

The Glory of Brahma Vidya

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CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST
MUMBAI - 400 072.

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A discourse on the Upanishadic philosophy originally written by Sree Swami Tapovan Maharaj in Sanskrit for the Vedanta Volume of 'Kalyan'. This translation into English is by his *Sishya* Sree Swami Chinmayanandaji.

THE GLORY OF BRAHMA VIDYA

It is very well known that Vedanta is but another name for the Upanishads. It deals with the Immutable and Immortal Reality, the Brahman. We shall try to elucidate here, with the help of appropriate quotations from the Scripture, the nature of the Infinite Brahman and also illustrate how this Eternal Truth is being indicated by the Upanishads in their inimitable style.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म – (तैत्तिरीय)

“*Satyam gnanam-anantham brahma*”

(Taittiriya Upanishad)

(Brahman is Existence, Knowledge, Absolute.)

विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म – (बृहदारण्यक)

“*Vignam-Anandam brahma*”

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)

(Brahman is in nature Consciousness-Bliss)

And in such other daring and pregnant words the Rishis have made it clear that the

Supreme Brahman is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं
तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् । - (कठोपनिषद्)

*“A-sabdham-asparsam-aroopam-avvyayam
Tatha-arasam nithyam-agandha vaccha yat”*

(Kathopanishad)

(Brahma is Beyond sound, touch, form and taste. It is Eternal, Infinite, Immortal and Absolute.)

अनाद्यनन्तं महत् परं ध्रुवम् (कठोपनिषद्)

“Anady-anantam mahata param dhruvam”
(Kathopanishad)

अस्थूलमनन्व ह्रस्वमदीर्घमलोहितम् (बृहदारण्यक)

*“Asthoola-mananwa-hraswa-madeergha-
malohitham”*

(Brihadaranyaka)

(It is neither gross, nor subtle, nor short, nor long, nor colourful).

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनोमतम् तदेव ब्रह्मत्वं विद्धि (केनोपनिषद्)

*“Yanmanasa na manuthe yenahur manomatam
tadeva brahma twam viddhi”*

(Kenopanishad)

(That which the mind cannot comprehend but without which the mind cannot contemplate upon anything at all, understand That to be the Brahman.)

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूषि पश्यति
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि (केनोपनिषद्)

*“Yachakshusha na pasyati yena chakshumshi
pasyati tadeva brahma twam viddhi”*

(Kenopanishad)

(That which cannot be perceived with the eyes but by which the eyes are able to see know That alone as Brahman.)

यच्छ्रोत्रेण न श्रुणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतं
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि (केनोपनिषद्)

*‘Yatsrotrena na srunoti yena srotramidam
srutam*

tadeva brahma twam viddhi”

(Kenopanishad)

(That cannot be heard by the ear, but by which

the ears are able to hear, know That as Brahman.)

Through hundreds of such statements we gather that Brahman, the theme of the Upanishads, is something other than Sound, Form, Taste, Smell and Touch, and that It cannot be defined in terms of dimensional or other qualities, such as gross, or subtle, small or big. The Absolute Truth is without properties, is without qualities, is without form; and therefore, it can never be an object of not only perception but even of emotions or of thoughts. It cannot be comprehended by the mind or appreciated by the intellect; nor can It be perceived by the sense-organs.

No doubt in the Upanishadic lore we find very many statements, obviously posing themselves as direct definitions of Truth, but they are at best only the nearest approximations, helping the student's intellect to think in the right direction. In all the above statements so far quoted, the Infinite is only indicated; the Absolute in Its essential nature is indeed totally unconditioned ever by all qualities (*Nirvishayam*). Whatever that is "with properties" (*Savishesham*) they are all, like mud-pots, ever destructible (*Vinasi*) —

“यद्यत् सविशेषं तत्तद् घटादिवत्
विनाशि”, इति न्यायेन

‘*Yadyad savishesham tattad ghatadivat vinasi*’
(Whatever that is “qualified” they are all, like
mud-posts, etc., perishable)

This logic (*Nyaya*) eliminates the existence of any properties in the Infinite. The Infinite with properties will become at once finite. Thus, here also we find a very strong scientific reason for the Upanishad description of the quality-less (*Nirvishesha*) Absolute. Therefore, critics who complain that Vedanta is expounding only “qualified Truth” (*Savishesha Brahman*) are not really serious and truly close students of the Upanishads; and to follow such interpreters is not very correct.

