

Shri S.N.Sastri is a former member of the Indian Revenue Service. He retired as Member, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Government of India.

## **Panchadasi of Sri Vidyanaranya Svami Introduction**

Sri Vidyanaranya Swami flourished in the fourteenth century A.D. He was the Guru as well as the Prime Minister of Harihara I and Bukka, the founders of the Vijayanagara Kingdom. He is reputed to be the greatest among post-Sankara Advaitins. He was the head of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha established by Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada from 1377 to 1386 A.D. Panchadasi is one of the works attributed to him. This work is so named because it consists of fifteen chapters. It is a comprehensive manual of Advaita Vedanta. The fundamental teachings of Advaita are presented in this work in a clear and lucid manner. It is therefore the best text for the novice who desires to get acquainted with this philosophy. At the same time the work is very profound and is of interest to advanced students of Advaita as well.

The fifteen chapters of this work are divided into three groups of five chapters each. Brahman or the supreme Self, which is the only reality according to Advaita, is described in the Upanishads as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The first group of five chapters deals with the Existence aspect of Brahman, the second group with the Consciousness aspect and the third with the Bliss aspect.

The core of Advaita is that Brahman is the only reality. 'Reality' is defined as that which does not undergo any change at any time. By this test, Brahman, which is absolutely changeless and eternal, is alone real. The world keeps on changing all the time and so it cannot be considered as real. At the same time, we cannot dismiss it as unreal, because it is actually experienced by us. The example of a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light is used to explain this. The snake so seen produces the same reaction, such as fear and trembling of the limbs, as a real snake would. It cannot therefore be said to be totally unreal. At the same time, on examination with the help of a lamp it is found that the snake never existed and that the rope alone was there all the time. The snake cannot be described as both real and unreal, because these two contradictory qualities cannot exist in the same substance. It must therefore be said that the snake is neither real nor unreal. Such an object is described as 'mithya'. Just as the snake appears because of ignorance of the fact that there is only a rope, this world appears to exist because of our ignorance of Brahman. Thus the world is also neither real nor unreal; it is also 'mithya'. Just as the snake is superimposed on the rope, the world is superimposed on Brahman. Our ignorance of Brahman is what is called Avidya or Ajnana or Nescience. This ignorance not only covers Brahman, but it projects the world as a reality. The world has no reality apart from Brahman, just as the snake has no reality apart from the rope. When the knowledge of Brahman arises, the world is seen as a mere appearance of Brahman. Another example may be taken to explain this. Ornaments of different sizes and shapes are made out of one gold bar. Their appearance and the use for which they are meant vary, but the fact that they are all really only gold, in spite of the different appearances and uses, cannot be denied. The appearance may change, a bangle may be converted into rings, but the gold always remains as gold. Similarly, on the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman (which is the same as the Self), though the different forms of human beings, animals, etc., continue to be seen by the Jnani, he sees them all only as appearances of the one Brahman. Thus the perception of difference and the consequences of such perception, such as looking upon some as favourable and others as the opposite, and the consequent efforts to retain or get what is favourable and to get rid of or avoid what is not favourable, come to an end. This is the state of liberation even while living, which is known as Jivanmukti.

The Jiva, or individual, is Brahman itself, but because of identification with the body, mind and senses he looks upon himself as different from Brahman and as a limited being, subject to joys and sorrows caused by external factors. This identification with the body, mind and senses is what is called bondage. In reality the Jiva is the pure Brahman and is different from the body-mind complex. When this truth is realized as an actual experience, the identification with the body-mind complex ceases. This is liberation. Thus liberation is not the attainment of a state which did not exist previously, but only the realization of what one has always been. The illusory snake never existed. What existed even when the snake was seen was only the rope. Similarly, bondage has no real existence at all. Even when we are ignorant of Brahman and think of ourselves as limited by the body, we are really none but the infinite Brahman. Liberation is thus only the removal of the wrong identification with the body, mind and senses. The attainment of the state of liberation-in-life or Jivanmukti is the goal of human life according to the Upanishads.

Maya, which is also known by other names such as Prakriti, Avidya and Nescience, is what conceals Brahman and projects the universe. It is because of this that every one identifies himself with his body-mind complex and is ignorant of the truth that he is none other than Brahman. Sri Vidyaranya points out that Maya may be looked upon from three different standpoints. For the ordinary worldly individual who looks upon the world as real, Maya which is the cause of the appearance of the world is real. For the enlightened person who has realized his identity with Brahman, Maya does not exist at all. For the person who attempts to understand Maya through reasoning, Maya is indeterminable because it cannot be described as either real or unreal or both.

There is a wrong notion that according to Advaita the world is a mere illusion. What Advaita says is that the world is not real in the sense in which Brahman is real. Advaita accepts three orders of reality. Brahman, which is eternal and changeless, is the absolute reality, known in Vedanta as paaramaarthika satyam. The world has empirical reality, known as vyaavahaarika satyam, which means that as long as a person has not become free from avidya and has not realized his real nature as Brahman, the world is real for him. It is on this basis that all the rituals, injunctions and prohibitions laid down in the Vedas become applicable to such a person. In other words, until a person realizes that he is not the body or mind or senses but Brahman, the world is real for him. The object of Vedanta is to make man give up his wrong identification with the body and realize his true nature. What is meant here is not mere intellectual knowledge, but actual experience, which is otherwise known as realization.

The third order of reality consists of such cases as a rope appearing as a snake, a piece of nacre being mistaken for silver, and the experiences in dream. This order of reality is known as praatibhaasika satyam.

Panchadasi is a metrical work in Sanskrit. In the following chapters a summary of this work, chapter by chapter, is given. It is hoped that this will serve as an introduction to the work and will motivate the reader to go on to a detailed study, verse by verse.

## **Panchadasi** of Sri Vidyaranya Svami *A Summary*

### Chapter 1

Tattvaviveka-- The discriminative knowledge of the ultimate Reality  
In the first verse of the first chapter Sri Vidyaranya salutes his Guru, Sri Sankarananda, who "dedicated his life to the task of destruction of the monster of primal ignorance together with its manifestation, the phenomenal universe". This verse serves also as a prayer to the Supreme Being for the successful completion of the work, since the name 'Sankarananda'

also means the Supreme Brahman who is Bliss itself.

In the second verse the author says that the discriminative knowledge of the ultimate Reality (Tattva) is being presented in this work for the easy understanding of those whose minds have been purified by service to the lotus feet of their Guru.

These two verses also bring out, by implication, the four topics that are required by tradition to be indicated at the commencement of any work (sambandha-chatushtaya), namely, the vishaya or subject-matter of the work, the prayojana or purpose of the work, the adhikari or person for whom it is intended, and the sambandha or the connection of this work with Vedanta. 'Sankara' means Paramatma, and 'ananda' stands for the jivatma or individual soul. So the term Sankarananda indicates the identity of the jivatma and Paramatma, which is the subject-matter of this work. The purpose of this work is the destruction of primal ignorance, which leads to the attainment of the supreme bliss of liberation. The person who has attained purity of mind is the adhikari or the person for whom this work is intended. The sambandha is the fact that this work elucidates the teachings of the Upanishads for the easy understanding of the adhikari.

The actual subject-matter of the work starts from verse 3. We experience innumerable objects in this world through our sense-organs in the waking state. The objects are different from one another, but the consciousness behind the senses, which is different from the objects experienced, is only one. The consciousness of A is not different from that of B or C. Since consciousness by itself has no distinguishing features, it cannot vary from person to person.

The same is the case with the dream state. The objects experienced in dream are transient and disappear when the dreamer wakes up, but the objects experienced in the waking state are relatively permanent. But the consciousness in both the states is the same.

When a person wakes up from deep sleep he remembers that he slept happily and did not know anything during his sleep. Remembrance is possible only of objects experienced earlier. It is therefore clear that in deep sleep absence of knowledge and happiness are experienced.

The same consciousness is present in all the three states, as is proved by the fact that a person identifies himself as the same in all the states. This consciousness is thus the same in all persons and at all times. It is therefore only one and is eternal, without any beginning or end. It is self-revealing and does not need another consciousness to reveal itself or its objects.

This consciousness alone remains unchanged in all the three states. The sense-organs are not present in the dream state and the mind itself is not experienced in deep sleep. Therefore this consciousness is the unchanging essence of every living being and it is therefore called the self. This self, or essence of all living beings, is of the nature of supreme bliss, for it is the object of unconditional love. All other objects and persons are loved only if they are conducive to one's own happiness. Even one's own body may be disliked when it causes suffering. But the self is never disliked; on the other hand it alone is the perennial object of love. Sometimes a person may say that he hates himself and wants to put an end to his life, but that is because he identifies himself with his body which is the cause of suffering due to disease, poverty or other reasons. From the fact that the Self is the object of the highest love it follows that it is of the nature of the highest bliss, since what every human being wants always is happiness. All other things, such as money, house, children and the like are desired only because they are expected to make the person happier; but happiness is desired for its own sake.

It has thus been established by reasoning that the individual self is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. The Upanishads declare that the supreme Brahman is also of the same nature and that the individual self and Supreme Brahman are the same.

If an object exists at a particular place but is not actually seen, it must be due to some

obstruction such as darkness or a wall in between. Similarly there must be some obstruction because of which the self, though existing, is not revealed to us. This obstruction is avidya. This avidya is beginningless in the sense that we cannot know how and when it originated, because it is logically prior to time.

Prakriti is composed of the three gunas, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas and has in it the reflection of Brahman which is pure consciousness and bliss. This Prakriti is of two kinds. When the element of sattva is pure, it is known as Maya; when impure, due to the admixture of rajas and tamas, it is called avidya. Brahman reflected in Maya is the omniscient Isvara, who controls Maya. Brahman reflected in avidya (impure Prakriti) is the jiva who is under the control of Maya. Jivas are innumerable in number and are of different grades due to the different degrees of admixture of rajas and tamas. Avidya is the causal body or kaaranasarira of the jiva. The word 'sarira' means, by derivation, 'what is perishable'. Avidya is called sarira or body because it will cease to exist on the dawn of self-realization. It is called 'kaarana' or causal because it is the cause of the subtle and gross bodies. When the jiva identifies himself with the causal body he is called praajna. This happens in the state of deep sleep when the senses as well as the mind cease to function and there is only avidya.

At the command of Isvara the five subtle elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water and earth, arose from the part of Prakriti in which tamas predominates, in order that every jiva may have experiences in accordance with its karma. The five subtle organs of sense, namely, those of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, respectively arose from the sattva part of the five subtle elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth. From a combination of the sattva parts of all the five subtle elements arose the antahkarana or the mind. Though only one, the mind is given different names according to the different functions performed by it. When the mind cogitates it is known as the manas or mind. When it comes to a decision it is called buddhi or intellect. The function of storing information and experiences is called cittam. The notion of 'I-ness' which is behind all these functions is called ahankara or ego.

From the rajas part of the subtle elements arose the subtle organs of action--- the organ of speech arose from the rajas part of ether, the hands from the rajas part of air, the feet from the rajas part of fire, the organ of excretion from the rajas part of water and the genital organ from the rajas part of earth. (Note--These, it should be noted, are not the physical organs bearing those names, but their subtle counterparts in the subtle body. The presiding deities of these organs are, in order, Agni, Indra, Vishnu, Yama and Prajapati.)

From a combination of the rajas parts of all the five subtle elements arose prana or the vital air. This prana is given five different names according to the five different functions performed by it-- prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana.

[Note-- These functions are described in Sri Sankara's Bhashya on Prasnopanishad 3.5, thus:--- He (prana) places apana, a division of himself, in the two lower apertures, as engaged in the work of ejecting the excreta. Prana himself, who occupies the position of the sovereign, resides in the eyes and the ears and issues out through the mouth and nostrils. In the navel is samana, which is so called because it assimilates all that is eaten or drunk, distributes them equally in all parts of the body and effects digestion. Udana, another division of prana, moves throughout the body and functions upwards. It leads the soul out of the body at the time of death and takes it to other worlds according to one's punya and papa. Vyana regulates prana and apana and is the cause of actions requiring strength. According to Sankhya, there are five more subsidiary vital forces known as naaga, koorma, krikara, devadatta and dhananjaya). Their functions are, respectively, causing vomiting, winking, creating hunger, producing yawning and nourishing the body).

The five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the five vital airs (prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana), mind and intellect--- all these seventeen together constitute the subtle body, which is known as sukshma sarira or linga sarira. (Though the cittam and ahankara, which are also names of the antahkarana as stated earlier, are not specifically

mentioned here, they should also be taken as included in mind and intellect).

When the jiva identifies himself with the subtle body, he is known as Taijasa. This happens in the state of dream. Isvara identified with the totality of subtle bodies is known as Hiranyagarbha. The difference between the two is the same as the difference between the individual and the collective. Hiranyagarbha is called 'samashti' or 'totality' because of his identification with all the subtle bodies of the universe. Taijasa identifies himself only with his own subtle body and so he is called 'vyashti' or 'individual'.

After the five subtle elements came into existence, a process of combination of the elements took place. This process is known as 'quintuplication' or 'pañcikaranam'. What happened was that each subtle element was first divided into two equal halves. One of the halves of each element was then divided into four equal parts, resulting in four one-eighth parts of each element. The other half of each element then combined with one-eighth part of each of the other elements. Thus, one half of the element 'earth' combined with one-eighth of each of the other four elements, to become the gross element 'earth'. The same thing happened with the other elements. As a result, each gross element has half of itself and one-eighth of each of the other four elements. All the gross objects of experience in the universe and all the gross bodies of all living creatures were created out of these five gross elements.

It has been said above that Isvara identified with all the subtle bodies is called Hiranyagarbha. The same Isvara identified with the totality of gross bodies is known as Vaisvanara. When the jiva identifies himself with his own gross body he is known as Visva.

The jivas go helplessly from one birth to another, just as worms that have fallen into a river are swept from one whirlpool into another. As a result of good deeds performed in many births, a particular jiva may be fortunate to receive initiation from a Guru who has himself realised Brahman. Then he differentiates the self from the five sheaths which make up his gross and subtle bodies and attains the supreme bliss of liberation. The five sheaths are those of food, vital air, mind, intellect and bliss, known respectively in Vedanta as annamayakosa, pranamayakosa, manomayakosa, vijñanamayakosa and anandamayakosa. The jiva, being enveloped in these five sheaths, identifies himself with them and forgets his real nature. This is the cause of repeated births and deaths, known as transmigration. The five sheaths

The gross (or physical) body, which is the product of the gross elements, i.e., the elements after quintuplication, is known as the food sheath or annamayakosa. The five vital airs and the five organs of action, which are the products of the rajas aspect of Prakriti, together constitute the vital sheath or pranamayakosa. The cogitating mind (manas) and the five organs of perception, which are the product of the sattva aspect of Prakriti make up the mind sheath or manomayakosa. The buddhi or deciding intellect, together with the five organs of perception, forms the intellect sheath or vijñanamayakosa. The causal body (avidya or kaaranasarira) is the bliss sheath or anandamayakosa.

