlds.

येषां वृत्तिः समावृद्धा परिपक्वा च सा पुनः ।
ते वै सदब्रह्मतां प्राप्ताः नेतरे शब्दवादिनः ॥१३२॥

Yeṣām vṛtīḥ samāvṛddhā paripakvā ca sā punaḥ
Te vai sadbrahmatām prāptāḥ netare śabdavādinaḥ (132)

Verse 132

Those, whose knowledge is complete in this and who are perfect in the *Brahman*-state, indeed have attained the *Brahman*, and not others who simply talk.

Those who do not maintain the *Brahmākāra vṛtti* that *Brahman* alone they are, live like cattle in this world. This privilege of loving, constantly entertaining the *vṛtti* that one is *Brahman* is given only to the human species. He who fails to use this privilege automatically gravitates to the level of an animal. Those who recognise this rare privilege, understand that they are nothing but *Brahman* and thereafter make it their subjective experience are really blessed. Those who have clear information about this *vṛtti* that they are nothing but *Brahman*, and then practice it, improve on it and get themselves more and more established in this Higher experience are the really good ones. They are really blessed, they are to be worshipped.

This attitude that one is nothing but *Brahman* may come only at the time of meditation, but through constant practice one can order this *vṛtti* at will. If this is pursued constantly and continuously at all times and in all places, then the individual will get established in it. The first stage is to bring this *vṛtti* more and more into the ambit of one's Consciousness. The second stage is to become increasingly aware of the *vṛtti* constantly, and then to get identified with it and gain the experience that one is nothing but *that Brahman*. The first stage is to learn it, listen to it from great teachers, understand it, assimilate and absorb it in the mental complex. What

is there in the book, must become part and parcel of the mental complex. Then, what is there in the mind must become one's own intimate experience. This intimate experience will come only when one practices this for a pretty long period with faith, devotion and sincerity. Those who do not do these things but merely talk about it are mere prattlers.

कुशला ब्रह्मवार्तायाम् वृत्तिहीनाः सुराणिणः ।
 तेऽप्यज्ञानतया नूनम् पुनरायान्ति यान्ति च ॥१३३॥

Kuśalā brahmavārtāyām vṛttihīnāḥ surāṅiṇaḥ
Te 'pyajñānatayā nūnam punarāyānti yānti ca (133)

Verse 133

Those, who are experts in vain talk about *Brahman* and those who do not practice, are indeed ignorant and they are born to die again and again.

There are some who are experts in explaining all about the *Brahman*. They have a profundity of knowledge about this *Brahman*. But it is there with them only in their brain cells. This knowledge leaks out of them now and then only through the mouth. Never does this knowledge express itself in them in their actions. They may be experts in subtly arguing about it. But they have not subjectively experienced this *Brahma-vṛtti*. They have an intellectual appreciation of the Great knowledge and they are not capable of translating it in and through their actions. They have a good command over the language, arrange the ideas in well chosen phrases convincingly but they have never felt subjectively what they express vocally. They have never in their lives ever experienced this *vṛtti* and have not thought of practicing this *vṛtti*. They are the souls deluded by ignorance, riddled with a thousand desires, earning and spending, seeking and indulging in all sense pleasures pandering away their God-given life and energy. The world may call them great philosophers, they may write many sturdy philosophical volumes. Yet in spiritual parlance they are called deluded fools for they are under the grip of ignorance and they in their ignorance and ignorance-created delusion come again and again under the grip of birth and death. Their '*vāsanā*'s thick with desires to gain fulfilment in the firmament of the ever-changing flux of creation cling to the B M I demanding situations, environments and sense-objects for

their gratification and fulfilment. They have to come again and again into these sensuous worlds to exhaust their existing 'vāsanā's. Two defects in them debar them from this great Experience. One is their lack of knowledge about this *Brahmākāra vṛtti*. The other is their lust and passion for the sense-world. Such persons come under the sway of the forces of birth and death.

निमेषार्धं न तिष्ठन्ति वृत्तिं ब्रह्ममयीं विना ।
यथा तिष्ठन्ति ब्रह्माद्याः सनकाद्याः शुकादयः ॥१३४॥
Nimeṣārdham na tiṣṭhanti vṛttim brahmapamāyīm vinā
Yathā tiṣṭhanti brahmādyāḥ sanakādyāḥ śukādayaḥ (134)
Verse 134

Just as *Brahma*, *Sanaka*, *Śuka* and others, the real aspirants cannot remain even for a moment, without the thought of *Brahman*.