There are yet some who recognise and adore the *Jiva** and the *Prakriti*** which are, according to them, ever something other than the Brahman. They quote the Upanishads, and try to establish this concept. Let them quote the

* JIVA — The ‘individuality’ in each one of us.

** PRAKRITI — The matter equipments that constitute the individuality and the World of Objects.

Upanishads, but their conclusion — that the Supreme Reality (*Parama Tattwam*) is ‘along with Duality’ (*Dwaita Visishtam*), that is to say, the Supreme is ‘with plurality’ (*Sa-Dwaitam*) and not ‘without duality’ (*A-Dwaitam*) — does not in the least get established upon firm and acceptable logic. There are no Scriptural declarations which propound that the Infinite Reality in Its Ultimate Essence is not Non-dual. In case we accept that the ‘*Jiva*’ and ‘*Prakriti*’ have an independent existence (*Swatantra Satta*) other than the Brahman, the Supreme will thereby get conditioned by them both.

“How is it?” you may ask. Let me explain. A bull has an independent existence other than the independent existence of the horse, and therefore, the experience of the horse is the end of the experience of the bull. That is the qualities of the horse are not the qualities of the bull; and thus the bull becomes separate and something other than the horse. This experience of the “independent existence of the bull” becomes the end of the experience of the “independent existence of the horse”, which has a different set of qualities. That is, the qualities of the bull are not the qualities of the horse.

Thus the horse and the bull are limited by the other, and each has a separate existence of its own. Things which are thus separate, and limited by other things, are themselves, like horses, pots, mountains etc., ever perishable. This is very well known in the world of our constant observation.

Following the above observation it becomes evident that the Supreme, if It be 'with duality' (*Sa-dwaitam*), must Itself become finite and perishable, since It is also conditioned and limited by '*Jiva*' and '*Prakriti*' — which themselves have their own independent existence. To deny this defect in our understanding, in the earlier-quoted Upanishadic declaration we find the assertion that Brahman is Endless (*A-nantam* — *Anta-rahitam*). Thereby it is declared that Brahman is ever unconditioned by time, space or things of the pluralistic world. This term *A-nantam* is very often used in all the Spiritual books of Bharat to indicate that the Truth is Infinite, and the finite has no independent existence of its own to condition the Non-dual Infinite.

The term Endless (*A-nantam*) not only indicates that the Infinite is unconditioned by time and space, but it also declares that the Truth is

not limited by things or divided within Its own substance. Within the sketch of the Upanishadic discourses we find many other arguments, and the terms employed, all of them, repeatedly point out the final Truth to the Brahman, Qualityless (*Nirvisesha*) and Non-dual (*Adwiteeya*). And this Brahman is, naturally, “without parts” (*Niravayava*), and so, no type of differentiation — (*Sa-Jateeya*)* or (*Vi-Jateeya*) ** or even (*Swa-gata-Bhedda**** — ever pollutes its Non-dual Oneness (*Ekattvam*).

आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत् – (ऐतरेय)

“*Atam va idameka evagra aseet*”

(Aitareya Upanishad)

सदेव सौम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयं – (छान्दोग्य)

“*Sadeva Sowmy-aidam-agra aseeth ekameva adwiteeyam*”

(Chandogya Upanishad)

“Oh ‘Sowmya, this Jagat that you perceive with forms and names was one Infinite whole before creation.

Three kinds of differentiations are possible :

- * of the same species : White cow and a brown cow;
- ** of different species : Cow and a horse; and
- *** within itself : Like the head, trunk & limbs.

(That Brahman, which alone was in the beginning, is One, without-a-second, and is ever free from all pairs-of-opposites.)

आत्मैवेदं सर्व – (छान्दोग्य)

“*Atmaivedam sarvam*”

(Chandogyam)

(All these are but expressions of the Atman alone.)

ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वं – (मुण्डक)

“*Brahmai-vedam viswam*”

(Mundakopanishad)

(This universe is nothing but the Brahman.)

इदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा – (बृहदारण्यक)

“*Idam sarvam yadayam atma*”

(Brahadaranyaka)

(Everything is the Atman alone.)