The self, which is identical with the supreme Brahman, should be realised by distinguishing it from the five sheaths in the following manner. The physical body, which is present in the waking state, is not experienced in the dream state, since the organs of sense and of action do not function then. In the state of deep sleep neither the physical body nor the subtle body is experienced, since the mind is also dormant then. The witnessing self, which is pure consciousness, is however, present in all the three states. Though the causal body, (avidya or nescience) is present in the state of deep sleep, it is negated in the state of deep meditation, but the self is present in that state also. Thus all the five sheaths are seen to be impermanent and only the self is permanent. The self can thus be distinguished from the five sheaths (or the three bodies) through reasoning, just as the slender, internal pith of the munja grass is detached from its coarse external covering. The identity of the individual self and Brahman is taught in sentences such as 'That thou art' in the Upanishads.

Brahman associated with the tamasic aspect of Maya is the material cause (upadana-

kaaranam) of the universe. Brahman associated with the sattvic aspect of Maya is the efficient cause (nimitta-kaaranam) of the universe. Brahman associated with (or reflected in) Maya, is Isvara and he is thus the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe.

It is Isvara that is primarily denoted by the word 'That' in the sentence (mahavakya) 'That thou art'. Brahman reflected in avidya is the jiva. The primary meaning of the term 'thou' in the above sentence is the 'jiva'. The difference between Maya and avidya has already been pointed out earlier.

In the sentence 'This is that Devadatta', the word 'that' refers to a person named Devadatta associated with a former time and place, whereas the word 'this' refers to the person seen at the present time and place. The sentence brings out the identity of the person seen at the two different times and places by ignoring the particular connotations of 'this' and 'that'. Similarly, the sentence 'That thou art' brings out the identity of Brahman and the jiva by negating Maya and avidya, which are both 'mithya' (i.e, which cannot be characterised as either real or unreal). The truth of both jiva and Isvara is thus the indivisible supreme Brahman, who is pure existence, consciousness and bliss.

{This is further elaborated below, based on the Commentary of Sri Jagadguru Chandrasekhara Bharati on verses 243 to 251—of Vivekachudamani of Sri Sankara. The word tat stands for Brahman as qualified by the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution (i.e. Isvara). The word tvam stands for the Atma as qualified by the mental states of waking, dream and deep sleep (i.e. jiva). These two are of mutually opposed qualities, like the glow-worm and the sun, like the servant and the king, like the well and the ocean and like the atom and the earth (verse 244). There can be no identity between these two, which are the literal meanings (vacyartha) of the words tat and tvam. The identity is only between their implied meanings (lakshyartha). The opposition between the literal meanings is due to the upadhi, since the literal meaning of tat is Brahman with the upadhi or limiting adjunct of Maya and the literal meaning of tvam is Atma with the limiting adjunct of the five sheaths. When these limiting adjuncts, which are not real from the absolute standpoint, are negated, there is neither Isvara nor jiva. The two terms tat and tvam (That and Thou) are to be understood properly by their implied meanings in order to grasp the import of the absolute identity between them. This is to be done neither by total rejection of their literal meaning nor by total non-rejection, but by a combination of both.

Implied meanings are of three kinds:---jahal-lakshana, ajahal-lakshana and jahadajahal-lakshana.

Jahal-lakshana-- The literal meaning is to be rejected and some other meaning consistent with it is to be adopted. An example is—Gangayam ghoshah, the literal meaning of which is—'a hamlet on the river Ganga'. Since there cannot be a hamlet on the river itself, it is the bank of the river that is meant. Here the literal meaning of the word 'Ganga' has to be given up completely and the implied meaning 'bank' has to be adopted.

Ajahal-lakshana-- Without giving up the literal meaning of the word, what is implied by it is also adopted to get the meaning intended to be conveyed. An example is—the sentence, 'The red is running', which is intended to convey that the red horse is running. Here the literal meaning of the word 'red' is retained and the implied word "horse" is added to get the correct sense of the sentence.

Jahadajahal-lakshana-- Here a part of the literal meaning is retained and the other part discarded. The sentence 'This is that Devadatta' is interpreted by using this lakshana. The meaning intended to be conveyed by this sentence is that Devadatta who is seen at the present time in the present place is the same as the person who was seen earlier in another place. The literal meaning of the word "this" is Devadatta associated with the present time and place. The literal meaning of the word "that" is Devadatta associated with the past time and some other place. Since this sentence purports to convey the identity of the person seen in different places at different times, we get this meaning by discarding the reference to the place and time conveyed by the words "this' and 'that' and retaining the

reference to Devadatta. This is also known as bhagatyaga-lakshana. The meaning of the sentence tat tvam asi is obtained by using this method. Just as in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta' the identity is stated by rejecting the contradictory qualities, so also in the sentence 'That thou art' the contradictory qualities (namely, the limiting adjuncts) are rejected. Thus it follows that the jiva and Brahman are in essence one when the limiting adjuncts, Maya and the five sheaths, are rejected}.

The realization of the identity of the individual self (jivatma) and Brahman (paramatma) is liberation. This is not some state to be attained after death in some other world, but it is what is to be realised during one's lifetime itself. This is known as liberation-in-life or jivanmukti. The means for this realization are three -- hearing (sravana), reflection (manana) and unbroken meditation (nididhyasana). 'Hearing' is not merely listening to the teacher who expounds the upanishads, but arriving at the conviction that the purport of all the upanishads is the identity of the individual self and Brahman. 'Reflection' is churning in the mind what has been heard from the teacher, by making use of arguments in a constructive manner, to arrive at the conviction of its correctness. 'Meditation' is keeping the mind fixed on the thought of Brahman, uninterrupted by any other thought.

The result achieved by 'hearing,' etc.

'Hearing' removes the doubt whether the upanishadic text which is the pramana (source of knowledge) expounds Brahman or some thing else. This doubt is known as pramana asambhavana, or the doubt about the pramana itself.

'Reflection' removes the doubt whether Brahman and the jiva are the same or not. This doubt is called prameya asambhavana.

'Meditation' is intended to remove wrong notions such as 'The universe is real; the difference between Brahman and jiva is real', which are contrary to the teachings of the upanishads, by developing concentration of the mind. Such wrong notions are known as viparitabhavana.

Thus the purpose of hearing, reflection and meditation is the removal of obstacles in the form of doubts and wrong notions that stand in the way of Self-realization.

When the mind gradually leaves off the ideas of the meditator and the act of meditation and gets merged in the Self which is the object of meditation, it is called the state of samadhi. In this state the mind is steady like the flame of a lamp kept in a place where there is no breeze at all. This has been mentioned in Bhagavadgita, ch. 6, verse 19. Though in this state there is no subjective cognition of the mental function having the Self as object, its continued existence in this state is inferred from the recollection after emergence from samadhi. This shows that only the modifications of the mind cease in samadhi, but the mind itself is not dissolved. By such a samadhi, known as nirvikalpa samadhi, all the accumulated karma and all desires, which are the seeds of transmigratory existence, are destroyed. Then the mahavakya 'That thou art' gives rise to the direct realization of Brahman. The indirect knowledge of Brahman, received from the Guru, burns up all sins committed upto the attainment of that knowledge. The direct realization of Brahman totally destroys nescience which is the root cause of the cycle of repeated births and deaths.

Thus the Self should be distinguished from the five sheaths and the mind should be concentrated on the Self in order to attain liberation from bondage.

## Chapter 2

### **Mahabhutaviveka-- The discriminative knowledge of the five elements**

Brahman, the non-dual reality, can be known by discriminating it from the five elements. To enable this, the five elements are first described.

The element ether has only one quality, sound. The element air has sound and touch as its qualities. The element fire has sound, touch and colour. The element water has

sound, touch, colour and taste. The element earth has sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. These elements are perceived by the corresponding five organs of perception.

All actions of man can be classified into five groups. These are speech, grasping, movement, excretion and reproduction. These are performed through the corresponding five organs of action, namely, tongue, hands, feet, anus and genitals.

The subtle organs of perception and action are known as 'indriyas'. These form part of the subtle body. The corresponding organs in the physical or gross body are known as 'golaka'. The mind is the ruler of the ten organs of perception and action. It is situated within the heart-lotus. It is known as the inner organ (antahkarana). It depends on the ten organs for its functions in relation to external objects. The mind is constituted of the three gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas. The mind undergoes changes which are caused by the gunas. Sattva guna produces non-attachment, forgiveness, generosity and similar virtues in the mind. Rajas gives rise to emotions such as desire, anger, avarice and is the cause of the person undertaking various actions. Tamas is responsible for lethargy, confusion, drowsiness, etc. When sattva is predominant in the mind, merit (punya) is acquired; when rajas predominates, demerit (papa) results. When tamas is predominant, life is merely wasted.

All the objects in the world, as well as the senses and the mind are made up of the five elements.

There are three kinds of differences. A tree has the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. These are all different from one another. These are differences within one object, namely, the tree. Such a difference is known as 'svagatabheda' or internal difference. The difference of one tree from another is known as 'sajatiyabheda' or difference within the same species. The difference of a tree from a stone (or from any object other than a tree) is called 'vijatiyabheda' or difference between objects of different species. Since Brahman is the only reality, and there is nothing else of the same species or of a different species, there can be no difference of the last two kinds in Brahman. Since Brahman is homogeneous and without parts, there can be no internal difference. Brahman is therefore described as 'one only, without a second' (ekam eva advitiam). The word 'one' negates 'sajatiyabheda'; the word 'only' rejects 'svagatabheda'; and the words 'without a second' negate 'vijatiyabheda'. Brahman can be experienced when the mind becomes absolutely tranquil. Brahman is self-revealing and is the witness of the cessation of all modifications of the mind. Maya is the power of Brahman and has no existence independent of Brahman. Maya cannot be known directly, but can only be inferred from its effect, the universe. Before the manifestation of the universe Maya existed in Brahman in a potential form. Maya is neither existence nor non-existence. It is indefinable.

The Sruti says that the created universe forms only a part of Brahman. In the Gita Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "The universe is sustained by a part of Me". Though Brahman is without parts, the Sruti speaks of it as having parts, using the language familiar to us. With Brahman as the substratum, Maya modifies itself into all the objects in the world, just like various pictures drawn on a wall. The first modification of Maya is space. Space derives its existence from Brahman. That is to say, space appears to exist only because of its substratum, Brahman, which is existence itself. Space has sound as its quality. It is Brahman or Existence which appears as akasa (space), but ordinary people and the logicians consider existence as a property of akasa. This wrong notion is due to Maya. Space has no existence apart from Brahman. Similarly, the other elements, air, fire, water and earth too have no existence apart from Brahman. They are not real in the absolute sense, but appear to be real because of the substratum, Brahman. Brahman is all-pervading, but the range of Maya is limited, that of space is more limited and that of air yet more so.

Space has the property of (communicating) sound. Air has the property of perceptibility to the sense of touch. Colour is the specific property of fire, in addition to the properties of space and air. The specific property of water is taste. In addition it has the properties

of its predecessors, space, air and fire. Earth has the specific property of smell, in addition to the properties of space, air, fire and water.

Brahman alone is the absolute Reality. The universe has only empirical reality. When duality, which is not real, is negated, one becomes established in the non-dual Brahman. Such a person is known as a jivanmukta (liberated-in-life).

A jivanmukta is not affected by delusion and it makes no difference whether he dies healthy or in illness, whether while in meditation or rolling on the ground, whether in a conscious state or in an unconscious state, since he has already given up identification with the body.

Thus the discrimination of the elements from the non-dual Reality leads to supreme bliss.

## Chapter 3

### **Panchakosaviveka -The discrimination of the five sheaths**

The Taittiriya upanishad describes Brahman or the Self as "hidden in the cave". The 'cave' is the five sheaths known as annamayakosa (physical sheath), pranamayakosa (the sheath of the vital airs), manomayakosa (the mental sheath), vijnanamayakosa (the sheath of the intellect) and anandamayakosa (the sheath of bliss). The outermost is the physical sheath or the gross physical body or sthula sarira. Within it are the vital, mental and intellect sheaths, in that order. These three sheaths together constitute the subtle body or the sukshma sarira. The innermost sheath is the sheath of bliss. This is the causal body or karana sarira.

The physical body is produced from the seed and blood of the parents, which are formed out of the food eaten by them. It grows by food. It does not exist either before birth or after death. It comes into existence as the result of past actions. It cannot therefore be the Self which is eternal and has neither birth nor death. The vital sheath consists of the five pranas, namely, prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana. These pervade the physical body and give the power to the sense organs to function. This sheath cannot be the Self, since it is devoid of consciousness. The mental sheath is what gives rise to the notions of 'I' and 'mine' with regard to the body, relations and possessions. It too cannot be the Self because it has desires, is subject to delusion and is always changing. The intellect, on which there is the reflection of pure Consciousness, and which is dormant in the state of deep sleep is the intellect sheath. It cannot be the Self because it undergoes changes.

The inner organ, though one, is treated as two, namely, the intellect or buddhi and the mind or manas. The mind collects information through the sense-organs and presents it to the intellect which judges and decides. In deep sleep the inner organ becomes dormant and bliss is experienced. This is the bliss sheath. This too cannot be the Self because it is impermanent. The source of this bliss is the Self. The Self is always the subject and can never be the object of experience. The Self is consciousness itself and imparts consciousness to the mind and body, just as sugar is sweetness itself and imparts sweetness to all dishes which taste sweet. The Self cannot be described because it is not an object. It is self-revealing. This Self is Brahman. Being all-pervasive, Brahman is not limited by space. Being eternal, it is not limited by time. Being the substratum of the whole universe, it is not limited by any object, just as the rope is not limited by the illusory snake. Thus Brahman is infinite in all three respects.