Those who have gained the knowledge of the *Brahmākāra Vṛtti* must emulate the great ones that have transcended the BMI and experienced the Peace that passeth all understanding. Seekers desirous of reaching this highest state must faithfully follow the foot-prints of the great, on the sands of time. The ones that have made foot-prints on the sands of time are the ones who never remained even for a moment without a thought of the Brahman. Such great ones constantly and continuously remember that they are the *Brahman* and not the evanescent, destructible finite functioning as the BMI in the ever changing field of the OET. Such seekers who are desirous of this highest stage should ever spend all their moments in identifying themselves with the *vṛtti* ('*Aham Brahmāsmi*') emulating the great souls like *Brahmā*, *Sanaka*, *śuka* and other mind-born sons of *Brahmā*. Mere study of the books will not do. It must be followed by an intense thirst to live those read ideas in the books at all moments and that too under all conditions of stress and strain, in the ever-changing vicissitudes of the vast canvas of the world.

कार्ये कारणतायाता कारणे नहि कार्यता ।
कारणत्वं ततो गच्छेत् कार्याभावे विचारतः ॥१३५॥

Kārye kāraṇatāyātā *kāraṇe nahi kāryatā*
Kāraṇatvaṃ tato gacchet *kāryābhāve vicārataḥ* (135)

Verse 135

The cause is concurrent and inherent in the effects and not the effects in the cause. Therefore, by logic it is clear that in the absence of effects the cause, as such, also cannot remain.

The discussion on the '*kārya* (effect) and '*kāraṇa*' (cause) namely the enquiry into the cause and effect relationship is the essence or back-bone of all scientific investigations. All scientific investigation is nothing but the relationship between cause and effect. In our attempt to investigate into the nature of the effect we inquire into the fields of the cause. Cause hunting is the only process by which a scientist can understand what life is. Inquiry is the important factor that *Vedānta* takes up to enquire into and understand Truth.

An effect cannot be without a cause. It is also true that wherever there is an effect, there is a cause. Wherever there is a gold chain there is gold. Where there is no gold there cannot be a gold-chain. So long as the chain remains, gold is there. The effect (*kārya*) cannot be without the cause (*Kāraṇa*). In fact a cause can remain without an effect. But the vice-versa is not possible. In the same way the Lord (the cause of the world) can remain without this world, but this world cannot remain without the Lord. There is in the cause the possibility of the manifestation of the effects. In fact the effects are all in a subtle form, as a hidden possibility in the causes. Gold can remain without an ornament but ornaments cannot remain without gold. We know, that an effect cannot be without a cause. The cause is not far-away from the effect for it is concurrent and inherent in the effect. The effect is intrinsically nothing but the cause. The cause pervades the effect. Thus this universe, and all things in this universe are all pervaded by the Lord, the Reality, the *Brahman*. The essence of the whole world is nothing but the *Brahman*. The properties of the effects are there in the cause as possibilities. The properties of the cause are there in the effect. The waves are not there in the ocean but the ocean is in the waves. In the *Gitā* also the Lord says 'I am there in *Samśār*, but the *Samśār* is not there in me. 'I am the basis or support of the plurality, but in the plurality I am not'. 'I do not identify myself with the body, mind and intellect to become the co-sharer in the ephemeral joys and

sorrows (*bhogabhāk*) says the Lord, 'but the body, mind and intellect cannot exist without me'.

The cause is ever independent of the effects. Supreme Consciousness is everywhere present. When I enquire into the nature of this light of Consciousness I find that this light is the nature of the experience. When I try to contact that light without its effects it ceases to be there. Looking at the body, mind and intellect, I try to seek the cause for these, forgetting that the effect is nothing but the cause. We are the effects and God is the cause. God is ever with us, the effects. The moment I contact the cause and experience the cause the effect has totally merged with the cause and hence the effect ceases to exist in that state. *The one alone remains. 'Brahma Satyam, Jaganmithyā.'* Brahman alone is real, the world is an illusion. Thus when I identify and experience the cause, the effect ceases to exist. When the effect has disappeared how can we call the cause, a cause? Cause of what? So the idea of the cause also vanishes. This is the case where the cause-effect relationship is transcended. The cause-effect relationship is the one hatched by the intellect and when I transcend the intellect, the cause-effect relationship disappears.

अथ शुद्धं भवेद्वस्तु	यद्वै वाचामगोचरम्	
द्रष्टव्यं मृदघटेनैव	दृष्टान्तेन पुनः पुनः	॥१३६॥

*Atha śuddham bhavedvastu yadvai vācāmagocaram
Draṣṭavyam mṛdghaṭenaiva drṣṭāntena punaḥ punaḥ (136)*

Verse 136

Thereafter the Pure *Brahman* remains, which is beyond speech. This should be realised, pondering over that again and again through the example of mud and pot.