तदेतद् ब्रह्मापूर्वमनन्तरमबाह्यं – (बृहदारण्यक)

“*Tadetad brahma purvam
anantaram abahyam*”

(Brahadaranyaka)

(This Brahman, which is the cream of the Upa-

nishads, is above cause and effect. It is everywhere — within and without.)

By the above declarations the Sruti clearly advises that in Brahman there exists nothing other than Itself; nor is there in Itself even a suspicion of any differentiation (*Bheda*) — of the same species (*Sa-Jateeya*) or of different species (*Vi-Jateeya*) or within Itself (*Swa-gata*).

It is Brahman, Un-Qualified (*Nirvisesha*), Formless (*Nirakara*), Non-dual (*Adwaita*), One (*Eka*), Bliss-mass (*Ananda-ghana*), which is the single theme of all the Vedanta declarations.

This Science of Reality is *Brahma-Vidya* or *Vedanta-Vidya*. The term *Vedanta-Vidya* is but another name of *Brahma-Vidya*, the Science of Reality, or the Knowledge of Truth. The Knowledge (*Gyanam* or *Vidya*) of Reality (*Brahman*) is *Brahma—Vidya*. Here the term knowledge (*Gyanam*) means “to contemplate, to the total exclusion of all other thoughts, upon the Brahman” (*Gneyakara Vritti*). So, the experience of Brahman is when the mind is fully merged in the contemplation of Brahman, and all other thoughts (*Vritties*) have been tot-

ally eliminated. Where and when can the mind come to this experience Infinite? Listen :

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गुढः - (श्वेताश्वतर)

“*Eko deva sarva bhooteshu gudhah*”

(Swetaswataropanishad)

(The one Deva dwells secretly deep within everything.)

तत्त्वमसि - (छान्दोग्य)

“*Tat twam asi*”

(Chandogya)

(That Thou Art.)

From such scriptural declarations, and many other thoughtful arguments, we can declare that the One, Non-dual, Conscious Principle, Brahman, express Itself in all bodies, and that the individual personality expressed at each physical structure (*Jivatma*) is none other than the Supreme (*Parama-atma*). The realisation of this Divine Principle ever present in the core of our personality, is the final consummation of the *Atma-Vidya*, the *Science of the Self*. This is the *Knowledge of Truth*, the *Brahma-Vidya*. The quest for this Truth need not be done

anywhere other than in the sacred sanctum of one's own personality (*Hridayam*).

All Upanishads unanimously declare and roar that in glory there is nothing that can come anywhere near the Science of Reality, nor is there any knowledge greater than this experience of *Brahma-Vidya*.

परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो
निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन - (मुण्डक)

*“Pareekshya lokan karmachitan brahmano
nirveda-maya-nnastya krita-kritena”*
(Mundaka)

(Having examined the world of joys won through action a student of *Brahma-Vidya* must come to reject them all, for, in the planes the actions, the ‘made’ (*Kritam*) cannot take us to the ‘Unmade’ (*A-kritam*) : the finite work cannot give us an Infinite fruit.)

शान्तो दान्त उपरतिस्तितिक्षुः समाहितो भूत्वा
आत्मन्येव आत्मानं पश्यति - (बृहदारण्यक)

*“Santo danta uparatha-stiteekshu samahitho
bhootwa atmanyeva-atmanam pasyati”*
(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)

(He who is a *Jitendriya* — Victorious over

the Indriyas, meaning one who has controlled his indriyas with Sama, Dama, Uparati practices, who is calm, serene and tolerant, and who is established himself in the Self, he sees the Self that indwells in his body.)

दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या - (कठोपनिषत्)

“*Drisyathae twagraya buddhaya*”

(Kathopanishad)

[With a purified mind (or sharpened intellect) one can attain the experience of the Self.]