Brahman, who is Existence, Consciousness and Infinite is the only Reality. Isvara and jiva are mere superimpositions on Brahman by Maya and avidya respectively. Maya is the power of Isvara, which controls the whole universe, but is itself under the control of Isvara. It appears to have consciousness because of the reflection of Brahman in it. Brahman is pure Consciousness, while Isvara is omniscient because of His power, Maya. Brahman is called jiva when It is looked upon as associated with the five sheaths, just as a man is

called a father and a grandfather in relation to his son and grandson. When considered apart from Maya and the five sheaths Brahman is neither Isvara nor jiva. He who realises that he is in essence Brahman (and not the body-mind complex) is not born again, since Brahman has no birth and is eternal.

## Chapter 4

### **Dvaitaviveka-- Discrimination of Duality**

In this chapter the duality created by Isvara and that created by the Jiva are described and differentiated. This will show what is the cause of bondage and what has to be rejected by the aspirant for liberation.

The Svetasvatara Upanishad says (4.10) : "Know Maya to be Prakriti and Brahman associated with Maya as Isvara". Isvara is the creator of the universe. The Aitareya Upanishad says that before creation there was Atman (i.e. Brahman ) alone. He willed, "Let me create", and He created the world by His will. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that from the Self or Brahman arose in succession ether, air, fire, water, earth, vegetation, food and bodies. Isvara willed, "Let me become many, let me create", and meditated and thus created the universe. The Chandogya Upanishad says that before creation Brahman alone existed as pure Existence. He desired to become many and created fire, water, earth and all living beings such as those born of eggs, those born from wombs, etc. The Mundaka Upanishad says that from the immutable Brahman arose the various sentient beings and insentient objects, in the same way as sparks emanate from a blazing fire. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that before it became manifest the universe existed in an unmanifest state. It assumed names and forms and manifested as Virat. From Virat came into being the Manus, human beings, cattle, asses, horses, goats, etc, of both sexes, down to ants. According to these Srutis Isvara entered into all these bodies as the Jiva. The Jiva is so called because it bears Prana, or the vital air. The Jiva is a blend of the substratum or Pure Consciousness, the subtle body and the reflection of Pure Consciousness in the subtle body. Maya, which is the Power of Isvara, has, in addition to the power to create, also the power to delude. The latter deludes the Jiva. The Jiva, thus deluded, identifies himself with the body, considers himself to be a limited, helpless being and thus becomes subject to grief. What has been described so far is the duality created by Isvara.

The duality created by the Jiva is described in the section known as Sapta-anna Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Jiva creates seven kinds of food (or objects of experience) by his actions and meditations. Of these seven, one kind is meant for human beings in general, two for the gods, one for animals and the remaining three for himself. Grains such as wheat are for human beings. The ingredients of the full-moon and new-moon sacrifices are for the gods. Milk is for animals. The mind, speech and vital airs (Prana) are for the Jiva himself. These are the seven kinds of food created by the Jiva. Though these objects are also created by Isvara, the Jiva converts them into objects of enjoyment for himself and so they are spoken of here as the creations of the Jiva. The idea is that each Jiva creates his own world by his actions and thoughts in previous births and so whatever objects he experiences and whatever joys he enjoys and sorrows he suffers, are all the result of his own actions and thoughts.

An object such as a gem, which is a creation of Isvara, always remains the same, but the attitude of each individual human being towards it differs. The man who gets possession of it feels happy, while another man who has not got it is sad. A third man, who is indifferent to such objects, feels neither happy nor sad. The feelings of happiness, sorrow and indifference are created by the respective Jivas towards the gem, but the nature of the gem as created by God does not undergo any change. Similarly the attitudes of different persons towards the same woman differ, depending on whether he is her father or brother

or husband or a stranger. Correspondingly the attitude of the same woman towards each of these different persons will be different, depending on her relationship with them. Thus, while the physical body of the woman as well the other men remains the same, the mind of each of them undergoes changes in accordance with their relationships. These changes are created by the Jivas. Thus each human being or Jiva has two aspects, the material and the mental. It is this mental aspect, which is the creation of each Jiva, that is the cause of bondage. Each Jiva develops likes and dislikes towards various objects. depending on his mental attitude which is governed by the impressions (called Vasanas) left by his own past actions. These likes and dislikes are the cause of joy and sorrow. In dream a person experiences joys and sorrows because of objects conjured up by the mind, though there are no external objects. In deep sleep, when the mind does not function, no joy or sorrow is felt by the person, even if there are objects by his side which can cause joy, sorrow, fear, anger, etc. Thus it is clear that it is the mind that is the cause of joys and sorrows and not other persons or objects.

A person whose son had gone to a far-off country was wrongly informed by some one that the son had died. Though this information was wrong, the father was plunged in sorrow. At the same time, his neighbour, whose son it was who had died in a foreign country, remained calm, believing that his son was safe. This shows that the real cause of a man's bondage and sorrow is the mind and not any actual event.

Unlike the Buddhist Vijnanavadins, Advaita accepts the existence of external objects and holds that, in perception, the mind takes the form of the external object. It may be argued that, since it is the mind that causes bondage by projecting the phenomenal world, the world could be made to disappear by controlling the mind through the practice of yoga. The answer to this is that though duality can be made to disappear temporarily by control of the mind, final elimination of bondage is not possible without the realization of Brahman, which alone will destroy Nescience (avidya).

Even after the realization of Brahman, the duality created by Isvara will continue to be perceived by the Jnani, but he will not be affected by it, since he has realized their unreality. Once a person has been convinced that the water that appears in a mirage is illusory, he will no longer go after it, though the water will continue to appear as before when looked at from a distance. The mere disappearance of duality cannot eliminate bondage without realization of Brahman. At the time of the dissolution of the universe all objects cease to exist, but they will come into manifestation again when the next cycle of creation starts. At that time all Jivas who have not realized Brahman in the previous cycle of creation will be born again. Thus total freedom from rebirth can be attained only by the realization of Brahman.

The world of objects created by God is a help for the realization of non-duality and not an obstacle. It does not get destroyed even when a person attains knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. It is the duality created by the Jiva that hinders the attainment of Self-knowledge. The duality created by the Jiva is of two kinds-- that which is in conformity with the scriptural teachings and that which is not. The first should be accepted and practised till Self-knowledge is attained. Enquiry about Brahman by hearing the scriptures from a Guru, reflecting on its teachings and meditating on them is the duality which is in conformity with the scriptures. This enquiry necessarily involves the acceptance of different entities such as Guru, disciple and the Sastras, but this duality is necessary to enable the disciple to conduct the enquiry into Brahman and so it is acceptable. But even this difference (or duality) has to be given up after the realization of Brahman, because then there is nothing other than Brahman. The Amritananda Upanishad says: "A wise person, having studied the scriptures and repeatedly practised their teachings, should renounce them after realizing Brahman, just as a traveller throws away a flaming torch after reaching his destination, or as a person throws away the husk after taking the grain". He should thereafter keep his mind fixed on Brahman and should not burden his mind with mere words (Br. Up.

4.4.21).

The duality (or multiplicity) that is not in conformity with the scriptures is that resulting from looking upon all living beings and objects as different from one another. It is this mental attitude that gives rise to attachment, aversion, anger, greed and other emotions. The mental attitude that gives rise to craving, anger and similar emotions is called 'violent'. That which gives rise to fanciful thoughts is called 'mild'. Both these should be given up by the spiritual aspirant because calmness of mind and concentration are the essential pre-requisites for an aspirant. One can become fit for liberation only if he gives up the desire for objects of sense. The way to do this is to remember always the adverse consequences of the enjoyment of sense pleasures. Even mental preoccupation with the objects of desire should be given up, because it is the seed of all evils. It is said in the Bhagavadgita that dwelling mentally on objects leads to attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to longing for the object. If the desire is not fulfilled, anger results. Anger makes a person forget all the good lessons that he has learnt, and this in turn results in loss of discrimination. Ultimately he becomes unfit for spiritual progress. (Gita, 2.62- 63).

The tendency to think of objects of desire can be overcome by meditating on Isvara, which will lead to meditation on Nirguna Brahman and to liberation. When the mind is thus controlled, it becomes calm and free from all modifications. When one realizes that the phenomenal world has no absolute reality, one experiences the bliss of Nirvana. Such a person is not merely a knower of Brahman; he is Brahman itself.

## Chapter 5

### **Mahavakyaviveka— Understanding the import of the 'Mahavakyas'**

In this chapter the meaning of four Mahavakyas from the four Vedas is explained.

The first Mahavakya taken for explanation is 'Prajnanam Brahma' (Aitareya Upanishad, 3.1.1 in the Rigveda). This means that Brahman is pure Consciousness. It is because of this Consciousness that all creatures are able to see, hear, smell, speak and distinguish different tastes.

The same consciousness enlivens gods, men and all other creatures. This consciousness is Brahman.

The next Mahavakya is 'Aham Brahma asmi' (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1.4.10 in the Sukla Yajurveda), which means 'I am Brahman'. The infinite, supreme Brahman, which, as the indwelling Self of all, is the witness of all the functions of the intellect, is known as 'I'. The person who has acquired the necessary qualifications such as control of the senses, control of the mind, total detachment towards all pleasures and an intense yearning for liberation is fit to realize his identity with this Self.

The Mahavakya in Chandogya Upanishad (6.8.15) in the Samaveda is 'Tat tvam asi', which means 'That thou art'. Before the creation of the universe there existed only one non-dual Existence without name and form. Even now it exists in the same condition (but with the universe of names and forms superimposed on it by Maya). This Existence is indicated by the term 'That'.

The indwelling self in individual beings that transcends the body, mind and senses is indicated by the term 'thou'. The identity of 'That' and 'thou' is expressed by the term 'asi'.

The Mahavakya 'Ayam atma Brahma' is in the Mandukya Upanishad in the Atharvaveda. This means that the indwelling self in every creature is Brahman.

The identity declared in the above-mentioned Mahavakyas is not with reference to the primary meanings of the terms, but only with reference to their implied meanings. This has been elaborated in the summary of chapter 1, which may be referred to.

How knowledge arises from the Mahaavaakya—two theories.

According to one theory, known as the prasankhyaana theory, attributed to Mandana

Misra, the knowledge which arises from the Mahavakya is relational and mediate, like any other knowledge arising from a sentence. Such a knowledge cannot apprehend Brahman which is non-relational and immediate. Meditation (prasankhyaana) gives rise to another knowledge which is non-relational and immediate. It is this knowledge that destroys nescience.

The view of Suresvara is the opposite of the above. Knowledge of Brahman arises directly from the Mahavakyas. According to him also, meditation is necessary, but it is only for perfecting the hearing. The difference between the two theories is that, while, according to Suresvara, the knowledge which arises from the Mahavakya is immediate and non-relational, according to the other theory this knowledge is only mediate and relational. For an elaborate discussion Suresvara's Naishkarmyasiddhi may be referred to.

Following the view of Mandana, Vachaspati Misra holds that the mind is the instrument for the attainment of Self-knowledge. Following the other view stated above, Prakasatman, the author of Vivarana says that the Mahavakya itself is the instrument, though the knowledge no doubt arises in the mind.

The Mahavakya gives rise to Self-knowledge by making the mind take the form of Brahman. The question arises—since Brahman has no form, what is meant by saying that the mind takes the form of Brahman (akhanda-aakaara-vritti)? This is explained by Vidyaranya in Jivanmuktiviveka, chapter 3 by taking an example. A pot made of clay is full of the all-pervading space as soon as it is made. Filling it afterwards with water, rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc, in the pot can be removed, the space inside can never be removed. It continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot is hermetically sealed. In the same manner, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the consciousness of the self. It takes on, after its birth, due to the influence of virtue and vice, the form of pots, cloths, colour, taste, pleasure, pain, and other transformations, just like melted copper, cast into moulds. Of these, the transformations such as colour, taste and the like, which are not-self, can be removed from the mind, but the form of the self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed at all. Thus, when all other ideas are removed from the mind, the self is realized without any impediment. It has been said—"One should cause the mind which, by its very nature, is ever prone to assume either of the two forms of the Self and the not-Self, to throw into the background the perception of the not-Self, by taking on the form of the Self alone". And also—"The mind takes on the form of pleasure, pain and the like, because of the influence of virtue and vice, whereas the form of the mind, in its native aspect, is not conditioned by any extraneous cause. To the mind devoid of all transformations is revealed the supreme Bliss". Thus, when the mind is emptied of all other thoughts Self-knowledge arises.

The meaning of the Mahavakya 'aham brahma asmi'  
This Mahavakya is explained by Suresvara in Naishkarmyasiddhi, 2.29 thus:--Just as in the sentence, "This post is a man", the earlier cognition that there is a post is sublated by the subsequent cognition that it is a man (and not a post), the cognition "I am Brahman" removes entirely the cognition as "I". Sures'vara explains the statement aham brahma asmi, (I am Brahman), through what is known as baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. In a sentence in Sanskrit, words which, having the same case-endings, denote one and the same thing are said to be in samaanaadhikaranam. The relation between the words is called saamaanaadhikaranyam. This relation is of two kinds, mukhya saamaanaadhikaranyam and baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. In the former, the objects denoted by the words will have the same ontological status (or the same order of reality). For example, in the sentence, the pot-space is but the great (outer) space, the space within the pot and the great space are both empirically real (vyaavahaarika satyam). The difference between them is only due to the upaadhi in the form of the pot. When the

upaadhi is removed, they become one, which they really are, even earlier. But if the words of a sentence, having the same case-endings, denote objects which have different ontological status, and if they purport to convey only one idea, they are in baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. For example, in the statement "This post is a man", the words "post" and "man" have different ontological status. Since what exists is a man and not a post, "man" is empirically real (vyaavahaarika) and "post" is only apparently real (praatibhaasika). Thus, just as the idea that what is seen is a post is removed when the person hears the statement "This post is a man", the wrong cognition of the form 'I am a man', 'I am happy' etc, is removed when a person realizes that he is Brahman on hearing the statement aham brahma asmi.

The essence of the entire universe is Brahman. The same Brahman is the self-luminous indwelling self or atma.

## Chapter 6

### **Chitradeepa-- The Picture on Pure Consciousness**

The titles of chapters 6 to 10 contain the word 'dipa' which means 'lamp'. This word denotes the Consciousness aspect of Brahman which is dealt with in these chapters.