Now, as the contemplation goes on, as explained in the earlier verse, that the cause itself is the effect, the effects are pervaded by the cause, that the cause can remain without the effect and therefore when I search for that Cause, that Vital Force of Life in me, I realise at that time that there is no cause, because there are no effects around it. After realising this fact, the Reality becomes Pure, even without a speck of plurality arising out of it. It becomes the Pure Consciousness which is imperceptible, which cannot be

explained in terms of words; it cannot be explained in terms of our conscious senses for it is beyond the experiences of our sense organs. It is Pure Absolute Reality. We should try to experience it, again and again by contemplating on the example in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. There the teacher says, “*Vācārambhanam Vikāro namadeyam Mṛtika iteva satyam*” meaning, the names in the world are only just words, just names. Name is for the cause; thus whether you say a pot, or a cup or a jug or a wall they are all only words, mere words, but all of them are nothing but the cause, the clay. The cup is not like the pitcher and therefore they are given different names. Further they are meant for different purposes. But in all of them the ‘*satya vastu*’, the changeless thing, that which remains in the past, present and future, in all of these names and forms is clay, clay alone. The play of different names and forms is called the plurality of the clay-world and the ‘*satya vastu*’ in them is the clay. Similarly in the pluralistic phenomenal world of the BMI, PFT, and OET, all of them are nothing but the *Brahman*, the Pure Consciousness alone. Thus in the line of the *Upaniṣadic* description of the Reality the seeker should experience the Reality again and again. This is the way to develop the *Brahmākāra vṛtti* in ourselves.

अनेनैव प्रकारेण	वृत्तिर्ब्रह्मात्मिका भवेत्	
उदेति शुद्धचित्तानाम्	वृत्तिज्ञानं ततः परम्	॥१३७॥
<i>Anenaiva prakāreṇa</i>	<i>vṛttirbrahmātmikā bhavet</i>	
<i>Udeti śuddhacittānām</i>	<i>vṛttijñānam tataḥ param</i>	(137)

Verse 137

By this process, in the mind of the pure, the awareness of *Brahman* dawns and this should be merged into the Absolute State.

With reference to the effect alone is the cause, a cause. With reference to my wife alone I am a husband, I am not born as a husband. When the effects are not there then the cause cannot be called a cause. In order to become a knower there must be something to know. When the perceptions and thoughts are transcended then there is nothing to know; there are no objects, no emotions, no thoughts. When even the thought is ended what is there for me to know? Then I become not a knower, but knowledge itself. In that

state my *vṛtti* will be of the nature of *Brahman*. When all thoughts end, the mind becomes pure and in the pure *minded* arises the *vṛtti Jñānam* of the *Brahman*. *Brahman* is our real nature. We are that alone.

A seeker is expected to seek the effect and trace therein, the cause and thereafter identify with the cause only. When we detach ourselves from the effects and identify with the cause we become the very cause and then it cannot be called a cause, for a cause is a cause only with reference to an effect. Then alone does the *Brahmākāra vṛtti* develops and this *vṛtti* by itself turns into the *Brahman*.

कारणं व्यतिरेकेण पुमानादौ विलोकयेत् ।
अन्वयेन पुनस्तद्धि कार्ये नित्यं प्रपश्यति ॥३८॥

Kāraṇam vyatirekeṇa pumānādaū vilokayet
Anvayena punastaddhi kārye nityam prapaśyati (138)

Verse 138

First, one should perceive the cause in all effects by the process of negation. Thereafter by the positive methods should one perceive the cause as concurrent in all effects.

By negating our identity with the body, mind and intellect we try to seek the cause for the BMI. We then come to know that it is the Supreme Consciousness in whose presence and with whose light is the body perceived, the mind felt and the intellect recognised. When the Consciousness ceases to work through the BMI, the equipment of the BMI fails to function. Even while eating a plantain we first negate the rind of the plantain and then eat the inner contents. So too the outer layers are rejected and inner entity is identified with.