From these quoted declarations it becomes clear that those who have developed the divine qualities, natural to all men of spiritual aspirations — such as a satiation in the enjoyments of the sense world, here or in heaven (*Vairagya*) who have mastered sense-control (*Sama*), who have the mental-control (*Dama*), who can call back their mental rays at once to focus at any given point of contemplation (*Uparathi*), have the capacity to ignore and suffer patiently the little pinpricks of life (*Titeeksha*), practice-self-absorption (*Samadhi*) and concentration (*Chitta-Ekagrata*) — all of them are fit students who will really advance in *Vedanta-Vidya*. Vedanta is not for a mere intellectual recrea-

tion, or for a mere expansion of one's intellectual fancy. One has to dedicate one's own total life into it and thus strive to 'Realise' this Supreme Truth. A great European Philosopher declares in one of his very recent books, very crisply : "Philosophy is not an intellectual pursuit, but it is a dedicated life."

Thus,

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यः

मन्तव्यः निदिध्यासितव्यः - (बृहदारण्यक)

*"Atma va are drishtavyo, srothavyo,
manthavyo, nididhyasitavyam"*

(Brihadaranyaka)

(O! Dear disciple : the Atman is to be listened to, reflected and meditated upon for realisation.

According to these Rishi-advice it is indeed clear that the fit students, who have all the necessary mental and intellectual qualities, gained through 'listening' and steady practice of the Upanishadic way-of-life, will come to gain this great Knowledge in their own experience. Due to the Seeker's attitude of detachment (*Vairagya*) and his concentration power, wherein his mind has left all its 'tossings' (*Vik-*

shepa), during the very days of his sincere seeking, he gets himself uplifted into a life of sorrowless joys and undisturbed peace within. Hence the mysterious glory of *Brahma-Vidya*. Irrepressible is its enchantment upon all true seekers, who devote themselves sincerely to their pursuit of Reality, in the right direction, with all the elementary qualifications necessary for this Supreme Pilgrimage.

Once this Science of Vedanta has been well-understood, the seeker plunges himself into constant and sustained practice. He makes his knowledge fruitful with the experience within himself, and the non-apprehension of Reality (*A-vidya*) and its by-products of painful misapprehensions — such as I and mine (*Asmita*), desires (*Raga*), passions (*Dwesh*) — end, and so, all sorrows once for ever depart from him (*A-atyantik-Dukkha Nivriti*). Therefore, since the seeker ever dwells in his own experience of the Self, he comes to life Infinite Bliss (*Nivrittisaya Ananda*). Therefore, how far can any one express the glory of this *Brahma—Vidya*; words have not the capacity to indicate truly even a distant shade of its glory to any listener.

को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः - (ईशावास्य)

“Ko moha ka soka ekathwam-anu pasyantah:”
(Isa)

किमिच्छन् कस्य कामाय शरीरमनुसंज्वरेत् - (बृहदारण्यक)

“Ki michan kasya kamaya sareera-manusam-jwareth.”
(Brihadaranyaka)

तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं - (मुण्डक)

“Tarati sokam tarati papmanam”
(Mundakam)

तरति शोकमात्मवित् - (छान्दोग्य)

“Tarati Sokam atmavit”
(Chandogyam)

(He who has realised his Oneness with the entire panoramic world of plurality and sees his own Self as the Self in all, will no more be affected by sorrows and desires. For, he has nothing to gain or aspire for from the world-of-objects. It is due to our ego centric desires that we suffer this *Samsar*. Once this ego is annihilated then where is the scope for sorrow and unhappiness? He overcomes *Soka* and *Moha*.)

Similar declaration in the Upanishads openly declare that One, who has come to awake to this experience of the Self within, can no more have sorrow (*Soka*), nor any clinging attachments (*Moha*) in life. To him is no more the pain-ridden experiences of change and finitude, the *Samsar*. No more can such a Perfect Man of Realisation be tempted to embrace the charms of this world, or of any other plane of subtler experiences of sense-joys.

Knowledge of this Self, through, the study of Vedanta, takes us away from not only the worldly sorrows and anxieties, but it also holds before us a hopeful picture of Perfect Bliss even in the hereafter.

एतं ह वाव न तपति किमहं साधु नाकरवं
किमहं पापमकरवमिति - (तैत्तिरीय)

“*Aetam ha vava na tapathi kim-aham sadhu
nakaravam kim-aham papam-akaravam- iti*”
(Taittireeya)

(Why did I not do *punnya*? Why did I do *papa*?
Thus, a realised one, can never regret.)