The supreme Self is explained by comparison with the canvas on which a picture is drawn. Just as there are four stages in the painting of a picture, there are four stages in the apparent modification of the supreme Self. In the painting of a picture the four stages are, a clean white canvas, the canvas stiffened with starch, the canvas with outlines drawn on it with a black pencil, and the canvas with colours applied to the picture. The corresponding four stages with regard to the Self are, pure Consciousness, Consciousness as the indwelling controller in all beings, Consciousness as associated with the totality of subtle bodies, and Consciousness as associated with the totality of gross bodies.

Just as in a picture there are superior and inferior objects, there are in the universe various grades of beings from Brahma and other gods to human beings, animals, birds, etc. In a picture human beings are painted as wearing clothes of different kinds, and the clothes painted appear to be as real as the canvas on which the pictures are painted. All the forms in the universe are superimposed on Brahman which is pure consciousness. This consciousness is reflected in these forms and the forms with the reflection of consciousness in them are known as Jivas. The Jivas go through the cycle of repeated births and deaths. Ignorant people would think that the clothes painted in a picture are as real as the canvas itself. Similarly, ignorant people think that the transmigrations of the Jivas are undergone by pure consciousness itself. Just as the inanimate objects in a picture are not painted as dressed in clothes, inanimate objects in the universe do not have the reflection of consciousness in them. The wrong notion that transmigration is real and that the Self, which is pure consciousness, is subject to it is what is called 'Avidya' or nescience. This nescience is removed by the knowledge of the real nature of the Self. Transmigration is only for the Jiva, which is a reflection of the Self, and not for the Self. This understanding is knowledge and it is gained by enquiry. Therefore one should always enquire into the nature of the Jiva, the universe and the supreme Self. When the Jiva and the universe are negated, the pure Self alone remains as the only reality. Negation does not mean that the Jiva and the universe cease to be perceived, as that happens even in deep sleep or in a faint. Negation means the conviction that the Jiva and the universe do not have absolute reality and that they are only 'mithya', i.e., they have only empirical reality.

The knowledge that Brahman exists is only mediate (paroksha) knowledge. The knowledge 'I am Brahman' is called realization.

The same Brahman is spoken of in four ways: as 'kutastha' or immutable, Brahman, Jiva and Isvara, just as the same space is spoken of as pot-space, all-pervading space, space conditioned by water and space conditioned by a cloud. The sky with clouds and stars reflected in a pot of water is known as space conditioned by water. The sky reflected in the water particles in a cloud is known as space conditioned by a cloud. The Self or pure Consciousness which is the substratum on which the gross and subtle bodies are superimposed, and which is not affected by any change in the two bodies, is known as 'kutastha' or immutable, since it is changeless, like the 'kuta' or anvil on which the goldsmith fashions his jewellery. The reflection of the Self in the subtle body is the Jiva or individual who goes from one birth to another ( transmigrates). He is known as the Jiva because he is animated by prana (the vital air). (The verbal root 'jiva' means 'to be endowed with prana' or vital air). Because of nescience which is beginningless, the jiva identifies himself with the body and does not realize that he is in reality the kutastha or Brahman. This nescience has two powers; the power to conceal Brahman, known as Avarana sakti and the power to project the universe, known as Vikshepa sakti. The power to conceal Brahman makes the jiva totally ignorant of the existence of Brahman. Because of the power of projection, the jiva experiences the subtle and gross bodies and looks upon them as real. This is what is known as the superimposition of these bodies on Brahman. It is like a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light when the rope is not clearly seen. Because of such superimposition caused by nescience, the mind, with the reflection of Consciousness in it, is mistakenly thought to be the pure Self or Consciousness itself. The mind with the reflection of consciousness in it is known as the 'ego' or 'Ahankara'.

Brahman or pure Consciousness is the substratum on which all animate beings as well as inanimate objects are projected. The animate beings have life and are able to function because they have a subtle body which receives the reflection of pure Consciousness. Because of this reflection of Consciousness they themselves appear to have consciousness, just as the moon shines because of the reflection of the light of the sun on it. The inanimate objects do not have a subtle body to receive the reflection of Consciousness. Death is the separation of the subtle body from the gross body. When the subtle body departs from the gross body, the living being becomes lifeless.

It is nescience that conceals the real nature of the Self and makes the Jiva identify himself with the body. This concealment as well as the wrong identification cease when nescience is destroyed. But as long as the praarabdha karma which gave rise to the present body lasts, the mind and body, which are the effects of nescience continue.

The word 'karma' is used in two different senses in Vedanta---(1) the results of actions performed, in the form of merit and demerit (punya and paapa), which produce their effects later on, usually in another birth, and (2) the action itself, whether secular or religious. Here we are speaking about karma in the first sense. This karma is of three kinds— known as sanchita, praarabdha and aagaami. The karma accumulated over innumerable past lives is known as sanchita karma. Out of this, a portion gives rise to the present birth. This portion is known as praarabdha karma, meaning 'what has already started (aarabdha) giving its effect'. The karma that results from the actions performed during this life is known as aagaami karma. This gets added to the sanchita karma. On the dawn of Brahmajnaana the entire sanchita karma as at that time is destroyed. Actions performed after the dawn of knowledge do not produce any karma because identification with the body-mind complex, which is the cause of karma, has ceased to exist. Thus there is no further aagaami karma. But praarabdha karma is not destroyed by knowledge. It continues to give its results until it is exhausted. Therefore the present body-mind complex continues to exist till the exhaustion of the praarabdha karma. But since the jnaani does not identify himself with his body and mind, he is not affected by whatever happens to them, but remains established in his real essence as Brahman. This is the state known as 'jivanmukti' or liberation-in-life. (Reference may be made in this context to Sri Sankara's Bhashya on the following:-

Br.up.1.4.7., Br.up.1.4.10., Ch.up.6.14.2., Br.up.4.4.22., Bhagavadgita, 4.37).

Various views are held by different schools regarding the Self. One group of Lokayatas (materialists) consider the physical body to be the Self. Another group holds the senses to be the Self, another the vital airs, another the mind, and yet another the intellect. All these are undergoing changes all the time and so they cannot be the Self which is changeless. The Buddhists say that perception, as well as the objects of perception are creations of illusion. The Vedantins reject this view by pointing out that there can be no illusion without a substratum. There can be no illusion of a snake without a rope as the substratum. The Buddhists hold that there is only void, but even a void must have some one to witness it; otherwise it would be impossible to say that there is a void. We are therefore led to the conclusion that there must be a changeless substratum for the changing universe. That substratum is Brahman or the Self. There are also different views about the size of the Self. Some hold that it is atomic, some that it is all-pervading and some that it is of medium size.

The Vedantins hold that the Self is pure consciousness, infinite, devoid of parts and all-pervading. Maya or Prakriti, which is the power of Brahman is neither real nor unreal; it is indeterminable. Maya can be looked upon in three ways. For the ordinary people it is real. For the enlightened person (jñani) it does not exist at all. For those who try to understand Maya through reasoning it is indeterminable. Maya projects the universe without in anyway affecting Brahman. Making the impossible happen is the nature of Maya.

Brahman reflected in Maya is Isvara. Isvara controls Maya, but the jiva is under the control of Maya. Isvara is the indweller and inner controller (antaryami) in every living being. He is omniscient and is the cause of the universe. He causes the manifestation of the universe and creates beings in accordance with their past karma. Creation is like the unrolling of a painted canvas. If the painted canvas is rolled up, the picture is no longer visible. In the same way, when the karma of living beings is exhausted, Isvara withdraws the universe into Himself. Then the universe and all beings remain in a latent form till the commencement of the next cycle of creation. Isvara is the cause of the inanimate objects through the tamasic aspect of Maya. He is the cause of the jivas through the reflection of pure consciousness in Maya. Brahman is unconditioned by Maya, while Isvara is conditioned by Maya and is the creator of the universe. The Upanishads declare that Brahman is reality, consciousness and infinity. The sense organs and the mind cannot grasp it.

Hiranyagarbha is the totality of the subtle bodies of all jivas. Virat is the totality of all gross bodies.

The whole world is a creation of Isvara and jiva. From the determination of Isvara to create, down to His entrance into the created objects as the inner controller, is the creation of Isvara. From the waking state to liberation is the creation of the jiva.

A person who has realized his identity with the changeless Self that is pure Consciousness is not affected by anything that happens to the body.

Detachment, knowledge of the Reality and giving up desire-prompted actions mutually assist one another. Detachment arises from the realization that the happiness arising from objects is impermanent. Knowledge of the Reality is attained by hearing the scriptures, reflecting on them and meditation. Cessation of desire-prompted activities results from control of the mind. Of these three, the knowledge of the Reality is the most important. These three come to a person who has acquired a vast store of merit (punya) in innumerable past lives. The summit of detachment is the total absence of desire even for the pleasures of the world of Brahma (the Creator God). The summit of the knowledge of the Reality is reached when a person experiences his identity with the supreme Self as firmly as an ordinary man identifies himself with his physical body. The height of cessation of desire-prompted activities is the complete forgetfulness of all worldly affairs even in the waking state as in the state of deep sleep.

Enlightened people may behave in different ways according to their fructifying karma,

but there is no difference in their knowledge of the Reality or in the nature of their liberation.

The universe is like a picture drawn on the supreme Brahman. When we ignore the distinctions, which are all caused by Maya, pure Consciousness alone remains.

This chapter, when regularly studied, frees the intelligent aspirant from the delusion that the world is real, even though he may continue to see the world as before.

## Chapter 7

### **Triptidipa-Fulfillment on Realization of Pure Consciousness**

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4.4.12, says that a person who has realized that he is the pure Self (Brahman) will not afflict his body for the fulfillment of any desire. This statement is analyzed thoroughly in this chapter to enable us to understand the state of perfect bliss of a liberated person.

Isvara and the jivas are both reflections of Brahman in Maya. The whole universe is the creation of Isvara and the jivas. From the determination of Isvara to create, down to his entrance into the created objects, is the creation of Isvara. (The term 'entrance' means only the presence of Isvara as the Antaryami or inner controller in all jivas). From the waking state up to liberation, which constitutes 'samsaara', is the creation of the jiva.

The universe appears on the substratum Brahman which is pure consciousness, the Self of all beings and immutable. The reflection of Brahman in the intellect is known as chidaabhaasa. Because of mutual superimposition between Brahman and the intellect, the chidaabhaasa identifies itself with the intellect. The chidaabhaasa identified with the intellect is the jiva. The jiva looks upon himself as an agent and an enjoyer. Because of identification with the gross and subtle bodies, the jiva attributes to himself the joys and sorrows which pertain to the bodies alone. When the jiva gives up his identification with the bodies he realizes that he is the substratum, Brahman, which is pure consciousness and devoid of association with anything.

A story is told in Vedantic works to illustrate how knowledge of the reality dawns as a result of hearing from a guru the mahavakya 'That thou art'. Ten ignorant villagers crossed a river. On reaching the other bank one of them counted their number to see if all of them had reached safely. He counted only nine and felt that one of them must have been drowned in the river. Each of the others then counted and got the same result. When they were grieving about the loss of one of them, a man who was passing by offered to count their number. After counting nine, when he came to the last man he told him, "You are the tenth". Each one then realized that he had forgotten himself while counting, because of his ignorance. In the same way, every human being has forgotten his real nature and realizes it only when instructed by a competent teacher with the mahavakya 'That thou art'.

There are seven stages in the process of realization of the Self. They are, ignorance, obscuration, super-imposition, indirect or mediate knowledge, direct or immediate knowledge, cessation of sorrow and a sense of supreme fulfillment. The jiva is ignorant of the truth that he is Brahman in essence. Because of this ignorance he says that Brahman is not manifest and does not exist. This is obscuration. He looks upon himself as a doer and an enjoyer because of identification with his body and mind. This is super-imposition. When he is instructed by a competent teacher, he gets the knowledge that Brahman exists. This is mediate or indirect knowledge. Then by acquiring the requisites such as detachment, etc., and reflecting and meditating on the teachings, he realizes that he is Brahman and remains established in that experience. This is direct or immediate knowledge. Now he is free from the wrong notion that he is a doer and an enjoyer. With this all sorrows come to an end. He feels that he has accomplished the ultimate goal of life and has a sense of supreme fulfillment.

The statement in the Upanishad that before creation Brahman alone existed (Ch.up. 6.2.1) gives indirect knowledge (paroksha jnana) of Brahman. The statement 'That thou art' (Ch.up. 6.8.7) gives direct knowledge (aparoksha jnana) of Brahman. The sage Bhrigu acquired indirect knowledge of Brahman from the indicatory statement that Brahman is that from which the universe arises, that by which it is sustained and that into which it merges. He got direct knowledge of Brahman by enquiry into the five sheaths. (Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhrigu valli).

In the statement 'That thou art', the word 'thou' primarily denotes pure Consciousness or Brahman limited by the mind, which is what is denoted by the word 'I'. Pure Consciousness conditioned by Maya is Isvara who is omniscient and is the cause of the universe. He is primarily denoted by the word 'That'. The entities denoted by the primary meanings of these two words possess totally contradictory qualities and so there can be no identity between them. The identity is only between the implied meanings. This point has been dealt with in detail in chapter 1.

When this identity between the jiva and Brahman is realized, there remains only pure consciousness which is absolute bliss. The view held by some schools that the mahavakya can give only indirect knowledge of Brahman is wrong.

The difference between jiva and Brahman consists only in the fact that the former has the upadhi or limiting adjunct in the form of the mind, while the latter does not. But for this adjunct the two are identical. Just as a reflection exists only as long as there is a reflecting medium, jivahood exists only as long as the mind, which is the reflecting medium, exists.

In the mahavakya, 'Aham Brahma asmi', which means 'I am Brahman', the primary meaning of 'I' is the blend of the pure self and the mind. The implied meaning of 'I' is the pure self alone. The identity is thus between this pure self and Brahman.

There is a distinction between the cognition of an external object such as a pot, which is of the form 'this is a pot' and the direct knowledge of Brahman, which is of the form 'I am Brahman'. In the former case, the mind first becomes modified in the form of the pot. This modification is known as vritti. This vritti removes the ignorance covering the pot. Then the reflection of Brahman or pure Consciousness on the vritti produces the knowledge 'this is a pot'. In the case of the knowledge of Brahman also, there is a vritti in the form of Brahman, known as akhanda-aakaara-vritti. After this, the second step of the reflection of Brahman falling on the vritti is not necessary here, because Brahman is self-luminous, unlike inert objects. This is similar to the difference between perceiving a pot and perceiving a lighted lamp. In the former case both the eye and a light are necessary, but in the latter case another light is not necessary. Therefore, while in the case of external objects the reflection of Brahman in the vritti is necessary, in the case of realization of Brahman it is not necessary. The reflection of Brahman or Consciousness in the vritti is known as 'phala'. Thus the cognition of an external object is brought about by 'phala', but the direct knowledge (which is called realization) of Brahman is brought about by the vritti itself, without the aid of any phala. It is therefore said in Vedanta that all objects are 'phala vyapya', while Brahman is 'vritti vyapya'.