When I am hearing something there is a hearer. The ear cannot be the hearer. The hearer is the one who staying behind the ear hears everything. This hearer behind the ear is the cause of hearing. In the same way the seer behind the eyes, the taster behind the tongue and smeller behind the nostrils is the Real Cause, the Real Perceiver. Without this subjective principle functioning behind all these organs there cannot be any perceptions, feelings or thoughts. This subjective one is the one we are seeking. Thus we come to know that wherever there is an effect there should be a cause. First I recognise the effect

and then by negating the effect I try to seek the cause. Then I identify with the cause and come to experience that the effect is concurrent in the cause. For example in an ornament, I understand that the ornament is gold. I reject then the shape, form and name of the ornament. Then what remains is gold. So too in spirituality reject first what you are not and thereafter by the positive method comprehend the Truth that the entire world of plurality is nothing but Brahman, the Truth. In the effect, the cause is ever present. We apprehend the Self by the method of negation. Then by the positive method of identification with the Self, we come to experience the Self in all objects at all times.

कार्ये हि कारणं पश्येत् पश्चात् कार्यं विसर्जयेत् ।
कारणत्वं ततो गच्छेत् अवशिष्टं भवेन्मुनिः ॥१३९॥

Kārye hi kāraṇaṁ paśyēt paścāt kāryaṁ visarjayet
Kāraṇatvaṁ tato gacchet avaśiṣṭaṁ bhavenmuniḥ (139)

Verse 139

One should see the cause in the effects and then should discard the effects altogether. Then the cause also should be dissolved, then what remains is the Absolute Truth, and the seeker becomes verily that.

These stanzas are rare ones. Those who are regularly meditating will come to appreciate these verses more and more. The Truth is very well explained here yet those who are practising these Truths may find it difficult to comprehend these ideas.

We must try to experience the cause in the effect itself. The effect here is the world of plurality. Recognise the Pure Consciousness playing in and through matter. Thereafter the matter should be rejected. First of all we will have to understand that there is the Light of Consciousness in everyone of us. Thereafter we have to understand that the Light of Consciousness alone appears as the world of objects, emotions and thoughts. Then the OET is to be renounced. First we understand that the Light of Consciousness functioning in and through the equipments of the BMI. Then he negates his identity with the BMI and then looks at the light of Consciousness now and comes to understand it as the *Ātman*, the Pure Consciousness without

and within and everywhere. Since the plurality is negated there is no effect and hence no cause also. The pure Consciousness becomes the cause only with reference to the effect. When effect goes away the cause does not stay. This state is not a void for the knower becomes at this moment knowledge. What the seeker has been seeking, the seeker becomes one with. There is nothing other than himself at that moment.

भावितं तीव्रवेगेन यद्वस्तु निश्चयात्मना ।
 पुमांस्तद्धि भवेच्छीघ्रम् ज्ञेयं भ्रमरकीटवत् ॥१४०॥

Bhāvitam tivravegena yadvastu niścayātmanā
Pumāmstaddhi bhavecchīghram jñeyam bhramarakītavat (140)

Verse 140

A seeker constantly thinking of an object ultimately becomes that itself. This fact is made clear by the example of the wasp and the worm.

The contemplative man becomes what he constantly contemplates upon. He who continuously and with firm determination and conviction contemplates upon this infinite Reality becomes the Reality. How does this happen? Just like the famous example of the worm (*pupā*) becoming the wasp, the limited individual becomes the unlimited Infinite. The wasp brings the worm (*pupā*) and putting it in a cell, constantly and continuously stings the worm. The worm, therefore, constantly and continuously contemplates on the wasp and so gets metamorphosed into the wasp. The dictum here is, 'as you think, so you become,' The individual who constantly meditates on the *Ātman* becomes that *Ātman*.

The *pupā* metamorphoses into a wasp by virtue of its being a potential wasp and by its long period of wait during its "meditation" it constantly grows becoming a wasp. The human being too grows into Divine personality by virtue of its being essentially divine, and, by its constant single-pointed meditation upon the Divine, it grows in spiritual dimensions to become the Divine.

अदृश्यं भावरूपं च सर्वमेव चिदात्मकम् ।
 सावधानतया नित्यम् स्वात्मानं भावयेद्बुधः ॥१४१॥

Adṛśyam bhāvarūpaṃ ca sarvameva cidātmakam
Sāvadhānatayā nityam svātmānam bhāvayed - budhaḥ (141)

Verse 141

The wise should meditate on the manifest and unmanifest as his own Self constantly and carefully which is nothing but Pure Consciousness.

The Unmanifest is the *Brahman* free from all the effects. The manifested is the world of objects, emotions and thoughts. Both the manifest and unmanifest are the expressions of 'sat' and 'cit'. Pure Consciousness is all these. The world that is seen outside and whatever is felt, perceived and thought within me are all nothing but the expressions of the Pure Consciousness, *Brahman*. This is the line of contemplation that is to be taken up constantly and carefully. This contemplation should be done slowly, gradually and carefully. Just as a child grows into a youth gradually, slowly and deliberately so too this unfolding should be undertaken through this process slowly, gradually and imperceptibly. A seeker who is wise should contemplate again and again that all this which is Existence-Knowledge expressing itself as the manifest and unmanifest. The gross, subtle and the causal is nothing but the Light of Consciousness. This is the process of realisation.