In short, to a successful student of *Brahma-
Vidya* thoughts of “merits not done,” or of the

“de-merits perpetrated”, cannot give any agitations. He comes to live totally beyond them both in his inner vision of the Universal Oneness.

Brahma-Vidya thus removes at once all sorrows arising out of the world around, and all sorrows arising out of the body and its hungers, and also those springing from mental anxieties and intellectual despairs regarding the merits and de-merits (*Punnya* and *Papa*). This *Vidya* in fact annihilates the very cause for all sorrows, the Ignorance (*A-vidya*). Thus this Knowledge of the Self is a million times more glorious than all other fields of knowledge, and no other knowledge is ever comparable with It. Besides all these, in the Upanishads again and again the experienced Rishis declare that the pursuit of the Science of Reality, *Brahma-Vidya*, takes the seeker to a state of Infinite Beatitude, an endless Bliss Absolute.

रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽनन्दी भवति - (तैत्तिरीय)

“*Rasam-hiye-vayam labdhwa anandee bhavanti*”

(Taitireeya)

(This Jiva, having identified with the Self becomes the Self, the Blissful.)

Through Brahma-Vidya man reaches the Brahman-state of Perfection. This “reaching” is nothing but a state of ones own total identification with the Eternal (*Nitya*), Constant (*Nirantara*), Incomparable (*Niratisaya*), Blissful-Nature (*Ananda Swaroop*a) of Truth. The “reaching” of the Brahman-state is but the experience of ‘I am this Reality’, it is an inner ‘awakening’. It is like the dreamer ‘becoming’ himself the waker. The *Jiva* “becomes” — or “awakens to realise”, or ‘experiences’ — that it is nothing other than the Infinite Self. Thus, the term ‘reaching’ indicates no change in essence : it is just like the ‘dreamer’ is said to be reaching the ‘waker-state’. Thus having ‘reached’ or ‘realised’ or ‘experienced’, the Supreme, he ‘becomes’ the Brahman, and so he lives thereafter the experience of Infinite Bliss.

एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्यानि भूतानि
मात्रामुपजीवन्ति - (बृहदारण्यक)

“*Aetasya-eva-anandasya anyani bhootani
matram upa jeevanti*”

(Brihadaranyaka)

(All the other creatures live their joys in life with but a minute fraction of this Infinite Bliss of the Self.)

From this declaration it becomes clear that all sensuous joys known to us now are all but a fraction of the Infinite Bliss experienced in *Brahma-Vidya*. Naturally no man of realisation can have any fancy for the sense pleasures, and the sense-objects; they can never fascinate and enchant him any more. The man of realisation experiences in his Infinite Bliss, all joys of the world arising from the possession of woman, son, wealth, kingdoms, heaven, etc.

सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह - (तैत्तिरीय)

“*So-asnute sarvan kaman saha*”

(Taitireeya)

(He enjoys the pleasures of everything at the same time.)

After realising the theme of *Vedanta-Vidya* there is nothing else to covet for, or to hunger for, in life, since in this Infinite experience all desires are fulfilled to their utter fullness. No sense of want, which generally arises from the awareness of imperfection, can remain with the individual, who has realised the Perfections. This too is the great glory of *Brahma-Vidya*.

After gaining the experience of *Brahma—Vidya* there is nothing more to desire for, there is nothing more to be achieved or gained, there is nothing more to be done or accomplished. All gains are gained, all achievements are accomplished. The consequent sense of Supreme Fulfilment (*Krita-Krithyata*) is another of the mighty splendors of *Brahma-Vidya*.

अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्येतावदनुशासनं - (बृहदारण्यक)

“*Atha marthyo amritho bhawath-yaetavad anusasanam*”.

(Briha)

(After the attainment of realisation a man becomes Immortal. This is the commandment of the Vedas.)

Through the total renunciation of all yearning, the *Vedanta-Vidya* becomes well-established in the seeker's life, Thus the mortal man arrives at his own Immortal State of Fulfilment. Till one thus realises the *Vedanta-Vidya*, the seeker must strictly learn to live the disciplines prescribed for his benefits in the Upanishads. After the realisation he is under no injunctions; and he becomes a fulfilled seeker.