It has been stated above that the mind takes the form of Brahman. The question arises - since Brahman has no form, what is meant by saying that the mind takes the form of Brahman? This is explained by Svami Vidyaranya himself in Jivanmuktiviveka, chapter 3, by taking an example. A pot made of clay is full of the all-pervading space as soon as it is made. Filling it afterwards with water, rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc, in the pot can be removed, the space inside can never be removed. It continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot is hermetically sealed. In the same manner, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the consciousness of the self. It takes on, after its birth, due to the influence of virtue and vice, the form of pots, cloths, colour, taste, pleasure, pain, and other transformations, just like melted copper, cast into moulds. Of these, the transformations such as colour, taste and the like, which

are not-self, can be removed from the mind, but the form of the self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed at all. Thus, when all other thoughts are removed from the mind, the self is realized without any impediment. It has been said—"One should cause the mind which, by its very nature, is ever prone to assume either of the two forms of the Self and the not-Self, to throw into the background the perception of the not-Self, by taking on the form of the Self alone". And also—"The mind takes on the form of pleasure, pain and the like, because of the influence of virtue and vice, whereas the form of the mind, in its native aspect, is not conditioned by any extraneous cause. To the mind devoid of all transformations is revealed the supreme Bliss". Thus, when the mind is emptied of all other thoughts Self-knowledge arises.

The mahavakyas such as 'That thou art' produce direct knowledge of Brahman, but this knowledge does not become firmly established because of defects in the mind such as doubts and wrong notions. It is therefore necessary to hear the scriptures, reflect on them and meditate on their purport repeatedly and also practise the disciplines such as control of the senses, control of the mind, etc.

'Hearing' is the process by which the conviction is attained that the identity of jiva and Brahman is declared throughout in the Vedas. 'Reflection' is satisfying oneself of the validity of what has been heard by the test of reasoning. Meditation removes the wrong notion, acquired over innumerable births, that the body is the Self and that the world is real. Concentration of mind is acquired by the worship of God.

A person who has realized that he is the self knows that the world is only an appearance on Brahman due to Maya and that it has no absolute reality. He is therefore not affected by the joys and sorrows of the world. But he engages himself in various actions solely for the welfare of the world, according to his karma. The karma which brought about the present birth (praarabdha karma) continues even after enlightenment, but the enlightened person remains undisturbed by whatever happens, while the ignorant persons suffers when anything adverse happens. When the realization that the world has no reality has become firmly established, there are neither desires nor the desirer. Consequently all sorrows cease, just as the flame of a lamp gets extinguished when the oil is exhausted. A spectator in a magic show who knows that the objects produced by the magician are not real merely enjoys the show and does not desire those objects. Similarly the enlightened person is convinced of the unreality of all worldly objects and does not harbour any desire for them. The efforts to earn wealth cause suffering; there is always anxiety about the safety of what has been earned, and there is grief when it is spent or lost. Thus wealth causes sorrow at every stage. All objects in the world which are sought by people hoping to get joy from them have their negative aspects. A wise man should see the defects and give up desire for them. All sorrows are caused by the erroneous notion that the objects and happenings in the world are real. Desires can never be quelled by enjoyment; they only increase, like fire fed by clarified butter. But when the impermanence of worldly pleasures is realized, gratification of desires brings about cessation of desire. One who has controlled his mind is satisfied even with a little enjoyment, because he knows that pleasures are impermanent and are followed by sorrow. A king who had been imprisoned by an enemy and is released will be satisfied by becoming the ruler of even a single village, whereas a king who has never been conquered by any one else is not satisfied even with his kingdom.

The praarabdha karma functions in three ways--producing actions motivated by desire, producing actions without desire, and producing actions through the desire of another person. The first type is where the praarabdha karma itself produces desire and makes the person act for its fulfillment. The second is where even without desire a person is compelled by circumstances to undertake a particular action. An example of the third type is that of a realized person teaching his disciples in response to their sincere entreaties. Here it is the karma of the disciples that makes him take up the task of teaching them.

Whatever is destined to happen will certainly happen and what is not destined to happen will never happen in spite of all efforts. The realization of this truth will make a person free from anxiety and grief.

Praarabdha karma produces its effect for the enlightened person as well as for the ignorant. But while the ignorant person looks upon the results as real and enjoys or suffers, the enlightened person is indifferent to the result and is therefore never affected by sorrow or disappointment.

If a person carefully examines his experiences in the waking state and in dream, he will realize that they are very similar. He should then give up the notion that the objects in the world are real and become free from attachment towards them. This world of duality is similar to something created by magic. It cannot be explained logically. The wise man who remembers this will not be affected by the effects of his praarabdha karma. By the realization of Brahman the unreality of the world from the absolute point of view is realized. But this does not destroy the praarabdha karma which continues to give its effect until it is exhausted. Knowledge and the effects of praarabdha karma are not opposed to each other and can co-exist, just as a spectator can enjoy a magic show even when he is fully aware that what he sees is not real.

Control of the mind is essential for the realization of the unreality of the world. Even though desires may arise in the mind of an enlightened person, they do not bind him as in the case of an ignorant man, because he is free from all attachment. An enlightened person does not consider himself as a doer or enjoyer. This is what is meant by the statement in the first verse of this chapter that “a person who has realized that he is the pure Self (Brahman) will not afflict his body for the fulfillment of any desire”.

The question as to who is the doer and enjoyer, whether it is the immutable Kutastha (Brahman) or the reflected consciousness (Chidaabhaasa) or a blend of the two, is now being examined. Enjoyment implies change as a result of identification with the experience of pleasure and pain. Since Brahman is changeless, it cannot be the enjoyer. The reflection of consciousness has no separate existence apart from pure consciousness and so it too cannot be the enjoyer. So it is generally thought that the blend of the two is the enjoyer. But this too cannot be correct because the Sruti says that Kutastha or pure consciousness alone exists in reality. Because of ignorance the jiva attributes to himself the reality which is the nature of Kutastha alone. Consequently he thinks that his enjoyment is real and does not like to give it up. He wishes to have a wife, son, properties, etc, for his enjoyment. The Br. up. 2.4.5 says that wife, son and all others are loved by the jiva only for his own sake and not for the sake of the wife, son etc. A person loves his wife, son, etc, only as long as they give him happiness. One's own self is thus the object of unconditional love. Therefore a spiritual aspirant should acquire dispassion towards all objects of enjoyment in the world and direct his love towards the Self, which is his own self. He should keep his attention fixed on the Self at all times and differentiate the body from the Self.

It is common experience that the states of waking, dream and deep sleep are distinct from one another. The experiences in each state are totally different from the experiences in the other two states. But the consciousness, which is the experiencer, is the same in all the states. When a person has realized the identity of his self with this pure consciousness, which is Brahman, he is released from the bondage caused by ignorance. This self, which is Brahman, is beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is the witness, ever blissful, and is neither the enjoyer nor the enjoyment, nor the object of enjoyment. When the self has been differentiated in this way, what remains as the enjoyer is the chidaabhaasa or jiva, who is also known as the intellect-sheath and who is ever undergoing change. This world is like a creation of magic and chidaabhaasa is part of it. By repeatedly differentiating the chidaabhaasa from pure consciousness one becomes convinced that the jiva has no existence apart from Kutastha and that the jiva is nothing but Kutastha. Then all desire for enjoyment of external objects ceases. A person harbours desire only

for objects thought to be different from himself. When a person has realized that he is Kutastha or Brahman, there is no object different from himself, since everything is Brahman. He then no longer looks upon himself as an enjoyer of happiness or an experiencer of sorrow.

The physical body is subject to various diseases. The subtle body is afflicted by desire, anger, greed, etc. On the other hand, it experiences happiness when there is control of the mind and the senses. In deep sleep the jiva knows neither himself nor others. This is the state in which the causal body predominates. The causal body is the seed of sorrow in this birth as well as in future births. These sufferings are natural to these bodies. Chidaabhaasa, which is the reflection of pure consciousness in the mind, is however free from all these sorrows. But due to ignorance the chidaabhaasa identifies himself with the three bodies and considers himself to be suffering. When he realizes that he is not the bodies, but the Kutastha itself, he becomes free from all sorrow. The sruti says: "The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman". By fixing his mind on Brahman alone, the jiva realizes that he is Brahman. But the jiva continues in the body until the praarabdha karma is exhausted. He is, however, a jivanmukta and remains established in the knowledge that he is Brahman. He enjoys total fulfillment. The satisfaction arising from external objects is limited, but the satisfaction arising from direct realization of Brahman is unlimited and absolute. The realized person has no further duties to be performed, and there is nothing more to be achieved by him. The onlookers may, out of ignorance, attribute worldly actions and qualities to him, but he is not in the least affected by such attribution, just as a bush of red gunja berries may be mistaken for a blazing fire by a person looking at it from a distance, but such an imaginary fire does not affect the bush in the least. Even the scriptures are no longer necessary for him. There is no more any need for meditation or Samadhi. He has attained all that was to be attained and has done all that was to be done. He may still engage himself in action for the good of the world. His senses may still perceive duality, but he knows that it is not real and so he is not affected. When he is in the midst of ordinary people he may behave like them, just as a father plays with his baby, pretending to be like it. When he is praised or blamed by other persons, he does not praise or blame them in turn, but behaves in such a way as to awaken the knowledge of the ultimate reality in them. The enlightened person has no duty other than awakening the ignorant to the reality.

The wise who study this chapter repeatedly will realize Brahman and attain the goal of perfect bliss.

## Chapter 8

### **Kutasthadipa-- The Immutable Consciousness**

In this chapter Kutastha or pure consciousness, which is eternal and immutable, is being distinguished from the reflection of pure consciousness in the modifications of the mind (vrittis) with the help of an example. When the rays of the sun fall on a wall, the wall is illumined and looks bright, though by itself the wall has no brightness. When the rays of the sun fall on a mirror and the rays reflected from the mirror fall on the wall, the wall looks even brighter. Similarly, because of the presence of pure consciousness within, the physical body acquires sentiency. When the mind functions through any of the sense organs and becomes modified into the form of an external object, the pure consciousness becomes reflected in this modification (which is known as vritti). Then the sentiency of the body becomes even more manifest because the person sees external objects, hears external sounds, etc. Even when there are no mirrors to reflect the rays of the sun the wall on which the sun's rays fall directly remains illumined. Similarly even when there are no vrittis of the mind, pure consciousness illumines the body and gives it sentiency. Even in the state of deep sleep, when the mind and the senses are dormant, pure consciousness

illuminates the body.

The process of visual perception, according to Advaita Vedanta, is described in chapter 1 of Vedanta Paribhasha thus: Just as the water in a tank, issuing through a hole, enters, through a channel, a number of fields and assumes the shapes of those fields, so also the luminous mind, stretching out through the eye, goes to the space occupied by an object and becomes modified into the form of that object. Such a modification is called a vritti of the mind. This vritti removes the ignorance covering the object. Then the reflection of pure consciousness falls on the vritti and the person perceives the object. Before the rise of the vritti the object was not known. In other words, there was ignorance of the object. This ignorance becomes known only because of the pure consciousness or Brahman. Later, when the object is perceived, the knowledge of its existence also arises only because of pure consciousness. Thus the ignorance as well as the knowledge of any object arises only because of pure consciousness which is the witness of both. It is therefore said that all things are objects of the witnessing consciousness, either as known or as not known. It is only when the pure consciousness is reflected in the vritti of the mind that an object becomes known. The vritti, the reflection of consciousness in the vritti and the object itself are illumined by Brahman or pure consciousness; whereas only the existence of the object is made known by the reflection of consciousness in the vritti.

It is thus seen that the cognition of any object, such as a pot, is brought about by the chidaabhaasa or reflection of consciousness in the vritti, combined with pure consciousness or Brahman which is the substratum of the mind. The Naiyayikas hold that the cognition 'This is a pot' becomes known only through another cognition which they call 'anuvyavasaaya'. This view is not accepted by Vedanta, because it will lead to infinite regress, as the second cognition would need a third cognition to become known, and so on, ad infinitum. In Vedanta pure consciousness or Brahman itself takes the place of this anuvyavasaaya, and since Brahman is self-luminous it does not need another cognition. Therefore, the cognition 'This is a pot' is brought about by chidaabhaasa, but the knowledge 'The pot is known' is derived from Brahman or pure Consciousness. Thus the distinction between chidaabhaasa and Brahman has been brought out in respect of cognition of objects outside the body. The same distinction applies also in respect of cognitions within the body, because the chidaabhaasa pervades also the inner states such as desire, anger, the ego-consciousness, etc., just as fire pervades a red-hot piece of iron. All vrittis of the mind arise one after another. But vrittis are absent during deep sleep, swoon and Samadhi. The consciousness that witnesses the interval between two successive vrittis as well as the period during which vrittis are absent is called Kutastha. This is immutable.

The objects of internal cognition are the states of the mind such as happiness, sorrow, anger, etc. The mental modification (vritti) naturally coincides with them. The mind has not to go out to unite with them as in the case of external perception. So the mental states of happiness, etc., are said to be revealed by the witnessing consciousness itself, as soon as they arise. These cognitions are pratyaksha, or perceptual knowledge.

Vedantaparibhasha says: "Being cognized by the witnessing consciousness itself does not mean that the mental states are the objects of the witness self without the presence of corresponding mental modifications, but that they are the objects of the witnessing consciousness without the activity of the means of knowledge such as the sense organs".

Chidaabhaasa, which is the reflection of pure consciousness in the mental modification, has a beginning and an end. But pure consciousness is eternal and immutable. Brahman or pure consciousness, its reflection in the mind and the mind itself are related in the same way as a face, its reflection and the reflecting medium.