दृश्यं ह्यदृश्यतां नीत्वा ब्रह्माकारेण चिन्तयेत् ।
 विद्वान्नित्यसुखे तिष्ठेत् धिया चिद्रसपूर्णया ॥१४२॥

Dṛśyam hyadṛśyatām nītvā brahmākāreṇa cintayet
Vidvānnityasukhe tiṣṭhet dhiyā cidrasapūrnayā (142)

Verse 142

Merging the manifest into the unmanifest, meditating that everything is *Brahman*, the wise seeker should rest blissfully in the state of Absolute Awareness.

What has been said in the previous stanzas is being repeated here. The gross world should be dissolved in the Pure Consciousness. A man of wisdom, after doing this, remains in this Blissful state of happiness which is the One Infinite Consciousness. In this indivisible state all those that are perceived, those that are felt and those that

are thought are to be dissolved. For the time being, in meditation shifting the attention totally from one's own problems, and relationship with the world of objects one should plunge into the Lord of one's own heart. Let the seeker understand that all that is perceived, felt and thought are nothing but *Brahman* alone and nothing else. Normally in the world, the stress and strain on the physical body brings about the tension and agitation in the mind- for the body and the mind are inter-related.

First of all make the gross body and gross world of objects merge with the subtle body and the subtle world and then through *Japa*, devotion, surrender, reflection, contemplation and study of the '*Śāstra's*' recognise that all this is nothing but the play of the one *Brahman*.

The wise ones mentioned here are the ones who are initiated into the path of spirituality. Constant practice will help the seeker gain glimpses of the Infinite Bliss and finally he will get merged with the Infinite.

एभिरङ्गैः समायुक्तः	राजयोग उदाहृतः	
किञ्चित् पक्वकषायाणाम्	हठयोगेन संयुतः	॥१४३॥
<i>Ebhirangaiḥ samāyuktaḥ</i>	<i>rājayoga udāhṛtaḥ</i>	
<i>Kiñcit pakvakaṣāyāṇām</i>	<i>hathayogena samyutaḥ</i>	(143)

परिपक्वं मनो येषाम्	केवलोऽयं च सिद्धिदः	
गुरुदैवतभक्तानाम्	सर्वेषां सुलभो जवात्	॥१४४॥
<i>Paripakvaṁ mano yeṣām</i>	<i>kevalo'yaṁ ca siddhidah</i>	
<i>Guru-daivata-bhaktānām</i>	<i>sarveśām sulabho javāt</i>	(144)

Verse 143 and 144

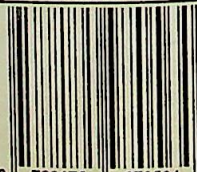
These fifteen limbs of the *Rāja Yoga* are thus explained. This should be combined with *Hatha-yoga* by those whose worldly desires are partially subdued.

To those, whose mind is completely purified, this alone is sufficient for liberation and perfection and it can easily be gained by everyone by devotion to Guru and God.

All the fifteen steps of *sādhana* described in the earlier verses put together is called *Rāja Yoga*. Usually *Rāja Yoga* is considered as a secret technique. Though this is considered a secret Ādi Śāṅkara here emphatically declares it to all. This *Rāja Yoga* is meant for people whose minds are clear, serene and quiet. If their minds are getting agitated, if they again and again fall into the mire of the flesh and again and again indulge in sensuality then they have to practice *Hatha Yoga* which helps to reduce the 'Tāmasic' *Vāsanā*'s, helps to purify the inner equipments which then become fit to take to *Rāja Yoga*. Utterly 'Tāmasic' persons should first practice 'Hatha Yoga' and then come to these fifteen steps called *Rāja Yoga*. This *Rāja Yoga* is meant for persons whose minds have become relatively quiet, whose 'vāsanā's have been relatively exhausted, whose minds are free from the pull of the 'vāsanās'. To those devotees who have surrendered themselves totally to their 'gurus' and have quietened their minds this *Rāja Yoga* is very easy. The highly sensuous ones should take to *Hatha Yoga* and then develop high devotion to the Guru and the Lord. Devotion to the Guru will help us to imbibe the ideas that he has taught and the ideals he is practising. Devotion to the Lord is necessary to eliminate the ego more and more. The devotee lifts himself out of the entanglements of the body, mind and intellect by his devotion to the Guru and the Lord.



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