Many of the glories of *Brahma-Vidya* which we had already discussed earlier — such as the end of agitations and the experience of more and more peace and harmony, etc. — can be experienced right here even while the student is yet a seeker. After realisation of the Self he lives in life ever free, peaceful and supremely fulfilled. When once the body drops off from him, he merges to become the Infinite Life, All-pervading, Eternal. Thus the final goal attained in *Brahma-Vidya* is the at-one-ment-with (*Sayujya*) the indescribable Bliss Absolute, wherein there is no subject-object distinctions ग्राह्यग्राहकभेदशून्य (*Grahya-grahaka-Bheda-Soonya*) (1); there the processes of birth and death, meaning change, are at rest; this is the Non-dual Brahman. That it take us to this goal of Infinite Satisfaction is the glory of the *Vedanta-Vidya*.

Not only during the striving, or in its final goal is the *Brahma-Vidya* incomparably blissful, but in its very nature it is indeed the very Science of all Sciences. It is indeed the Science of Sacredness.

In other sciences the attempt is to gather the 'knowledge of objects' — all a bundle of bril-

liant pieces of informations; at best they are all only 'conditioned knowledge-bits'. In *Brahma-Vidya* the attempt is to realise the Knowledge Absolute by whose light all other 'knowledges' are rendered possible. Pure Knowledge conditioned by objects, the very Principle which is the illumining factor in all other 'conditioned knowledges' is the theme in the *Brahma-Vidya* quest. Hence we claimed that *Vedanta-Vidya* is incomparable in its very nature, in Its very contents, in Its very form.

Also, in *Brahma-Vidya* all other sciences are included, assimilated, digested. Says the Upanishad :

ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठां - (मुण्डक)

“*Brahamavidyam sarvavidya pratishtam*”

(Mundaka)

(The knowledge of Brahman is the substratum for all other knowledges in this world.)

This glorious Science of Sciences is also called as *Para-Vidya* in Vedanta.

अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते - (मुण्डक)

“*Atha para yaya tat-akshara-madhigamyate*”

(Mundaka)

(That which gives the knowledge of the *Akshara-Brahman* — the Immutable Reality — is *Para-Vidya*.)

Knowledge (*Vidya*) is of two kinds *Para* and *A-para*. Vedas give the *A-para* knowledge, because, as science it talks of the knowledge-of-things; here knowledge illumines only limited objects, and this can give rise only to knowledge of the finitude ... *Samsar* ... and its endless experiences of attachments, hatreds, etc. The Infinite-thought rising as a result of the practice of *Brahma-Vidya* is called the *Para-Knowledge*. This awakes in us the experience of the Infinite Reality, and completely annihilates all the finite experiences of the world-of objects (*Samsar*). Thus *Vedanta-Vidya* is the Highest Knowledge, and the Greatest Science in every sense of the term — in its techniques, in its final goal, and in its own very nature. This is the chorus declared by all Rishis in the Vedanta Text-books.

That which is called as *Para-Vidya* in Vedanta-volumes is itself the condition of *Para-Bhakti* as discussed in books of devotion. Devotion is of two kinds, the "Path" (*Sadhana-roopa*) and the "Goal" (*Phala-roopa*). A close

examination of and the consequent discrimination between the Lord and the devotee — between ‘That’ (*Tat*) and ‘You’ (*Twam*) terms in the *Mahavakya* — generates a force of meditation which culminates in the ‘experience’ of the Lord — the Pure Brahman, the Absolute. Thereafter alone can the Goal, the *Para-Bhakti*, dawn in the bosom for experience. Thus the *Para-Bhakti*, pure devotion, which is springing from the experience of the Pure Self, is in no way less than the *Brahma-Vidya*. This explains why Sri Madhusudana Saraswathi considered *Para-Bhakti* as the sixth stage (*Bhoomika*) in the 11-stage spiritual scheme of unfoldment discussed by him in his work the

भगवद् भक्तिरसायनम् ।

“*Bhagavad Bhakti Rasayanam*”.

In this work Madhusudan rightly uses the pregnant term.

स्वरूपाधिगतिस्ततः ।

“*Swaroopadhigati-Statah*”

The experience of the Pure Brahman, the Ever-pure (*Nirvisesh*), the Formless (*Nirakara*), the Essence (*Swaroopabhoota*) as nothing other than the Self within”, is pure devo-

tion — *Para Bhakti*. This state is considered as one of the higher stage in the ladder of evolution towards the Highest Divine Experience.