With regard to the manner in which the appearance of the jiva is to be understood, there is a difference of opinion between the two main post-Sankara Advaita schools---the Vivarana school and the Bhamati school. According to Vivarana, the jiva is reflection (pratibimba) of Brahman in nescience, and Brahman as the prototype reflected is Isvara. This is known

as the 'reflection theory'. The Bhamati view, which is known as the 'limitation (avaccheda) theory', is that the jiva is Brahman as delimited by nescience. The analogy for the former view is the reflection of the face in a mirror; for the latter view it is the delimitation of ether by a pot, etc. Swami Vidyananda rejects the limitation theory by pointing out that if Brahman becomes a jiva by being merely delimited by the intellect, even a pot which is also pervaded by Brahman would become a jiva. He accepts a modified form of the reflection theory, known as aabhaasa-vaada, or 'semblance theory'. While according to the Vivarana theory the reflection is real and is identical with the prototype, in the semblance theory the reflection is a mere appearance, an illusory manifestation. In the reflection theory the apposition between the jiva and Brahman is through identification, like the identification of the space within a pot with the total space. In the semblance theory the apposition between the jiva and Brahman is by sublation, as in the case of the illusory snake and the rope, where one says: "What appeared as a snake is really a rope".

The jiva is in reality none other than Brahman, but because he identifies himself with his gross and subtle bodies he wrongly thinks that he is different from Brahman. When the jiva realizes that he is Brahman, the identification with the two bodies ceases. The sruti text, "All this is indeed Brahman" (Ch. up. 3. 14. 1) means that what appears as the universe is in reality Brahman. Similarly, by the text, "I am Brahman" (Br. Up. 1. 4. 10), the identity of jiva and Brahman is declared.

Brahman has been described as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. As the support of the universe Brahman is Existence. As the cognizer of all insentient objects it is Consciousness. As it is always the object of love it is Bliss. Its relationship with the world is only as the substratum, like the relationship of the rope to the illusory snake. In fact, there can be no relationship between Brahman which is the only reality and the universe which is mithya, i.e., neither real nor unreal.

Both jiva and Isvara are reflections of Brahman in Maya. They can reflect consciousness, unlike the inert objects in the world. Though both the mind and the body are products of food, the mind is subtler than the body and so it can reflect consciousness. Similarly, jiva and Isvara are subtler than inert matter and so they can reflect consciousness.

In dream we ourselves create so many objects. So there is no wonder that Maya creates everything that we experience in our waking state.

Brahman is pure consciousness. Brahman reflected in Maya is Isvara, who is omniscient. Omniscience is possible only when there are things to be known. These things are the creation of Maya. So it will be correct to say that Brahman, which is pure consciousness, becomes a knower of everything only because of Maya.

Brahman is ever associationless and changeless. Brahman is the only reality. Since Maya is not real from the absolute point of view, bondage which is caused by Maya is also not real. If bondage is not real, release from bondage is also not real. So from the point of view of absolute reality, there can be no such thing as an aspirant for liberation or a liberated person. Bondage, release, aspirant and liberated exist only when we are speaking from the empirical point of view. This distinction between the two standpoints has always to be kept in mind. When what was taken to be a snake is found, with the help of a lamp, to be only a rope, no one would say that a snake was previously there, but has gone away and a rope has come in its place. On the other hand one would say that there never was any snake and there was only a rope all the time. Similarly, when a person becomes liberated, it would be wrong to say that the person was previously in bondage and has now become liberated. The correct position is that he was never in bondage, but was liberated all the time, though he wrongly thought that he was in bondage.

When it rains in torrents, the ether is not affected at all by it. Similarly pure consciousness is not affected by the phenomenal world which is the creation of Maya. The enlightened person knows that he is the pure consciousness and so he is not affected by whatever happens in the world.

He who studies this chapter and reflects on it ever abides as the self-luminous Kutastha.

## Chapter 9

### **Dhyanadeepa—Meditation on pure Consciousness**

According to the teachings of Vedanta, a person who has acquired the four preliminary requisites, namely, discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, total dispassion towards all pleasures in this world and in higher worlds, the spiritual disciplines such as control of the mind, control of the senses, etc., and intense yearning for liberation, attains liberation through hearing of the scriptures from a Guru, and reflecting and meditating on them. For those who, even after the study of the Upanishads, are not able to attain realization due to some obstruction, such as lack of subtlety of mind, meditation on the attributeless (Nirguna) Brahman is prescribed as an alternative means in this chapter. Such meditations are laid down in the Uttaratapaniya Upanishad.

Sometimes even by acting on a wrong notion one may by chance attain a desired end. For example, a man sees the gleam of a gem coming from a distance. Mistaking the gleam for a gem itself he runs towards it and gets the gem. Though he was wrong in thinking that the gleam itself was a gem, he succeeded in getting a gem. Such a notion which, though wrong, results in a successful conclusion, is called 'samvaadi bhrama'. Another person mistakes the gleam of a lamp for a gem and runs towards it, but is disappointed. Such a wrong notion is called 'visamvaadi bhrama'.

If a person mistakes mist for smoke and goes towards it expecting to find fire and accidentally finds fire there, it is called 'samvaadi bhrama'. A person sprinkles on himself the water of the river Godavari, thinking it to be the water of the river Ganga. He is purified, because the water of Godavari is also a purifier according to the scriptures. Here his mistaking Godavari water for Ganga water is 'samvaadi bhrama' because though it is an error, it leads to the desired result. A man in delirium because of high fever unconsciously repeats the name 'Narayana' and dies. He goes to heaven because of having uttered the name of the Lord at the time of death. This is another instance of 'samvaadi bhrama'. (In Srimad Bhagavata it is said; "The name of the illustrious Lord, whether uttered consciously or unconsciously, destroys a person's sins as surely as fire destroys a heap of wood; just as a powerful medicine has its effect, even if taken by chance by one who does not know its potency, so has the Lord's name when uttered even by an ignorant person"--Bh. VI. 2. 18-19).

In direct perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana) and scriptural authority there are innumerable instances of samvaadi bhrama. The worship of images made of clay, wood and stone as deities is one such instance. In Chandogya Upanishad (Chapter 5) heaven, rain-god, earth, man and woman are to be meditated on as the sacrificial fire. These are also instances of samvaadi bhrama.

Samvaadi bhrama, though it is a bhrama (error), leads to a desirable result. So also, meditation on Brahman leads to liberation. Brahman with attributes which is meditated on, is not a reality (in the absolute sense) and so such meditation is samvaadi bhrama. Any upasana or meditation is based on looking upon one thing as another, such as the linga as Siva, salagrama as Vishnu, or Brahman with attributes (Saguna Brahman) as the ultimate Reality. It is therefore a bhrama.

After knowing the one indivisible homogeneous Brahman indirectly from the scriptures (getting paroksha jnanam), one should meditate identifying oneself with Brahman. The knowledge that Brahman exists, derived from the study of the scriptures, without the actual realization that Brahman is one's own Self, is what is known as indirect knowledge. It is like the knowledge of the forms of Vishnu and other gods. The knowledge of the form of Vishnu as described in the scriptures is not false, though indirect, because the scriptures

are authoritative. One can know from the scriptures that Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, but he cannot be said to have direct knowledge of Brahman until he has realized Brahman as the inner witness within himself. The indirect knowledge is, however, not illusory. As long as identification with the body continues, one cannot realize one's identity with Brahman. The indirect knowledge of non-duality gained from the scriptures is not opposed to the perception of duality in the world. The perception that an image of Vishnu is made of stone is not opposed to the idea that the image represents Vishnu and to the worship of the image as Vishnu.

Indirect knowledge of Brahman can arise even from a single instruction by a competent preceptor. Like the knowledge of the form of Vishnu, it does not need any enquiry. The methods of worship have been laid down in the Kalpa-sutras by the sages, Jaimini, Asvalayana, Apastamba, Bodhayana, Katyayana and Vaikhanasa. These form limbs of the Vedas. Worship can be performed by a study of these and with the help of instructions from a knowledgeable person. But, for direct realization of Brahman the instruction of a preceptor, though essential, is not sufficient. In addition, the spiritual aspirant must perform reflection and one-pointed meditation. Want of faith obstructs the rise of indirect knowledge, but want of enquiry (i.e. hearing, reflection and meditation) is what obstructs the rise of direct knowledge. The enquiry should be continued until realization. If one does not get realization in this birth even after practising enquiry till death, he will get it in a future life when all obstacles have been eliminated. By virtue of the practice of spiritual enquiry in a previous birth, Vamadeva attained realization even when he was in his mother's womb, says Aitareya Upanishad, 2.1.5.

If, in spite of the practice of enquiry over a long period realization does not arise, it is due to various impediments. Realization will dawn when the impediments are removed. A person who does not know that one of his ancestors had buried a large quantity of gold under the ground in the compound of his house lives in poverty. When some one who knows the secret informs him about the treasure, he collects it and lives happily. A monk could not attain realization because of his past attachment to a she-buffalo. His teacher instructed him to meditate on Brahman, looking upon it as the substratum of the buffalo. By doing so he was able to attain realization.

Some of the impediments are: intense attachment to sense-objects, lack of subtlety of the intellect, indulging in perverse arguments about the truth of the Upanishadic teachings, and the deep-rooted conviction that the Self is a doer and an enjoyer. These should be removed by the practice of disciplines such as control of the mind, control of the senses, dispassion, etc., and enquiry into the nature of the reality. It is said in the Bhagavadgita that the spiritual development attained by a person in one life will not be lost on death, but will be with him in his next birth and will enable him to progress further from the stage reached (B.G.6.41-45). The essential condition for the attainment of realization is complete freedom from all desires, including desire for the pleasures of heaven and even of Brahmaloaka.

If a person is unable to practice enquiry, he should keep his mind always fixed on the thought of Brahman. Just as it is possible to meditate on Brahman with attributes, it is also possible to meditate on the attributeless Brahman. The latter may be meditated on as being beyond the reach of the senses, speech and the mind. Meditation on Nirguna Brahman has been spoken of in the Nrsimha-uttaratapaniya Upanishad (1.1), Prasna Upanishad (5.5), Katha Upanishad (1.2.15-17), and Mandukya Upanishad (1.12). This meditation has been mentioned also in the Panchikarana Vartika by Suresvaracharya. It is a means towards the indirect knowledge of Brahman. The Self is indicated in the Upanishads by implication by means of positive attributes such as bliss, etc and also negatively as 'not gross', etc. One should meditate on the indivisible, homogeneous Self as 'That I am'.

The difference between knowledge (jnana) and meditation (upasana) is that the former

depends on the object, while the latter depends on the will of the meditator. To explain, knowledge reveals an object as it actually is, but in meditation an object is looked upon as representing some thing else. Seeing the sun as the sun is knowledge, but thinking of the sun as Brahman is meditation.

Knowledge of Brahman arises by the practice of enquiry. Such knowledge puts an end to the notion that the world is real. On the attainment of this knowledge the person enjoys permanent satisfaction and feels that he has accomplished the goal of life. He becomes liberated even while living and merely awaits the exhaustion of the karma which brought about his present birth (praarabdha karma).

A person who is not able to practise enquiry should meditate in the manner prescribed by his Guru with complete faith, without allowing his mind to be distracted by other thoughts. He should continue the practice of meditation until he becomes identified with the object of meditation and thereafter also continue it till the last moment of his life.

A diligent student of the Vedas recites them even in his dreams. Similarly, one who practises meditation without any distraction continues the meditation even in his dreams, because of the deep impression produced by the meditation in his mind. Such a person can meditate without interruption even while continuing to experience his fructifying karma, just as a worldly person keeps on thinking of the objects to which he is attached even while he is engaged otherwise.

A person who has realized that he is the Self (and not the body-mind complex) fulfills his worldly duties also well, because they do not conflict with his knowledge. The knowledge that the world is not real but only Maya and that the Self is pure consciousness is not opposed to worldly activities. In order to perform worldly activities it is not necessary to believe that the world is real. Only the right means are necessary. These means are the mind, speech, body and external objects. They do not disappear on the attainment of enlightenment.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures have no application to the enlightened. They apply only to those who look upon themselves as belonging to a certain caste or station or stage of life. The enlightened person knows that caste, stage of life, etc., are creations of Maya and that they pertain only to the body and not to the Self which is pure consciousness. The enlightened person whose mind is completely free from all desires and vasanas has nothing to gain from action or inaction, meditation or japa.

A person who meditates continuously attains identity with the object of meditation, but this identity ceases if the practice of meditation is given up. But the realization of the Self, once attained through knowledge, is never lost. Every living being is in reality Brahman, but is ignorant of this fact. Knowledge only reveals this truth and does not create Brahmanhood.

Because of nescience which conceals their real nature, people do not realize the purpose of life. But just as begging is better than starving, it is better to practice devotion and meditation rather than other pursuits. Performance of the rituals laid down in the scriptures is superior to being engrossed in worldly affairs alone. Better than that is worship of a personal deity. Even better than that is meditation on the attributeless Brahman which leads to direct realization.

A samvaadi bhrama which leads to the desired result becomes valid knowledge (prama). Similarly, meditation on Brahman, when it ripens, leads to liberation and becomes knowledge of the reality. Though meditation on the form of a deity and chanting of mantras also lead to liberation, meditation on the attributeless Brahman is nearest to the goal of Self-realization.

Meditation on the attributeless Brahman matures into savikalpa samadhi in which there is still the distinction of meditator, the act of meditation and the object of meditation. This, when pursued, leads to nirvikalpa Samadhi where such differences vanish. There is then a perfect realization of Brahman as immutable, associationless, eternal, self-luminous, without a second and infinite, as declared in the scriptures.

Those who undertake pilgrimages and chanting of mantras instead of meditation on the attributeless Brahman may be compared to a person who licks his hand after dropping the sweets held by him.

Enquiry into the nature of the Self by hearing the scriptures from a teacher and then reflecting on them and practicing meditation is the direct means to Self-realization. Meditation on the attributeless Brahman is prescribed only for those who are unable to practise such enquiry.

If a person is not able to perfect his meditation in this life, he may attain liberation by acquiring Self-knowledge in Brahmaloaka or in another life. The Bhagavadgita says that one attains that which he thinks of at the time of death (8.6). Thus the future life of a person is determined by his thoughts at the time of death. So the worshipper of a Personal God will attain identity with Him, and the meditator on the attributeless Brahman will obtain liberation.

One who studies this chapter and reflects on its contents is freed from all doubts and constantly meditates on Brahman.