The seeker whose heart is rich in pure love, even if he be a man of realisation, he comes to express his devotion to some one of the manifestations of the glory of the Self. He comes to court and feel his oneness with the divine in the forms of Siva, Vishnu, Rama or Krishna. This experience of Perfection and the practice of *Para-Bhakti* makes him the best Teacher of the World, and he gets the gratitude of the seekers in all generations. His is the true glory, he alone is the true Teacher — the Prophet.

The experiences of a student of *Brahma-Vidya* are all the experiences of a *Para-Bhakta*. The sacred *Para-Bhakti* is nothing other than the *Para-Vidyā*.

The Infinite, Sat-Chit-Ananda, Brahman, to be ultimately realised through the Vedanta Science is both without form (*Nirakara*) and also with form (*Sa-kara*). The whole universe of names and forms is the Glory of the Supreme only. Thus Devotion to this Divine Form is advised, and it should be practised. This is not

an opinion : it is declared in the very Upanishads by the Rishies themselves.

यथा सर्वगतस्य निराकारस्य महावायोश्च तदात्मकस्य त्वक्पतित्वेन प्रसिद्धस्य साकारस्य महावायुदेवस्य चाभेद एव श्रूयते सर्वत्र तद्वत् परब्रह्मणः सर्वात्मकस्य साकारनिराकारभेदविरोधो नास्त्येव - (त्रिपाद्विभूतिमहा- नारायणोपनिषत्)

“Yatha sarva gatasya nirakarasya mahavayoscha tadatmakasya twakpati-twena prasidhasya sakarasya mahavayudevasya cha-abheda eva srooyate sarvatra ... tadwat parabrahmanah sarvat-makasya sakara-nirakara bheda virodho nastayeva”.

(Tripada-Vibhooti Mahanarayanopanishad)

(The air, that is everywhere and at all times, can be known to our comprehension only when the breeze comes and touches our skin. It assumes the nature of existence to us, but its pervasiveness is not minimised thereby. Similarly Brahman, the Infinite and Eternal, even if He be worshipped as having a Form, cannot be contaminated by the limitations or attributes so superimposed upon Him. It is ever All-pervasive, Absolute, and Immortal.)

उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं
त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं महान्तं
ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतायोनिं - (कैवल्य)

*“Uma sahayam parameswaram prabhum
Trilochanam neelakantham mahantam
Dhyatwa munir gachati bhoota yonim”.*
(Kaivalya)

(The Rishis, meditating upon the form of three-eyed Parameswara accompanied by Uma, enter unto Him and become one with Him.)

श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगादवैहि - (कैवल्य)

“Sraddha bhakti dhyana yogadavaihi”.
(Kaivalya)

[Known that Eternal Truth through faith (Sraddha), Devotion (Bhakti), and Meditation (Dhyana).]

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिताह्वर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ - (श्वेताश्वतर)

*“Yasya deve para bhakti yatha deve tatha a
gurau
Tasyaite kathitahyarthah prakasante
mahatmanah”*

(Swethaswatara)

(He who has supreme devotion — *Para-Bhakti* — unto Parameswara, and to his own Guru, in him alone Truth comes to shine.)

The end — conclusion — of all Vedas is Vedanta. Naturally the term connotes that the 'end of all knowledge', the culmination in Pure wisdom, the very core of the Vedas, is Vedanta. The final essence in Veda is the Pure Brahman. The result of this study is the final realisation of the Absolute Existence which brings the culmination of all sorrows arising from our sense of limitations, and blesses us with the actual experience of the One-ness-with-Brahman (*Brahma Kaivalya*). Therefore the special glory of this Science of Reality.

In the above discussions we have not brought in the views of Sankara or Ramanuja or Madhwa or Vallabha, instead we have tried to point out the glory of vedanta by analysing its own immortal declarations. Such an unbiased discussion should give us an inkling into the essential glories of Vedanta which is *Brahma-Vidya*.

॥ ॐ नमः औपनिषदाय पुरुषाय ॥

Om namah Aupanishadaya Purushaya

(Our Salutations to the Purusha of the Upanishads.)