## Chapter 10

### **Natakadipa-- The lamp of the theatre**

In this chapter the supreme Self is compared to the lamp which lights the stage in a theatre. The lamp illumines the empty stage before the play starts; it illumines the play when it is in progress; and after the play is over and there is no one on the stage, the lamp continues to illumine the empty stage. Similarly, the supreme Self which is self-luminous exists before the origination of the universe, during the period of appearance of the universe, and also after the dissolution of the universe.

Before the creation of the universe the supreme Self which is non-dual, infinite bliss, alone existed. Through its Maya it appeared as the universe of names and forms and entered into them as the jiva or the individual self. Entering into divine bodies, the same Self became all the deities such as Vishnu. Entering into the bodies of human beings, it became the worshipper of the deities.

As a result of the practice of devotion in many lives, the desire to enquire into his real nature arises in the jiva. When such enquiry and reflection attain perfection, Maya is negated and the Self alone remains.

As long as the jiva, who is in reality the Self which is non-dual and of the nature of supreme bliss, perceives duality and looks upon it as real because of ignorance, he experiences misery. This state of ignorance of his real nature and the consequent suffering is what is known as bondage. Realizing his own nature as the supreme Self and remaining established in that realization is liberation.

The jiva who is ignorant of his real nature identifies himself with his body and mind and looks upon himself as the performer of action and the enjoyer of the fruit thereof. The mind is his instrument of action. The mind undergoes a twofold modification, namely, internal and external. The internal modification takes the form 'I'. It makes him the performer of action. The external modification takes the form of objects which are referred to as 'this'. The external objects are cognized by the five organs of sense distinctively as sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. The consciousness which simultaneously illumines the agent, the action and the external objects is known as the 'witness'. While revealing all these, the witness remains changeless like the lamp illumining the stage in a theatre.

The lamp reveals the patron, the performer on the stage, as well as the audience and continues to shine even when all of them have left. The witness-consciousness illumines the ego, the intellect and the sense-objects. Even when these are absent, as in deep sleep, the witness remains self-luminous. The intellect functions only in the light of the ever-luminous and ever present witness. In the above illustration the patron is the ego, the

various sense-objects are the audience, the intellect is the performer on the stage, the musicians playing on their instruments are the sense-organs, and the lamp lighting up all of them is the witness-consciousness. Just as the lamp lights up all these while remaining in its own place, the witness, which is motionless, illumines external objects as well as the states of the internal organ. The distinction as internal and external is only from the point of view of the body and not the witness. The ego is internal while objects are external. The qualities of the mind such as fickleness are wrongly attributed to the witness-consciousness by the ignorant. When the mind becomes absolutely quiet, the witness shines as it is.

The Self illumines all the modifications of the mind as the witness, but is itself beyond the grasp of speech and the mind. When the unreality of all duality is realized, the Self alone remains. Since the Self is self-luminous, its existence need not be proved by any pramana (means of knowledge). The Self can be realized as the witness of all the internal and external creations of the intellect if one hears the instruction of the sruti from a Guru and reflects on the teachings.

## Chapter 11

### **Yogananda—The Bliss Of Yoga**

Chapters 11 to 15 expound the various aspects in which Bliss which is Brahman manifests itself. In this chapter it is pointed out that the bliss attained through the practice of Yoga is an aspect of the supreme Bliss that is identical with Brahman.

On the attainment of the bliss of Brahman one becomes free from all present and future miseries. He who realizes that he is the supreme Self and remains established in that realization becomes free from all fear; but he who perceives even the slightest difference from the Self is overcome by fear.

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that the deities Vayu, Surya, Agni, Indra and Yama are in constant fear of Brahman. They attained these positions as a result of very meritorious actions performed in previous lives, but because they have not realized their identity with Brahman they are still subject to fear.

One who has attained the bliss of Brahman does not experience any fear at all and is not troubled by thoughts such as whether he had done meritorious deeds or not, because his actions do not taint him. So says Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.9.1. Giving up all actions and going beyond all thoughts of good and evil, he ever remains engaged in meditation on the Self. He looks upon all actions as identical with the Self. All the desires which bind him are destroyed, all his doubts about the Self are dispelled and all his actions perish in the sense that they do not cause any bondage for him. Only by realizing Brahman one goes beyond death and transmigratory existence. There is no other means to attain this end. All bonds are cut when the effulgent Self is known. All afflictions come to an end and he is not born again. One who has realized that he is none other than the supreme Self becomes free from all worldly joys and sorrows even while living in this world. He is not tormented by thoughts about his acts of commission or omission. The srutis, smritis and puranas repeatedly declare that the realization of Brahman puts an end to all sorrows and confers supreme bliss.

Bliss is of three kinds: The bliss of Brahman, the bliss born of knowledge, and the bliss derived from external objects. Of these, the bliss of Brahman is being described now.

Bhrigu heard the definition of Brahman from his father Varuna. By negating the sheaths of food, vital air, mind and intellect, he realized Brahman reflected in the bliss-sheath. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that all beings are born from bliss, they are sustained by bliss and they finally merge in bliss. (This statement is not elaborated in Panchadasi, but Ramakrishna, in his commentary named Padadipika, explains this verse as follows: Procreation is due to the pleasure derived from physical union, sustenance of life is due

to the happiness derived from sense-objects, and happiness is experienced in sleep when the individual soul temporarily merges in the supreme Self). Therefore there is no doubt that Brahman is bliss. Before creation of beings there was only the infinite Brahman without the triad of knower, object known and the act of knowing. In dissolution also the triad will cease to exist. When the created world is in existence, the intellect-sheath is the knower, consciousness reflected in the mind-sheath is knowledge and sound, etc., are the objects known. Before creation none of these three existed. Before the creation of the world and in the states of Samadhi, deep sleep and swoon also the Self alone exists.

Bhagavan Sanatkumara told sage Narada that the infinite Self alone is bliss. There is no happiness in anything finite. (Ch.Up.7.23.1). Even though Narada had mastered the Vedas, Puranas and various scriptures, he still suffered misery because he had not known the Self. Before he began to study the Vedas he suffered only from the three kinds of afflictions natural to all human beings, namely, adhyatmika, those arising from bodily ills, adhibhautika, those caused by other creatures, and adhidaivika, those caused by calamities such as floods, earthquakes, etc. But after he had mastered the Vedas and other scriptures he was, in addition, burdened by the need to keep on reciting what he had learnt, and beset by the fear of forgetting what he had learnt, the fear of being defeated in argument and the pride of learning. So he approached Bhagavan Sanatkumara and prayed for the knowledge that would lift him out of all sorrow. Sanatkumara told him that the ocean of sorrow could be crossed only by attaining Brahman which is pure Bliss. The happiness derived from external objects is always accompanied by sorrow. There is no real or unmixed happiness in the finite realm. It is true that there is no triad of knower, knowing and known in the non-dual Brahman and so there can be no experience of happiness as from sense-objects, but one who has realized Brahman remains as pure bliss. In deep sleep the bliss of Brahman is experienced though there are no objects and no triad. This bliss is therefore self-revealing. In deep sleep one does not suffer the miseries experienced during the waking state, caused by blindness, wounds and sickness. In deep sleep one is united with Brahman and so becomes bliss itself.

The Upanishads give various illustrations to describe the bliss enjoyed in sleep. A falcon, tied to a post by a long string, flies hither and thither and finally, when exhausted and in need of rest, goes back to the post to which it is tied. Similarly, the mind, after experiencing joys and sorrows in the waking and dream states, becomes absorbed in its cause, avidya, in the state of deep sleep. The jiva then becomes one with the supreme Self and enjoys bliss (Ch.Up. 6.8.2 and Br.Up. 4.3.19). A baby, having fed at the breast of its mother, and being free from attachment and aversion, lies in its bed, enjoying its natural bliss. A sovereign emperor, endowed with discrimination and having at his command all the virtuous pleasures within the reach of human beings, and consequently being free from further desire, remains as bliss personified. A great Brahmana who has realized Brahman remains established in the supreme bliss of enlightenment in the state of jivanmukti, having achieved all that was to be achieved. The innocent child, the discriminating emperor and the enlightened Brahmana are examples of supreme bliss. Others are subject to sorrow and not entirely happy. In deep sleep, however, every one enjoys the bliss that is Brahman. In that state he is not conscious of anything internal or external, like a man in the tight embrace of his beloved wife (Br. Up. 4.3.21). The experiences of the waking state are external and those of dream are internal. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that in the state of deep sleep, a father ceases to be a father, a mother ceases to be a mother, worlds cease to be worlds, and so on (4.3.22). Thus all worldly ideas are absent. Then jivahood ceases and Brahman alone remains. Grief is the consequence of identifying oneself as father, son etc. In deep sleep, when such identification is absent, there is no sorrow. One who has woken up from sleep recollects that he slept happily and knew nothing. Recollection presupposes experience. In deep sleep the Self reveals itself as bliss and it also reveals ignorance. Brahman is self-luminous bliss. In deep sleep the mind and intellect remain

latent in their cause, avidya. They become manifest when the person wakes up. The person then remembers his experience of happiness and total ignorance during sleep. The state of deep sleep in which the mind and intellect are latent is called the bliss-sheath. When the person wakes up, the mind and intellect sheaths again become manifest. It is the sheath of bliss that is the enjoyer and it is the bliss of Brahman that is enjoyed. In the waking state the modifications of the intellect, which are the instruments of cognition, cover various objects of knowledge, but in deep sleep they become one undifferentiated mass of consciousness. In deep sleep there are no mental modifications in the form of sorrow. The state of deep sleep, in which bliss is enjoyed, ceases and the person wakes up when prompted by his karma. The impression of the bliss enjoyed in sleep remains for a short time after waking up. Then, impelled by his karma, he sets about performing his duties and gradually forgets the bliss of Brahman.

Even though every one enjoys bliss during sleep, he does not realize that bliss to be Brahman itself. Mere intellectual knowledge about Brahman is not enough; Brahman should be realized as one's own self.

Whenever happiness is experienced even without any external object or any event to which it could be attributed, it should be understood to be the impression (vasana) of the bliss of Brahman. The happiness experienced on the fulfillment of any desire is due to the reflection of the bliss of Brahman in the mental modification (vritti). This happiness is called vishayananda, or happiness from the enjoyment of external objects. There are thus only three kinds of happiness: Brahmananda or the bliss of Brahman, Vasanananda or the happiness which is an impression of Brahmananda, and Vishayananda or the reflection of the bliss of Brahman in the mind. Brahmananda is self-revealing and it is what gives rise to the other two kinds of happiness.

The fact that the bliss of Brahman is self-revealing in the state of deep sleep is testified by the scriptures, by reasoning and by experience. The jiva is called Anandamaya in the state of deep sleep when he enjoys the bliss of Brahman. In the states of dream and waking the jiva is identified with the intellect-sheath or Vijnanamayakosha. The sruti says that in the waking state the jiva abides in the eye, in the dream state in the throat and in deep sleep in the lotus of the heart. In the waking state the jiva identifies himself with the gross body and looks upon himself as a man, woman, etc. He then experiences joys and sorrows. When at some time he is free from worries and at the same time is not experiencing joy from any external object, his mind is calm. Then he experiences the natural bliss of the Self. But this bliss is not the supreme bliss of Brahman, as the notion of egoity is also present; it is only an impression of the supreme bliss. This is like the outer surface of an earthen pot full of water being cold to the touch, even though there is no water outside. Just as the presence of water inside a pot can be inferred from the coldness of the outer surface, one can comprehend one's own nature of supreme bliss when one's egoity becomes extremely attenuated by continued practice. The bliss in which there is no experience of duality and which is not the state of deep sleep is the bliss of Brahman. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita that one should gradually withdraw the mind from all other thoughts and keep it fixed on Brahman. Whenever the mind, which is by nature restless and fickle, strays away, it should be restrained and again fixed on the Self. The Yogi who has made his mind perfectly tranquil and free from all taint, who is sinless and who has realized his identity with Brahman attains supreme bliss. When by the practice of yoga the mind is withdrawn from other objects and concentrated on the Self, the supreme bliss which is beyond the senses and which can be grasped only by the intellect, is attained. There is nothing higher than this state. The person who has attained this state is not disturbed even by the greatest calamity. Yoga is the state of being totally free from any association with sorrow. This Yoga must be practised with determination and a dispassionate mind. The Yogi who is free from all taint and whose mind is ever fixed on the Self experiences the supreme bliss of identity with Brahman. Control of the mind can be achieved by

assiduous practice as pointed out in the story about the bird which set about to dry up the ocean by baling out its waters drop by drop with its beak. The story is that the eggs laid by a bird on the seashore were washed away by the waves. The angry bird decided to get back its eggs by drying up the ocean and began to bale out the water with a blade of grass. Sage Narada who was passing by happened to see the bird and was impressed by its determination. He went to Garuda and asked him to go to the rescue of a member of his own species who was pitched against the mighty ocean. Garuda came and threatened the ocean with severe punishment if it did not restore the eggs to the bird. The ocean then returned the eggs to the bird. The moral of this story is that if one has the necessary determination, divine help will come and enable him to achieve his objective.

Just as fire becomes extinguished when the fuel is exhausted, the mind merges in its cause when all modifications cease. When the mind is fixed on Brahman, the ultimate reality, all joys and sorrows resulting from praarabdha karma will be seen to have no reality. It is an ancient truth that the mind assumes the form of the object towards which it is directed. The mind is the cause of transmigratory existence. It should be purified with untiring effort. By the purification of the mind all the impressions left by actions, both good and evil, are destroyed. The purified mind abiding in the Self enjoys infinite bliss. If a person fixes his mind on Brahman with the same intensity with which people fix their mind on sense-objects, all bondage would be definitely eradicated.

The mind which is tainted by desires is an impure mind and the mind which is free from desires is a pure mind. The sruti says that the mind alone is the cause of bondage as well as liberation. Attachment to objects of sense leads to bondage and freedom from attachment is the means to liberation. The bliss arising from absorption in the contemplation of the Self, when the mind becomes cleansed of all impurities, cannot be described in words. It can only be felt in the heart. The enlightened person always enjoys this supreme bliss inwardly even when he is outwardly engaged in worldly activities. The wise man gives up all desire for sensual pleasures and concentrates his mind on the Self so that he can enjoy that supreme bliss. A man whose mind is free from worldly concerns and is fixed on Brahman is not affected by any sorrows resulting from the operation of his fructifying karma. When worldly pleasures which are not opposed to Dharma come to him because of his praarabdha karma, without his seeking them, he looks upon them only as aspects of the bliss of Brahman. He experiences the bliss of Brahman in the waking state as well as in dream, because dreams consist only of the impressions left by the experiences in the waking state.

In this chapter is described the realization of supreme bliss by the Yogi.

## Chapter 12

### **Atmananda—The Bliss of the Self**

The Yogi experiences the bliss of Brahman as stated in the previous chapter. In this chapter the bliss experienced by the unenlightened person is examined.

In the Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad it is said that every one loves others only for his or her own happiness and not for the happiness of the person loved. The husband, wife, son, wealth, animals and all other things are loved only because they give happiness. This is evident from the fact that when a person's wife or son acts in a manner contrary to his wishes, he does not like them. Even an inveterate miser is willing to spend all his money to cure himself of a life-threatening disease, showing that his love of himself takes precedence over his love of money. All other things are loved only as long as they contribute to one's own happiness. So all other persons and things are only means to one's own happiness, and are not desired for their own sake; but happiness is desired for its own sake and not as a means to some thing else. A child, when kissed by its father feels pain

by being pricked by the father's bristly beard and cries, but the father goes on kissing the child because he feels happy thereby. This is a clear instance to show that all love is only for one's own happiness. Love of the means to happiness shifts from one object to another, but love of one's own self ever remains the same. Even when a person desires to end his life because of poverty, disease, humiliation or any other reason, it is the body that he wants to get rid of and not the self. Thus the self is the dearest to every one.

The word 'Self' is used in three different senses, namely, figurative (gauna), illusory (mithya) and primary (mukhya). In the sentence 'Devadatta is a lion', the identification of Devadatta with a lion is figurative. The purport of this sentence is that Devadatta possesses some of the characteristics of a lion such as courage, majesty, etc. At the same time the difference between the two is also clearly understood. In the scriptures sometimes a son is identified as the self of his father. This identification is figurative.

When a post is wrongly taken to be a man the identification is illusory. The identification of the self with the body and mind which constitute the five sheaths falls under this category.

The primary meaning of the word 'Self' is the pure unconditioned witness-consciousness or non-dual Brahman.

When a person desirous of attaining heaven performs the prescribed yajna, he knows that it is his subtle body that will go to heaven and not his physical body. He thus looks upon his subtle body as his self.

An aspirant for liberation strives for the realization that he is the pure unconditioned Self. Here the word 'Self' is used in its primary meaning.

Supreme love is felt for the primary Self. One loves everything related to the Self, but the love for them is limited and conditional on their giving happiness. No love is felt for other things.

The degree of love towards various objects of enjoyment varies according to their proximity to the Self. A son is dearer than wealth, one's own body is dearer than one's son, the sense-organs are dearer than the body, life is dearer than the sense-organs and the Self is dearer than everything else.

A married couple intensely desires to have a son and is very unhappy till the wife conceives. After conception there is great worry about safe delivery. When the child is born there are anxieties about its health and whether all its faculties such as eyesight, hearing, etc., would be sound. When the child grows up there is worry about whether he would be intelligent and industrious in studies. Thereafter there is anxiety about whether he would earn well and become rich or suffer from poverty and also whether he would lead a good moral life or not. There is also anxiety about whether he would be healthy and live long or die prematurely. Thus there is no end to the sorrows of parents. The only way to avoid sorrows is to avoid attachment to persons and things and to focus his love on the Self. It should be noted here that attachment is different from love. Attachment puts one at the mercy of the person or thing to which the attachment is directed. But love, which by definition is free from any selfish motive, makes a person independent of the object of love. Love directed equally towards all living beings ennobles.

Love for the supreme Self is in effect love for all creatures, since they are not different from the supreme Self.

Since the Self is of the nature of bliss as well as consciousness, the question arises as to why bliss is not experienced in all modifications of the mind and only consciousness is experienced. This can be answered by taking the example of a lamp. When a lamp burns it emits both heat and light, but only light fills the room and not heat.

When the Self is both bliss and consciousness, how is it that when consciousness is revealed in a mental modification bliss is also not revealed at the same time? This is answered by pointing out that though an object has colour, odour, taste, and touch, only one of these properties is cognized by a particular sense organ. It is not correct to say that colour, odour, and other properties of a flower are different from each other and so the

example given is not applicable because bliss and consciousness are not different from each other. The properties of a flower are not different from one another. If it is said that they are different because they are cognized by different sense-organs, then it must be pointed out that there is similarly a seeming difference between bliss and consciousness brought about by difference in the composition of the mental state. When Sattvaguna predominates in the mind, both bliss and consciousness are revealed, while when Rajoguna predominates, only consciousness is revealed and bliss is obscured.

The Lord says in the Bhagavadgita that there are two paths to liberation. One is Yoga and the other is the path of knowledge.

One who knows that the Self is dearest does not desire any external object of enjoyment. Nor does he have aversion towards any thing because he sees no object inimical to himself.

## Chapter 13

### **Advaitananda—The Bliss of Non-Duality**

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that the world is born from bliss, it abides in bliss and finally merges in bliss. This bliss is the same as Brahman. Brahman is thus the material cause of the world.

The relationship between the material cause and the effect is explained in different ways in the different schools. According to Vaiseshika, the effect is something new and absolutely different from the cause. This is known as Arambhavada.

The Sankhyas hold the view that the effect is an actual transformation of the cause, like milk changing into curd, clay into pot and gold into ornaments. This is known as Parinamavada.

In the case of a rope appearing as a snake, there is no real transformation. The snake is only a Vivarta or apparent modification of the rope. The appearance of the snake is due to ignorance of the rope. Similarly, the world is only a Vivarta of Brahman. Maya conceals Brahman and projects the world.

Maya is the power of Brahman. Power does not exist apart from its possessor. At the same time, power is not identical with its possessor, because even when the power is obstructed, its possessor remains the same. Power cannot be directly perceived, but can only be inferred from its effect. Maya, the power of Brahman, manifests as action, knowledge and will. The supreme unconditioned Brahman is eternal, infinite and non-dual. When associated with Maya, Brahman is described as omnipotent.

Brahman becomes manifest as consciousness in all living beings. Its power appears as movement in air, hardness in stone, liquidity in water, and heat in fire. Just as a tree with its branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc., is latent in the seed, so is this world latent in Brahman (before manifestation). When Brahman assumes the power of cognition it is called the mind. The notions of bondage and liberation arise in the mind.

In Yogavasista it is said that a nurse narrated the following story to amuse a child. Once upon a time there were three handsome princes. Two of them were never born and the third was never even conceived. They lived righteously in a city which never existed. While moving about in the city the princes saw trees laden with fruits growing in the sky. Then they went to another city which had not yet come into existence and lived there happily, spending their time in games and hunting. The child believed all this to be true because of lack of discriminating capacity. In the same way this world is accepted as real by those who have no discrimination. Sage Vasista described the power of Maya through such stories.

Maya is different from its effect as well as from its substratum. It can only be inferred from its effect, just as the burning power of an ember can be inferred only from the blister caused by it.

An effect is non-different from its cause. A clay pot is not different from the clay, because it has no existence apart from the clay. At the same time, the pot is not identical with clay, because it is not perceived in the un-moulded clay. Therefore the pot has to be called indescribable, like the power which produced it. Because of this, the Chandogya Upanishad says that the pot is not real, being only a name, reality being attributed only to the clay (Ch.Up. 6.1.4). Of the three entities, namely, the product of power which is perceptible, the power itself which is not perceptible, and the substratum in which they both inhere, only the third persists; the first two exist by turns. So only the third is real. The pot has a beginning and an end. It is therefore not real. Before the pot was made it was only clay. When the pot exists, it is also only clay. After the pot is destroyed there is only clay. Thus clay alone is real. (It should be noted that this reality is only from the empirical point of view).

The illusory snake disappears when the substratum, rope, is known. But a pot continues to appear as such even after its substratum, clay, is known. So the question is, how can the pot be said to be illusory? The answer is that though the pot is still seen, it is realized that it has no reality apart from clay. The substitution of the notion that the pot has a reality of its own by the realization that it is nothing but clay with a particular name and form can be described as destruction of the pot.

The world is superimposed on Brahman. Even after the realization that Brahman is the only reality the world continues to be perceived by the realized person, but it is not accepted as real by him. He is not affected by the joys and sorrows in the world. It is in this sense that the world is said to have ceased to exist when Brahman is realized.

In an actual transformation, as in the case of milk becoming curd, the original substance, milk, disappears. But in the modification of clay into pot, or gold into ornaments, the substratum, clay or gold, remains as such. Chandogya Upanishad says that by knowing a lump of clay, everything made of clay is known. Similarly, by knowing Brahman the whole phenomenal universe is known. Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss, whereas the world consists of name and form.

Before the manifestation of the universe Maya remained unmanifest in Brahman. The Svetasvatara Upanishad says: "Know Maya to be Prakriti (the material cause of the universe), and the supreme Lord to be the Ruler (or substratum) of Maya". Name and form are merely superimposed on Brahman.

By the continuous practice of meditation on Brahman a person becomes established in the knowledge of Brahman. Then he becomes liberated from Samsara.

In dream a man sees impossible things happening, but at that time he does not even realize that they are impossible, but accepts them as correct. When such is the power of dream, what is there to wonder about the power of Maya which projects this universe and makes it appear real? The whole universe is only the projection of names and forms in Brahman by Maya. When one realizes that all names and forms have no reality and rejects them he remains as the pure Brahman. Even if he continues to be engaged in worldly matters he is not affected by the joys and sorrows arising from them.

Just as a huge rock lying in the bed of a river remains unaffected even though water continuously flows over it, Brahman remains unchanged while names and forms keep on changing.

Realizing that Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss, one should keep his mind fixed on Brahman and restrain it from dwelling on names and forms. Thus the bliss of non-duality will be realized.

## Chapter 14

### **Vidyananda—The Bliss of Knowledge**

In this chapter the bliss experienced by a person who has attained the knowledge

(realization) of Brahman through one of the three paths described in the preceding three chapters, namely, the practice of yoga, discriminative knowledge of the Self, and constant contemplation of the unreality of duality, is described.

The happiness arising from external objects is a modification of the intellect. Similarly, the bliss arising from the realization of Brahman is also a modification of the intellect. This bliss has four aspects. These are, absence of sorrow, the fulfillment of all desires, the satisfaction of having done all that had to be done, and the feeling of having attained the goal of life.

The jiva identifies himself with the subtle and gross bodies and thinks of himself as an agent (doer) and an enjoyer. The names and forms in the universe are looked upon as objects of enjoyment. When the jiva realizes that he is the supreme Brahman and gives up identification with the bodies, there is neither enjoyer nor objects of enjoyment. It is the identification with the bodies that is the cause of all desires, since all desires are for the comfort of the body. Sorrow results when a desire is not fulfilled. The knower of Brahman realizes that worldly objects have no reality and so he has no desire for them.

Just as water does not stick to the leaves of the lotus, actions performed after realization do not attach to the knower, because actions are performed by the body and the knower of Brahman has no identification with the body. The accumulated actions (sanchita karma) are burnt by the fire in the form of the knowledge of Brahman.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the Vedas do not have any application to the enlightened person. These are applicable only as long as one identifies oneself with the body and the mind. Any action performed by a realized soul is not action at all, because he has no sense of doership. Whatever action he performs is only for the welfare of the world and not for any benefit for himself, because he is the pure Self which has no desires. He enjoys supreme bliss. The present body continues till the praarabdha karma which brought it into existence is exhausted. On the fall of this body he will not be born again because there will be no karma left to give him another birth.

The bliss of the Self is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is superior even to the happiness enjoyed by Brahma and other gods.

## Chapter 15

### **Vishayananda—The happiness from external objects**

In this chapter the happiness derived by the contact of the sense-organs with external objects is described. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that this happiness is only a particle of the bliss of Brahman (Br. Up. 4.3.32).

Mental modifications (vrittis) are of three kinds—calm (sattvic), agitated (rajasic) and dull (tamasic). The sattvic modifications are detachment, forbearance and generosity. The rajasic modifications are craving, attachment, greed, and the like. The tamasic modifications are delusion, fear, etc. The consciousness aspect of Brahman is reflected in modifications of all kinds, but the bliss aspect is reflected only in sattvic modifications.

The same supreme Self dwells in all bodies. Though it is only one, it appears as many, like the reflections of the moon in different vessels of water. The reflection of the moon is clear if the water is pure and faint if the water is muddy. Similarly, Brahman appears differently in different bodies, depending on the nature of the mental modification.

Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The existence aspect alone is manifested in inanimate objects, but not consciousness and bliss. This is because inanimate objects have no subtle body which alone can reflect consciousness and bliss. The consciousness aspect is manifested in all animate beings, even when the mind is agitated, for we see that even a person who is unhappy is conscious. But the bliss aspect is manifested only when the mind is calm. A doubt arises as to why, when Brahman has both the aspects of

consciousness and bliss, only one of them, consciousness, is reflected in an agitated mind. When you look at the reflection of your face in a mirror, you find that the face in its entirety is reflected and not only some aspects of it. This doubt is answered by giving two examples. When water is in contact with fire, only the heat aspect of fire is absorbed by the water and not the light of fire. But when a log of wood comes into contact with fire, it absorbs both the heat and the light aspects. Similarly, only the consciousness aspect of Brahman is reflected in an agitated mind, but both the consciousness and the bliss aspects are reflected when the mind is calm.

When there is some desire in the mind there is anxiety about whether the desired object will be attained or not. In such a condition there can be no happiness. But as soon as the desired object is attained, the mind becomes calm. The bliss of Brahman is then reflected in the mind. The happiness experienced then is wrongly attributed to the attainment of the desired object, while it is really due to the mind becoming calm. This happiness continues only till another desire arises and agitates the mind. When a person has attained complete detachment towards worldly pleasures and is free from desires, his mind is absolutely calm and then supreme bliss is experienced.

Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss. In inanimate objects such as stones, only the existence aspect is manifest, because they have no subtle body which alone can reflect consciousness. In all living beings both existence and consciousness are manifest. All the three aspects of Brahman are manifest in a mind that is predominantly sattvic.

Brahman is in reality devoid of all attributes. The multifarious names and forms in the world are superimposed on Brahman by Maya. For those who are incapable of meditating on the attributeless Brahman meditation on Brahman with attributes is prescribed in the scriptures.

When the non-dual, self-luminous, attributeless Brahman is known, there is no triad of knower, knowing and known. Then there is infinite bliss.

May the Lord who is both Hari and Hara protect all those who, with a pure mind, surrender themselves to Him.

End